This Month Webcast with Gene Barlow
Acronis True Image
&
Acronis Disk Director Suite

Inside this issue:

Juice Your Broadband Speed

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People prefer broadband internet connections because of the obvious speed advantages over dial-up and satellite links. Then why is it that broadband never seems to be fast enough? Are you getting the speed promised by your ISP? Broadband can cost $100 a month or more, but does the provider really provide the advertised speed? Is the connection reliable or does the modem need a reboot several times a day? Fortunately, there are ways to achieve high, reliable throughput without having to have an engineering degree. Here are some suggestions to get every bit per second possible from your modem without any technical hiccups or interruptions in service.

Start with your computer and TV equipment. A common source of line noise can be traced to improper grounding of anything that plugs into household electrical circuits. This can seriously degrade performance of cable equipment. Every electrical device, especially those in the same room as the cable modem, should be plugged into properly grounded outlets. The best connections are with polarized plugs oriented in the correct direction, and please don't use any three prong to two prong adapters. Get up-to-date gear. Electric outlet testers are cheap. Buy one and use it to test for excess voltage on

This Month at the NOPCC

Gene Barlow has been a key figure in the user group community for the past 27 years. He is an educator, writer and a talented presenter, representing many vendors over the years with products that he finds valuable and effective for home and small business users. Gene will demonstrate his most exciting products including backup and disk management software from his clients at the our meeting.

Gene will be speaking to us from Salt Lake City. That's right, the NOPCC will be presenting its first webinar. Your Board performed a dress rehearsal last week with Gene and it worked great. Come on out and see how we are going to communicate in the 21st century.

Acronis True Image Home 2009: This backup utility is a great tool to help you backup your entire hard drive and everything on it (operating system, applica-

(Continued from page 1)
(This month at NOPCC Cont'd)
tion programs, settings, data files) or just a few key data files. You can restore your entire hard drive or just a few individual files. It also offers disk cloning for upgrading to a larger hard drive. Disk Cleanser lets you securely wipe your private data from an old drive. Other tools let you see inside of your backup files or search for files in backup images. The Try&Decide feature lets you use your computer while locking out any hard drive changes. Backups can be set to run automatically. This is a "must have" utility for all end-users.

Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0: This partitioning utility is an excellent tool to help you better organize your hard drive. You can add partitions and resize partitions without losing your files on the drive. Setting up a separate data partition to give you better backups would require this utility. You can also setup and run multiple operating systems on your hard drive, letting you try Vista or Linux without giving up your WinXP. Moving and copying partitions and their content is also possible. This is a "must have" utility for accomplished computer users.

Our presenter will explain how to use these very valuable software applications.

The Acronis True Image Home 2009 has a list price of $50 but we will have 20 copies for sale at $25. Price after the mtg will be $29.

The Acronis Disk Director Suite 10.0 has a list price of $50 but we will have 8 copies available for $29.

Editor: I have been using these programs from Gene Barlow and Acronis for the past several years and say enough good things about them. I especially like the Disk Director Suite . When you purchase a new computer, the hard drive is one big C:\ partition, which is NOT good practice. I immediately use Disk Director to divide that big C:\ into two additional partitions. A D:\ partition where I like to have my applications place their data files, and another partition in which to install any additional applications. The way I see it, the less that goes into the C:\ partition (other than the OS) the better off you are. This is also recommended by Gene Barlow.

Broadsides
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Dear friends,
These ideas are compiled from years of accumulations from various magazines, books, on-line sites, and my own personal experience. I claim neither originality nor ownership to any of its contents. My only intent is to share the various "tips, "tricks", & "hints" in hopes of helping & maybe enhancing your computing experiences. They are all intended for anyone who uses a PC. It is for beginners as well as advanced users. Enjoy and use as you will.

Ron Broadhurst

HOW TO HAVE WINDOWS REMIND YOU ABOUT PENDING UPDATES

Click Remind Me Later in the Automatic Updates dialog box before you download or install the update.

In the Reminder dialog box, you can specify the amount of time Windows should wait before reminding you.

If the reminder is for downloading, Windows reminds you only when you are connected to the Internet.

If the reminder is for installing, Windows reminds you according to the schedule that you specify.

HOW TO DOWNLOAD AVAILABLE UPDATES

If you configured automatic updating to notify you before downloading any updates, an icon is displayed in the notification area each time new updates are found.

