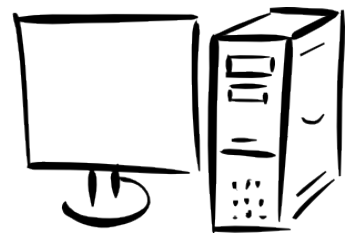# Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

January

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center   1801 Forest Hills Blvd   Suite 208 (lower level) Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: www.bvCompClub.org

Email: jrc@bvcc.arcoxmail.com

Meetings

January 9th

BVCC Board Meeting

5:30 pm

Computer Club Meeting

Highlands Crossing 7 pm

NEW MEETING ROOM

All meetings are on the lower level of the Center. You may use entrance A on the West side or entrance C on the South side and take the elevator or stairs to the bottom floor. Entrance A (Main entrance) is closer to the stairs. Entrance C (The Apartments) has a covered walkway, is closer to the elevator, and has more parking.

The NE Village House entrance to the lower level will no longer provide access to our rooms.

   Monthly meetings are in Community Room A (marked 1001) NW wing lower floor.

PROGRAM

Jerry Argentsinger will present a program on Password Management at the 7 pm meeting of the Bella Vista Computer Club on Monday, January 9.

HELP CLINICS

Open House help clinics will be held Jan. 4 and Feb. 1 from 1 to 4 pm; and Jan. 7 and 18, and Feb. 4 from 9 am to noon. Help clinics are a free service for computer club members.

Bring your tower, laptop, tablet or smartphone for problem solving.

Welcome New Members

Craig   Marten
Jansen   Wernimont
Robert   Wernimont
Betty   Gale
Richard   Sherbondy

New officers have been elected but we still need a volunteer for **Secretary.** It is not hard, I did it for two years and enjoyed working with the Board.

Julie Storm

Genealogy SIG 10 AM John Ruehle Center

3rd Saturday 10-12 am

Should You Update Your Device Drivers?

Let's be clear -- those popups are ads, not dire warnings from your computer's operating system. They're pushing software that scans your computer, looking for device drivers that need to be updated. Some of these products are outright scams or malware in disguise. Others are semi-legit, but misleading.

Let's start by defining the term. Device drivers, commonly called just "drivers," are small programs that act as translators between your operating system and the hardware devices it uses. Every hardware device needs a driver. Your printer, scanner, mouse, keyboard, hard drive, graphics card and network adapter are all examples of devices that require a software driver in order to respond to commands from the operating system.

For example, when you hit the Print button, Windows issues the generic command "print," and a device driver translates that command into the specific instructions needed by your particular make and model of printer.

Windows comes with a vast library of drivers. When Windows is installed, it scans your computer for attached devices and tries to match them with drivers from its library. Likewise, when you plug a new device into a Windows system, Windows looks for an appropriate driver in its library. If the right driver for a device is not in Windows' library, you will be prompted to supply it (typically, on a CD included with your hardware device).

Install the driver and you're done, right? Well, not always. Hardware makers do issue updated drivers occasionally. Whether you install them or not is up to you.

Do I Really Need This Driver?

If you've determined that you absolutely need to update one or more of your device drivers, I strongly urge you to use System Restore to create a restore point first. Then if anything goes wrong, you can undo the update. It's also a good idea to make a backup of all your device drivers, in case you have a hard drive failure which requires re-installing Windows from scratch.

Most driver updates are performance-enhancers. They may fix minor but irritating glitches in previous versions. Often, these glitches are so minor that they pertain only to particular PC models and do not affect the majority of users.

Sometimes you'll need to update a device driver if you move to a newer operating system. For example, you might have a printer or scanner that worked fine under Windows XP. You upgrade to Windows 7, 8, or 10, and now it doesn't work. A quick trip to the vendor's website should help you find a driver written specifically for that device and operating system. In most cases, you will simply download and run an EXE file to install the new driver, then restart your computer. If that's not the case, look for instructions on the vendor's site.

A few driver updates patch security vulnerabilities that might enable bad guys to infiltrate your computer - if they bothered to take advantage of the vulnerabilities. It's just not worth a hacker's time to write a virus targeting the driver for one of several thousand devices. Beside, security-related driver updates generally find their way automatically onto most users' systems via Windows Update.

Most people don't bother looking for driver updates unless they are having a problem with a hardware device. After all, it isn't broken, why fix it? By the way, Windows Device Manager is not a reliable indicator of whether your drivers are up to date. Device Manager tells you only whether a driver is working, not whether it's the latest and greatest version.

Watch Out For These Driver Update Gotchas

There are many so-called "driver updaters" available online. These programs scan your system's drivers, tell you which ones are out of date, and offer to fetch and install the latest drivers for you. Sounds neat, until you realize there's a fee for all of this. Then you may also realize that you have no way of knowing whether the drivers installed by such services are really the latest drivers, or even if they are malware in disguise.

