

MotherBoard

Volume 27, Issue 12

December, 2009

This Month



Inside this issue:

<i>The Technology Revolutions Go On</i>	1— 2
<i>Windows 7 Is Here - Cont'd</i>	2— 4
<i>I Made the Move to Win7—The Trials and Tribulations</i>	4—5
<i>Need a Printer? Consider This...</i>	5
<i>Advertisements</i>	6
<i>Calendar of Events NOPCC Directory</i>	7

The Technology Revolution[s] Go On

A Look Back and Ahead at Trends

Written by John White, a member of the ICON PCUG, Inc., New York
The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of the ICON PCUG, July 2009

www.iconpcug.org
[editor\(at\)iconpcug.org](mailto:editor(at)iconpcug.org)

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Scholars of the revolution process remind us that, like France's, most revolutions are half over before the affected people know they are under way. Whether we have noticed or not, here are some well underway:

1. On-premises storage: Most users know the dangers of "going naked," i.e. without backing up data while hoping for the best. Remember those s-l-o-w hard drive backups on tape that always failed to create a full restore? We resolved, of course, to backup all the data, at least, on a bushel of floppies, but didn't get around to it. Iomega's ZIP disks held much more than 3.5" floppies but at too high a price. Write-once backup CDs were much cheaper and usable on all computers, but burning several tied up the computer and user quite a while. Still better were DVDs and automated external hard drives using USB or Firewire cables. Then came Vista, which rejected all my previous backup software programs. I still miss "Bounceback," which was included with an external Seagate and made file-by-file backups, not just images. Today, with 1-T drives going for a little over \$100, nearly all of one's data and pictures, at least, can be salvaged easily from such a drive. Solid-state drives use even less energy. Their prices and capacity are tracking Moore's Law right on schedule. Within five years, spinning-platter hard drives will be found only on museum shelves near the eight-inch floppy drives. This month's 8-Gb thumb drives should be replaced with similarly-priced 64-Gb drives by next July. These, also known as flash drives or key drives, sometimes make moving files between computers (by "Sneaker-net") easier than getting administrator privileges and moving them via a network.

2. Off-premises storage: This long-needed form of "cloud computing" meets an urgent need. Gmail pioneered—and inspired its competitors to offer—2-Gb per account of free permanent storage of email and attachments on their distant sites. Web download sites offer a free utility to treats one's Gmail account as a regular drive visible in the My Computer folder. With a high-speed Internet connection, the drive becomes a place to store files without opening email. OK, that is the theory anyway. My Gmail account opens fine in the regular way, but my Gmail drive does not. After being told the Login failed, I

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

clicked on the help file to find the cure, but instead got this message: "The Help for this program was created in Windows Help format, which depends on a feature that is not included in Windows Vista." Arrrgggh. Why am I not surprised?

For other choices for off-site storage that can be accessed from elsewhere, two popular choices at Mozy.com and Carbonite.com. Mozy, which boasts over a million customers, offers 2-Gb free storage per computer or unlimited backup for one computer at \$4.95 a month. Carbonite offers a 15-day free trial, but then unlimited storage costs \$5 monthly. Another highly-rated service, ElephantDrive.com charges \$4.95. Idrive, gets mixed reviews. Its pricing seems a bit vague, starting with 2-Gb Free Basic, then 10-Gb more free if the user supplies five email addresses of potential customers. I use Carbonite but Mozy's impressive ratings might convince to try it on another computer. One note of caution about selecting one other than Mozy or Carbonite: One of the Big Two competing with Mozy not long back was Xdrive. It shut down in January, 2009. If we want to trust our data to distant strangers, I only trust the current Big Two. At just \$60 per year per account, even a one-terabyte external hard disk costs more.