Double-click the icon in the notification area.

Do either of the following steps:

If you want Windows to download an update, make sure that the check box beside it is

selected.

-or-

If you do not want Windows to download an update, click to clear the check box beside it. Your selected updates are downloaded in the background; this

How To Send An Email Message To Any Cell Phone
Written by Ken Peters,
Product Review / Special Interests,
Hilton Head Island Computer Club, SC
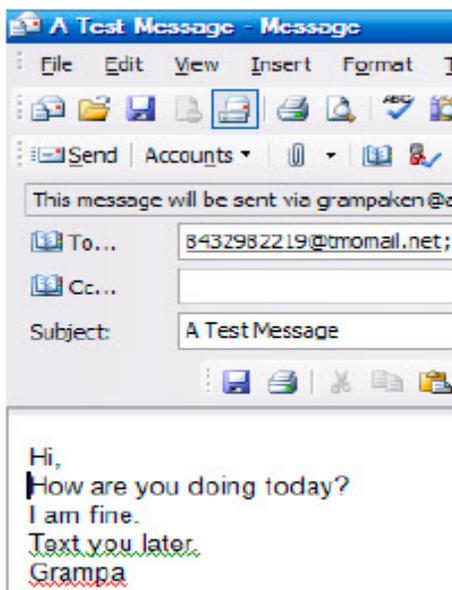www.hhicc.org
product.review (at) hhicc.org

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Impress your kids, grandkids and friends with your ability to text. Send a text message to their cell phone by email from your computer.

Most cell phones have the ability to send and receive short text messages. This is called short message service (SMS) or text paging. This service can take email
sent over the internet and deliver them to a cell phone as a text message. Each carrier has its own email address extension i.e. @tmomail.net for T Mobile carrier.

The two things you need to know to send a message are the person's cell phone number and their carrier's email extension. So to send to a T Mobile phone, enter the phone number and add the extension - 8433216549@tmomail.net

The message will look similar to this.

The email message   Appears on cell phone

Some of the common cell phone emails are:

Alltel AT&T (formerly Cingular)
10-digit phone number@message.alltel.com 10-digit phone number@txt.att.net
Example: 2125551212@message.alltel.com Example: 2125551212@txt.att.net

(Continued from page 3)

Boost Mobile Nextel (now part of Sprint Nextel)
10-digit phone number@myboostmobile.com 10-digit telephone number@messag
Example: 2125551212@myboostmobile.com ing.nextel.com
Example: 7035551234@messaging.
nextel.com

T-Mobile Verizon
10-digit phone number@tmomail.net 10-digit phone number@vtext.com
Example: 4251234567@tmomail.net Example: 5552223333@vtext.com

Virgin Mobile USA US Cellular
10-digit phone number@vmobl.com 10digitphonenumber@email.uscc.net
Example: 2622341256r@vmobl.com Example: 2125551212@ email.uscc.net

Sprint PCS (now Sprint Nextel)
10-digit phone number@messaging.sprintpcs.com
Example: 2125551234@messaging.sprintpcs.com

If you can't find the email address for the carrier, check the carrier's website (Links above) or call their customer service.

The one receiving the message may be charged 10 to 15 cents per message unless they have a plan that includes text messaging. Your kids and grandkids most probably do have a text plan. There is a 160 character limit per message including the email address and the subject line. Some carriers will split the message into two messages if it is longer.

The person receiving the email text message can reply to you from their phone and sometime later you'll receive their reply in your email inbox. If you don't like texting from a cell phone or hate trying to type a message with those small phone keys, give this a try. It's fun.

How To Switch Internet Browsers
Written by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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sandy (at) compukiss.com`

Microsoft's Internet Explorer is a software program that comes on all computers that use the Windows Operating System. Internet Explorer is called an Internet browser since it is the software that allows you to view Web pages and surf the Internet. In fact, at least 80% of you reading this Web page right now are using Internet Explorer. You don't, however, have to use Internet Explorer. There are several other Internet browsers available.

Due to recent critical security glitches in Internet Explorer, other browsers are looking more attractive. Also, while Internet Explorer has stagnated over the past several years, several other Internet browsers have overtaken it with useful new features and advanced functionality. Features like a tabbed interface that lets you quickly move from page to page and voice-activated menu systems have put alternative browsers like Firefox and Opera ahead of Internet Explorer.

