This Month At NOPC

Keep It Clean, Keep It Fast
By
Ray Paternostro

Inside this issue:

Keep It Clean and Fast

If you have had your computer for any length of time, you have probably loaded it down with a lot of applications. You have also added a number of accessories such as printers, scanners, memory card readers, DVD or CD burners and more. With each addition, your system gets slower and slower as each application and/or driver grabs more and more of the CPU's (Central Processing Unit) operating time.

Ray Paternostro, President of the New Orleans Personal Computer Club, will present ways to keep your computer clean and fast. He will explain what needs to be loaded at start-up and what doesn't. He will describe techniques to remove un-needed applications from your start up file.

For a clean, fast computer don't miss this meeting.

Making a Computer Shopping List

Buying a new computer?   Before you start reading the ads, you should make a shopping list. What do you want to do with the new computer? How fast does it need to be? What size hard drive? CD or DVD burner? How much RAM (Random Access Memory)? Any other features will you need?

After you have made the list, then it is time to begin reading the advertisements.

Do the systems presented have all or most of the items on your shopping list? Is the price within your range?

Ray Paternostro will offer to those present at the Membership Meeting those items he likes to have on his computer shopping list and why it is on the list. This is good information any time of year.

What is a "Rootkit"?

If you are into music and like to copy your CD's onto your computer, you may be a victim of a "rootkit". Sony Music has used them extensively as a means of copy protection on their music CD's. This stealth installation of applications onto a computer has caused class action lawsuits to be filed against Sony for using these rootkits. For greater detail, click on these links:

Sony hit by lawsuits over root kit
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2005/11/10/sony_sued_for_rootkit/

Windows Root kits a stealthy threat
http://www.theregister.co.uk/2003/03/07/windows_root_kits_a_stealthy/

RootkitRevealer
http://www.sysinternals.com/Utilities/RootkitRevealer.html

29 Useful Bookmarks

By Richard Johnson, TUGNET

www.tugnet.org

The Web is a marvelous resource, and most of us come nowhere near tapping its full potential. I've attempted here to list 29 websites that without any necessary downloading provide exceedingly useful free non-specialized services and tools, that require no particular knowledge except how to navigate the World Wide Web.

1. Time Cave www.timecave.com

2. Memo to Me www.memotome.com
Using these two email reminder services you'll never forget another upcoming activity or event. Time Cave allows you to schedule incoming messages by interval (so many hours, days, weeks, months, or even years away) as well as by date and time. Memo to Me allows editing of content and date. With Time Cave you can choose your own subject line and send reminders to others, but Memo to Me will charge you for those features. On the other hand, Time Cave charges for the ability to repeat messages (monthly, weekly, etc.), standard with Memo to Me.

3. Way Back Machine www.archive.org/web/web.php
Is a website you're seeking no longer around? If it was active as late as 1996, you'll probably find it easily in this huge archive.

4. Centerwatch Clinical Trials www.centerwatch.com
Gives information on more than 41,000 active clinical trials in which you could participate. (Some compensate you handsomely for helping, along with free medical monitoring.) Includes a notification service, for trials in areas of your interest. Also describes the newest drug therapies.

5. Objectgraph Dictionary
www.objectgraph.com/dictionary
A combination standard dictionary, technical dictionary, and thesaurus. (There's also a dictionary of chemical elements, of rather limited interest). A unique feature is the site's ability to "read your mind" if you're not sure of the word you're thinking of -- or its spelling -- or if you just want to save typing.

6. Myway email www.myway.com
An excellent Web-based email provider with an exceptionally clean interface (no banner ads or pop-ups). Unlike the case with competitors like Yahoo mail, Myway will respond to support inquiries. (It also has a terrific weather page -- see link #7 following.) [If you prefer Gmail, equally clean-appearing, I can get you an invitation -- see my article in the March Keywords.]

7. Myway weather weather.myway.com
The best weather page on the Web. Even though its weather information is from weather.com, you'll see when you use it that the interface is much cleaner (and loading therefore faster) than if you were to bring up either weather.com or one of its competitors. You can personalize the weather according to your home town or zip code; the page you'll want to bookmark is that personalized page

8. Past Weather
www.weather.com/activities/other/other/weather/yesterday.html
Use this site to compare today's forecast with yesterday's weather. There's also interesting historical data and a graph showing the weather for the past seven days. The past weather information can easily be compared with the forecast from Myway weather (link #7), which derives its data from the same source.

