

Glitches...I couldn't find the email confirmation of my MAC World registration, so I called to check on it before I went. I was told I hadn't registered. The week after Mac World I found the email. Grr.

I am really excited about the new direction we decided to take for our meetings. This month will be a combined kick off meeting, so we Windows folks have to remember to be at the library by 9:30 and enter through the back door. Kathy will demo Skype and Joan is bringing both her laptops for a hands on experience.

Skype lets you use your internet connection to make free calls anywhere in the world to people who use Skype. The computer-to-computer calls are secure and encrypted. They also have good rates for local, long distance and international calls to regular phones and mobile phones.

Skype archives your chats for you and stores them locally on your computer, if you have this option enabled. Chat histories are **not** stored anywhere on the network. In other words, no one else on Skype will ever be able to see any of your chat histories except you and the person you are chatting with. Chats are archived as a convenience to you, so that you can easily keep track of your chat conversations on Skype.



There are also some extra features. You can send text messages, hold conference calls, and (if you have a web cam) make video calls. You can also set up a separate internet phone number so long distance friends with regular phone numbers can call you on a local number. Some of the features cost while others are free.

The rates for calling non Skype phones are very reasonable. In fact, it is just 2.1¢ per minute for over 35 countries worldwide. There are 2 payment options:

- Monthly subscriptions include unlimited calls to selected countries and regions.

- Pay As You Go by adding some money to your account and then you just pay for calls as you make them.

### **Some of the additional features are:**

#### **Online number--Friends call you from a regular phone and reach you on Skype – anywhere.**

When you have a monthly subscription, you get \$30 off the purchase of a 12-month online number and \$6 off the purchase of a 3-month online number. Without a subscription, you pay \$60 for a full year of an online number or \$18 for the 3-month online number.

#### **SMS--Send text messages directly from Skype.**

Just like sending text messages from your mobile, you pay per SMS message you send from Skype, but the costs are usually much lower. The cost of each text message depends on where in the world you're sending it to (but not where you're sending it from, however). It's just 9¢ to most places, but there's a big list of rates to destinations worldwide.

#### **Voicemail—Never miss a call.**

Voicemail is included with the purchase of any of our subscriptions. Otherwise, it's just \$6 for 3 months or \$20 for a full year. You'll need to buy Skype Credit to purchase voicemail but you can also use the credit to call landline and mobile phones and send SMS directly from Skype.

#### **Call forwarding—Get your calls forwarded when you're offline.**

With a subscription you can forward calls to landlines in any country within your subscription at no extra cost. To countries outside of a subscription (and if you don't have a subscription) you'll pay a per minute rate charged at our rates for calling phones and mobiles. However, if you make a Skype-to-Skype call to someone who has their calls forwarded, you won't pay anything.

We will also unveil our new benefit program—Beth

## Advanced System Care Free V3 – Improve PC Performance

By Ira Wilsker, APCUG Director; Columnist, The Examiner, Beaumont TX

Radio Show Host

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### WEBSITES:

<http://www.iobit.com>

<http://www.iobit.com/advancedwindowscareper.html>

One of the most frequently asked questions on my weekly radio show (KLVI 560AM, Mondays, 6-7pm) has to do with improving the performance of a sluggish computer. One of the utilities I most recommended was the free version of IObit's Advanced Windows Care – Personal Edition, version 2. Recently IObit released an upgraded and updated utility renamed Advanced System Care Free V3, which IObit claims has over 10,000 improvements and updates. Being a fan of system improvement utilities, I had to download and install this new version, replacing the older version 2 that I have been happily using for about the past 18 months.

Going to the IObit website at [www.iobit.com](http://www.iobit.com), and downloading the new software was an easy experience, as I was given the choice of multiple download sites. I selected one of the Texas mirrors of MajorGeeks, a major download service, where the download counter of this new version indicates that over 1.5 million copies of this new version 3 have been downloaded from MajorGeeks alone. The download was about 7.6 megs in size, and downloaded remarkable fast for a download that size, to the credit of the bandwidth available at the Texas MajorGeeks website. Once downloaded, I clicked on the file to install it, and it recognized my older version 2, which it replaced. I was given the choice of language, and "skin" (background color scheme), and selected the white (really a soft light blue) as the easiest to read.

Once the install was complete, I chose to run the program. I was displayed a clean fresh graphical interface that on the left of the window gave the choices "Maintain Windows", "Diagnose System", "Utilities", and "Home". Whichever icon is selected opens the right half of the window. For my first test of the software, I chose to Maintain Windows. I was offered a check-box selection of "Spyware Removal", "Registry Fix", "Privacy Sweep", and "Junk Files Clean". I selected all of

them and clicked on "Scan". In just a few minutes, Advanced System Care Free V3 detected 20 items it labeled as spyware (all were tracking cookies), 66 correctable errors in my registry, 29 privacy issues, and 394 megs of junk files that could be deleted. I prefer to not blindly follow what is found, so I clicked on each of the findings to review what was found. After some minor tweaking, I decided to accept what was found, and clicked on the "Repair" icon. In just seconds, all of the corrections and deletions were carried out.