Using an alterative browser is easy. You simply download the browser from the Web site of the manufacturer and install it on your computer. Firefox, Opera, and Chrome are all alternative browsers that are free downloads. Just follow the Web site instructions to download and install the new browser. During installation the program will see Internet Explorer and will ask you if you want to transfer your Favorites and other information from Internet Explorer to the new program. Most alternative browsers will help you make the switch from Internet Explorer to their browser program. When you install Opera, Netscape, or Firefox you will be given the option importing your Internet information. Opera can import bookmarks and favorites. Firefox allows you to import options, bookmarks, history, passwords, cookies, and other data from Internet Explorer. This works for many different browsers. Fox example, if you switch from Internet Explorer to Netscape and decide that you would then like to switch to Opera, you can move your information from Internet Explorer to Netscape and then to Opera by simply following the instructions given during installation.

To use a different Internet browser, you don't have to uninstall Internet Explorer. In fact, it is best to leave Internet Explorer on your hard drive. Not only is Internet Explorer difficult to uninstall: you may need to use it in the future. Internet Explorer is the only browser that you can use to access the Windows Update Web site. Also, since it is the most

(Continued from page 4)

popular Web browser, many Web sites are optimized for Internet Explorer. If you use an alternative Web browser, in your surfing you may find an occasional Web site that does not work properly in the browser that you have chosen. If that is the case, you can simply switch to Internet Explorer to access that Web site and switch back to your alternative browser for your main surfing. You see, there is no problem with using several different browsers. In fact, you can actually use two or three different browsers at the same time with no interference.

When you start using your new browser you will be asked if you want to set the new software as your default Web browser. Whatever browser is set as your default browser will be the browser that will appear when you click on a link in an e-mail or other document. If you want to use your new browser all the time, you will want to set it as the default. If you say no to setting the new program as your default, the program will continue to ask you this question every time you start it. Look for a notice with a check box in front of it to tell the program that you don't want to see that question again. For instance in Opera you will click to put a checkmark into the box in front of "Do not show this dialog again." In Firefox click to remove the checkmark in the box that says "Always perform this check when starting Firefox." Then the program will not ask that question again.

If you decide that you don't want to continue to use the new browser, you can switch back to Internet Explorer at any time. Any new favorites or cookies that you have added to the new browser can be transferred back to Internet Explorer by using the export and import settings in the two browsers. You simply export the information from the program you are using and import it into to the program you want to use. Click on File, and choose Import/Export to use these functions. Most browsers have Wizards that will help you through the entire process. Some programs like Firefox make it easy to import information, but make it more difficult to export information. If a Wizard is not available you can use the programs Help menu for detailed instructions.

If you are used to using Internet Explorer, downloading and using a different Web browser is a big step. Although most alternative browsers are similar to Internet Explorer, you will need to invest some time into learning the new interface. Some features may not be obvious. For instance the

tabbed browsing in Firefox is not instantly noticeable. So be sure to read the help files and information on the product's Web site to get the full gist of what features are available.

(Continued from page 2)

Broadsides (cont'd)

behavior allows you to continue working uninterrupted. Downloading does not interfere with or slow down other network activity, such as Internet browsing.

When downloading is finished, the icon is displayed in the notification area to notify you that updates are ready to be installed.

CUSTOMIZE THE START MENU

The Start menu gets more real estate in XP than in previous versions, and it's more customizable. To make the Start menu display only the applications you want, rather than the default determined by Microsoft:

 Right-click in an empty section of the Start menu's left column.

 Select Properties > Start Menu > Customize. Here you'll find a list of your most frequently used programs. (XP keeps track of what you use and what you don't, then updates this list dynamically).

Don't want your boss to know that Pinball, Solitaire and Quake all make your list?

Go to the General tab, click Clear List, and set the counter to zero.

HOW TO PERFORM DISK ERROR CHECKING IN WINDOWS XP

This describes how to check the integrity of the hard disk drive in Windows XP. After you install Windows XP, the Scandisk command is not available.

 Double-click My Computer and then right-click the hard disk drive that you want to check.

 Click Properties and then click Tools.

 Under Error-checking click Check Now.

 Click Start.