9. Furl www.furl.net
Bookmarking is useful, but what do you do when you find that a bookmarked page has disappeared (left the Web)? Or maybe it's still there, but -- as with many newspaper sites -- you can't read it without going to a paid archive. This won't be an issue if you've Furled the page. Furl allows you to create a set of special bookmarks that can be easily searched or browsed -- or shared with others -- but whose contents are permanently stored on your hard drive. (If you feel the need to save parts of a page, try Net Snippets Free at www.netsnippets.com/basic. This does require a download.)

10. Gold Star Events http://snipurl.com/bl9o
Gold Star enables admissions to a large variety of live California productions at 50% off or better. After your (free) registration, you'll receive regular email notices of well-described shows in the zip code areas of your preference. There's a small per-ticket service fee, usually between $3 and $7.

11. Password Generator
http://mistupid.com/computers/passwordgen.htm
Random characters compose the safest passwords. This tool will create a password with random characters according to your specifications. On your instructions, will even avoid ambiguous characters [o and 0, 1 and I].

12. Zap2it www.zap2it.com
With Zap2it you can check out both TV and movie schedules. Various options let you permanently personalize each set of listings, to give you just the information you need, in the format you prefer.

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13. Acronym Finder www.acronymfinder.com
Don't be baffled by acronyms and abbreviations you encounter on the Web and elsewhere. This sit e offers definitions for over 398,000 such terms. Optional downloading of any of a number of search tools (for various browsers) will allow you to view a definition almost instantly.

14. Restaurant health ratings (LA County)
http://lapublichealth.org/rating
Avoid traveling to an appealing restaurant only to find that its health rating is below the level with which you're   comfortable.

15. Translation Wizard www.faganfinder.com/translate
The Translation Wizard uses other sites' services to ease the process of finding a translation -- that otherwise might require visiting ten or more sites to find the language of interest! It also has a neat button to identify a mystery language.

16. Anybirthday http://anybirthday.com
A fun site that can divulge your friend's birthday or even tell you where to mail the card.

17. TrackEngine www.trackengine.com
Notifies you via email of changes in Web pages that you select. You can preview the changes or view the whole page via email, with changes highlighted. Choose the Web address of a neighborhood theater, to see what plays are coming up. Or see every new installment of a favorite newspaper column, without having to buy the paper.

18. GovBenefits.gov http://govbenefits.gov
A source of information on over 400 government-funded programs that extend benefits for which you may qualify, including compensated volunteering. Features a confidential questionnaire designed to point you to the most likely matches.

19. AddALL www.addall.com
Use this site to find the very best price for a book you want to buy. Unlike most other comparison sites, it figures in shipping costs for your location. Links will take you to pages for magazine subs, music CDs, and videos.

20. jux2 www.jux2.com
Jux2 lets you receive and compare search results from two or three different search engines, or see what you're missing from your regular search results. (According to the site, competing search engines typically share fewer than 4 out their 10 top results.) Still in development, it's currently limited to Google, Yahoo, and Ask Jeeves.

21.   Medem   Medical   Library

www.medem.com/medlb/medlib_entry.cfm
Searchable and browsable medical library, organizing contributions from 45 medical societies. Features a complexity indicator for each article, from "introductory" to "professional."

22. Metacritic www.metacritic.com/film
Metacritic is an excellent source for movie critiques. For each film, it arranges its large variety of reviews from most to least favorable, and then tabulates the opinions, for an overall "metascore." (Additional Metacritic pages cover videos, music, and games.)

23. Kids-in-mind www.kids-in-mind.com For evaluating movies for children, or if you have a concern about violence, sex, or profanity, Kids-in-mind will rate and describe each film's content in those three areas.

24. CardRatings http://cardratings.com
This site maintains information on over 700 credit cards, and will suggest the best cards in a variety of categories -- low or no credit, no annual fee, low interest, rewards/rebates, etc.

25.   The   California   Patient's   Guide
www.calpatientguide.org
A well-organized extensive guide to Californians" health care rights, and what you can do if they're compromised. Assembled by medical, legal, and consumer experts, and published by the Foundation for Taxpayer and Consumer Rights.

26 CheckFree www.checkfree.com
There are a host of good reasons for paying your bills online. It saves time, saves the cost of stamps, reduces the chance of late payment, extends the time in which you can use your money, cuts down clutter, eliminates the danger of checks lost in the mail, and facilitates tracking. With CheckFree you'll be able to pay many or most of your bills online, and the service is free to the   payers.

