

Bits and Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

May 2011

Bella Vista Computer Club – John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Suite 208, Bella Vista, AR 72715

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(Basic Windows 7)

GOOD EMAIL MANNERS Most computer users have pet peeves directed toward those who don't know what good email manners are. So here are a few things to remember:

- ✓ Do not send messages without a subject line
- ✓ Never type in all caps
- ✓ Never use multiple exclamation points!!! Or ??????
- ✓ When responding to an email leave the original message intact
- ✓ Never pass on warnings, alerts or jokes, stories by email that say "send to all your friends" or "send to all your email addresses or contacts". **Let your recipients decide for who they want to send the email to.**
- ✓ Never forward email leaving previous email names or addresses in the email you are forwarding... **Always remove them before sending the email to others**
- ✓ Don't send emails with **cc's** of all your friends; always use **bcc** when sending to more than one person.
- ✓ Don't assume because you have a high-speed connection that everyone else does too. There are still some people using dial-up. Nothing is more irritating to those folks than receiving an embedded video they can't watch, or a huge embedded image that takes those twenty minutes to download.

OPEN HOUSE HELP CLINIC SCHEDULED

May 7 (Saturday) and May 18 (Wednesday) from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the John Ruehle Center. Let the Computer Club help you solve your computer problems. We are available to help you. And it's free!

WHAT ABOUT TV ADVERTISED

COMPUTER CLEANER PROGRAMS? Be very careful about advertised programs to speed up your computer. Everyone has for years been looking for the one magic bullet – a program we can install and make our computers run faster – better yet, make them run like new. Of course there really wasn't such a thing then when we had Windows 95 or Windows 98—and there isn't now. Remember, many TV advertised PC Cleaners possibly may not do anything more than what other programs can do.

There is no Santa Claus. The companies who promote these kinds of computer software spend millions advertising and make millions more duping those who are not computer savvy with such nonsense as "Does it take longer than three seconds to download your email?" That's a completely ridiculous question. It depends on how many emails you're downloading and how big each one is – and what kind of connection you have. Even with a fast broadband connection it's going to take you longer than 3 seconds to download 10 or 15 emails. Why? Because your email program has to query the mail server, the mail server

has to respond, then there's the authentication process. All that takes place before the first email is downloaded.

Paid actors testifying to the marvelous qualities and miracles performed by these kinds of programs do not make it true. If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. **The only thing these magic-bullet programs make faster is speed at which money flows from the wallet of the people who buy them.** There are several very good free software programs available to help your computer run faster. You can always bring your computer to the Computer Clubs' Open House. We would recommend this before you take your computer to the Geek Squad or some other computer repair service which will require a checkbook or credit card. What they will do is format your hard drive and reinstalls all your drivers – all for around \$200 to \$400. A format and a reinstall of Windows will always make your computer "run like new" because you are starting all over with Windows – but you'll lose everything unless you have good backups. You can perform a format and reinstallation of Windows yourself for \$0 – it will take you at least an hour. **You can get the correct drivers from your PC manufacturer's web site.**

But even a format won't help if your hard drive is failing or if you are experiencing other hardware issues. Only replacing the affected hardware will fix hardware issues.

Don't allow TV advertising to scam you out of your hard-earned money.

TOP TEN TIPS FOR MORE SECURITY WHILE ONLINE

- ALWAYS make sure you use an Anti-Virus program (only one) and keep it up-to-date.

- ALWAYS make sure to keep your operating system up-to-date. Always install the latest Windows updates.
- ALWAYS make sure you use at least two good anti-spyware programs – and keep them up-to-date.
- ALWAYS make sure you back-up your important data. That includes documents, pictures and emails. Keep the backup in a safe place. A safe place is not your Windows hard drive.
- ALWAYS make sure you are on a secure server when shopping online. Secure server URLs always start with https:// instead of http:// so look at your browser's address bar before entering your credit card information.
- NEVER open attachments you were not expecting even if they appear to be from someone you know very well. If in doubt, save the attachment to your desktop and scan it with your anti-virus program FIRST.
- NEVER visit porn (adult) sites or "warez" sites. These kinds of sites are notorious for furtively installing harmful, even dangerous software on your computer – sometimes without your knowledge or permission.
- NEVER attempt to close a pop-up window by clicking on it. Always use ALT+F4 key to close it. Nefarious pop-ups are ubiquitous on the web and they could infect your computer with spyware, Trojans or worse.
- NEVER reply to an email requesting personal information. No reputable company will ever ask you to do this.
- NEVER buy any products or services from a spam email. Those who do are really the ones responsible for the horrendous spam problem we all face today. If no one bought anything from spam emails, spammers wouldn't exist.