ADD FAMILIAR ICONS BACK TO YOUR DESKTOP

It's the case of the missing icons. Many of you may be wondering where all the icons from your desktop

your cable wiring. Any problem could indicate a serious safety hazard. Engage a licensed electrician to fix it.

Almost anything manufactured today in the consumer electronics world is light years ahead of its predecessors manufactured only two or three years ago. Cable modems are no exception, so if yours is more than three years old get a new one from your provider. Most providers will make a free exchange, but some will require an extension of your contract. You want to do this because the latest modems conform to the DOCSIS 2.0 standard. This offers higher upload and download capabilities and supports other advanced broadband applications, including online gaming and peer-to-peer computing.

Ask your ISP if they automatically update firmware for the modem. If they don't, have them supply the website address of your modem's manufacturer so you can download the most recent firmware. Check the website about twice a year for new updates.

Next, go to a test site such as PC Pitstop, and check your upload and download speeds to see if they match the terms of your service contract. If they don't, give your ISP a call and have them reset the modem's settings. While you're at it, have them check the signal-to-noise ratio. Too much noise can cause interference, and your modem will then have to resend information cutting down on your throughput.

It's possible that your cable wiring may contain too many splices or simply be too long. That can be fixed by a visit from your ISP technician. Have the technician check the line quality leading to your house. If the signal is good and you're having problems, the house wiring may be the culprit. The definitive answer for cable modems is to create a split directly after the junction box and then run a new cable directly to your modem. The other side of the split will take care of your television sets which aren't nearly as sensitive to line noise.

After you've done everything from a hardware and firmware standpoint, and your cable connection is as clean as possible, you're ready to fine tune the system for best performance. Vista users don't have to do much of anything to optimize the operating system since Vista does TCP stack tuning dynamically. Any internet performance adjustments can be made through the browser. Firefox users

may want to try Firetune or Fasterfox. They are both free utilities and allow adjustment to cache memory, capacity and other settings such as pipelining.

If you do a lot of downloading, you can save time by installing a download manager like Flashget. This widely used utility claims the highest number of users on the internet. It uses MHT (Multi-server Hyper-threading Transportation) technique. It's very easy to use and comes with exceptional document management features. Best of all, it's free.

After all this work, it would be a tragedy if you didn't keep in mind that sometimes the simplest solutions are the best ones. Most cable modems and routers have reset features. Many a mysterious internet ailment has been corrected simply by resetting the equipment. Turn off the computer and the modem. Un-plug the modem for a few minutes and then power everything back on. You may be pleasantly surprised.

BROADSIDES (cont'd)

are in Windows XP? You can place at least My Computer, My Network Places and My Documents on the desktop. Right-click on the desktop and then click Properties. Click the Desktop tab and then click on Customize Desktop.

Put a check mark in the box next to My Document, My Computer, My Network Places or Internet Explorer, to add those familiar icons to your desktop.

HOW TO FIND YOUR IP ADDRESS IN WINDOWS XP

Start and click RUN.

Type "cmd" (without quotes) and hit ENTER

Once the box opens, type "ipconfig /all" (without quotes) and hit ENTER.

IF WOMEN RULED THE WORLD

CLUB SUPPORTERS

MOTHERBOARD EDITOR RETIRES

Edward Jahncke took over the reins as Editor fo the NOPCC *Motherboard* in Oct, 2001 when the previous Editor, Ed Jatho found that his "real life" was taking on more of his time and attention.

The same thing is happening to Edward. He has enjoyed providing this service to the NOPCC. He felt it was a way to give back for all that the club has done for him over the years.

He will be turning over the task to two co-Editors, Jim Williams and Kevin Kratzberg. If you give them the support that Edward was given, their job will be an easy one, and they will appreciate the positive response.

Bon Chance' Edward

April 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1 NOPCC General Meeting Harahan Senior Center	2	3	4
5	6	7	**8** New & Inter-mediate User SIG Harahan Senior Center	9	10	11
12	13	14	**15** NOPCC BOD Meeting—Chateau Coffee Shop –Kenner 6:30pm—8:30pm	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of PCs, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author (s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC , its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author (s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, $40/yr.; Family Membership, $60/yr.;

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NOPCC Web Site	On the World Wide Web. Our own home page and club information.	www.nopc.org