27. Bug Me Not www.bugmenot.com
This site and the one following save you time and trouble while helping you cut down on spam. Bug Me Not keeps on hand log-in data (passwords with user names) for a huge number of sites that require registration. If you want access to such a site (like latimes.com), but don't want to bother registering, just visit the Bug Me Not site and log in easily.

28. Spam Bob http://evil-wire.luvfeed.org/cache/1269
Spam Bob offers a choice of three email addresses that you create, to protect your privacy. Anything@spambob.org is a phantom address, messages to which disappear into the

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ether. Use anything@spambob.com if you'll want to check on a reply message. (This is handy for registrations that require confirmation.) And you may want to use any-thing@spambob.net for all your correspondents. Mail from each such "net" address can be forwarded to you, and if it starts generating spam, just cancel the forwarding order!

29. Google Maps http://maps.google.com

Head and shoulders above the competition, these maps are much larger and far easier to configure. Zooming in and out is quick as a bunny, and re-centering is instantaneous. You can locate by category businesses in the map area, along with their phone numbers. Note that (at least as of this writing) these maps are not implemented in the regular Google search results, which will still point you only to Yahoo and MapQuest maps.

Richard Johnson is a writer and editor, and founder/administrator of FREE FOR ALL The Skills Pool, a 29-year-old membership organi-zation (http://theskillspool.org). He is a volunteer with TUGNET HelpContact for assistance with Internet Explorer, Outlook Express, and Gmail. You may reach him at rj@theskillspool.org.

Why Can't I Just Copy My Programs to My New Computer?

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D.,
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Let's start this with a discussion of imaging software. Something that many of us use to backup our hard drives. Imaging software makes a very complete "bit-mapped" copy of your hard drive. Bit-mapping means that every-thing contained on the hard drive is being copied, usually to a compressed file. Generally, imaging software also backs up open files, those that are currently in use on your computer. Most, but not all, regular backup software can only make copies of files that are not in use at the time of the backup. Thus it is very easy for a standard backup to miss some files or to produce a backup of your hard drive that is incomplete, especially with regard to files currently in use by your Operating System (OS). Imaging software overcomes this problem.

So when you buy, build or upgrade to a new computer, why can't you simply use your image file to transfer all of your programs and data from one computer to another? The basic answer is related to the difference in hardware between the two computers. If you are just replacing a hard drive in your computer, you can use the image file to move everything to the new drive. Some imaging software allows you to "clone" the old hard drive to a new drive. That is, providing both drives are connected to the same computer. However, when you change to a new computer with a new

motherboard, CPU, chipset, USB ports, sound and/or in-tegrated video are different and require new drivers.

The image file contains a complete copy of the Registry that has all the settings needed to connect to your hard-ware. It also has all the settings for the software installed on your hard drive. These settings are references to the files on your hard drive that are absolutely essential for the proper operation of both hardware and software. On Win-dows versions prior to WinXP/Win2K, the registry was contained in two files: system.dat and user.dat. In Windows XP this has changed greatly. The registry is now found in files in hidden folders within the System32 folder and the Documents & Settings Folder. Presumably this is to pre-vent users from deleting vital files. You can examine the Registry by running "regedit". However, it is not advisable to make changes to the Registry unless you are a very ex-perienced user. It is quite easy to corrupt the Registry and find that your computer will not run.

The Registry has five main branches in WinXP/Win2K. In earlier versions there were six. These are identified as keys. The most important are HKEY_ CLASSES_ROOT which has all the file types used by your software; HKEY_ LOCAL_MACHINE which contains all the information on the hardware and software in your computer.

So if you used the image file to transfer everything from your old computer to your new computer you would over-write the Registry settings for the hardware and pre-installed software on your new computer. This would very likely prevent it from completing a boot-up. It is really not practical to try to selectively transfer items from the Regis-try on the old computer. This would introduce other prob-lems. I did a search in the registry for items related to one application. The search found 128 entries. This may not have been all of them. Considering the number of pro-grams you might have on your hard drive, the total number of entries to be transferred is mind-boggling.

Another example, the Windows folder contains many Dy-namic Link Library (DLL) files that are associated with the particular version of Windows you have been running. There are also many shared DLL's used by Windows and your application software. How do you know which ones should be transferred and which ones will create problems with your new OS or your new software. Finally, the moth-erboard, chipset and CPU in your new computer require driver files that are specific to them and very likely are quite different from the drivers used on your old com-puter.