Selecting the "Diagnose System" icon, I was given the now familiar check boxes for "System Optimization", "Security Defense", "Disk Defragment", and "Security Analyzer". I checked all except Disk Defragment, as I had just recently defragged my hard drive using IObit's free standing and excellent disk defragmentation utility, and wanted to save the time, despite IObit's claim that the integral defragmentation utility is up to 10 times faster than some other competing products. System Optimization detected about two dozen "system bottlenecks" and corrected the system settings to improve performance. The Security Defense feature can immunize the computer against thousands of malicious websites, illicit tracking cookies, browser hijackers, dialers, and other malicious software. Security Analyzer examines running programs to detect and disable any malware that may be currently running on the computer.

The Utilities selection offers 20 distinct utilities to tune-up the computer and its applications; examine the security settings and backup critical system files and settings' and "Admin Tools" which includes an uninstall utility, as well as my personal favorite, a startup manager to identify and control what programs startup when the computer is booted. By cleaning up the startup, the computer will run faster, boot quicker, and have fewer conflicts, because fewer programs will be automatically loaded. Under the Tune Up tab, I found that Firefox (my preferred browser) can be optimized for maximum performance.

The "Home" icon displays program version, database updates, most recent scan, user account (free or paid "Professional" account), and the cumulative results of the scans that had been performed. The center "Care" icon automatically runs

the system optimization utilities, as a one-click performance improvement function.

As is to be expected, IObit has a comparison chart that compares the features of Advanced System Care Free V3 with its software competitors, both free and commercial. The features listed on the chart are “All-in-one secure, repair, clean, and optimize”, “Optimize and speed up PC and Internet”, “Complete registry care”, “Security features”, “1-click solution”, and “Price”. This software is compared to seven major competitors (1 free and six commercial), and comes out feature rich compared to the competition. To be fair, some of the products listed have features and capabilities not included with Advanced System Care Free V3, but comparing system utilities and clean up programs, this program compares very well.

Note: Before working in the registry **always** make a back up copy first—that way if something goes wrong you can restore the original settings.—Beth


It is inevitable that users will ask why IObit would give away software this powerful; the reason is that IObit clearly wants the satisfied user to upgrade to the Pro version, which has more features and capa-

bilities, and is currently on sale online for \$19.95 (regularly \$29.95) directly from IObit. The Pro version has additional performance improving features, a deep registry scan that roots out many more useless registry entries (the Pro version detected over 3000 useless registry entries on my computer, compared to only 66 in the free version), additional tune-up features to both improve hardware performance and web speed, and free technical support.

The excellence of Advanced System Care Free V3 has been recognized in the media with several awards, including high ratings from ZDnet, Tucows, Softpedia, Download.com, PC World, PC Magazine, and other publications. Download.com claims that Advanced System Care Free V3 is its number one most downloaded system utility, with about 9.5 million downloads, even though it has only been available for the past several weeks.

For those wanting a powerful, and feature rich utility to improve computer performance, the free version of Advanced System Care Free V3 would be a very good choice. For those who want additional features and capability, the Pro version, currently on sale for \$19.95, would be a very good choice.

**Upgrade Now**

 **Get PRO Edition to Unlock This Function**

**Extra benefits you will get:**

- + Double or triple the speed of your old and slow PC
- + Clean and repair 200% more Registry errors for better reliability
- + Tune up your PC automatically to boost video, picture, MP3 editing and viewing, game playing at its maximum speed
- + Accelerate Internet downloading, web surfing, online gaming, Youtube viewing up to 300% faster
- + Free technical support and commercial use

[What is in the Professional edition](#)

**Enter License Now**      **Register Online**      **Use Free Edition**

## Surviving the Switch to Digital TV

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At the stroke of midnight on Feb. 17, 2009, the analog transmissions that have beamed free television over the air in the United States for over half a century will disappear for good. They will be replaced by digital signals, many of which are already broadcasting, in what will be the most significant change to television since the introduction of color.



The "digital switchover" brings with it higher image quality, better sound and a level of versatility and flexibility previously unattainable through free television. It also brings with it a number of significant headaches, as confusion over exactly who will be affected is inspiring panic in viewers fearful of being left behind in a haze of snow and static as the rest of the country moves into the future. Many of those who will be affected know that the deadline is fast approaching, but are unsure of how to prepare for it. Thankfully, a solution is simple, easily attainable and won't cost you a dime.

There are two major reasons for the switch from analog TV broadcasts to digital TV. First, digital signals offer superior image quality and allow for the transmission of high-definition signals over the air. This means that a properly equipped HDTV can receive local high-definition broadcasts that will look about as good as what you'd get from cable or satellite television.

Second, switching from analog to digital frees up real estate on the broadcast spectrum for other uses, as digital signals are more efficient and take up less bandwidth. Telecommunications companies like Verizon and AT&T have spent nearly \$20 billion to secure the rights to the frequencies that were previously occupied by channels 52 through 69, in the hopes of using that air-

space to improve their wireless communication networks.

What the digital switchover is actually doing is changing the language that TV broadcasters use to communicate with your television. Since 1941, televisions in the U.S. have utilized a set of broadcast standards laid out by the National Television System Committee. Big broadcast towers sent out information over the air using these NTSC standards and were picked up by the television antenna in your living room. Inside your TV, an NTSC tuner interpreted the information and properly displayed it on screen.

The digital switchover is introducing a new language, a new set of broadcast standards, this one designed by the Advanced Television Systems Committee. On Feb. 17, those broadcast towers are going to stop speaking NTSC permanently and start speaking ATSC. But unfortunately, your old television set doesn't know how to translate ATSC into moving pictures and sound. Just about all televisions manufactured and sold after Mar. 1, 2007 feature ATSC tuners, but if you purchased a television any earlier than that, chances are your TV won't be able to pick up over-the-air broadcasts once the switchover occurs.

