



SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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You are invited to share favorite websites, reviews of software or just general computer experiences. Send your article or notes to editor@rvpcc.org.

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THINK SPRING

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Next Meeting
April 12, 2008
9:15 a.m.

Topics:
Extended Question and Answer
Session
Discussion of Future Direction of Club

Windows Vista SP1

Microsoft has the following information on its website:

“Windows Vista Service Pack 1 (SP1) is the complete set of Windows Vista updates Microsoft has issued over the past year plus additional enhancements to improve your PC experience. SP1 doesn't add new features or require you to learn anything new -- it simply makes your PC more reliable, run more smoothly, and even more enjoyable to use, all at no charge.

In mid-April, Service Pack 1 will automatically download and install on Windows Vista-based PCs that have automatic updating turned on. This is the easiest and most convenient way to update a Windows Vista-based PC, and we strongly encourage using this method. You can, however, download and install Windows Vista SP1 manually from the Microsoft Download Center.

The recommended (and easiest) way to get SP1 is to turn on automatic updating in Windows Update in Control Panel, and wait for Windows Vista to notify you that SP1 is ready to install. You just need a few clicks to begin the installation and the rest of the process is automatic. You can also manually download SP1 from the Microsoft Download Center.”

In spite of the Mid-April statement from Microsoft, some folks say that SP1 may already be installed on their computers. Here's how Microsoft says to check: *“To learn if SP1 is already installed, click the **Start** button, right-click **Computer**, and then click **Properties**. If **Service Pack 1** is listed in the **Windows edition** section, SP1 is already installed on your computer.”*

(See **Vista SP1** page 2)

Secretary's Report

March 8, 2008

President Earl Abbott opened the meeting at 9:15AM.

Door Prizes:

Bob Johnson - Book light; Bill Scott - \$5.00, Kay Viskup - Lighters, Sandy Johnson - Chocolate Candy Bar, John Yeatts - pen.

Officers' Reports:

Secretary: Kay Viskup reported Minutes are printed in February 9th, 2008 news letter.

Treasurer's Report: Helen Trenor read the current Treasurer's Report.

Public Relations: John Yeatts reported that the trip to VDOT building is tentatively for either July or August. Visit to Moog Company in Blacksburg is still under consideration.

Requested for ideas from attendees. At the end of meeting, John passed out pens with Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club logo to members requesting they pass them out at computer stores to attract new members.

Roanoke County Schools: Howard Duff reported that was nothing to report regarding the county schools.

2008 Christmas Dinner: Earl requested volunteers for getting reservations, prizes, etc. for this year's Christmas dinner. Earl asked for comments on prizes given at 2007 dinner.

PROGRAM:

John Leary and Andrew McLaughlin gave extensive and interesting presentations on Working Wireless Internet Access and Cellular Wireless. With no further business, Earl Abbott closed meeting at 10:55 AM.

Respectfully submitted,
Kay Viskup, Secretary

(Vista SP1 Continued from page 1)

To learn more about Vista SP1, go to www.microsoft.com, enter "vista sp1" (without the quotes) in the search box and press return. Next click on the first article in the search results, "Windows Vista Service Pack 1 (SP1)." In that article, in the box "Related Links," click on and read "Learn about Automatic Updating." Another article in the "Related Links" box is "SP1 Help and How-To Articles," which has links to many of the questions about SP1.

April shower time also means tax-due time. Mail your taxes by April 15th.



PREZ' NOTES

Friends,

We are living in a computer-enabled dissemination of information age. We can acquire and share stuff with incredible speed and ease. One example is a slideshow of jet fighter aircraft. Several planes are breaking the sound barrier and generating visible clouds. Ninety two photos are in this set.

<http://www.wcbstv.com/slideshows/jet.fighter.20.228729.html?>

To learn about other examples of computer-enabled knowledge, come to the April Meeting of the RVPCC.

Earl Abbott

XP Timeline

Microsoft has announced the schedule for the phase out of XP:

June 30, 2008: PC manufacturers stop selling computers with XP installed.

January 31, 2009: Microsoft stops selling XP altogether.

April 14, 2009: Mainstream support (free live support and warranty support) ends. Free maintenance is limited to security fixes.

April 8, 2014: All support for XP ends.

Web Sites to Check Out

<http://members.cox.net/oldroanoke>

When you get to the site, click on 'Old Roanoke' to begin to look at the pictures. Click on 'next' at the bottom of each set of pictures to continue.

<http://moreoldfortyfives.com/TakeMeBackToTheSixties.htm>

Good songs and pictures from the 60s.

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Why is my Computer so Slow? Part 4 of 4

One of the more common complaints is “My Windows PC doesn’t run as fast as it used to.” There are many factors that can cause this. Most of them can be cured without having to be a computer guru or a master mechanic.

This is the fourth and last in a series of articles on slow computers. This month is on the resource-using programs that load themselves when you start your computer.