3. Device convergence: The Blackberry and iPhone stretched the minds of tech enthusiasts. Thousands of downloadable apps and functions quickly arrived for sale. Wireless Web access spreading throughout much public space, computers, cameras, and once-mundane cell phones have merged with GPS. This melding in turn raises Expectations, and inspires market options to meet them. Intel's tiny, cheap, low-powered Atom microprocessor quickly led to ultra-small Netbooks powered by the almost-abandoned Windows XP Basic. With improved batteries and solid-state storage drives, some of these little machines can fit in a topcoat pocket and remain self-powered on a flight nine hours on a flight from New York to Los Angeles and maybe to Hawaii. Tech-poor nations that were never wired for telephones have skipped over the copper-on-poles era and have cell phone (read "Web") access in areas far from paved roads. Even the U.S., which is not in the top dozen of "wireless access" nations will soon convert remaining water towers, church steeples, power-plant chimneys, and bare hilltops to points of access. Satellites and microwave transmitters can fill most of the remaining gaps. The changes streaming at us with such speed compare

to telescoping the Pony Express, continental telegraph and telephone systems, commercial radio, and television into one generation. In our immediate future we will adopt or adapt still-developing technologies now originating in nations that used to look to us for innovation.

(To be continued in a future edition of the ICON Graphic)

Windows 7 is Here! – Cont'd

Written by Robert Nisbet,
a member of the Asbury Computer Club, MD
www.amvresidents.org/computerclub
[halmarilyn \(at\) hotmail.com](mailto:halmarilyn@hotmail.com)

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

So far in this series we have covered some general questions about Windows 7 and obtaining and installing Windows 7. This month I will start to cover some of the new features of Windows 7.

Caveat for upgrading from Vista

Something I forgot to address in the last issue is for Vista users upgrading to Windows 7. In your upgrade box you will find two DVDs. One is for 32 bit Windows and one is for 64 bit Windows. Choose the 32 bit disc for your upgrade. Don't worry about the difference for basic computing. Now, one of the two choices you have when you start the upgrade disc is the option called Upgrade. This is called an "in place" upgrade where the new operating system replaces the old operating system, but (hopefully) leaves everything else in place – your data files, settings, etc. NEVER, ever, ever start this process without first backing up all your data files to an external medium. Nine hundred ninety eight times out of a thousand everything will go fine, but you don't want to end up among those few where it does not and lose all your data. The Windows 7 DVD contains a Windows Easy Transfer Wizard tool that will backup all your files and settings for you and put them back on the Windows 7 computer. If you are not computer savvy, you may need technical assistance to accomplish all this. Just to reiterate for XP users, Windows 7 ONLY comes on DVD, so if your XP computer only has a CD drive, forget about investing in the upgrade.

What's New in Windows 7?

There is no way in a few short paragraphs to describe in-depth all the new or improved features in Windows 7. For these articles I will just give you a

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued from page 2)

basic overview of several of the most obvious so you better know what to expect when you see your own desktop and start using your new (or up-graded) computer.

While Windows 7 initially looks and acts a lot like Windows Vista from the user standpoint, there are a number of new and improved features designed to make using the computer easier and to improve productivity. I will cover some in this article and more in the next edition. Some are things you will not use every day, but it is good to know they exist – and understanding them will help you use Windows 7 more effectively.

Windows Aero

Aero is the “glassy” transparent look of windows that was introduced in Windows Vista. Things look even glassier in Windows 7. The idea is to deemphasize the windows itself and bring the focus onto the contents of the windows. The Aero effect also is seen on the taskbar and in several neat window management features carry the Aero label.

Windows 7 Taskbar

One of the first things you notice on the Windows 7 desktop is that the taskbar along the bottom of the screen still is there, but looks different. The icons on it are bigger and there are three icons already on it. Normally, the taskbar has only displayed icons for applications, folders, and files you had “opened.” Also, just to the right of the Start button (or orb) there was a small area with a few icons on it. This was called the “Quick Launch Toolbar.” Now, those two areas have been more or less combined. You can have both “shortcuts” to frequently used things on the taskbar (which you can “pin” there) as well as having it reflect the things you have opened. How do you tell one from the other? It can be confusing at first until you note that the “open” items each have a “glassy” box around them whereas the shortcuts do not.