The solution: A digital converter box, essentially an external ATSC tuner that sits on top of your existing television and is linked between your antenna and your TV. The ATSC signals are grabbed by the same antenna you've always used, then passed to the digital converter box that translates the ATSC signals into something your NTSC television can understand. They are easy to hook up and available at a wide variety of stores, including big box stores like Best Buy, Wal-Mart and Target, as well as online retailers.

Digital converter boxes cost between \$40 and \$70 on average, but since the digital switchover is being forced upon consumers, Congress has stepped up and created the "TV Converter Box Coupon Program." Under this initiative, each American household is entitled to two \$40 gift cards that can only be used to purchase a digital converter box. Individuals can apply at the official Web site for the DTV switch. You can apply for coupons until Mar. 31, 2009; they expire 90 days after they are issued. You might want to apply for

them sooner rather than later because the government has allocated a finite amount of funding.

TV viewers who pay for cable or satellite service need not worry. The digital switchover only applies to over-the-air broadcasts, so consumers who get their television directly from Comcast or DirecTV will not be affected at all, and service will continue uninterrupted and unchanged as the DTV deadline comes and goes.

There is, however, a subtler, unrelated analog-to-digital switchover taking place among cable companies, one that could affect subscribers. It has usually been possible to view a small number of basic cable channels by plugging the coaxial cable directly into a television set, bypassing a cable box entirely.

This was a quick and easy way to bring cable TV to many rooms in a home without renting multiple cable boxes. Unfortunately, this may not be possible in the near future. Cable companies like Comcast and Time Warner are slowly phasing out their analog cable services in favor of digital. By switching over, they free up more space on their cable networks that can be allocated to new high-definition channels and interactive services like "On Demand." The downside is that when all cable channels are converted to digital, renting a cable box will be required to see any channels at all.

Another point of confusion that retailers and manufacturers have been reluctant to clear up: consumers need not purchase an HDTV to weather the digital TV switchover.



In addition to the converter boxes, new standard-definition CRT televisions are still available, and they are required by law to include the necessary ATSC tuners. While an HDTV will allow viewers to take advantage of digital TV's high-definition potential, it's important to know that there is a lower-cost option available as well.

With the emergence of free, digital, over-the-air television that includes HD transmissions, it will be interesting to see if Americans, the majority of whom now pay for their television service via cable or satellite, might see the benefit of switching back to the old rabbit ears. While the selection of over-the-air broadcasts will never be as compre-

hensive as pay services, that same glut of content is often cited as an annoyance--lots of channels that subscribers will never watch.

Of course, all this will depend on how smoothly the digital switchover goes, and whether or not people are actually able to see the improvements on their screen. With just a few short months to go, having the right knowledge to make it through is absolutely crucial.

See Also:

In Pictures: 10 Tips For Switching To Digital TV at <http://tinyurl.com/5tj8wq>

Thinking of buying a new television as the U.S. moves to digital TV? Be smart--and ask these questions at <http://tinyurl.com/57jfbu>



### Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

#### Use The Tools You Have

One of the best ways to keep your computer from getting loaded down with malware is to never let the stuff in the door. WinXP includes a basic firewall with the operating system (and it's activated by default), but it can't hurt to run a few extra layers of protection. First, though, let's check to make sure your WinXP firewall is up and running. It's pretty simple to access the firewall. Click Start, Control Panel, and then Windows Firewall. If the firewall is set to Off, simply select the radio button for On and then click OK.

Now comes the step of adding another layer of protection. There are several free firewalls available on the Web that do a marvelous job of protecting your computer from unwanted intrusions. One of the most reliable is ZoneAlarm (free; [www.zonelabs.com](http://www.zonelabs.com)). Once installed, ZoneAlarm will prompt you to determine which programs are authorized to access the Internet. After that, ZoneAlarm will block the rest (or at least seek permission to allow a new program to access the Internet).

Of course, the enterprise-level offerings, such as Symantec's Sygate Enterprise Protection and McAfee Total Protection For Enterprise, include powerful firewalls, so if your company uses programs similar to those, make sure they're up and running before you leave for a business trip. You can also try out the antivirus and personal firewall solutions from F-Secure ([www.f-secure.com](http://www.f-secure.com)) free for 30 days.

# Saving pictures that show on your computer screen

by Dick Carricato, Tri County Computer User Group, Florida  
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These days we are bombarded with beautiful pictures on our computers, and when I see a great picture I'm not happy until I have it stored away in my own computer where I can use it when I want to.

The usual technique used to extract and save pictures from the web, from e-mail, or from any other source that places a picture on the computer screen, is simply to right click on the picture and select "Save picture as..." This will often open the 'My Pictures' folder where the user can select a folder in which to save the picture.

This is a very straight forward, simple, and easy to remember technique for those situations where it works, and if it worked all the time this article would end right here. However, it often does not work. Sometimes web authors make it difficult for you to copy their pictures, and a right click on one of those pictures produces a grayed (not available) "Save picture as..." selection. Pictures in PDF documents in general cannot be copied, and for that matter, even highlighted text can't be copied from most PDF documents. Very often when an e-mail picture is right-clicked the "Save picture as..." selection is available, but when that option is selected an error box appears saying, "The system cannot find the file specified."