Many programs load at start-up:

Unfortunately, program developers think that you want to use their software every time you start up. As a result, they write their programs to install themselves into the startup procedure. There is little timesaving and no real advantage to loading the program at startup instead of at your convenience, except for protection programs like anti-virus or firewalls.

How to find out what programs are loading at startup:

There is a long list of applications and processes (programs) that load and often run in the background. Don’t be surprised to find 30 or more of them. View these in W98 and XP with the System Configuration Utility. In Vista, use the built-in Startup Manager.

W98 and XP: To run the System Configuration Utility, click Start, and Run. Type “msconfig” into the Open box and click OK. On the “General” page, click Selective Startup. Click the Startup tab. Msconfig will display all the programs that have requested to be loaded at startup. Make a note of the names and extensions that you don’t recognize. Since the processes have odd names like “MSAFTTcip.exe,” you’ll probably list most of them. Also note the extension, the .xx or .xxx after the name of your process. This can be found in the “Command” column (the second column) of the msconfig startup display

Vista: To run Vista’s Startup Manager, go to Start > Control Panel. Double-click Windows Defender, click Tools, and then click Software Explorer. Select the category Startup Programs. Make a note of the names and extensions that you don’t recognize.

How to decide which programs don’t need to be loaded at startup:

Determining which programs should not be loaded at startup takes a bit of work. The free program “Process Library” from UniBlue can help. Go to www.processlibrary.com. From the list made earlier, type the name and the extension of your process into the “Find a process or dll” search box and then click “Find.” You will get a good description of what your process does, plus a recommendation on whether or not to disable the startup.

Don’t be surprised if the search says the process is a virus or other bad guy since the names are often very similar. Recheck your spelling of the name and extension.

How to prevent a program from loading at startup:

Win98 and XP: In the System Configuration Utility (msconfig), a check in the box in front of the process’s name indicates that the program will be allowed to load at startup. To disable the loading of one or more programs, click on the boxes to remove the checks. When finished, click Apply, and then click Close. The changes will take effect on restarting. After the restart, a message box will appear. Click Start normally and click Don’t show this box again.

Vista: In Vista’s built-in Startup Manager, click the program name. Click Disable and then click Yes to confirm.

Any Operating System: Of course, if you don’t want the program to run at all, ever, just uninstall it completely.

There are other ways of disabling unwanted startups, but using msconfig (W98 and XP) or the startup manager (Vista) has the advantage of being reversible. If you decide you should not have disabled a startup, just put the check back in front of its name (using msconfig in W98 and XP), or click Enable (using the Startup Manager in Vista). It also avoids the need to edit the registry, which is guru-intensive. There is a good tutorial on using msconfig at www.netsquirrel.com.

The above describes one method of controlling startups. Like most things in Windows, there is more than one way to get your results. If anyone has a favorite method of managing startups, let your editor know so it can be published.

Also, there are several third party startup manager programs available, some free, some \$\$\$. Kim Komando has recommended the free Win Patrol at www.WinPatrol.com.

Lightning Protection

There is one problem with the surge suppressors that most of us use: they can’t handle lightning. Suppressors are essential for protecting your computer from garden-variety surges. But don’t count on lightning protection.

There’s one certain, inexpensive way to block lightning damage: turn off the computer, unplug it from the wall outlet, and disconnect the telephone or cable.

Meeting space provided by
Roanoke County Schools



At our March meeting, John Leary and Andy McLaughlin presented a program about working wirelessly.



John Leary



Andy McLaughlin

Wills and Passwords

Here is another thing to remember during your next review of your will and your estate plan:

Be sure to include a list of e-mail accounts, on-line accounts, passwords, PINs, and security codes with your will. It would also be a good idea to include a copy in the instructions to your executor since a will may be in a lock-box and not be available quickly.

The first problem your survivors will face is determining what financial, email, social networking, and other companies you have dealt with. The next problem for your survivors is getting those companies to release the information.

Most internet-based companies have guidelines to help survivors, but the process can be lengthy. Some companies may even require a court order to release information.



Vista Tips

If you are using Vista and would like some Vista-tips, Kim Komando has 45 of them. They can be found at <http://www.komando.com/tips/categories.aspx?cat=164>.

Or, instead of typing in all that, go to www.komando.com. Click on "Tips" in the red row of subjects. In the next screen, scroll down the "Tips Archive" box and click on "Windows Vista," the last entry.

Health Information

www.MerckSource.com/health has health information, condition guides, questions to ask your doctor, and health centers for men, women, seniors, and children. You can also find interactive health tools, trackers, and risk assessments. The site is free. They do ask you to register (at no cost) to obtain additional benefits like more health tools, and free subscriptions to the *Harvard Health E-Newsletter* and Merck's *The Source Report*.

4x4 Magic Squares

4	14	15	1
9	7	6	12
5	11	10	8
16	2	3	13

8	11	14	1
13	2	7	12
3	16	9	6
10	5	4	15

Two possible solutions to Magic Squares