You also notice a new button on the far right end of the toolbar. This is the Aero Peek button. Say you have several open windows covering the desktop and want to see your analog clock or weather bug gadget (described below) on the desktop. Just rest your mouse cursor on the Aero Peek button and the open windows become transparent allowing you to see the desktop. Move away and the windows return. Not the greatest advancement since sliced bread, but pretty neat nonetheless.

You also notice that if you open multiple files using the same application – say, Microsoft Word – there is only one Word icon on the taskbar, not one for each document. Hover your mouse over the Word button and you see live thumbnails of each document over the button, similar to what you see in Windows Vista. However, move the cursor up to one of the thumbnails and a full screen live preview appears. Once you find the file you want to work on, click that thumbnail and the document is on the screen.

Desktop Gadgets

What are gadgets anyway? They are handy little utilities that do something (hopefully) useful for you. There are analog clocks, weather bugs, slide shows, stock monitors, and literally hundreds of others to choose from in all types of categories. Gadgets were introduced in Windows Vista and resided in a reserved area along the right side of the screen called the Sidebar. Users complained that the sidebar ate up too much screen, so in Windows 7 gadgets have been moved to the desktop. You can place them anywhere you want or not have any at all. It's up to you. Since they are on the desktop, they often are hidden behind windows, hence Aero Peek described above.

Libraries

I am going to end this edition with another significant change in Windows 7. That is the introduction of the library concept for file management. You will see them, but may never fully use them. Still you need to understand what they are. Since the earliest days of Windows, we have had folders to keep our files in – the Documents folder being a prime example. All these folders resided on our computer. Well, the concept of personal computing has drastically changed over the last few years. Many homes have networks of several computers; some homes have home servers – essentially a basic computer with a huge hard drive to store files you want on it. In business, the file a person may need to use daily could be located on a far distant computer.

This is where libraries come in. Not to get too technical, but libraries do not exist physically. They are just a way to aggregate the folders and files you use and need to access in one handy place. You still have a Documents link on your Start menu just as you did in Vista. Now when you open it you see “Document Library” and the folders and files you have created. You also still have a default folder on

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

your computer where Windows can store the things you create. This is called "My Documents." (Sound familiar? Déjà vu all over again.) However, you also can "store" – and access in your Documents library – files which exist on another computer on your home network or even in another location over a network or the Web.

Many of you may never find the need to take full advantage of the library concept. However, it is a significant step forward in file access and management that does not tie the user to just one computer any more. Good job Microsoft, for a change.

I Made the Move to Win7 The Trials and Tribulations

by Edward Jahncke

Ass't Editor-NOPCC "Motherboard"

ejahncke@edwardjahncke.net

One morning I woke up to find that no matter how many times I pushed the Power Button on my computer, it would not light off. I am a little bit of a geek, so I found a used power supply in the spare computer parts box, and installed it. Now the computer would light off, the fan on the CPU was spinning, BUT the NOTHING appeared on the monitor. The monitor was connected to the onboard video. I went back to the spare parts box, but while I had another Video card to try, it was an older AGP type and the only slot available was PCI. At this point I threw in the towel and went to the nearest computer store and bought a new desktop with Win 7-64 bit.

I must digress at this point and explain that besides the normal things people do with their computer (i.e Word Processing, Accounting, Data Management, Internet Access, and the ever-present eMails), I use mine to interface with my Amateur Radio equipment (Ham Radio). There are software applications that keep a log of who I talk to and when; show me who is on the air; and allow me to use digital modes of communication other than voice. The computer that failed was the one that was configured to do all of this, and more!

Bear with me as I provide some more "Geek Speak"... Ham Radio equipment is based on a 12 volt system. Computers use a 5 volt system in most of their outputs. So isolation is required to separate the two systems, yet still allow transfer of digital signals across the interface. The preferred connection to use on the computer was the good old COM

(Serial) port. Recently, there had been some USB to Serial Adapters, but they usually required special drivers for them to work. I was using several Com ports and one USB to Serial Adapter to make my computer talk to my ham radio, and vice-versa.

So, I have the new computer home, and as I am taking it out of the box, I notice that there aren't any Com (serial) Ports on the rear of the case. Just six (6) USB ports. Well, I should be able to use my existing USB to Serial Adapter. I had several Com (Serial) Port cards in the parts box. Maybe I can use one of them?