The remainder of this article will be devoted to a single method that allows the user to copy and save any image that shows on his computer screen. This method involves the use of the Windows Print Screen function. Of course, everyone remembers how to use Print Screen (Prt Scn) because we have discussed it in the past. Just in case you have forgotten I'll review it here.

The Prt Scn key is located to the right of the function keys at the top of the keyboard. When Prt Scn is pressed it copies a picture of the entire display to the Clipboard. Pressing Alt-Prt Scn copies an image of the Active window to the Clipboard. Remember that the active window is the one with the bright title bar, and it got that way by clicking the mouse anywhere within the window. The Clipboard is just a section of memory that Windows

uses for all Copy and Paste operations. Information is copied from any Windows program to the Clipboard by using the Copy command. Information is pasted to any Windows program from the Clipboard by using the Paste command.

The next time a nice picture shows up on your screen, right-click on it and attempt to save it by using the "Save as..." command. If that fails, click once in the window where the picture is located; maximize the window to make the picture as large as possible, and then press Prt Scn. (In rare cases you might have to hold the Shift key while pressing Prt Scn.) This places the entire window, including the picture that you want, in the Clipboard. The rest of the procedure requires a graphics processor, and fortunately the Windows Paint program will do just fine. It can be found by clicking Start, (all) Programs, Accessories, Paint (or mspaint). To put a shortcut to Paint on your desktop, right click and drag it to your desktop, let go, and select copy here.

So far all we have done is to discover a picture, maximize the window that contains it, and press Prt Scn. Next, open Paint by double clicking the Paint icon on the desktop. In Paint, click Edit and select Paste. Now the entire window that you copied above is visible in the Paint window

Pick up the selection tool from the group of tools along the left side of the Paint window. To do this, click on the dotted line rectangle. Move the mouse pointer to the upper left corner of the Picture. Then press the left mouse button and drag to the bottom right corner of the picture. This selects the picture that you want to keep. Copy this to the Clipboard by right clicking within the selection and (left) clicking on Copy.

Now you have what you want in the Clipboard, and all that you don't want is visible in Paint. Click File and New, and answer the query to save the garbage with 'no'. Click Edit and Paste to get the picture alone into Paint. Click File and Save as.... Be sure to select a file type of JPEG for your picture. If you don't, Paint will save the file as a bitmap (.BMP) which is quite large, ranging from 1 to 5 megabytes depending on the size of the picture. The JPEG file will be only about 5% of the size of the bitmap file.

## Copying Information from Your Screen

by Richard Kennon Amador Computer Users Group, Jackson, CA  
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Dick Carricato, member of the Tri County Computer User Group in Florida wrote a good article about copying pictures from your computer screen. Sometimes there are other things you may want to copy from your screen that may not lend themselves to the PrtScr method. This is especially true of lists in drop down boxes that require a scroll bar down the right side. PrtScr will only show the portion of the list that shows. For instance, I write a (almost) monthly newsletter on the web and usually include a bunch of pictures. I like to have a hard copy of the picture thumbnails at hand to remind me of things to say. This is always a scrolling window. Often I want a hardcopy of a menu, too.

I have found FastStone Capture to be a perfect answer to my needs. You can try it free by going

to <http://www.faststone.org/>. Then, if you like it, as I do, you can purchase a lifetime license for \$19.95.

You can capture and annotate anything on the screen including windows, objects, menus, full screen, rectangular/freehand regions and scrolling windows/web pages. Editing tools include annotating, resizing, cropping, sharpening, watermarking, edge effects and many more. Of course, you can transfer the image to any editor of choice. You can either print the copy or save it in one of eight different formats. I choose JPEG. Further, you can choose the resolution of the saved image. I don't know if it actually improves the resolution or just resizes to more pixels.

Of course, it features a bunch of hot key combinations but, with my memory, this is not useful. Instead I rely on the small box of choices at the bottom right of my screen. I find it extremely useful and use it almost every day.

## Some Printing Questions Answered

By David, WorldStart Staff Member

This information has been reprinted with permission from WorldStart

**Q:** How do I print double sided?

**A:** The short answer: flip your paper over.

Now for a long answer...

Load only one sheet of paper into your printer.

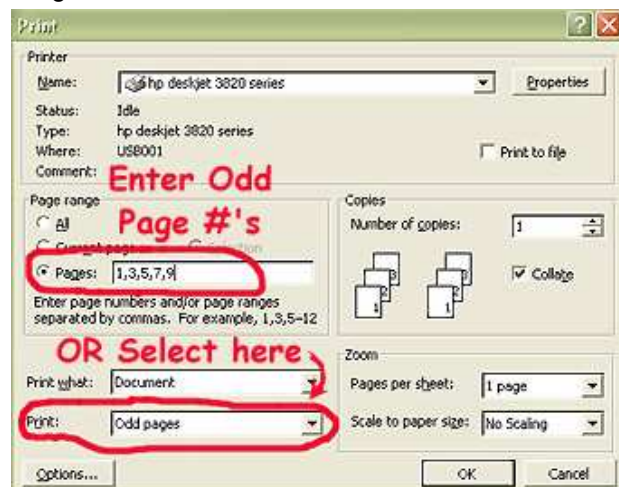
Pay attention to how the paper feeds through (which side did it print on to?)

After the first page prints you may get a message telling you that the paper tray is empty. Put the page back in the tray with the blank side of the page turned to where the next page will print onto it. You may need to click a "resume printing" button to continue printing or it may start up when it senses that paper is in.

