This Month

Hurricane Season Pre- partions for Your Computer

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Jerry Seregni

Inside this issue:

Clean Up Your Room/Desktop
Part 2

INTRODUCTION
Last month we started on managing your icons. In this issue, we'll be continuing the saga of the icons. When you have completed the exercises below and learned the
various activities involved, you will be on the road to becoming an "expert" to your friends. You can then play the role of teacher rather than student.

Currently, there are many different Windows versions in use so the material which follows may bring up a slightly different listing of choices on your machine, when one right-clicks on the desktop. With all these varying situations, it is very difficult to present the many fine points exactly.

In general, the differences will be obvious by simple inspection. When they are not, the most direct approach is just to experiment to see what is produced when a choice

This Month at the NOPCC

Learn the easy way —
How to Prepare for a Post Hurricane Recovery.
Jerry Seregni

Computer Guru and technology reporter for local Fox8 News 6:20am and 7:20 am Channel 8—will explain what we need to do now in case we need to restore our computers or purchase a new one after a disaster.

**Venue: Harahan Senior Center
100 Elodie St.
Harahan, LA
6:30 Wednesday August 5th**

Computer Programming SIG Report

When Steve Andrews, Team System MVP, INETA Speaker, MCP, ICSOO, contacted me and said he'd be in town July 9th – 14th and wondered if he could present to us, I assumed that he was in town for Microsoft's Worldwide Partner Conference. Actually he had won a free trip to the Tales of the Cocktail 2009 which happened to be held here in New Orleans the very same weekend. Since he had another engagement scheduled for the Tuesday night, we rescheduled to Monday July, 13. With 11 people in attendance, Steve talked about a lesser-known feature of Visual Studio, Text Template Transformation Toolkit (T4). T4 is a template-based code generation engine which is included in Visual Studio 2008 and available as download for Visual Studio 2005. Pretty much, this means that T4 is a tool that can write Visual Basic or C# code on the fly, compile it and then execute the generated program. He started with the basics, creating templates to explore statements and expressions. Then took us all the way through to custom directive processors and hosts to handle advanced scenarios.

Coming up, in August, our own Manny Dennis is scheduled to give a presentation on Windows Communication Foundation (WCF). WCF is a part of the .Net Framework that provides a unified programming model for rapidly building service-oriented applications that communicate across the web and the enterprise. Manny will give a loose overview of a project he has been working on. He'll talk about what technologies he used as well as some gotchas and roadblocks he ran into along the way.

We will meet at 6:30 pm on Tuesday August 11 at New Horizons New Orleans, 2800 Veterans Blvd., Suite 330 (about 2 blocks east of Causeway Blvd., next to Steinmart). Parking is available in the free garage behind the building. Enter the building at the rear and go to the third floor.

Submitted by Mike York.

Humor:

From the poem "*Yes, I am a Senior Citizen*",
Author Unknown

I am usually interested in going home before I get to where I am going.

I am smiling all the time because I can't here a word you are saying.

NOPC Information

BOD (Board of directors) meeting —
August TBA

New/Intermediate users' SIG:
August 12th - 6:30 -8:30pm
2nd Wednesday of each month.
Harahan Senior Center
Post your questions to Yahoo Groups—
Nopc_help.
This will give Ray & Tom a better chance of answering your questions.

Programer's Sig
August 11th 6:30
Special day this month
Where—New Horizons
3rd floor
2800 Veterans
Metairie, LA
Kmart/ SteinMart shopping center.
Suggested parking garage behind building

Next month at NOPC

Computer Disaster Recovery "Lock Box"
Wednesday, September 2nd
Tim Gagliano, CIO Services

Coming in October

Nital Sheridan -
Ochsner Medical Libarian

Medical Information from the Web

Look for NOPC

Twtter.com
nopcc

Yahoo groups:
NOPC_HELP

Disintegration of Service

By Jerry Goldstein

Want to make a free over sea calls to India? Just call for technical support on your computer, Internet service, or cable service. You are likely to be routed overseas to India. You then get the pleasure of talking to the "well trained" script readers. About the only thing they are trained for is to tell you: "Yes, very much I can help you". You hear this phrase whenever you call for tech support. The techs use that phrase to hide the fact that they are spending that time to check their index sheets for key words in what you told them was your problem. They then turn to that page in their script book and start reading off a page that is supposed to match your problem. The key word is "supposed". Reality is far from tech support fantasy.

