

Bits and Bytes February 2014

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

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

Web Site: www.bvcompclub.org

E-mail: jrc@bvcc.arcoxmail.com

Richard Clark, President

Don Hood, Newsletter Editor

SECRET WINDOWS 8 STUFF -

Part 2

*Windows 8 and 8.1 (continued from
January "Bits & Bytes" newsletter)*

Windows 8 maintains itself automatically. Did you know that Windows 8 has a new feature that runs maintenance tasks like software updates, security scanning, and other maintenance and diagnostics, automatically. It also runs Disk Optimizer (Defrag) automatically every week.

By default, Windows 8 runs automatic daily maintenance tasks at 3AM daily. If you're like us and using your computer at that hour :-), Windows 8 is smart enough to wait until you're done using your computer. Automatic maintenance will wake your computer to do its thing, too!

Windows 8 also gives you the option to change the automatic maintenance time or turn it off all together so, if you wish, you can perform maintenance manually. You can take control of Windows automatic maintenance from the Action Center. You can access the Action Center most easily from the tray icon which looks like a flag, or type Action Center when you are on the Windows desktop - or just type it into the search in the Charms bar.

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Computer Club Classes

PC Maintenance Part 1 "Cleaning"
Feb 11 — 9 am to noon

File Management Feb 11—1 pm to 4 pm

Understanding Windows 8 (4 hrs.)
Feb 11 & Feb 22 — 10 am to noon

Windows Live Mail (Windows 7, 8 & 8.1)
(4 hrs.) Feb 25 & Feb 27 — 10 am to noon

Microsoft Excel (4 hrs.) Feb 25 & Feb 27
1 pm to 3 pm

Computer Security (2 hrs.) Mar 4
9 am to noon

Setting Up Windows 8 (3 hrs.) Mar 4
1 pm to 4 pm

Digital Photography Part 3 "Photo
Editing & Sharing (3 hrs.) Mar 5
9 am to noon

Pre-registration is required for all classes and are free to all Computer Club members. Call Marie Herr (273-2558) for more information and to pre-register.

Genealogy Special Information Group will meet at 10 AM February 15th at the John Ruehle Center.

WHERE CAN YOU STILL FIND A PC RUNNING WINDOWS 7?

Summary: If you want a PC running Windows 7, where do you look? Skip your local office superstore or big-box retailer and go where the business buyers go. In those channels, you'll find that Windows 7 never went away. In fact, it's not just alive, it's thriving. I conducted a thorough check of business-focused PC channels. As expected, I found a huge assortment of Windows 7 PCs available for purchase there.

Windows 7 PCs are a drop in the bucket at HP's consumer-focused online store, which currently has a grand total of three Windows 7 desktops on offer, with 33 distinct Windows 8 and 8.1 desktop machines on offer. But you get a very different story if you visit HP's **Small and Medium Business site**. Or if you check in with U.S. archrival Dell, which also has a separate online store for **Work and Business PCs**.

Even the consumer-friendly Newegg, a favorite of PC hobbyists and DIY system builders, has lots of choices available: Search for *Windows 7 downgrade* and you get a list of 27 desktop and notebook PCs with Windows 7 pre-installed, ranging in price from \$398.00 all the way up to more than \$3,900 for an HP EliteBook Mobile Workstation with a Haswell Core i7, 32 GB of RAM, twin 256 GB SSDs, and AMD FirePro graphics.

It's true that PC retailers aimed at consumers tend to push the newer, touch-enabled Windows 8 devices. But don't assume that means you can't track down a Windows 7 box. At the most consumer retailer of them all, Best Buy, you can still find PCs running Windows 7. When I searched at Best-Buy.com in the Desktops and All-in-ones category, the filtering tool told me it has 369 Windows 8 machines to choose from, as well as 227 Windows 7 options, including choices from third-party sites that sell through Best Buy.

Personally, if I were going to buy a Windows 7 PC today I would look for one that includes a Windows 8 Pro license and has been downgraded to Windows 7 Pro by the OEM. That configuration gives you the flexibility to upgrade to Windows 8.1 (or, presumably, 8.2 or 8.3, if those versions arrive in the next year or two) for free. If you buy a PC with a Windows 7 license and decide later that you want to upgrade, you'll have to pay dearly for the privilege.

The bottom line: Windows 7 never went away. It continues to be widely available today, just as it was before Microsoft released Windows 8. Under Microsoft's normal sales lifecycle, OEMs would be prohibited from building and selling new PCs when the two-year anniversary of Windows 8 rolls around in October 2014. We'll see what happens then, however. I won't be surprised if Microsoft extends that date.

By Ed Bott for The Ed Bott Report | January 21, 2014 ZDNet Tech Today - US <newsletters@zdnet.online.com>

Open houses for Computer Repair & Help

Feb 19th (10 am—1 pm) (Wednesday)

March 1st (10 am—1 pm) (Saturday)

March 5th (1 pm—4 pm) (Wednesday)

COPY AND PASTE TRACKING NUMBERS TO FIND OUT WHERE YOUR PACKAGES ARE

Did you know you can copy and paste any UPS or FedEx tracking code directly into the address bar of Chrome, IE or Firefox and get one search result that you can click on to get all the information about a shipment? You can, and it's fast.