And here's a longer answer: print the odd number pages first, then the even number pages on the back. This requires a bit more skill but once learned is pretty easy.

From your Print interface select "Pages" and enter the odd pages separated by commas, for example... 1,3,5,7...

You also might have a drop down box in the lower left hand corner where you can select "Odd Pages".



After printing the first side, you may need to change the order depending on how the paper feeds.

For the back side enter the even numbers into the "Pages" area (2,4,6,8...) or choose "Even pages" from

the print drop down box.

Don't worry if you mess up the first time—once you

### Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

Smart Computing Magazine sends these tips via e mail. They also have them archived on their website:

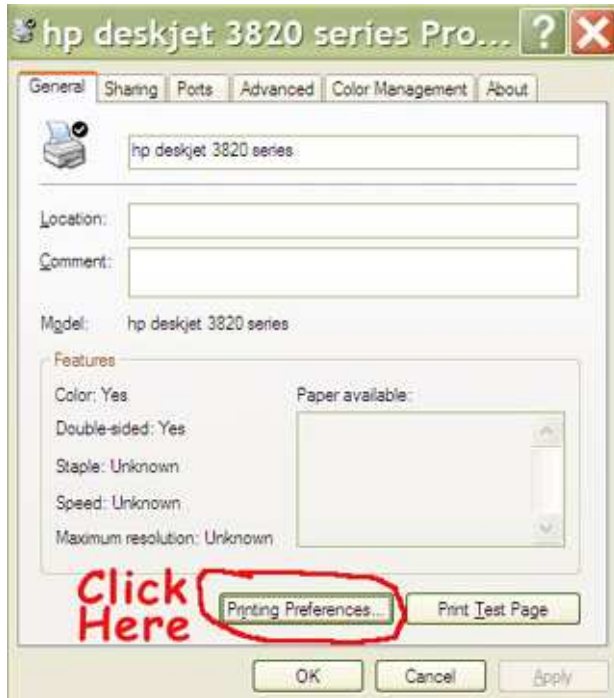
[www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com)

figure it out you'll be printing on both sides like a pro.

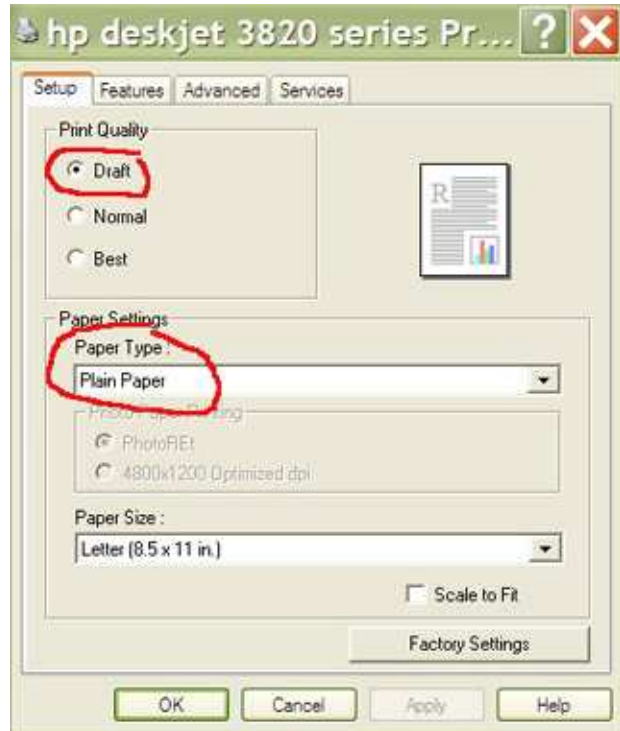
**Q:** Every time I go to print seems to take longer than it used to—a lot longer. Is there a way to get my quick printing back?

**A:** Most likely your printer settings got changed from "draft" to "best". I know because I did the same thing. I was printing some photos and changed the print quality to "Best" mode and it stayed there. Every time I went to print a simple Word document, it would take forever to print. If I remembered to change the properties, it would go right back the next time I printed. Finally, I figured it out...

Rather than opening my print properties in Word, I needed to change them in the Control Panel. Go to Start/Control Panel then "Printers and Faxes". Find your printer on the list, right-click then choose "Properties" (or Alt+double-click the printer). Click the "Printing Preferences" button



Next, change the Print Quality to "Draft" and make sure the Paper Setting is on "Plain Paper".



Click OK and you're all set. These should now be your default settings

### Smart Computing Tip Of The Day

#### Tame An Unruly Mouse In WinXP

If you installed a new mouse, but Windows won't recognize it, a driver conflict may be the problem.

If you didn't uninstall the previous mouse, it may be causing a hardware or device driver conflict. Windows Device Manager can identify hardware conflicts and device driver problems, as well as remove problem devices from your computer. You can either connect the previous mouse or use your keyboard to open and view the Device Manager. Press the Windows key to bring up the Start menu. Use the arrow keys to highlight Settings and Control Panel and then press ENTER. Select the System icon, press ENTER, and use the arrow keys to select the Hardware tab. Press TAB until you select the Device Manager button and press ENTER. Press TAB and press the Down arrow key until the Mouse icon is highlighted. Use the Right arrow key to display the installed mouse. An exclamation point indicates that a mouse has a driver conflict.

