



SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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Serving the Roanoke Valley

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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.

RVPCC IS 25

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Next Meeting

October 10, 2009
 9:15 a.m.

Topics:

Comparing Popular photo-editing
 programs*
 and
 Turbo-Cad drawing program
 by
 Bob and Sandy Johnson

*Bring along a photograph, preferably on a flash drive, and we will edit it the different programs, such as Adobe Elements, Microsoft's Digital Image Suite, Picasa 3, or Vista's Windows Photo Gallery.



RVPCC is celebrating its 25th anniversary this month.

Come and join us for an interesting meeting PLUS a piece of the anniversary cake.

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Secretary's Report

September 12, 2009

President, Earl Abbott, called the meeting to order at 9:16 a.m.

The **Vice President**, Ron Zoll, will be handling the Christmas dinner.

The **Secretary's** report from August is in the current newsletter.

Treasurer, Helen Trenor, gave the treasurer's report. The club is solvent.

Program: November's meeting will cover high dynamic range photos.

Andy McLaughlin showed his netbook and desktop computers, both with the Intel Atom processor. He was able to get extremely good deals on them by using e-coupons.

John Leary showed his new Peek, which may replace his Blackberry. The Peek reads and writes email. You can find out more about it at www.getpeek.com.

Bill Scott showed off his on-line subscription to PC Magazine. www.zinio.com offers on-line magazine subscriptions to such publications as Kiplinger's, Macworld, PC Magazine, Popular Photography, Road and Track, Smart Money, Smithsonian, etc.

Door prizes were won by Bill Scott, Stan Rogowsky, and Bob Johnson.

Program: John Leary gave a presentation on Windows 7.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Sandy Johnson,
Acting Secretary



PREZ' NOTES

Sept 30, 2009

I hope everyone is well, happy, and enjoying personal computing.

We have a lot to be thankful for. Our Country has a lot to be thankful for. I have enjoyed peace and prosperity for most of my [69] years. I suspect that you have enjoyed peace and prosperity for most of your [--] years. We can use our personal computers and the Internet to obtain information from anywhere in the world. We are limited primarily by how we spend our time. I hope you will decide to share a couple of your hours with us at our next computer meeting. We have the potential to share good information.

Earl Abbott

Remove Hardware Correctly

You can damage or lose part of your data by unplugging hardware like a USB flash drive, camera card, or external hard drive at the wrong time. Often, Windows doesn't complete transferring data until it "knows" that you want to shut down your computer. Then the computer completes all the data transfers and closes the application properly.

If you want to unplug something without shutting down the computer, click the "Safely Remove Hardware" icon in the systems tray, that blue stripe at the bottom right corner of your screen.

The "Safely Remove Hardware" icon might be hard to see. It's a tiny little green arrow above a tiny little USB flash drive. Not only is the icon tiny, but also it is probably hidden. You'll need to click on the left-pointing arrowhead in the systems tray to make the icon appear. Hover the mouse over the icon and the message "Safely Remove Hardware" will appear.

Click the icon and then from the list displayed, select the drive you want to remove. After a brief hesitation, you'll get a message that you can safely remove the hardware. Now you can unplug, disconnect, or turn off, knowing that your data is safe.

Neologism

By now, we are probably all using the word “Google” as a verb, as in “I’m going to Google that business.” The word Google is a neologism. This is defined as “a newly coined word that may be in the process of entering common usage, but has not yet been accepted into mainstream language.”

Many words that we use today have worked their way into the mainstream; words like x-ray, radar, laser, genocide, pro-life, Hoover, robotics, prequel, plus-size, xerox, and wardrobe malfunction. In “Academic Instincts,” Marjorie Garber said, “Yesterday’s neologisms, like yesterday’s jargon, are often today’s essential vocabulary.”

Google has not been happy about the use of its trademarked name as a verb. The more the name becomes a part of everyday language, the less it is a brand. There is a chance that the use of the name might become so common that the courts will cancel the trademark. It has happened to rollerblade, escalator, pogo, gunk, heroin, and aspirin. Other trademarks in danger are Kleenex, Scotch Tape, and Band-Aid. Have you noticed that Kleenex is now labeled “Kleenex Brand?” And Scotch Tape is now “Scotch Brand Tape?”

