


The Byte-Line – a Newsletter

By Michael Van Ert, The Computer Guy!

Date: August 1, 2010


This Month's Special

Complete remote system tune-up for just \$25! Refer a new client to me and you and the new client get my Service Package # 3 for \$25.00 each. Here are the details of Service Package # 3:



Advanced SystemCare

Keep Your PC in Top Condition!



"Best **free tool** to clean, fix, and speed up your PC."

★★★★★

Download

IObit

I will install freeware programs that I have found to be essential in getting rid of viruses, spyware, and Malware. Once I've installed these programs I will then proceed to run a 'quick' scan of your computer to rid it of the most obvious infected files. I leave all programs on your computer so you can run the more exhaustive scan of your computer later. Not only will I do all the Windows updates I'll look for updates for Microsoft Office and other commonly used programs. Package number three generally takes 2 to 3 hours and costs ~~\$45~~ **\$25.00**. I will make a full report on what I found out about your computer along with recommendations for improving the performance of your computer and software. You must have LogMeIn installed; go here, <http://mvanert.com/help-me/>, to get installation instructions for LogMeIn.

You can order this package by going to my web site and clicking on the 'Specials and Referrals' link at the top of the site. Or just click <http://mvanert.com/current-offers/>.

A Note from Michael Van Ert

Beginning with this issue I am going to demonstrate my *Five Vista/Win7 Tips*, *Five XP Tips*, *How-To's (Software)* and eventually, *Freeware Software Review* and *What's New in Hardware* using YouTube videos I have created. There won't be videos for all segments but, depending on the feedback, I would like to make this an integral part of this newsletter. This is being done to create more meaningful content for you.

Five Vista/Win7 Tips –

1. **Configure User Access Control in Windows 7**

Figure 1 Advertisement
- Advanced System Care

User Access Control (UAC) is one of the most annoying features of Windows Vista. Each time you attempt to perform a task that requires administrative rights, a dialog box appears prompting you for permission. Hence, most people disable it sooner after installing Vista.

Fortunately, UAC in Windows 7 displays fewer warnings. Furthermore, you have some control frequency of the notifications which means you still run UAC without it being annoying.

You can configure the notification behaviour by launching the UAC Settings from the start menu. In the Start Menu search field, type in "UAC" and click the result. From the UAC Settings, use the slider to change the notification behaviour.

Video Link - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygfYD1SFfG8>

2. Burn ISO Image in Windows 7

One of the fabulous new features of Windows 7 is that you can now burn an ISO image without having to download third party software. Furthermore, the process is so easy that even novice users can burn images without any assistance (or trouble).

To burn an image, simply double-click an ISO file and the Burn CD Image dialog box appears. Select your CD burner from a drop down list, select whether or not to verify the disc after burning and click the Burn button. It really is as simple as that.

Video Link - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehFbKnw111o>

3. Minimize Programs to the System Tray/Notification Area in Windows 7

As with previous versions of Windows, any active programs appear as icons on the Taskbar. While this is useful for programs that you are working in, such as Word or Internet Explorer, it does clutter up the taskbar, particularly when you have other programs, such as Messenger, running in the background. These programs also appear as icons on the taskbar, when in fact hiding them may be more useful.

In Windows 7, you can prevent active instances of programs from cluttering up the taskbar by hiding them in the System Tray/Notification Area. To do so, right click a program shortcut and select the Compatibility tab. Select "Windows Vista" under the Compatibility Mode drop-down menu.

4. Pin a Folder to Windows Explorer Jump List in Windows 7

Windows Explorer in Windows 7 includes a Jump List that lists the most frequently opened folders for faster access to them. In addition, above the most frequently visited folders are your pinned folders (or favourites). So what exactly are your pinned folders? A pinned folder is one that you manually add to the Jump List and remains there until you remove it. For

those folders you access on a daily basis, one of the options you have for making them more accessible is to pin them to the Jump List.

To pin a folder location, right-click on any folder, either on your desktop or within Explorer, and drag that folder icon to the Explorer shortcut on the Taskbar. A message appears that reads, "Pin to Windows Explorer" before you release the mouse button. The folder will appear under a "Pinned" section of the Jump List. You can remove a folder from the Jump List by clicking the "Unpin from this list" icon on the right side of the panel.

5. Reorder Taskbar Icons in Windows 7

In Windows 7, as with previous versions, any active programs appear as icons (or tabs) on the Taskbar. What is new in Windows 7, is that you can reorder the icons on the Taskbar to suit your needs. To move an icon, simply drag and drop.