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Microsoft's Office 2007 is the perfect suite of applications and is suited to all types of users. Office will aid you in being more productive and allow your documents, spreadsheets and presentations to be professional and attractive. Different versions of Office 2007 include different applications, from the Basic version with Word, Excel, and Outlook, to an Enterprise version including everything. This variety of suites may seem overkill but it provides an Office suite in complexity and price range for anyone. I have been using Microsoft Office Professional since Office 95. The only version that I skipped was Office 2000 and I still used it on the CRUG computers. After finishing my last Word 2003 class in late November I upgraded to Office 2007 Professional. It includes Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access and Publisher.

I personally use Word and Outlook extensively and also use Excel and Access for particular tasks and PowerPoint for meeting presentations and classes. Because of my love of Microsoft Word I don't often use Publisher. I tend to try to use Word, if at all possible, but find myself occasionally needing to use Publisher for those tasks that are very graphically oriented.

I will be reviewing Office 2007 in steps through CRUG's monthly newsletters. This month I discuss the Office suite in general and Outlook 2007. In following months I will take a deeper look at Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access. In November we published a review of Publisher 2007 so I will not discuss that application.

## The Ribbon

The first thing you notice with Office 2007 is the completely new user interface. The new Ribbon interface is really attractive and provides a totally new look. After the initial shock and adjustment period I found the Ribbon quite intuitive. It gives past users the chance to improve productivity but will really benefit new users. No more searching through layers of drop down menus to find com-

mands.

The new Ribbon interface which replaced the drop down menus and toolbars in Word, Excel, PowerPoint and Access can seem confusing at first, as anything new can be. But the Ribbon provides quick access to program features. It organizes commands into logical groups on tabs relating to a type of activity. Some tabs appear only when needed like the Picture Tools tab, shown when a picture is selected. When a picture is selected a new tab appears at the far right with Picture Tools above the line of tabs.

When a tab is selected the Ribbon becomes a graphical presentation of the program commands in that group. This means that commands are readily available and noticeable. It is easy to see things you may never have known existed or just thought were too much trouble to find.

The main Outlook application window does not use the new Ribbon interface. However, the Ribbon is used in Outlook's content creation windows. I wish that Microsoft had carried the Ribbon interface through all Office applications.



The biggest problem I had with the Ribbon interface was finding the old File drop down menu commands. The new

Office Button replaces the File drop down menu and Options dialog. Clicking the button in at the top left of the application window opens a new drop down menu. From the menu you can create a new document, open an existing document and save or print the current document. It also provides a list of recently accessed documents. The Options dialog box is accessed from the menu.

## File Formats

The default file formats for Word, Excel, and PowerPoint are XML formats but it is easy to select the option to maintain compatibility with Office 2003 applications. The new file name extensions add an "x" or an "m" to the file name extensions used in earlier versions of Office. The "x" signifies an XML file with no macros, and the "m" signifies an XML file containing macros.

The XML file formats reduce file size, offer ease of information transfer between applica-



tions and automate formatting changes across libraries of documents. For individual users like me the compatibility with Office 2003, on my desktop computer, can outweigh the loss of some new features. I select the file format depending on how and where I will use a particular file. And I have downloaded and installed the file converters on my Office 2003 computer so I can open Office 2007 files.

Office XML Formats automatically compress files using zip compression to store documents. To open a file, it is automatically unzipped. When you save a file, it is automatically zipped again. XML files are modular with different data components separate allowing files to be opened even if a component within the file is corrupted. This can be a true life saver when working with a complex document. Another advantage of Office 2007 new formats is protecting privacy by controlling personal information. Just Remove hidden data and personal information before sharing a document.

### Save as PDF

Now you can save as a PDF or XPS file right from most 2007 Office applications. You do have to download and install the add-in. This little bit of time and effort is well spent. Although I was surprised that it was not an integral part of Office 2007.

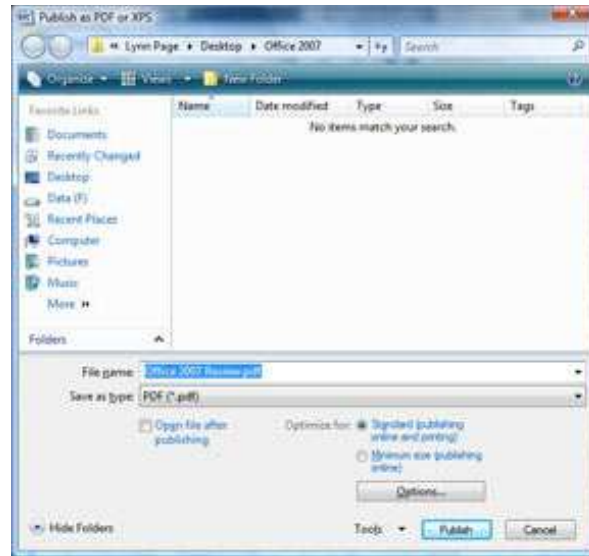
I use PDF for the email newsletters and sharing many files. So the ability to convert and save my Office documents to PDF without an additional application was one of the most important features in Office 2007 for me. I like to use PDF because it ensures the file remains as I created it when viewed online or printed. Another benefit is that the file and data in it cannot be easily changed.

You can save your files in PDF but still need a PDF reader installed on your computer to view it. And after you save a file as PDF, you cannot use Office applications to make changes directly to the PDF file. Unless you have a PDF application on your computer you will need to make changes to the original file in the Office 2007 application program where you created it and save the file again

#### Mouse Tip from APCUG

If you're using a wireless optical mouse then get a white or light-colored mouse pad. The mouse's infrared transmitter/receiver uses less power if it's reading a light-colored surface. This will make your batteries last longer.

as PDF.