If Google loses its trademark status, Microsoft might be free to launch “Microsoft Google” and all of Google’s brand-building efforts will be wasted.

By the way, if we are going to use it as a verb, should we write “...to Google...” or “...to google...?” Probably not-capitalized is better – although that’s not better for Google Inc.

Where did that name “Google” come from? “Googol” is the mathematical term for 10^{100} , or 1 followed by 100 zeroes. Google’s play on the term reflects the company’s mission to organize the immense amount of information available on the web.

On your next rainy day, do some more interesting reading on the subject. Just google – sorry, Google – just use your browser to search for “google verb” without the quotes. One of several results is the Wikipedia article titled “Google (Verb).” After enjoying that article, you can follow the links to items like “neologism.” Happy surfing!

Free Software Site

A popular website is the free software site www.GiveAwayOfTheDay.com. Each day, this site lists a free program that can be downloaded for your own use. The software is licensed, legal, and fully functional, not a limited-time trial version. The programs offered can be useful or interesting, and at the price, can’t be beat for trying something new.

However, the comments posted by users about the software are often even more interesting. Click the “Proceed to Download Page” and scroll down to see thumbs up/down voting by users. Then scroll down more to get to the comments section. There the users will discuss the offering of the day, and often list other programs that they believe are better.

August 20 was a good example. The Give Away offering was “Data Recovery Wizard Professional 4.3.6.” Out of 446 votes, 61% were thumbs up and 39% thumbs down. Farther down in the comments, other users listed alternative programs:

DiskDigger

<http://dottech.org/freewaresr/8643>

Perfect Utilities \

<http://putils.com/content/view/2/4/>

ADRC Data Recovery

http://www.adrc.com/software/data_recovery_tools/

Disk Investigator Data Recovery

<http://www.theabsolute.net/sware/dskinv.html>

Disk Data Recovery

<http://www.cgsecurity.org/wiki/TestDisk>

Tune Up Utility 2008

<http://www.tune-up.com/products/tuneup-utilities/>

Of course, SoftTalk hasn’t compared or even tried any of these. This list is presented as an example of the software references that can be gleaned from the Give Away site’s comments. Anyone want to try some of these and report?

Meeting space provided by
Roanoke County Schools

Services for Seniors

A “Boomers and Beyond Expo” was held at the Roanoke Civic Center on September 15. There were over 100 exhibits on housing, health, insurance, estate planning, home care, Social Security, real estate, and more. Attendees came away with bags of literature.

Almost all the exhibitors had websites that could provide more information. Three exhibitors had sites that provide links to most of the services that are available to seniors.

One exhibitor was Senior Navigator, “Virginia’s resource for Health and Aging.” A visitor to <http://SeniorNavigator.org> can find hundreds of links under the headings of health, legal and financial, housing and long-term care, community, care giving, and aging well.

A free membership at Senior Navigator will provide additional resources such as “Ask an Expert” which allows you to email a question to be answered by volunteer experts. You can also do a “Needs Assessment” to determine your needs and what community services and resources exist to meet those needs.

Another exhibitor was 2-1-1. This is an easy-to-remember phone number connecting people with free information on available community services. When you dial 2-1-1, a trained professional listens to your situation and suggests sources of help using one of the largest databases of health and human services in Virginia. 2-1-1’s motto is “Get connected. Get answers.”

Their Website, www.211virginia.org, accesses 2-1-1’s database. A visitor to the site can enter a location and select a need to see a display of the relevant links.

The third exhibitor was Seniors Guide. Their Website provides seniors and their families with information on a complete range of topics at www.SeniorsGuideOnline.com. Their goal is to be “a one-stop-shop for great advice for seniors and their families.” They are a “comprehensive source for information on the issues that affect seniors

most, including senior services, senior housing, home care, assisted living, independent living, continuing care, Alzheimer’s care, Medicare and Social Security.”

