

# Bits and Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club`

June 2011

**Bella Vista Computer Club – John Ruehle Center**

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**TURN YOUR COMPUTER INTO A TV** This suggestion is for Windows 7 – so if you have XP or Vista, it probably won't do you much good. This information provided by "Cloudeight Information".

It is recommended you have a broadband (high speed) Internet connection. It's not configured by default, so you'll have to set it up first.

First launch Windows Media Center. You can do this quickly by pressing the "Start button" and typing in Windows Media Center in the start menu search. Then choose TV from the menu. You'll see the words "Internet TV" appear. Click or press on Internet TV. Next you will need to install a small add-on from Microsoft, and you may need to upgrade your version of Microsoft Silverlight too – this is done automatically, if necessary. All this takes only a few seconds to download. The add-on (and upgrades) will install automatically for you. Once you have Internet TV set up, you'll be amazed at the great choices you have. You can watch full episodes of PBS shows, some of your favorite TV shows, news shows, movies, and movie and program trailers, even get the latest sports shows. You will be really surprised by the high quality of the TV shows and movies, and by the number of choices offered.

Internet TV is one of the least known features of Windows 7, but we think it's one of the best features of Windows 7.

## **NAN DELANY – NEW COMPUTER CLUB PRESIDENT**

Welcome to Nan DeLany for offering to serve as President of the Bella Vista Computer Club. She will be filling the vacancy that has existed for several months with the resignation of Dick Wenzel.

**OPEN HOUSE HELP CLINIC SCHEDULE** – Computer Club members that are having problems with their computers, questions on how to do things, get new computers up and running, or any other concerns, can bring their laptops (with power supply) or desktop towers (no monitor, keyboards, or mouse) to the John Ruehle Center for help on the following dates: June 15<sup>th</sup> (Wednesday) and July 2<sup>nd</sup> (Saturday) between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. This is a free service for members only. Non-members will need to join before receiving assistance.

**COMPUTER CLASSES OFFERED IN JUNE** Classes offered include:

June 1 & 9      Computer Maintenance

June 1 & 9      File Management and Security

June 13 & 15    Basic Windows (Vista)

June 14 & 16    Windows Vista – Windows Mail

June 20 & 22    Internet

June 20, 22, 27, 29    Using Windows 7

June 27 & 29    Windows 7 Live Mail

## **USE YOUR USB FLASH DRIVE TO LOCK YOUR**

**COMPUTER** There's a small free program called "Predator" that you can install on a USB flash drive that allows you to use it to lock your computer. It does this by disabling your keyboard, monitor and mouse whenever you remove the special USB flash drive from your computer. Simply remove the flash drive and your computer is locked, until you return and insert the flash drive back into a USB port on your computer. So what Predator does is turn a USB flash drive into a key that locks and unlocks your computer. It's really great if you travel and take a notebook with you, or if you don't want people snooping around your PC when you're not home. What about when your kids or grandkids are away at school and need to secure their computer?

- ✓ Here's some additional details on Predator from the programs developer:
- ✓ When you return back to your PC you put the USB flash drive in place: the keyboard and mouse are immediately released, and the display is restored.
- ✓ It's easier and faster than closing your Windows session, since you do not have to retype your password when you return.
  - Advanced Security Features:

Predator records all security-related events in a log file: start, alarms, and stop. By reading this log, you will know if intruders have tried to use your computer while you have been away.

Predator frequently changes the security codes recorded on your USB drive. If an intruder manages to copy your flash drive, this copy will not work because the codes on your own flash drive will have changed in the meantime.

Predator disables the Windows task manager when you unplug the USB drive. Nobody can stop it with Ctrl-Alt-Del.

Predator lets you regain control of your computer if you lose your flash drive. When you start the software for the first time, you set a password that will unlock your session if your USB drive is not available.

Predator can sound an audible alarm is somebody enters an invalid password.

Predator can protect several PCs with the same flash drive.

If interested go on the internet and type in "Predator" to find this free download.  
(*"Cloudeight information and Web"*)

## **STRONG PASSWORDS: The Key to Your**

**Security** – Do you use passwords like 12345 or djones525 or katybelle1942? In the age of "the cloud" it's more important than ever that you use strong and secure passwords. Server security has gotten better and better, encryption has gotten stronger and stronger, but all that means nothing if your password is something like "password" or "tom1234" or "penny 6129". If someone can guess your password they can access your online accounts; all the server security in the world will not save you if you continue to use simple passwords. And if you use the same password for everything– you're just asking for big, big trouble. Simple passwords are an invitation to disaster. Using one simple password for everything will be a disaster - it's not a question of "if", it's a question of "when".