SHOULD YOUR MODEM BE LEFT ON OR TURNED OFF TO KEEP VIRUS AND SPYWARE FROM INVADING THE COMPUTER

Always leave the modem running except when there are thunderstorms or weather conditions which may cause power failures. Other modem failures or cable dropouts may be caused by cable companies over-subscribing a node. Each node is designed to support a certain number of users. Cable companies sometimes may put too many subscribers on a node which will cause a dropout and other problems. In fact if you experience dropouts, one of the fastest ways to get reconnected to the internet is to unplug the power to your cable modem for ten to fifteen seconds and then plug it back in. **Some computer users always turn off their computers when retiring each evening and leaving their modem on;** whereas, many leave both the computer and modem on 24/7.

It's great that you have several anti-spyware installed and one anti-virus program. **While having several anti-spyware programs installed is a great idea, you should choose one to run as your primary protector – and keep the others to double-check your computer once or twice a week. Don't have several anti-spyware programs running in the background.** That unnecessarily uses resources and doesn't afford you any greater protection – it might even cause conflicts. Always keep your anti-virus and anti-spyware programs updated. Windows XP, and Windows Vista both have built-in firewalls. Always have your Windows firewall turned on. You don't need to install a third-party firewall.

If you have a router (wired or wireless) you will find that it probably acts as hardware firewall too. Check your router's documentation to learn whether or not your router acts as a hardware firewall. A hardware firewall is superior to a software firewall.

SIX QUICK WINDOWS TIPS

- **Quick Change** – Want to change the name of a desktop icon, folder, file etc? Click whatever you want to rename, **then click the F2 key** and make your change!
- **Quick View** – To view properties menu of a file, folder, etc., highlight it and **click Alt + Enter**. Highlight My Computer and **click Alt + Enter** to view System Properties.
- **Quick Print** – **Click Control + P** to open the Print Dialog.
- **Quick Favorites** – **Click Control + D** to quick save a web page to your Favorites menu.
- **Quick Windows Explorer** – **Click the Windows Key + E** to open Windows Explorer in a flash!
- **Quick-Lock Your Computer** – (This tip only works if you have more than one user account on your computer and your account uses a password) **Click the Windows Key + L** to lock your computer. You'll need to type your password to log back into your user account.

COMPUTER CLUB CLASS SCHEDULE

May 16, 18 – (Basic Windows 7)
(1:30-3:00)

June 7, 9 – (Computer Maintenance)
(10:00-Noon)

June 7, 9 – (File Management & Security) (1:30 – 3:30)

June 13, 15 – (Basic Windows Vista)
(1:30 -3:30)

June 14, 16 – (Windows Mail Vista)
(10:00 – Noon)

WHAT IS "Recuva"?

This is a free program which is suppose to rescue deleted files but has some limitations.

Here is how Recuva works: If you've deleted something and emptied your recycle bin, the files you've deleted are not really gone. Most of them may be completely recoverable, if they have not been overwritten with other data. But, in order to retrieve deleted files which have been removed from your Recycle Bin, you need the right tools. That's where a program like "Recuva" comes in handy. Recuva will scan your drives for files you've deleted and recover them - if they're recoverable (i.e. they've not been overwritten with other data).

Keep this in mind: The more time that passes between the time you deleted the files and the time you attempt to recover them, the more unlikely it is you'll be able to recover a deleted file. So it's really essential if you deleted something really important that you don't wait too long to attempt to recover it. If you accidentally deleted a file, you should try to recover it as soon as you realize what you have done.

Let's say you took pictures of a birthday bash last Friday. And, tomorrow, you want to show these pictures to some friends but now you can't find those wonderful pictures. You panic. Someone deleted all of those birthday shots and emptied the recycle bin. By using Recuva, the program will scan your hard drives and find all the files you've deleted that can recovered.

"Recuva (pronounced "recover") is a freeware Windows utility to restore files that have been accidentally deleted from your computer. This includes files emptied from the Recycle bin as well as images and other files that have been deleted by user error

from digital camera memory cards or MP3 players. It will even bring back files that have been deleted by bugs, crashes and viruses!" It's not a program you'll use every day or even every week. Recuva is one of those tools that it's better to have and not need than to need it and not have it. Recuva is simple enough that even the newest computer user can figure it out. It's still freeware.

OPEN AN ELEVATED COMMAND PROMPT IN WINDOWS VISTA OR WINDOWS 7

Don't you just hate it when you're trying to perform a task in Windows Vista or Windows 7 that requires you to run a program and you get the message that you "must be an administrator" to run it?

Want to know a quick and easy way to open an elevated command prompt in Windows Vista or Windows 7? Here's how:

To open an elevated command prompt in Vista or Windows 7:

1. Press the Window key
2. Type cmd (in the start menu search) then press Ctrl+Shift+Enter. Now click OK or hit ALT+C to confirm the elevation prompt.

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