In addition, once you have reordered the Taskbar icons, you can start a new instance of any of the first five programs by pressing Win+1, Win+2, Win+3, etc. For example, if Windows Explorer is the second icon on the Taskbar, you can open a second instance by pressing Win + 2.

Five XP Tips –

1. Speed up Windows XP's defrag operations

A simple way to speed up a defrag operation in Windows XP is to restart the system before you launch Defrag. This allows the operating system to clear out the swap/paging file and reset it to the default size. This lets Defrag focus strictly on the necessary data on the hard disk without having to stop and manage a huge swap file loaded with unneeded data. Another approach to speeding up a defrag operation in Windows XP is to configure it to occur immediately upon startup. Fortunately, you can do so easily with this simple registry edit:

- Launch the Registry Editor (Regedit.exe).
- Go to HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\RunOnce.
- Right-click on the RunOnce subkey and select New | String Value.
- Name the value Defrag and press [Enter] twice.
- Type Defrag.exe c: /f in the Value Data text box and click OK.
- Close the Registry Editor and restart Windows.

The defrag operation will begin when you type in your password and press [Enter]. (Keep in mind that values added to the RunOnce key are removed immediately after the command has been run.)

2. Clear the Windows XP Run command's most recently used list

Notes: Editing the registry is risky, so be sure you have a verified backup before saving any changes. This tip applies to both Windows XP Home and Professional editions. If you regularly use the Run command to launch applications, you know that Windows XP keeps a record in the registry, called the MRU (most recently used) list, of all the applications you recently launched. When you have the Run dialog box open, you can access the MRU list by clicking the drop-down arrow adjacent to the Open text box. The MRU list is designed to make it easier for you to re-launch the same applications at a later date. However, this list can grow quite long, making it difficult to find what you want. Fortunately, you can create a registry shortcut that clears the Run command's MRU list. To do so, follow these steps:

- Launch the Registry Editor (Regedit.exe).
- Go to
HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Explorer\RunMRU.
- Right-click on the RunMRU key and select Export.
- Name the REG file Clear Run MRU, click the Save button, and close the Registry Editor.
- Open the Clear Run MRU.reg file in Notepad.
- Add a minus sign to the beginning of the key name just inside the square brackets.
- Delete all lines that follow the line containing the key path.
- Save the file and close Notepad.

Reboot Windows (or at least log off and then log back on) to make this change effective. Now, any time you want to clear the Run command's MRU list, simply locate and double-click the Clear Run MRU.reg file. The Registry Editor will then display two dialog boxes: one that prompts you to confirm the operation and one that lets you know the operation was successful.

3. Schedule a restart operation with Windows XP's Shutdown utility

Note: This tip applies to both Windows XP Home and Professional editions. Wouldn't it be nice if each morning your Windows XP machine restarted before you got to work so you had a fresh system to work on each day? To help you automate this type of operation, Windows XP comes with a command-line utility called Shutdown.exe, which can restart your system. To make this happen automatically, you can configure it to run at a specified time with the Scheduled Tasks tool. Here's how:

- Go to Control Panel | Scheduled Tasks.
- Double-click Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard.
- Click Next and then click the Browse button.
- Access the Windows\System32 folder, select Shutdown.exe, and click Open.
- Follow the wizard through the next two screens to give the task a name and choose a schedule.
- Enter your user account name and password and click Next.
- Select the Open Advanced Properties check box and click Finish.

- In the task's Properties dialog box, add the /r parameter to the end of the command line in the Run text box and click OK. (Be sure to include a space between the last character in the command name and the first character in the parameter list.)
- Enter your user account name and password and click OK.

When the Shutdown utility runs, you'll momentarily see a small dialog box on your screen before the system restarts.

4. Disable Windows Messenger on a Windows XP machine

Note: This tip applies only to Windows XP Professional. If you're using MSN Messenger as your chat and videoconferencing tool, you may never use Windows Messenger anymore and have removed it from the startup group to keep it out of your way. However, you may have seen it pop up on occasion and had to struggle with closing it down. The reason that Windows Messenger makes these impromptu appearances is that Outlook, Outlook Express, and even some Microsoft Web pages can still make it load automatically. Fortunately, you can banish Windows Messenger from your desktop by making an alteration to the local group policy with the Group Policy Editor. Here's how:

- Access the Run dialog box by pressing [Windows]R.
- In the Open text box type Gpedit.msc and click OK to launch the Group Policy Editor.
- Go to Computer Configuration | Administrative Templates | Windows Components | Windows Messenger.
- Double-click the Do Not Allow Windows Messenger To Be Run setting.
- In the resulting dialog box, select the Enabled option and click OK.
- Close the Group Policy Editor.