Faced with this problem, what do you do? The most com-monly used solution is to dig out all the original disks for your application software. Find the serial numbers and/or

other information needed to do a new installation on your new computer. Once you have the programs installed you can transfer the data files for each application. This gives you a clean install for your software and, if the programs are compatible with the new OS, you will have no problem running your applications.

This, however, can be a long and tedious process. Also, what happens when you can't find the original program discs? Maybe it was download and you didn't keep the install file or make a copy of it. Or maybe you can't find the serial numbers you need to install some of your programs. Then you have to ask the software manufacturer for help, providing you registered the software when you first installed it. There is another option.

I got into all this because I have just built a new computer and needed to transfer all, or most all, of my software to a new computer. I had used two different transfer programs in past upgrades and found them to be somewhat lacking in both accuracy and speed. Since my new computer is running Window XP Pro I also looked at the "Transfer Files & Setting" Wizard. This transfers the Internet browser and e-mail settings between the two computers, providing you are using Internet Explorer and Outlook or Outlook Express. It will also transfer the contents of your "My Documents" folder. It will not transfer any applications. For me this was useless, since I don't use IE or OE.

In my searching for possible solutions I found a program called "Move-Me" from Spearit Software. It is the first transfer program I've found that uses network connections to move programs, data files, settings, etc between your old and new computers. It can also use the USB ports or the parallel ports. These are much slower than a LAN connection. Move-Me also works with removable media that can be read by both computers. Now before you get too excited, this is not a free program. It will cost you $39.95 for the Internet download version. You can download a trial version that has all the information and help files. It just will not do any transfer until you enter the serial number. That you get only after paying for it. The only thing that makes me nervous about the whole process is that you have to turn off your software firewall and virus checker during the serial number validation process. This validation requires that you be connected to the Internet. In my case I still had a hardware firewall in my router, but that's not always sufficient protection. But I went ahead and ran the software. (You know the saying "Fools rush in……)

Yes, it did work, but with some glitches. First let me say it transferred over 12 gigabytes of programs and data from the old to the new in just over 1.5 hours. Now that is a definite time saving. I had estimated it would take me more

than a day to reinstall all my software and move the data files. Only a couple of applications and my external devices needed to be reinstalled after the move. By that I mean printers, scanner and external drive. The big exception was the Bookmarks for Firefox and the e-mail address book and mail settings for Thunderbird. Those I had to transfer manually. Once I found the instructions on the Mozilla websites, the setup went quickly.

The point of all this is, if you buy a new computer, try to get the dealer to transfer your old software as part of the deal. If you do it yourself, a file copy won't work. You need special transfer software like Move-me or Aloha Bob's PC Relocator. However, if you don't have a LAN connection between your computers, expect to spend 1 hour per gigabyte for a USB 2.0 transfer and much, much more time with a parallel port transfer.

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HANDY PRODUCT!
Move It On Over
PC-to-PC data transfer device operates at USB 2.0 speeds with no software to install!

http://www.moveitonover.com/site/index.shtml

Submitted by Sherrie Henne
Webmaster, NOPC

Maintaining Your Downloads
By David Garcia, President,
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Having trouble keeping track of your downloaded files? Here's a couple of easy procedures to help you maintain, identify, and document your downloads.

1. Create a "Downloads" Folder & Sub-folders
When downloading files, (for example, you buy some software online, and download it instead of having it mailed) it is a good idea to place all your downloads into a specific folder so that you can always find them when you need them. If you don't already have a folder called "Downloads," or "My Downloads," then you should create one on your hard drive (normally the "C:" drive).

To create a folder on the "C:" drive right-click the Start button on the desktop, then click "Explore" in the popup menu. This will open the Windows Explorer. Left-click the "Local Disk (C:)" icon to highlight it. Then click "File" on the Menu Bar and point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Folder." A "New Folder" is created on

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the C: drive. Rename it to "Downloads" or "My Downloads" as you prefer. To rename it just right-click it and select Rename from the popup menu.

Prior to downloading a given file it would also be good, for identification and documentation purposes, to create a sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder that identifies the origin of the download. Give the sub-folder a short name that identifies its origin. For example, if you download some anti-virus software from Symantec, you might name the sub-folder "Symantec." Then when you download the file place it into the Symantec sub-folder within the "Downloads" folder. Any subsequent downloads from Symantec should also be placed into this folder.