I had some fairly large capacity hard-drives in the failed computer with my ham radio applications already loaded. While they would have to be "installed" to update the registry, I would not have to search for all of the disks to re-load them.

The computer has not been out of its sales box only 30 minutes and I have the cover off! What are these funny little cables that connect to the hard drive and optical drives? What are these funny little (only about 3/4" long) accessory slots on the motherboard? Nothing from my Vista or earlier machines was going to be able to be used in this new Win7-64 bit machine. I had been Bill Gates'd again.

Well, let us continue with the installation of the new Win7 machine. The setup was quick and easy. One new feature that I liked was the ability to have dual monitors, which I was looking forward to trying.

As soon as the installation was complete, or at least as complete as I could be without the ham radio interfaces, I decided to see if I could get my USB to Serial Adapter to work. I went on the Internet and found the support site for the adapter and searched for the appropriate driver. The support site said that the WinXP and Vista 32 drivers would work on Win7-32, BUT this was a 64 bit machine! I found several drives that had cryptic titles and suggested that they were for Win7-64, so I downloaded them. None properly installed.

I was getting very, very frustrated. I considered returning the computer to the store and getting a Win7-32 bit machine. Luckily, I took a deep breath and went back to the Internet to check the availability of Win7-32 bit machines. They were available, but only in "business" class machines which had no optical drives (to prevent copying of corporate se-

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4)

crets), and other limitations. Well, that idea of computer return was shot easily. Now what to do???

Maybe I could get a Serial card that would plug into those funny small motherboard slots? You know how it is with "boys and their toys"! Back to the Internet to Google those funny slots. The side of the carton mentioned something about PCI-E, so I Googled that. I learned that these PCI-E slots come in different sizes (no of pins). With this information, I was then able to search for a Dual Serial Port PCI-E Adapter card. I found several and noted their manufacturer, whose sites I then searched for Win 7-64 drivers. One such site had a pretty complete support site with well labeled drivers. The price for their adapter card was less than two USB to Serial Adapters, so I placed my order for one.

While I was having so much fun on the Internet, I decided to find out about those funny hard-drive and optical drive cables. I learned that they are the new SATA type that use a serial communication in lieu of the old wide ribbon cables that used parallel signals. According to the internet the SATA configuration can process signals (data) a lot faster than parallel. Some more searching located some sources for reasonably priced SATA hard-drives and optical drives. I like to have at least two hard-drives and two optical CD-RW/DVD-RW drives in my computers.

I contacted several of my ham radio buddies that had recently acquired new Win7 computers, and one had the same USB to Serial adapter as mine. He had been able to locate and install the correct driver to have it work on his Win7-64 machine. He emailed it to me with a few installation hints. Guess what! The computer could now talk to my radio.

Little by little, my frustration was abating. During all of this frantic information gathering, I found that Win7 had a great user interface, and had connected to my Home LAN and the Internet with no effort on my part. I was liking Win 7 even more and more with every boot-up. Now that I understood the new hardware that was in the current Win7 computers, I felt comfortable there also. Maybe this wasn't such a bad machine after all. I decided to keep it. Just be prepared for the change.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.....

Need a Printer? Consider This....

by Edward Jahncke

Ass't Editor-NOPCC "Motherboard"

ejahncke@edwardjahncke.net

They say that problems go in "three's". December was my month for the "three's". First, computer died. Second, inkjet printer died, and Third, caught a winter cold! Well, at least the "three's" cycle was over, or so I hoped.

With Christmas coming, I needed a color printer to print those cards with the family photos, the special labels for the gifts, and lots more.

Having dealt with several different manufacturers inkjet printers, I noted some features that I wished to wanted to avoid.

- 1) **When one ink cartridge is empty, the printer stops.** Epson was one of my printers that did this. If a color cartridge was empty, you couldn't even print using the black. I wasn't going to get another Epson.
- 2) **Cartridges not easily (and cheaply) refilled.** Walgreen's provides an inkjet cartridge service at about 1/2 of the new cartridge price, but only do this for certain printer manufacturers. They love HP, but not Canon, which I had. That struck Canon from the list.