Tech support used to mean reaching a person knowledgeable in the problem you were calling about. Now it is a means the manufacturers and utility suppliers use to avoid dealing with customers. There was a time when the support staff knew and understood computers. But then the corporations came up with the idea of making support calls difficult. They figured we would be less likely to complain if doing so was difficult. It is not bad enough instructions are written by non-English speaking people. Now we have to get the instructions interpreted by someone who failed a course in English as a second language. Which is pretty tough to do in India, a country where English, along with Hindi, is the official language. (I won't even go into how all those people in India suddenly have American names like Jack and John when they join tech support.)

I know my patience has a limit. I test it regularly when I call for Tech Support. Thanks to the service quality of my utility, cable, and Internet providers I get to test my patience all too often.

Tech support did get smarter, though not for the better or to the benefit of the consumer. Used to be you could ask for a supervisor and be moved up to someone in the states. Now tech support

in India has their own supervisors who are as good as the base level worker at helping. Pretty much no help at all.

If you are lucky enough to be moved up the ladder to what is often called the "corporate escalation department" you will find your anger escalate as well. Corporate only works business hours and Monday through Friday, sometimes. Holidays or any other excuse, means you won't reach corporate help. What will corporate escalation do when you get there? Route you to the technical support staff in the states you needed from the beginning. But first you need to wait 24 hours for a return contact. Oy*

How do I know so well how tech support fails to work? I am my family and business's IT person. That means I am often on the phone with tech support. I recently spent five days without Internet service thanks to Earthlink's outsourcing it's tech support to India. After days of trying to get Earthlink to fix the problem I called the line provider that Earthlink uses and had them fix the problem myself. Total outsourcing.

Is there a way to avoid all this? There are less chances everyday as corporate America outsources its human interface with its customers. Can we do anything about it? Sure. When looking at what to buy, or a service to use, take into consideration how the manufacturer or provider will support its product. Use products and services that support you as a human and not as a joke.

For those few unfamiliar with "Oy" please click HERE

is made. Generally, all such choices are reversible. In the process, you will get to better understand what is happening. To me, the aspect of experimenting is usually the best approach to understanding and learning.

Remember what I have been preaching for years in my articles. As you become more conversant with using your computer, you will gain more confidence in expanding your horizons with the most amazing machine that mankind has produced. But, it is only a "machine," and you should be in charge of it, even though Microsoft tends to try and make it in charge of you. You are the boss, and the sooner you let your computer know that, the sooner you will stop feeling intimidated by it.

DESKTOP
In the latest Window's XP and Vista, MS has made a lot of changes, including the default desktop displayed.

I personally don't like it, but that's a matter of my taste. However, MS did leave the door open to go back to the older style of desktop, which you may prefer. If you right click on the desktop, there should be a choice to have a classic Windows desktop. Try selecting
this and see which you'd rather have. You can always revert back to the new style if you choose.

ARRANGE THE ICONS
Right click on an empty space on the desktop and a menu will come up. The first item on the XP listing is "Arrange Icons by." Put the focus on "Arrange Icons by," and you will get a list with lots of choices on how you want them arranged.

If you have carefully positioned all your desktop icons in the various areas where you want them and you use the "Arrange" feature, they will all line up like soldiers,
starting at the upper left part of your screen. Then you will have to manually reposition them to where they were before you started. Again, this is a good area in which to
experiment.

AUTO ARRANGE
In the window that pops up when you click on "Arrange Icons by", you will see an entry named "Auto Arrange." If you check this, your icons will always stay arranged, but not in any groups that you have established.

They will all line up like soldiers and stay that way even if you move them. They will jump right back into line. I personally don't like using this. But, you can try it to see if you'd like it. "Auto arrange" is the equivalent of constantly invoking the "Arrange" command.

ALIGN TO GRID
I personally use the "Align to Grid," which auto aligns all icons so that rows and columns are straight. With this checked, sometimes when you move an icon, it snaps to a
different point on the grid.