**Why?** Because if someone guesses your password and you use that same password for everything – then the person who has your password has access to everything you do. In “the cloud” that means they have access to your money, your credit cards, and you personal, private data, your email, all your messages, and maybe even your computer. Whether any of us like it or not, we moving out of the desktop era and into the “cloud” era. The Cloud is The Web and no matter what we think the rush is on to make “the cloud” as important today as the desktop was yesterday.

Security companies and Internet Technical people constantly advise to use complex and difficult passwords. An example is using a mixture of upper and lower case letters with different numbers and with at least one special character like “@,#,<,\*”. Others believe this type of password (EX: O4fS.6\*) is too hard to remember and is often left on a post note. In contrast, others believe hackers use several complex programs like key logger and dictionary programs that can scan at the rate of 500 times per second. Hackers may use a dictionary program that can search for any word found in the dictionary. When using a password manager like RoboForm or LastPass (used by Cloudeight) these free programs will help generate passwords for each web site requiring a password sign-in. These programs will also tell you how strong your password is that you select. There are many other password generators on line such as:

<http://strongpasswordgenerator.com/>,

<http://www.grc.com/passwords.htm>

<http://www.multicians.org/thvv/gpw.html>

**Password Recommendation** a preferred way to prepare secure passwords is to prepare a three word statement that you can remember and type fast. For example: this is fun, fluffy is puffy (3 uncommon words), du-bi-du-bi (4 uncommon words). A useable and secure password is then not a complex one. It is one you can remember – a simple password using 3+ words. Note the spaces between the words.

Here are some additional useful tips for secure and effective passwords:

1. **Avoid basic words.** Words that you can find in a dictionary, even if written backwards, in another language, or with simple number following the word are definite no-nos. Hackers have password-cracking tools that predict commonly used words.
2. **Avoid using personal information.** Passwords that include your name or username, birthday, anniversary, favorite sports team or TV show can be guessed by anyone who knows you.
3. **Size Matters.** Choose passwords that are at least 8-14 characters long and use a combination of upper case letters, special characters (like symbols or punctuation marks), and numerals.
4. **Use mnemonics.** Try working a mnemonic phrase into your password. For example, “There’s no place like home” would be translated into “TNPLH”
5. **Change your passwords often.** Online financial accounts should be changed

every 1-2 months, while other passwords should be changed every 3-4 months. Consider making a note on your calendar to remind yourself of these tasks.

6. It is recommended to use different passwords for each website. Avoid repeating passwords or similar patterns because this increases the vulnerability of your online accounts.

Keep your passwords secret. Don't share your passwords with friends or family members. The best place to store your passwords is either in your head or in a locked safe. Certainly do not store your passwords on your computer or mobile device; this is the first place that cyber criminals will search. Password-storage software such as 1Password or myID.com will also help you keep track of your online privacy settings and ensure that your personal information including passwords is not exposed to the world. For additional information consider taking the time to review the following: <http://baekdal.com/tips/password-security-usuability> (*Info from Cloudeight and Baekdal*)

#### **BELLA VISTA COMPUTER CLUB OFFICERS**

Nan DeLany, President

Chuck Billman, Vice-President

Julie Storm, Secretary

Lee Hehl, Treasurer

George Hart, Board Member

Marie Herr, Board Member

Jan Kaylor, Board Member

**WHAT TO DO IF A COMPUTER WON'T BOOT** These tips will work on Windows XP, Vista and Windows 7. (*Information from Cloudeight*)

1. Shut the computer off at the power switch
2. Wait at least two minutes
3. Turn your computer back on – Tap the F8 key continuously as soon as the computer starts to boot
4. Select "Safe Mode" from the menu
5. When the computer boots into Safe Mode you'll see a dialog box telling you are in Safe Mode
6. Open your start menu and go to All Programs, Accessories, and System Tools and then select System Restore.
7. Choose a date at least 2 days in the past and restore your computer to that point.
8. Your computer will reboot automatically
9. If all went well, you should be back into Windows. Select OK at the System Restore prompt if all seems OK

If these instructions don't work, you have another option – find your Windows CD or DVD. Insert it in your DVD/CD drive and power off your computer. Wait a minute or two. Turn your computer back on. You'll see a dialog on the screen that will say "Press any key to boot from CD (DVD)" Press any key. Your computer should boot up. When you're in Windows, run a system restore as per the instructions above.

#### **DON'T FORGET THE "FREE CLASSES OFFERED FOR COMPUTER CLUB MEMBERS**

*"Note: The Bella Vista Computer Club assumes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information contained herein and will accept no liability for its application."*