

The Byte-Line – a Newsletter

By Michael Van Ert, The Computer Guy!

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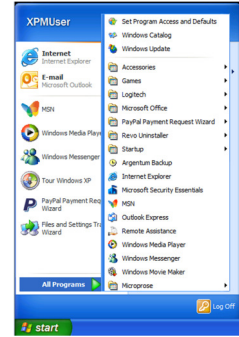
Five Vista/Win7 Tips –

1. Microsoft Gadgets - Sidebar, Microsoft's widget platform, is built right into Vista, and you can download additional widgets from the Windows Live Gallery (gallery.live.com).
2. DeskScapes - Are you running Vista Ultimate Edition? With DeskScapes, you can set up a video as your Windows wallpaper, in much the same way you'd slap a still photograph onto your PC's virtual desktop. Yes, Vista Ultimate ships with a version of this tool called Windows DreamScene (in partnership with Stardock), but DeskScapes is the way to go. You can build your own wallpaper "animations" from scratch or set up triggers that automatically change your wallpaper according to what your machine is doing.
3. Windows Classic - If you hate the look of Aero, click Start/Control Panel/Themes and you can choose a non-Aero theme, such as Windows Classic.
4. Add Clocks - In Windows Vista and Windows 7 you can add additional clocks to the system tray. Click the clock, and then click Date and Time Settings. Click the Additional Clocks tab. You can add one or two additional clocks to the tray and select their time zones.
5. Create XML documents - XML documents are more secure than regular text files or even word processor docs. Just create a document in a word processor, print it via the options menu, and select the XPS printer.

Five XP Tips –

1. File & Transfer Wizard – If you need to transfer your files and settings from one XP machine to another Microsoft has an excellent program that will do that for you. Check out this article at http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/setup/expert/crawford_november12.msp
2. Enable DMA - Amazingly, some Windows XP systems are not configured to use DMA, a mode in which your hard drive bypasses the CPU and accesses memory directly from RAM. DMA enables the CPU to work less and therefore faster. Go to Device Manager (Control Panel | System | Hardware | Device Manager) and look for the IDE ATA Controllers section. Click the Plus sign, then double-click Primary IDE Channel. Click Advanced Settings. Make sure the DMA option is selected for both Transfer modes. Click OK. Repeat for the Secondary IDE Channel. Click OK.
3. Open a Window Maximized - You can tweak the properties for any shortcut to specify the way you want it to open—Normal, Minimized, or Maximized. Right-click the shortcut and choose Properties from the pop-up menu. The drop-down list labeled Run is the one that controls this setting. Change it to Maximized and click OK. If it doesn't open at max, don't worry. There is a simple key combination you can use to maximize the active window. Press Alt-Spacebar (which opens the system menu at the window's top left) followed by X, the shortcut key for Maximize.
4. Open New Tab Firefox/IE8 – Hold the Ctrl key & left click the mouse.

- Windows Updates – Most of us have Windows updates set to automatic and that's fine as far as it goes, however, it doesn't go far enough. Click on Start>All Programs>Windows Updates and that will open IE. From there choose the 'Custom' update button and what this does is shows you the updates for optional Windows programs, new device drivers and Office updates. Choose the updates you want to install by checking the boxes next to each one and then click on the button 'Install Updates' and let Windows do its thing. Depending on the size of the updates and your internet speed this could take a while. You could be prompted to accept various EULA's at the beginning of the download related to software updates.



Favourite Web Sites – Groupon

Groupon, <http://www.groupon.com/>, is a web site dedicated to finding 'deals' in your city and, yes, Vancouver is included. It's simple to use just sign up for the newsletter by entering your email address and choose your city. That's it, every day you'll get notification of a new special!



Figure 1 Groupon Specials

"How-To's" (Software) – Programs you can use to make your life easier

Ninite Easy PC Setup

When it comes to setting up new computers this program, Ninite Easy PC Setup (<http://ninite.com/>) is my new best friend. It isn't really a program rather than a script that executes the installation of programs you choose. Here's how it works: Ninite has grouped most of the most popular freeware programs in one place and you choose the ones you want to download by clicking on the box next to the programs name. Once done you click on the big green button "Get Installer" and you will be prompted to download the file. Save it where you will remember it (I put it on a thumb drive). When the download is complete open the file and stand back, all the programs you selected will be automatically downloaded and installed and they will all be the latest version. This is a great app!

Freeware Software Review – Malwarebytes

Malwarebytes (<http://www.malwarebytes.org/>) is the *best freeware* anti-malware program available. Period. It identifies and removes malicious software (malware) from your computer. It comes in a freeware and a paid version. The primary difference is with the freeware program you must run the scans manually. The \$24.95 cost is well worth it if you want a "set it and forget it" program.

What's New in Hardware – 3D Monitors

It's back! 3D has become the newest rage in movies with more and more premiering every week. Yes, you still need special glasses to view the movies but they're not a funny looking now as they once were.

If you haven't seen the new 3D you should treat yourself and check it out, it's pretty good. Of course, once there are 3D movies can 3D TV's be far behind? Of course not! Not only are 3D TV's coming out to the market there are 3D TV's that don't require glasses. Intel recently showcased its 3D offering at CES (see Engadget report here <http://tinyurl.com/yen3oen>) where it was well received. Some of the other manufacturers are Mitsubishi, Philips, Samsung and NEC. While the more traditional ones are on the shelves today these glassless 3D sets won't be available for a little while yet and they will be expensive, some as high as \$20,000.00. Current sets sell for between \$2,000 and \$7,000 in the U.S. To learn more about 3D TV read this excellent article in Tom's Hardware Guide <http://tinyurl.com/yko9pdd>.

Will you be getting a 3D TV?

As always, your comments are welcomed. Until next month!

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