Creating the sub-folder is similar to creating the "Downloads" folder. To create the sub-folder you left-click the Downloads folder, click "File" on the Menu Bar, point to "New," click "Folder," and rename it. You should now have a sub-folder within the Downloads folder. The hierarchy should look like this:
Local Disc (C:)
      Downloads (or My Downloads)
         Sub-folder (Whatever you name it)

2. Documenting the Download
When a file is downloaded it usually has a cryptic name like "Abc4205.exe" To further document my downloads, I create a text file within the sub-folder that identifies the download. Within the text file I give a description of what the download is, when I downloaded it, and when I installed it. I give the text file the same name as the downloaded file except for the extension. For example, if I downloaded a file called "Abc4205.exe" from Symantec using the procedure #1 above, it would be in the "Downloads" folder in the "Symantec" sub-folder. I would then create a text file called "Abc4205.txt," and also place it in the "Symantec" sub-folder. In this example, I would have two files within my "Symantec" sub-folder: Abc4205.exe which is the downloaded file and Abc4205.txt

which is my description of the downloaded file.

To create the text file left-click the sub-folder name (e.g. "Symantec") once. Click "File" on the Menu Bar and then point to "New." When the fly-out menu opens, click "Text File." A "New Text Document.txt" file will be placed into the subfolder. Rename the file to the download file name (without the "exe" extension). Now double-click the renamed text file to open it with Notepad. Type in your description of the download and save it.

Using the above two procedures gives you an orderly method of maintaining, identifying, and documenting your downloads.

Mind boggling questions

Why do you have to "put your two cents in"… but it's only a "penny for your thoughts"? Where's that extra penny going?

Why do doctors leave the room while you change? They're going to see you naked anyway.

Why is "bra" singular and "panties" plural?

If Jimmy cracks corn and no one cares, why is there a stupid song about him?

Can a hearse carrying a corpse drive in the carpool lane?

If corn oil is made from corn, and vegetable oil is made from vegetables, what is baby oil made from?
Submitted by Jeanne Okamoto
Member, NOPC
Thanks, Jeanne

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Ray Paternostro	president@nopc.org	737-9099
Vice President	Clarke Kissel .	vp@nopc.org	828-5678
Secretary	Carl Henderson	secretary@nopc.org	466-3954
Treasurer	Don Herrmann	treasurer@nopc.org	831-1284
Director At Large	Albert Fox	director1@nopc.org	269-5786
Director At Large	Mary Prinz	director2@nopc.org	455-1412
Director At Large	Tom Ford	director3@nopc.org	985-643-3172

Standing Committees

BBS SysOp	Lanny Goldfinch	sysop@nopc.org	482-5066
Newsletter Editor	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205
Public Relations	Jeannie Okamoto	pr@nopc.org	455-0977
Publicity	Jackie Elliott	publicity@nopc.org	455-6203
Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	webmaster@nopc.org	504-913-5638

Special Interest Groups

Computer Programming	Elliot Mike York	mike@gnonug.org	738-5997
Digital Media	Ray Paternostro	dm@nopc.org	737-9099
Genealogy	Vincent Haupt	hauptv@aol.com	985-785-6288
Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopc.org	737-9099
New Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopc.org	985-643-3172
Web Lab	Edward Jahncke	editor@nopc.org	897-1205

Other Important Numbers / Addresses

Club Hotline	Recorded messages. Meeting Information. Open 24 Hours	887-5746
NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopc.org

December 2005

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3 **Living with Home Electronics** WTIX 690AM 10-11a
4 **Computer Solutions** WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	5 **GNONUG** 6:30p-8:30p	6	7 **NOPC Gen Mtg J.D. Meisler School 6:30p-8:30p**	8	9	10 **Living with Home Electronics** WTIX 690AM 10-11a
11 **Computer Solutions** WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	12 **GNONUG** 6:30p-8:30p	13	14 **NOPC BOD @ McCann's 6:30p-8:30p**	15	16	17 **Living with Home Electronics** WTIX 690AM 10-11a
18 **Computer Solutions** WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	19 **GNONUG** 6:30p-8:30p	20	21	22	23	24 **Living with Home Electronics** WTIX 690AM 10-11a
25 **Computer Solutions** WSMB 1350AM 11a-12p	26 **GNONUG** 6:30p-8:30p	27	28	29	30	31 **Living with Home Electronics** WTIX 690AM 10-11a

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