

The Byte-Line – a Newsletter

By Michael Van Ert, The Computer Guy!

November, 2009

This Month's Articles

What's New in Computers - eBook Readers gain in popularity

It seems everyone and their neighbour has an eBook reader, Amazon has its' Kindle¹, Sony the Reader Touch PRS-300 to 900, Samsung the Papyrus, and Barnes & Noble's has the 'nook' plus several other eBooks.

Which one is best? Up until Barnes & Noble introduction of the 'nook' Amazon's Kindle has been widely acclaimed as the best reader on the market, easy to use, simple design, well made. The main complaint with the Kindle has been its' price \$259.00, not cheap. The 'nook' also comes in at \$259.00 and is due out later this month. It is considered to be the one that could take away the Kindle's crown. Why? One of the main reasons is it has a removable memory card and it will read PDF files and other open source eBooks which the Kindle does not.

I am not interested in these readers because of their high price point; maybe if they were under \$100 then I would be interested. What do you think of these readers, would you, have you bought one?

What's New in Software - What else? Windows 7 is here

It's here, on Thursday October 22, Windows 7 was officially released to the public. Reception to its release has been hugely positive whether it be from mainstream reviewers or Joe and Jane SixPack. There are thousands of pages written about it both pro and con, mostly pro (even from Mac users).²

I think Windows 7 is the best version of Windows yet produced without question. Is it perfect? Of course not. Does it crash? It hasn't for me in over 10 months on a dozen different computers from old to new.

¹ The Kindle is not available in Canada; it is available in other countries. Apparently we are not significant.

² You can see a lot of the reviews [here](#).

There is one concern, if you are upgrading from Windows XP, as most people will be, it can take a very long time to do. There are 3 upgrade paths that can be taken to go from XP to Windows 7 -

1. Nuke & Pave in which you do a low-level format of the hard drive, pop the DVD in (no CD's, you must have a DVD player to install Windows 7 unless you can get your hands on a bootable USB version of Windows 7) and in 30-60 minutes you'll be up and running.
2. Backup all of your files to an external hard drive or USB thumb drive using the Windows Easy Transfer Utility, drop the DVD in and choose the Clean Install option (2nd one). This will replace XP and not save any of your information and you will have to re-install all of your programs and then your files. This can take 4-6 hours and more depending on the size of your files to be restored and number of programs you have to re-install.
3. If you don't have all of your program disc but have a copy of Windows Vista you can do an upgrade to Vista and then to Windows 7. I just did one of those upgrades and it took over 18 hours... There are all sorts of hoops and problems that can and probably will crop up when doing this sort of upgrade.

I will be producing an instruction eBook in the next week dealing with all three upgrade paths. The eBook will be selling for \$13 and is available for pre-order price of \$10 to the first 50 people who respond to this offer.

Personal Usage (How We Use Our Computers) - Backing up what's important

This is related to the above article in a couple of ways and it is something we all know we should do and probably about 2% of us actually do. With the amount of photos and videos we all are taking CD disc and DVD disc no longer are big enough to hold all that we hold dear.

The solution is an external hard drive, one that plugs into a USB 2.0 port of your desktop or laptop. They are cheap. You can buy an external drive with backup software just about anywhere, from me, from Future Shop, Staples, Office Depot and Wal-Mart. Prices are as low as \$99 for a 500GB external hard drive. Combine one of these with Windows 7's backup utility and you've got no reason to not protect those photos, videos and files that are important to you.

