

Bits and Bytes

September 2012

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

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Richard Clark, President

Don Hood, Newsletter Editor

ELECTION RESULTS

Some new officers were selected by a large number of members in attendance at the Annual Membership Meeting August 13. Newly elected officers include: **Richard Clark, President, Donna Farmer, Secretary, and James Gutowski, Treasurer.** The members re-elected incumbents Chuck Billman, Vice-President, and Marie Herr, Board Member. The nominating committee was very successful in submitting a large slate of candidates for the members to consider.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

Jim Price, Membership Chairman, is reminding members that with the beginning of the Club's fiscal year (Sept. 1st), membership renewal will require payment of \$20.00 for the first household member and \$10.00 each for other members of the household. For members who joined during the past fiscal year, renewal will be required by their anniversary date. Members can renew at an open house, regular or special meeting or via mail.

Open house for Computer Repair & Help for club members at the Computer Club:

Sept. 19 (10-1 pm)

Oct. 1st (1-4 pm)

Oct 3rd (10-1 pm)

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES—CLASSES

- ♦ Microsoft Word —Sept. 11, 13 —1-3 pm
- ♦ Windows Vista Mail —Sept. 18, 20 —10 am to noon
- ♦ Digital Photography—Photo Editing & Sharing — Sept. 18 — 1-4 pm
- ♦ Microsoft Publisher Sept. 25, 27 — 1-3 pm
- ♦ Microsoft Excel —Oct. 1-3 — 10 am to noon
- ♦ PC Maintenance—Part 1 --Cleaning — Oct. 2 — 1 pm to 4 pm
- ♦ Microsoft Word Workshop — Oct. 4 — 1 pm to 3 pm

WELCOME TO OUR AUGUST COMPUTER CLUB NEW MEMBERS

Jamie Johnson	Doug Johnson
Deena Guptil	Bonnie Mangan
Pam Stephens	Dianne Fritz
Bob Guthrie	

TRY USING MICROSOFT'S PASSWORD CHECKER

ALL COMPUTER USERS need to be cognizant of the necessity of using strong passwords. However, most of us do not. Most use simple passwords like birthdays, names, street addresses and simple words. Many of us use the same password for everything thinking that I don't really need to worry. I've never had anyone get into my computer and go to my sites. Why is everyone always making such a fuss about passwords and security. I've never had my identity stolen before. In years past, we never locked our house, left our car's doors unlocked and even the keys in the ignition. Now we wouldn't even think about doing it. Just as we keep an anti-virus security program on a computer and some spyware programs to keep our computer clean and running smoothly, we need to secure our computer and its programs with **strong passwords**.

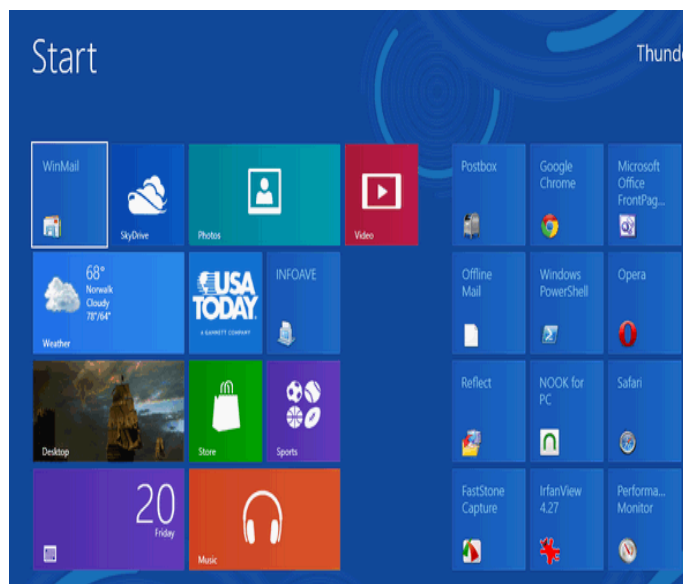
Microsoft has a Web page that lets you check your password—it's called Microsoft Password Checker. This program allows you to check each and every password to see how secure they are. Why? Because there are dozens, perhaps hundreds of password cracking programs available on the Web. And they are good. Simple passwords are simple to crack.

Go to the Web and type in "Microsoft's Password Checker" or <https://www.microsoft.com/security/pc-security/password=checker.aspx>. Note that this is a secure site having the (s) behind the http. You will be able to automatically evaluate each of your passwords and see how strong they are. Microsoft does not retain information entered into the password checker. The password you enter is checked and validated on your computer. It is not sent over the internet. If you need help, Microsoft provides assistance in creating strong passwords by clicking on a link "Create strong passwords".

Editor's Note: With the upcoming October 26 release of Microsoft's new Windows 8 the following article provides information that may help computer users to make a decision to either stay with Windows 7 or upgrade to Windows 8.

WHY YOU SHOULD CONSIDER INSTALLING WINDOWS 8 RP (RELEASE PREVIEW) ON YOUR WINDOWS 7 COMPUTER

"I'm going to stick my neck out here. I've never been one to recommend that anyone run Windows operating system betas. But if you're using Windows 7, you might get a nice surprise if you download and install Windows 8 Release Preview. It's the most polished Windows preview ever -- and if you don't like the Metro interface (see image below), you can use the standard Windows desktop sans start button. There's no start button on Windows 8 so why does my Windows 8 have one? Because I added one with the help of a little freeware program called [ViStart](#) (beware, it wants to put other software on your computer -- but if you're careful and click the decline button when it asks to install the junk ware, you'll get a nice Windows 7-style start button on your Windows computer).