After careful research (reading the fine print in the online manuals and specifications), I found that the Brother line of inkjet printers had several redeeming features. They had multiple color cartridges that would keep printing even when one became empty. The multiple color cartridge feature is nice because if you, say print a lot red, you only have to replace the red cartridge and not the multi-cartridge that had has red-yellow and blue (OK, I know that is not the technical name for these colors, but....). The big negative is that Walgreens does not refill the Brothers cartridges, but they aren't too costly.

This isn't a complete review of the pros and cons of inkjet printers, just some of the factors that effected my usage. I did buy a Brothers inkjet (it was on sale) and am pleased with it. I have had a Brothers Black Laser printer since Win 98SE and it evens works on Win7. 'Nough said.

CLUB SUPPORTERS

THE SECRET GUIDE TO COMPUTERS

The Secret Guide is available at every New Orleans Personal Computer Club General Meeting. The latest printing is available for only \$15.00. Or contact Ray Paternostro either at: secretary@nopc.org or (504) 737-9099.

The Coins & Collectibles Shop

Coins - Coin Supplies
Antiques & Collectibles
Buy - Sell - Trade
Coin Collections Appraised

Rick Demers

3712 Williams Blvd, Suite I
Kenner, LA 70065
504-464-1995

Open:
Tuesday - Saturday 11am till 6pm
Sunday 12 noon till 5pm

WEBSITE AND INTERNET BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT
Olean, NY
Phone: 716.379.8015
Email: shenne@gmail.com
www.mardigrasdesign.com

McCann Electronics

M. Gerry McCann, President
100 Division St. Metairie, LA 70001
504-837-7272 800-473-7270
Cell 504-905-6064 Fax 834-1014
gmccann@mccann1.com
www.mccann1.com



★ Southern Star ★

A Division of Integrated Data Systems

John Souvestre

johns@sstar.com • www.sstar.com
(504) 832-0002 x110 • (504) 832-1877 (fax)
106 Metairie Lawn Dr. #300 • Metairie LA 70001
Support • (504) 888-3348 • support@sstar.com

The Computer Emergency Room

"We Fix Sick Computers"

Buy, Sell
& Trade



New / Used PC
Equipment

Frank Bozeman

3807 Airline Hwy. Metairie, LA 70001 Ph. 834-4386 FAX 834-4387
E-mail: comper@bellsouth.net

Computer Solutions



Joseph W. Chevalier

technojoe@csanola.com

7021 Airline Highway Ste A
Metairie, La. 70003
(504) 228 - 5990

Servers . Workstations . Networking . Maintenance



December 2009

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
		1	2 NOPCC GENERAL MTG 6:30 pm	3	4	5
6	7	8 Programmer's SIG 6:30 pm	9 New/ Intermediate Users SIG Mtg	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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.; and Students (under 21), \$20/yr. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month at J.D. Meisler Jr. High School on Cleary Avenue in Metairie, Louisiana.

NOPCC Directory

Elected Officers

President	Walt Christensen	president@nopcc.org	982-3705
Vice President	Mike York	vp@nopcc.org	738-5997
Secretary	Ray Paternostro	secretary@nopcc.org	737-9099
Treasurer	Kevin Kratzberg	treasurer@nopcc.org	464-4418
Director At Large	Tom Gaffney	director1@nopcc.org	
Director At Large	Bill Howard	director2@nopcc.org	831-1279
Director At Large		director3@nopcc.org	

Standing Committees

Newsletter Co-Editors	Kevin Kratzberg	editor@nopcc.org	464-4148
Public Relations	Tom Gaffney	pr@nopcc.org	
Webmaster	Sherrie Henne	webmaster@nopcc.org	504-913-5638

Special Interest Groups

Computer Programming	Elliot Mike York	mike@gnoug.org	738-5997
Internet	Ray Paternostro	internet-m@nopcc.org	737-9099
New/Intermediate Users	Tom Ford	new-user@nopcc.org	985-643-3172

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.nopcc.org