To save a file created in Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Access, click the Microsoft Office Button, select Save As, and then click PDF or XPS. Type a name for the file and click PDF in the Save as type list.

The Publish as PDF or XPS dialog box contains a section for optimization. Here you choose depending on whether file size or print quality is more important. For high print quality, click Standard (publishing online and printing). If print quality is less important than file size, click Minimum size (publishing online). Make any option selections and then click Publish in the Publish as PDF or XPS dialog box.

Publisher 2007 does not have the new Ribbon interface. So to save as PDF in Publisher 2007, click Publish as PDF or XP on the File drop down menu. Type in a name in the File name list, and click PDF in the Save as type list and save as with other Office applications.

### Easy Formatting

I appreciate the ease with which Office 2007 aids in formatting documents so that they are professional looking. Choosing formatting options has never been easier. Included with the new Ribbon interface are features letting you see different formats before actually making a change. Mouse over a formatting option, such as font, size, color, highlight or style and the selected text changes so that you immediately see the effect. Click to make the change or move the mouse pointer away to continue without making a change. With Quick Styles and Document Themes, you can quickly

change the appearance of text, tables, and graphics throughout a document to a preferred style or color scheme.

### Themes and Styles

It is easy to format an entire document with a professional look by applying a theme. Each document theme has a set of formatting choices including colors, fonts and effects. Word, Excel, and PowerPoint contain predefined document themes, but you can create custom themes. After creating a personalized document, you can save it as a custom document theme. Document themes are shared across Office programs so Office documents can have a uniform appearance.

Styles are another important method for creating unified documents. In Word 2007, you can apply a specific style quickly in the Styles group, or choose a set of styles that work together to create a document designed to suit a specific purpose. A set of Quick Styles can include styles for different heading levels, body text, and title. The style colors and formats in each set are designed to be used together to create an attractive professional document. Again you see the effect of changing a style set by mousing over its name in the Quick Styles gallery.

In Excel you can apply several formats in a single step ensuring cells have consistent formatting by using a cell style. The cell style defines formatting characteristics, like fonts, font sizes, number formats, cell borders, and cell shading. Cell styles are based on the document theme so switching to another theme changes the cell styles.

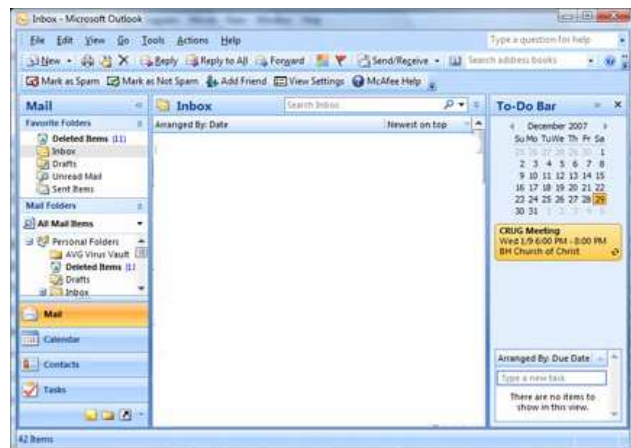
PowerPoint has Quick Styles for graphics including edges, shadows, line styles, gradients, and 3-D perspectives. Quick Styles are displayed in a thumbnail in the Quick Style galleries. Mousing over a Quick Style thumbnail shows how the Quick Style affects the SmartArt graphic or shape. SmartArt Styles affect an entire SmartArt graphic, but Shape Styles affect only the selected shape.

### Outlook 2007

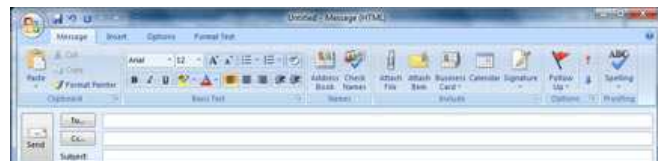
I have used Outlook for my primary email since I first used Office 95. The benefit of having one location for email, contacts, calendar and notes made the choice easy. Then as the security improved through each successive version it was impossible to even consider anything else.

Outlook 2007 has everything required to manage time and information. When first opening Out-

look 2007 it doesn't look as different as the other Office applications. You still see the multiple pane window used in Office 2003. Outlook does not have the new Ribbon interface so you still use the drop down menu system in the main application window. A new addition in right hand pane is the To-Do Bar. I really like this feature. I always had Outlook open to the calendar but with Outlook 2007 I open Outlook to Mail and can still see my appointments on the To-Do Bar. It includes a Date Navigator, Appointments section, Task Input Panel and task list. I leave all of these on but you can turn anything except the task list off. This provides additional space for your tasks. The default To-Do bar gives a view of the current month and upcoming appointments and tasks. I find this sufficient for my use but you can resize it to see more than a single month.



Although the Ribbon interface is not used in the main Outlook 2007 window it is used in sub or working windows. So when composing a new message or appointment you see a window with Ribbons.



I use Bcc a lot so the message is sent to that recipient, but their name is not visible to other recipients. It is a nice practice to get into so that you are not spreading friends email addresses around to others. I would have liked the Bcc box to be visible in the default Outlook settings or at least a box to add Bcc. However it is not difficult to add. While creating a new message select the Options tab and in the Fields group click Show Bcc. This is also where you can select to show the From field if you want it to show when creating a message.