The Windows 8 Metro Desktop

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The Windows 8 Desktop sans Metro - using ViStart to restore the start button.

Almost any computer currently running Windows 7 has more than enough power to run Windows 8. And all or almost all of your applications will run on Windows 8. My windows 7 laptop got peppier after installing Windows 8 -- Windows 8 handles memory better than Windows 7 and I think it's generally lighter on resources.

The official Microsoft minimum system requirements for the computers to run Windows 8 are:

- 1 gigahertz (GHz) or faster 32-bit (x86) or 64-bit (x64) processor
- 1 gigabyte (GB) RAM (32-bit) or 2 GB RAM (64-bit)
- 16 GB available hard disk space (32-bit) or 20 GB (64-bit)
- DirectX 9 graphics device with WDDM 1.0 or higher driver (If you're running Win 7 Home Premium or better -- you have these)
- Taking advantage of touch input requires a screen that supports multi-touch.

Microsoft has a free tool that will analyze your computer and provide you with information about any incompatible devices and software on your computer so that you can upgrade them or remove them before installing Windows 8. One thing I'll tell you right out of the gate is that

you're going to have to uninstall Microsoft Security Essentials before you can install Windows 8 Release Preview. Windows 8 comes with Windows Defender (an antivirus/anti-malware) which is not the old clunky Windows Defender but a newer version of Microsoft Security Essentials. To check your computer download and run the Windows 8 Consumer Preview installer <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/download> . The program will run and start a compatibility checked instantly. It will take some time for the program to analyze your computer. Once it's finished it will list all the devices and programs that you'll need to update or remove before you install Windows 8 on your computer.

In my experience with this tool, only 2 software programs (one a virtualization tool, the other Microsoft Security Essentials) were not compatible. I had no hardware incompatibilities on my 2 1/2 year-old Windows 7 laptop.

Windows 8 runs so smoothly that many mornings, when I start work, I forget I'm using Windows 8. It has caused me no problems whatsoever. Windows Mail runs great on Windows 8 --even better than on Windows 7.

A couple of other things you should be aware of:

1. The final release of Windows 8 might be substantially different from Windows 8 Release Preview

2. You can't go back to Windows 7 if you install Windows 8 Release Preview.

That means you're going to have to buy Windows 8 when it's released, or start over from scratch by wiping your hard drive and reinstalling Windows 7. But... you can get a great deal on Windows 8 Professional (upgrade). It's only \$39.95 between now and January 2013.

Windows 7 users can keep all their programs, personal files, folders and settings. Windows Vista users can keep their personal files and settings. Windows XP users can keep only their personal files.

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So if you're a XP or Vista user -- keep in mind you're going to lose your programs and more if you install Windows 8 Release Preview.

Words of caution: This has been my experience with Windows 8. Your mileage may vary."

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ITS OFFICIAL—WINDOWS 8 TO BE RELEASED **OCT. 26**

Microsoft famously likes to hold a few juicy details back to announce at its annual all-hands sales meeting. That's where Windows chief Steven Sinofsky just told everyone that the release date for Windows 8 has been set for October 26. Microsoft is hoping that consumers mark their calendars.

Windows 8 is a big departure for Redmond. The tile-based Metro UI is invading all of the company's products, and Windows 8 might be the clearest example of that. The traditional desktop is being minimized in favor of the Metro start screen. Microsoft hopes this will be a more friendly environment, but some doubters think it will be too great a shift. Even the desktop looks different, having lost its iconic start button.

Part of the Metro strategy is related to tablets, some of which will be ARM based. The WinRT version of the platform will come on Windows tablet devices. The October 26 date applies to new PCs, as well as upgrade copies of Windows 8. These upgrade copies will be available for just \$40, That price might go up later, though. An OEM version of the OS for system builders is expected, but Microsoft did not talk about when we might get that, or what it would cost. Also, remember that the \$40 deal is only good if you buy the download copy from the Microsoft website. A packaged DVD will still run you \$70.

WAIT! BEFORE YOU DO ANY THING ELSE – **REBOOT!**

Whether you're using Windows 98 or Windows 7 one thing remains constant: If you're having problems with your Windows computer, no matter what they are, the first thing you should try is rebooting. Whether you're having problems with installing a program, running a program, opening a folder, opening a file, or your computer is running like Granny Gertrude in a senior potato sack race, rebooting is the first thing you should try.

Why? Because, you might spend hours trying to figure out what is wrong and never find a thing. Before you waste time looking through tips, tricks or Goggling for the answer, you might find that rebooting will fix whatever ails your computer.

Rebooting flushes your memory cache, reloads all Windows system files and gives your computer a fresh start. Everything's reloaded, memory is cleared, and that, my friends, can make a world of difference.

So before you waste hours of time trying to figure out a problem, save your time and the frustration of trying to find a solution to a problem that may be solved by something as simple as restarting your computer. We've learned this lesson the hard way, many times. We've wasted time looking for solutions to problems that seemed to disappear after we rebooted. And, often, in the frustration of the moment, when your computer seems destined for oblivion, simply restarting it might take care of whatever was wrong. Of course, if the problem keeps recurring, even after you restart your computer, you're going to have to dig down and find the source of the problem and fix it. But save all that work for later. The first step in troubleshooting is rebooting.

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