It will always snap to the nearest point. When this happens, just click and drag it to where you want.

In the early days of XP when one had temporarily booted into safe mode, and then returned to normal mode, the desktop layout was totally garbled up. Microsoft
apparently improved things in recent times, the original desktop layout does return now.

ICON ARRANGING UTILITIES
There are also a variety of simple programs available free on the Internet to save and then restore your desktop layout. This can come in handy when something/someone
has messed up your desktop layout. The one I used is called "iconlayout.zip" but the page for this appears to be gone now. This link appears to have a similar free program
at ZDNET.

http://downloads.zdnet.com/abstract.aspx?kw=Save+desktop+icon+layout&docid=185169

What these utilities generally do is add two items into the dropdown list when you right-click on your desktop - "Save desktop icon layout" and "Restore desktop icon
Layout." Browse around for something similar, if you'd like to have this handy utility, or try this ZDNET link.

CHANGING ICONS
Except for a few Icons, of which Windows is very possessive, the icon images that display for the shortcuts on your desktop can be changed to suit your desires. When you right click on an icon, and select properties from the window which shows, a small window

with other Windows-supplied icons which are available. The selection is somewhat limited, but there is a "Browse" button.

If you have any icon library files on your computer, click on the "browse", and navigate around to find these libraries. When you find one, double click on it, and a whole bunch of icons will appear, find one you like, then double click on it, click OK, then when you close the window, you'll have a new icon for that shortcut.

ICON LIBRARIES
If you'd like to get some icon libraries, one of the best places to go is www.zdnet.com. Once you get there, just navigate around to their download area, and then do a search for "icons." You should get lots of results. These are generally free files and there are lots available, so have fun.

Google is also a good hunting ground for icons. Do a search for "icons for Windows XP." You'll get lots of hits, most of which are free downloads.

The spacing of icons, color, and many other properties of the desktop layout can also be changed. But, that's outside of this area for now.

In a future article, we'll go over the ways to change your desktop colors, the sizes of things, the display resolution, and many other elements that can make your display
"better", and easier to use.

STARTING PROGRAMS
Left click on the START button on the lower left of your desktop. On the menu which comes up, left click on "All Programs." This should bring up a large window that lists all the programs installed on your computer. This is probably where you have been to run a specific program. You would move the cursor over the desired program and click; the program would then run.

Some of these items are links to start the program, and others are folders, which you must click to display the links that are within the folder. How about making copies of the startup links for the programs you use often. Doing this is simple. Put your cursor on a program shortcut, and then right click.

There should be a listed item "Create Shortcut." Clicking on this will create another shortcut, with a (2) showing that it is the a duplicate of the original shortcut. Then,
drag this onto the desktop. You can now edit the name to remove the (2), or make it any name you would like.

CONCLUSION
At this point, take a break, and make sure that you are now well versed in the icon activities presented above. It would also be a good idea to play with the capabilities
you have just learned, in preparation for the next venture. This will be a major step for many of you, as we'll be making new folders, adding icons to the desktop, and storing all the icons we don't need in a folder which we'll call "Icons in Storage."

Next month, we'll pick up where we left off, and go through a variety of procedures that you should understand relative to controlling and manipulating windows. We'll also "play" with icons, setting up a storage folder for the excess icons that are presently on display. And, we'll go through the process of getting some new icons on the desktop to save searching for them when we want to use them.

Remember, if you learn a little bit each day, your new skills will make using your computer much easier.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site www.brcs.org. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or Ron Hirsch print it out, and place it in a loose leaf notebook, for future reference.

Clean Up Your Room/Desktop, Part II
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CLUB SUPPORTERS

Humor :

August 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
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2	**3**	**4**	**5** NOPCC General Meeting	**6**	**7**	**8**
9	**10**	**11** Programer's Sig	**12** New & Intermediate User SIG	**13**	**14**	**15**
16	**17**	**18**	**19**	**20**	**21**	**22**
23	**24**	**25**	**26**	**27**	**28**	**29**
30	**31**		**BOD meeting TBA**			

NOPCC Directory

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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*