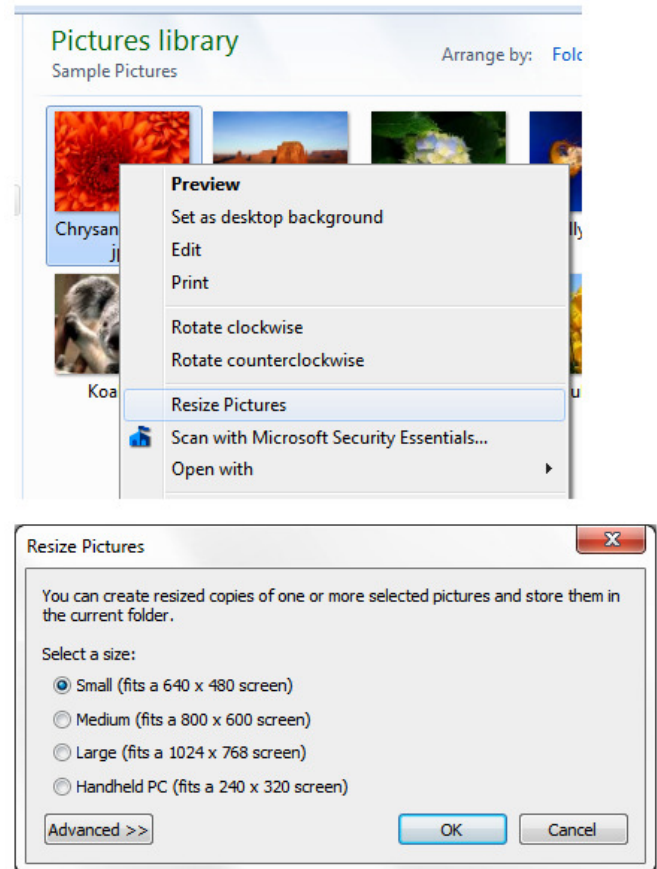
And, if you are thinking of upgrading your old XP computer to Windows 7, and I urge you to do it, getting one of these at the same time as you do Windows 7 makes excellent sense. If you have more questions please call or email me, 778-987-6148 or mike@mvanert.com .

“How-To's" (Software) - Quick photo re-sizing with Image Re-Sizer

Windows XP users have had use of a great image re-sizing utility for years called Power Toys Image Resizer³. This neat little utility makes it so simple to quickly re-size a photo making it easy to attach them to an email without having to open a separate photo editing program. You just open your Photo folder, find your photo, point at it, right click and choose re-size. It is that easy. Go [here](#) for details. This program is not a Microsoft program, however, it was written by ‘softies’, that is, people who design and write programs for Microsoft.

Unfortunately, until now, there has been no Vista or Windows 7 equivalent. Thank the gods that has changed with this Power Toy clone by Codeplex. Go to their web site at <http://imageresizer.codeplex.com/> to download this great, easy-to-use tool a fitting sibling to the original!

Screenshots

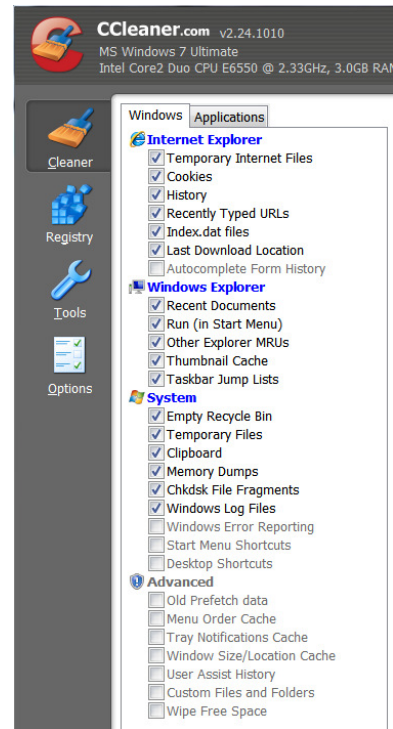


Freeware Software Review - CCleaner

Ccleaner is one of the best and most useful freeware utilities available today in my opinion. I could not imagine not being able to use it.

³ You can get it here <http://tinyurl.com/XPPwrToy>

What does it do? It gets rid of the temporary files Windows and other programs leave behind, it empties the temp file in Internet Explorer and other browsers. It erases the history of your web excursions and cookies. When setting it up, you decide what it should keep and what it should get rid of. Besides getting rid of temp files and traces of where you've been on the internet Ccleaner will also clean up lost and left behind registry entries. And, at the top left corner of the program you will get a brief description of your computer and operating system, very cool. In the Tool section there is an area for removing programs which is just an extension of the Windows program removal tool. I don't use it preferring Revo Uninstaller a more robust uninstall program. There is also, in the same section, a way of controlling which programs start when Windows does. The more programs running the slower Windows becomes. And finally there is a System Restore section where you can choose what restore points to keep, which ones to get rid of.



That is a lot stuffed into one small program. My only objection is that it wants to update itself every other day! Well, I'm exaggerating, probably more like once a week or so, it just seems like more. Besides, you can turn it off to and manually check for updates if it annoys you too much.

Get this program [here](#).

That's all for this month, please feel free to send in your questions and I will answer two each month. Be sure to pass on this newsletter to friends and relatives. Ask them to subscribe, remember, it cost nothing to join and you can unsubscribe at any time simply by sending me an email with the word 'unsubscribe' in the subject box.

Note: While this newsletter will be sent to subscribers once a month I will be putting updates on my website all during the month. Feel free to visit it often <http://mvanert.com> .