

The Byte-Line – a Newsletter

By Michael Van Ert, The Computer Guy!

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Five Vista/Win7 Tips –

1. **No Outlook Express in Windows 7** – Outlook Express is officially “toast” and thank goodness for that. While simple, it was extremely limited in its’ functionality. It is replaced by Windows Live Mail that besides being more full-featured email client supporting pop mail, Yahoo mail, and Hotmail it has a calendar and an enhanced contact manager. You also get greater control on how it appears too. With the calendar can send you a reminder of events coming up to your phone or email – very handy! Check it out, it is free. <http://download.live.com/wlmail>
2. **Windows 7 desktop gadgets** – Gadgets were first introduced to Windows by Google which quickly prompted Microsoft to come up with their own in Vista though they were not as numerous and Google’s. Since the introduction of Windows 7 I have found a number of gadgets I don’t want to do without though not all the ones made by MS are as good as the competitions. Microsoft finally got smart and opened up their code inviting all sorts of people to develop gadgets for Windows 7 which Google & Yahoo had done from the very start. There are now hundreds of gadgets available, some useful, some not so much. What do you think of gadgets? Do you use them?
3. **Problem Steps Recorder** – This little program is great for when your computer has a problem that you don’t know how to fix. Using this you can re-create the problem and then send it to your favourite techie. It’s really a type of screen capture software that records all actions be it keystrokes, mouse clicks, etc. and then saves those shots in an MHTML page that documents every step the user took, along with screenshots. You start the program by entering psr.exe in the Search box after clicking on “Start” or at the command prompt. You can see the recorded steps in IE by double-clicking the saved zipped MHTML file located on your desktop by default.
4. **ISO Burner** – Finally, Windows has a way to create iso files in addition to the normal CD/DVD burning capabilities. An "iso" file is just a disk image. This makes it easy to copy a complete disk to your computer. There are two ways to deal with a disk image: put it on a disk, or make it look like you put it on a disk. The easiest way to think of an iso file is more like a "zip" or "cab" file, only without the compression. An iso file contains the image of a disk. That means it contains all the files and folders that were on that disk, much like a zip or cab file contains a collection of files and folders. The real difference is that an iso is a byte-for-byte copy of the low-level data actually stored on a disk.
5. **Maximize a window** – Did you know if you ‘left clicked’ and held the button down at the top of any window you can minimize or maximize it by either dragging to the center of the desktop (minimize) or to the top (maximize)?

Five XP Tips –

1. **XP's annoying Desktop Clean-up Wizard** – Are you as tired of seeing this thing as I am? If you do run it what did it do with your icons? There is an easy way to turn it off just 'right click' on the desktop, choose properties and then 'desktop' and 'customize' and uncheck the box next to 'Run desktop cleanup wizard every 60 days'. That's it, it will not annoy you ever again.
2. **Stop Programs from loading at start-up for all users** – Edit registry by clicking on 'Start' button, type "regedit" and look for HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Windows\CurrentVersion\Run & right click on the entry you wish to remove and choose 'delete'.
3. **Erase swap file at shutdown** – Edit registry by the same method shown above, choose HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\System\CurrentControlSet\Control\Session Manager\Memory Management and look for ClearPageFileAtShutdown and change the DWORD to 1. The shutdown will take longer to do. It is advised that you use this only if you have a serious security threat.
4. **Changing the Internet Explorer Title** – You can easily change the title of IE by using this quick little registry edit. As always, be careful when using regedit! Start Regedit, Go to HKEY_CURRENT_USER\Software\Microsoft\Internet Explorer\Main\Window Title and then enter what you want appear in the title bar.
5. **How to change the name of the recycle bin** - open Regedit and go to: HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT\CLSID/{645FF040-5081-101B-9F08-00AA002F954E} and change the name "Recycle Bin" to whatever you want (don't type any quotes).

Favourite Web Sites –

“How-To's" (Software) – Secunia Personal Software Inspector

Secunia Personal Software Inspector (<http://secunia.com/>) tells you about all of the software you have installed on your computer but since a lot of programs do that, it's what it does with that information that makes it so useful. What it does is let's you know when there are updates to your programs and which ones are insecure. You should want to know this because insecure software can lead to the 'bad guys' taking advantage of the insecure software to load rogue programs onto your system. The program does not update your programs automatically it provides you with a link to the update allowing you to decide whether or not to apply the update. It is not the fastest program when it is scanning your computer for program updates but I believe it is such a good program that it is worth the time it takes. One other thing that program does is it tells you when your program is no longer supported, which is called 'end of life' software.

Freeware Software Review – “The Ultimate Boot CD”

The Ultimate Boot CD (<http://www.ultimatebootcd.com/>) is an absolute necessity for anyone involved in the repairing and maintaining of computers. I have been using this for years and it is one piece of freeware I find so useful that I donate to the author via PayPal.

UBCD is a Linux based operating system on a CD so it needs no hard drive to work. The whole thing boots from you CD or DVD drive. It is slower but if there is a virus or a Trojan etc. on your hard drive it will not be activated by UBCD. From UBCD here are just some of the things you can do:

- remove bios passwords
- restore default bios settings
- display bios information
- Id and test CPU's
- Manage and repair boot partitions and master boot records
- Edit registry
- Recover files
- Test hard drive for errors/problems all makes
- Format hard drive
- Clone drive
- Low-level format drive
- Partition drive, re-size partitions
- Test ram memory
- Run antivirus
- Test system
- Show system hardware

Using these tools I have been able to identify faulty hardware and recover data from machines that would not boot. Make sure you review any of the programs you use in UBCD before actually using them as you can really mess things up if you don't follow the instructions very carefully!

What's New in Hardware – iPad & iPhone 4.0 comes to Canada and beyond

Steve Jobs has been busy these past few months and unless you've been living on a deserted island you've heard about both the new iPad and the upgraded iPhone. While I have not tried either of these here's what I've read and viewed from a myriad of reviewers in a nutshell:

The iPad – It will revolutionize the way we get and use or interact with information. It is not a computer in the traditional sense; it is more an information appliance. You use it to surf the net, send emails, watch videos, view photos and read books & magazines. Yes, you can do some 'office' type of work but that's not what it was designed for, notebooks and desktops are far better for that.

The iPhone – This is the 3rd generation of the iPhone and there have been some major changes from the last model, the 3G (which I have been using for almost a year). I've listed the major changes and what they could mean to you.

- Glass front & back
- More rigid frame with integrated antennae
- New processor
- Longer life battery
- Higher resolution screen, 720p
- New operating system supports multitasking
- Forward and rear facing 5 mega pixel camera

- 25% thinner and flat front and back

Those are the major changes, the hard drive sizes have not changed and the pricing is expected to stay the same as what 3Gs was when it came out last year. It is expected to hit the US shelves on June 24th. The new os is expected to be downloadable for the 3G & 3Gs June 21st. It will not have all the features enabled if you have the 3G due to hardware limitations but everything on the i4 will work on the 3Gs. But it does have a new name, iOS4. How cute is that? – NOT!! I hope they've worked out the bugs with syncing with iTunes in Windows for me as it has been a royal pain.

That's it for this month, sorry for the delay and I hope to talk to you soon!

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