A useful new feature in Outlook 2007 is Instant search. Outlook uses the Windows Vista search technology so search results show as soon as they are found while the search is still running. Instant Search is available through a search box at the top of each Outlook task (Mail, Calendar, Tasks, Contacts, etc.). The Search utility is so quick and accurate that I might not have to create as many mail folders.

However, I doubt that my use of Outlook's Folders or Categories will change. With Outlook 2007 it is still easy to create folders to organize email messages. I like to keep email sorted in separate folders. That way I can easily back up my critical email more frequently. I also use categories to organize my mail, calendar, contacts and tasks. Assigning contacts to categories makes it simpler to select recipients for a particular email. I generally like to individually select recipients for most of my email. However I still use email distribution lists occasionally.

### Categories

The new Color Categories give a visual way to distinguish items from one another. I still prefer defining my own categories but appreciate the new color coding of each category. This makes it easy to locate information. Add the same category



to email, calendar, and task items to easily locate all items in that category. The color coding makes it easy. To assign a category just select an item, right click it, point to Categorize and click the Category. When you need to find the information, you can search and sort by Category.

### Security

Even though Outlook 2007 contains junk email and phishing protection I still use a security application that scans my email for viruses, spam and phishing. However, the Outlook 2007 junk email filter sorts out most unwanted email and contains new protection against phishing. Messages caught by the junk email filter are moved to the Junk E-mail folder. So remember to review the messages in the folder occasionally to be sure that they are not legitimate messages. If they are, move them back to the Inbox by marking them as not junk or dragging them to any folder.

When you open or preview a message, the computer downloads the external content so any pictures can be displayed or the sound played. Junk email senders often use the downloading of external content to verify a email address as valid so they can add it to their spam list.

Another way Outlook protects you is by disabling links within email messages. You have the choice to approve them. Outlook also warns you from within the email message of potentially malicious sites. The default settings block links to external content like pictures or sounds, in HTML messages. The links are references to an external location on the Internet. When images and other suspicious content are prevented from loading you can choose to allow it. Just click the warning message at the top of the message to see options for downloading the attached pictures and managing other security settings.



If you click Change Automatic Download Settings from a suspicious email message, the Trust Center opens so you can define which types of content to permit. The strictest settings are on by default. The Trust Center is also accessed from the Tools drop down menu. The Trust Center

shows security and privacy settings for Office 2007 programs.

As another security precaution Outlook does not allow you to receive or send files of certain types as attachments. These types of files could potentially introduce a virus. This can be a problem if you want to send or receive a blocked file. When that is necessary change the file extension to one not blocked. Then add instructions in the message about renaming the file to the original file extension. Another option is to zip the files before attaching them.

### Preview Attachments

Another neat addition in Outlook 2007 is the ability to preview attachments in the Reading pane right along with email text. If you subscribe to RSS feeds you can also read them within Outlook. To preview an attachment in a message without opening it, click it in the Reading Pane.

### Conclusions

After a month of using Office 2007 I am very impressed with the suite of applications. I have not used all of the separate applications in depth but did open some of my files in each program. Converting to the new XML format or maintaining compatibility with Office 2003 was simple.

The new Ribbon interface in most of the Office

2007 applications is not only attractive but extremely user friendly. It provides an easy to understand grouping of commands in tabs. The graphic display of the commands provide for ease of use. Beyond the look of the new interface Office applications themes and styles make it a straightforward task to create attractive and professional looking documents. The new features allowing for quick preview of formatting changes before applying them is a superb tool. Now with a simple movement of the mouse you can see your file with an all new look.

Office 2007 offers improvements in computing security by easily allowing you to remove personal data from your documents prior to sharing them. Or use the Mark as Final command to make a document read only so others cannot modify it.

Another of the many improvements that I specifically want to mention is the ability to save documents from Office within applications to PDF. This feature is a true benefit to all users. Although I have PDF file generation applications on both of my computers it is still a time savings to create a PDF file right in Office. I was disappointed that I had to download an add on to get this capability.

I think that Office 2007 is a great suite of office applications and that with the various versions available it should be accessible to most.

## **Amanda's Cool Site** — By Amanda, WorldStart Staff Member

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### Path to Health

This is a very interesting health Web site! I suggest you start out by reading the preface to the newsletters, which you can find by clicking the "Please click here to read the instructions for proceeding to the Newsletters" link.

Navigation is fairly straightforward. Just scroll down the page and click on the topic you would like to check out. You'll find 107 articles (including the introduction) on various health topics. I found that article 35 had some great tips on managing headaches. I'm prone to both migraines and tension headaches and the tips here were great. They seemed to really help, especially the warm shower where you use the warm water to ease the tension in your neck/shoulders.

You can also join the discussion forum. To do that, just click on the giant link that says "Click

Here" to Join the Discussion Forum." I bring this up, because I know a lot of you like to discuss this kind of information, as well as, ask questions and such. I'm also pointing this out, because the forum has a Recipes section, where you can share recipes and get healthy recipes to add to your own collection!

I think there is a lot of great information here for you to take in. I, for one, like to gather as much information as I can before making decisions about diets, health care and even the things my doctor tells me to do. That way, I can choose what's best for me. Check it out today!

<http://healthpath.wickedstones.com/index.htm>



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