5. Map drive letters to local folders in Windows XP

If you regularly work with files stored in shared folders on a Windows XP network, chances are that you've used Windows' Map Network Drive command to map a drive letter to that folder. Wouldn't it be nice if you could map a drive letter to a nested folder on your hard disk? Then, you could access nested subfolders just as easily as you can access shared folders on the network. Fortunately, you can do just that. Unbeknownst to most Windows users, an old DOS command called Subst is designed to associate a drive letter with any local folder—and it's still a viable tool in Windows XP. Here's how to use the Subst command:

- Open a Command Prompt window.
- Type the following command and press [Enter]:
- `subst x: C:\{pathname}\foldername`
- where x: is any available drive letter and {pathname}\foldername} is the complete path to your selected folder. For example:
- `Subst K: C:\Downloads\Windows\Drivers`

Now, instead of typing the full path, you can reach the Drivers folder by accessing drive K: in Windows Explorer.

Favourite Web Sites – Tom’s Hardware

Tom's hardware.com is the website that I go to when I need to find out what's happening in the world of computer hardware. The site has reviews of every type of computer and computer accessories I can possibly think of. The site also carries news of what's happening in the computer world and related subjects from around the globe. But it's not just limited to hardware, there are also software reviews including games. And if you want to know more information about computers there is an excellent forum where members can discuss the latest and greatest hardware or software as well as tales of personal triumphs and woes concerning their computer experiences.



There is so much information here person could spend the whole day and barely scratch the surface.

So go to <http://www.tomshardware.com> and see for yourself everything this great site has to offer.

“How-To's” (Software) – Dropbox

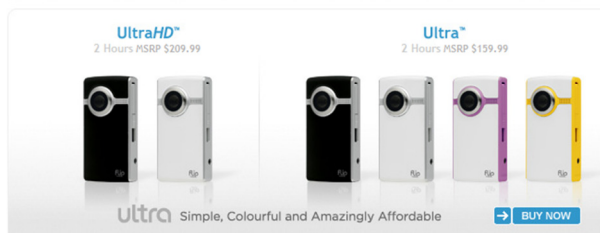
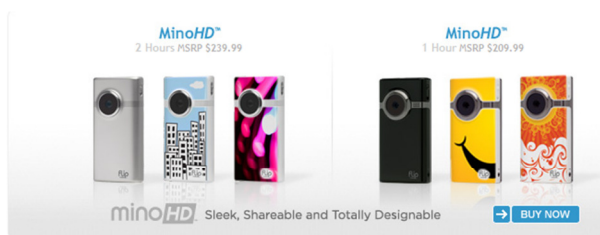
Dropbox is software that allows you to sync files of all types across different computers, the web and your phone seamlessly. It also allows you to set up shared folders for friends and family. Drop a file into any shared folder be it on your laptop, phone or from Dropbox's web site and it is quickly shared with all of your other computers. To see how this works they have an excellent video on their web site at

<http://www.dropbox.com> – check it out.

Freeware Software Review – Cam Studio

This is the primary software I use to create my 'how-to' videos. It is screen capture software. By that I mean it records what is occurring on your screen and then transfers it to an avi file or a flash file. Once done you can edit it just like any video clip inserting titles, captions, whatever you wish. It is simple to use and an excellent way to show people how to do “things” with their computers. You can get your free copy here - <http://camstudio.org/> and while free, if you find it valuable won't you please send a few bucks their way?

What's New in Hardware – “Flip” HD video cameras



So now that you have a way of sharing videos what are you using to create them? I know what I use, the Flip video camera. This is the best consumer video camera around without question. It is small, it is light, it is dead simple to use and it is inexpensive. Three of its four models are HD models! Prices start at \$159.00 for the two hour

Ultra. I believe in these cameras, I own one and gave my daughter one to record videos of our grandson. I got my brother to buy an HD one to record his daughter and he loves it.



Figure 2 Advertisement
- Nod32 Antivirus

These things are drop-dead simple to operate too. Here's how complicated it is – press 'Start' and when done press 'Start' again. That's the hard part. Now flip out the USB connector and plug the camera into the nearest USB port on your computer. A windows will pop up asking you to download the files, say 'yes'. You can use their software for editing or your own. I use [Microsoft's Live Movie Maker Beta](#) to do 90% of my video editing and it couldn't be easier. (I'll be doing a review of it next month, watch for it.)

I highly recommend you get a Flip Video Camera if you ever want to record videos of your family, your pets and to take on vacation, they are that good. And damn, I am not an authorized dealer or retailer ☹.

Until next month,

Michael Van Ert

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