The bottom line: In this area we have a wide selection of services to choose from. A handout at the Seniors Guide exhibit listed 57 housing choices ranging from independent living to rehab. In addition to housing, there is a surprisingly large number of agencies that can provide advice and assistance -- it can be difficult to wade through all the alternatives. The sites listed above can help narrow down your selections to the agency or business best for you.

Look over these sites to get an idea of what is out there. Be Prepared. Someday you may need one of the services, or you may need to help an older relative.

Getting Rid of Malware

You didn’t do it on purpose, but somehow your computer has become infected with malware like a worm, virus, Trojan, spyware, adware, or some other nuisance. Now what do you do? Smart Computing Magazine to the rescue!

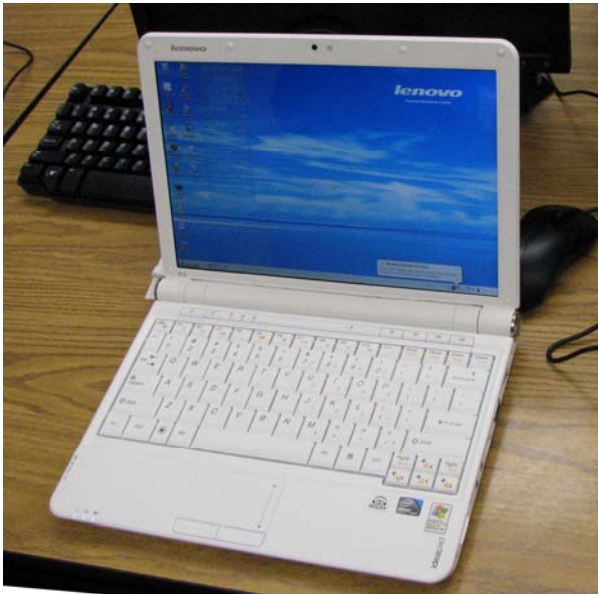
Go to www.smartcomputing.com, and click the “Tech Support Center” link on the home page. Next, scroll down to the “Security and Privacy” section and click the “How To Get Rid Of...” link.

Here you will find a long list of malware names, 51 of them at this writing. Click on the name of the item that you want to remove. You will be taken to a full article that provides a description of the item, tells you how to determine if it’s on your PC, and explains how to eliminate it.

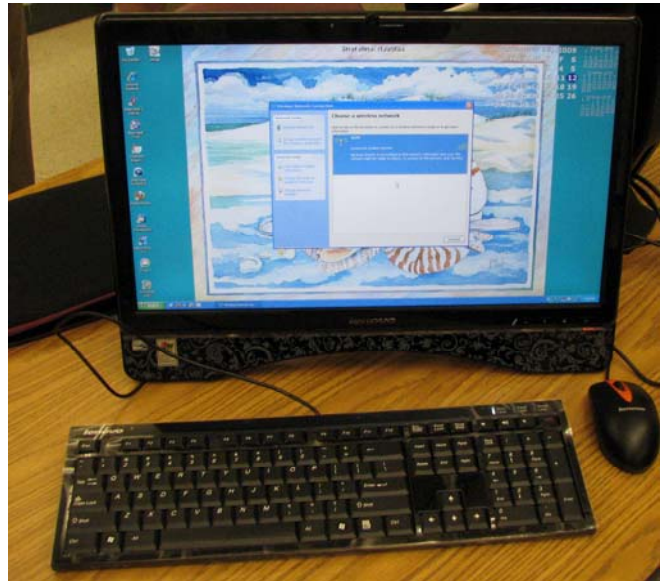
You don’t have to be a subscriber or even set up an account to use this free service.



Pictures from September meeting



Andy McLaughlin's Lenovo netbook computer



Andy McLaughlin's Lenovo desk top computer. This is it, there's no tower. Everything is built into the monitor.



A Blackberry and a Peek



John Leary presenting the Windows 7 program

RVPCC Meetings
When: 2nd Saturday of every month
Where: Arnold R. Burton Tech Center
Room 105
1760 Roanoke Blvd.
Salem, VA 24153
What time: 9:15 am until noon

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