 **HAPPY VALENTINE'S DAY**

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

Windows 8: System Restore, System Refresh, and System Reset

Windows 8 offers the most choices for digging yourself out of a computer hole than any previous version of Windows. Now, we're going to clear up some of the misconceptions and give you a plain English explanation of Windows 8's three options to get your computer back up and running well again if you should find yourself crossing the computer version of the River Styx.

Windows 8 System Restore

Restore your computer to an earlier point in time

Not much has changed here. System Restore reverts your system back to a time when it was running well. None of your personal files are lost and only the programs you installed AFTER the restore point you choose will be missing. In other words, your computer will be exactly like it was before you started the restore minus the programs you installed after the chosen restore point. All your email and documents, photos and music, everything but the programs you installed after the restore point and any settings changes you made after the restore point. System Restore should always be your first choice if your computer starts behaving very badly.

Windows 8 System Refresh

Refresh your Windows 8 PC

Refreshing your PC reinstalls Windows and keeps your personal files, settings, and the apps that came with your PC and apps that you installed from Windows Store, but not the programs you installed. Programs are not apps to Windows 8. They're called desktop programs and they'll all be gone if you choose Refresh. Keep that in mind. Still, it's better to try Refresh first if Restore does not fix the problems that caused your PC to go into computer hades. Oh, and one more thing: Windows provides you with a list of programs you'll need to reinstall after the Refresh is completed.

Windows 8 System Reset

Reset your Windows 8 computer to its factory state

Resetting your PC reinstalls Windows but deletes your files, settings, and apps—except for the apps and programs that came with your PC. In the old days this was called using the Recovery disk or partition. You'll end up with a computer that is exactly like it was the day you bought it – complete with any garbage programs which your lovely computer manufacturer decided to install just to make a few extra bucks from. Resetting your Windows 8 computer should be your last choice, and only if Restore and Refresh didn't correct the problems with your PC.

This article applies to Windows 8 and Windows 8.1. *copyright 2008 by Cloudeight Internet.*
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WELCOME NEW COMPUTER CLUB MEMBERS

Art Bregel	Jean Berg
Connie Clark	Betty Cummings
Denise Eicken	Reta Fair
Barbara Hansen	Barbara Harlson
Jane Hauser	Beth Kastl
Deloris Jennings	Jim Jennings
Judy Massman	Ken Massman
Bob Rolle	Janice Waters
Karen Twamley	Tim Twamley

Congratulations to **Mary Wynne** upon winning the new Toshiba Laptop raffled at the Computer Club meeting January 13, 2014. The brand new laptop was completely set up with the new Windows 8 operating system during the meeting by Chuck Billman prior to it being raffled off to the membership at the conclusion of the meeting. The club purchased the computer for \$398.00 and members bought tickets totaling \$393.00. However, 16 new members joined the club and 16 members renewed their membership.

ANOTHER REASON WHY YOU SHOULD SHOP ONLINE

For everyone

We have answered numerous questions from our readers who ask if they are safe shopping online - YES. And we've been big promoters of online shopping since we started this newsletter and we been proven correct time after time. We still get several emails a month from folks who still won't buy online and want to call us to give us a credit card number. No. No. No. We've been telling you it's safe to shop online. And now we can tell you that it's even safer shopping online than shopping at the store around the corner. Keep on reading and we will tell you why.

Target admits identity theft may have affected 80 million users...

The headline above, and others like it, makes most people wonder. And many believe this breach happened online. But this breach happened at the store from customers swiping their credit cards at the register. No one who bought items from Target's Web site had their credit card data stolen, but many millions who shopped at Target's brick and mortar did.

Retailers have hired security experts and spent huge sums of money on securing their point-of-sale Web sites, but they've basically ignored their check-out systems in their stores. The card-swiping technology used at checkout lines, almost everywhere, is decades old technology. You don't need us to tell you this -- you've all seen the card scanners: How much have they changed in the last 10 years?

Emsisoft wrote about this in a recent article, saying: (continue next column)

It would seem that a retail economy so focused on ensuring the security of online shopping has left its doors wide open for identity thieves poised to find another means of entry. Current details on how exactly the thieves hacked their way in is limited, but one can only assume that there was some sort of gaping breach in Target's internal accounting security. One further possibility is that the theft was an inside job, years in the making. (See <http://blog.emsisoft.com/2013/12/19/brick-and-mortar-identity-theft-targets-40-million-accounts/>)

When you shop online, you are making each purchase on a secure server. All data traveling to and from your computer and the Web site is encrypted. And it's encrypted by session. In other words, when you shop online today and go back to the same store tomorrow, a different random encryption code is used and it's only valid for that shopping session. When you swipe your card at the check out line in a store, your card number, your name, and your 3-digit security code is read by the card reader and sent electronically UNENCRYPTED to its destination.

Until retailers shore-up their card scanners and encrypt the data read from each credit card, customer-by-customer, you're much, much safer shopping online. And before you write and tell us that the cases of online identity theft are numerous, let us say that these were not shopper-by shopper breaches, these were data center breaches. And none that we are aware of were as massive as the Target breach and most of the information stolen was incomplete. In the Target breach, hackers were able to capture all the data they would need to use the individual credit card.

So, for now, until retailers upgrade their check-out line card scanners, you're much safer shopping online. *copyright 2008 by Cloudeight Internet, <http://thundercloud.net/infoave/index.html>*