Don't just Google the name of your device and download a new driver from the first website that pops up. Aside from Windows Update, the only trustworthy source of drivers is the support website of the hardware manufacturer. If you are having an issue with a particular device, look for a more recent driver on the maker's site. But updating drivers just for the sake of "keeping current" is not worth the effort.

Courtesy of ASK BOB.. Bob Rankin   http://askbobrankin.com

Transferring Files From Your Old Computer

There is an important divide between PC transfer programs. It's pretty easy to move data files and even settings stored in the Windows registry. There are plenty of free utilities out there that will do this job; in fact, one is baked into Windows 7 and above. But it's a lot trickier to move applications, such as Microsoft Office, games, or other installed programs from one hard drive to another. Utilities that move apps often cost money.

Windows Easy Transfer is the free data-moving utility built into Windows 7 and 8. (but not Windows 10). Just typing "Windows Easy" into the search box on the Start menu will find this utility; then click on its name in the results list to launch it.

You'll have the option to transfer files over an Easy Transfer cable, a special USB cable made by several vendors. Belkin's Easy Transfer cable goes for $28 on Amazon. You can also transfer files over a network. But for migrating all your data to a new PC, you should use an external storage drive or USB thumb drive of suitable capacity.

Selecting the external storage option tells Easy Transfer to create one file on the external device that contains all of your data and settings, as opposed to copying files individually across a cable or network. After the Easy Transfer file is created, you can use Easy Transfer to copy everything from that file to its proper place on the new PC. One drawback to Easy Transfer is that it will only copy browser settings and bookmarks from Internet Explorer. If you use another browser, such as Google Chrome or Firefox, you're out of luck.

PCTransfer from iOBIT is a free program from the makers of Advanced SystemCare. Like Easy Transfer, PCTransfer will move only data files and settings, not applications. Also, it does not support transfers over cable or network; only the external drive option is available. And unlike Microsoft's Easy Transfer, PCTransfer will copy browser settings and bookmarks from Internet Explorer, Chrome, Firefox, and Opera.

Laplink PCMover and Other Options

Windows 10 does not have a native file transfer program like Easy Transfer, Instead, Microsoft has partnered with Laplink to include with Windows 10 a basic version of Laplink PCMover. The free Win 10 version moves only data and settings. The paid versions move applications, too. Prices range from $20 to $60 depending on how many user accounts and PCs you need to migrate. I've used paid versions of Laplink PCMover twice, and found it did an excellent job of moving my files, settings and programs from an older Windows system to a new computer.

The EaseUS Todo PCTrans Pro migration app gets high marks from users for simplicity and reliability. It migrates data, settings, and most applications. Don't bother downloading the free "trial" version. It won't transfer any of the files you select. A two-seat license costs $50 while the unlimited enterprise version is $300.

Zinstall is a migration tool that some readers have mentioned to me. But you may want to avoid it after reading this Cnet forum thread. A company that threatens to sue a customer because he asked for a refund is not on my list of business partners.

The tool you choose depends on how many programs you have installed on the old computer, how important they are to you, and whether or not you have the installation media (and license keys) for them. If you've installed a program from a CD, chances are good you still have that disc, and the license or activation key.

But when programs are downloaded from the Internet, quite often the "installer" file is discarded after the program is up and running. Likewise, if you purchased a downloadable program, you may have deleted the email containing your proof of purchase and activation key. Of course it's possible to download the program again (OldVersion.com may help here) and contact the vendor to see if they will re-issue your activation key. But all that can take many hours or days to complete.

Some users prefer a "clean" approach to a new computer, in which they copy only their personal files from a backup, and install software as needed. Others may opt to keep NOTHING on the new computer, and restore everything to the new PC from a backup image taken on the old computer. It's good to have choices.

Courtesy of ASK BOB.. Bob Rankin   http://askbobrankin.com

Reminders

Be sure to check the class schedules at the meeting and sign-up for the ones you are interested in. There is no charge for classes to Club members.

Check your Membership to see if it is renewal time. We value each one of you!

The **Bits & Bytes** will be updated as new information comes.

Please check often!

Club Officers:

Sylvia Hill- President

Bob ShewmakeVice-President:

Secretary:

Treasurer: Joel Ewing

Board Members:

Marie Herr, Ken Nelson, Marilyn Russell

Committee Chairs:

Jim Prince, Membership

Julie Storm, Newsletter Editor

John Reese, Programs

Earl Cummings, Librarian

Nancy Jones, Public Relations

Joel Ewing Webmaster

Marie Herr, Education

Bob Shewmake, Genealogy Liaison

*Classes and open house clinics are free to Computer Club members.   Club membership fee- $20; ½ price additional family member. Classes and help clinics are held at the John Ruehle Center located in the Highlands Crossings Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd., Suite 208, Bella Vista. Class descriptions at **bvcompclub.org***