

The Byte-Line – a Newsletter

by

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What's New In Computers



Courier - A new booklet computer from Microsoft?

Gizmodo reported that Microsoft is working on a new computer that looks and works like a book. It appears to have two tablet computers hooked together with a hinge that allows you to move items with a pen or your finger from one side to the other. Each 'page' of this booklet is said to be 7" and it would have a camera and Wi-Fi. Apparently it will run

a version of Windows 7 and would have apps you would buy similar to what the iPhone offers. You can watch a video and get more details [here](#).

So far, Microsoft has said nothing, but, if it is true this is the slickest concept going that, in my opinion, would put all the book reader computers like Kindle out of business. It is said Microsoft is set to launch this by the middle of next year.

This is cool!

What's New in Software

Adobe has just released its latest edition in the Elements line of photo and video software, Photoshop Elements 8 and Premiere Elements 8. These two programs are what are referred to as prosumer software, not quite 'Pro' but definitely not beginner software either. There is a learning curve to both of these products.

I've been using these products since version 2 and while I won't admit to being an expert (no time) I can tell you when it comes to the program I want



to use to *really* edit a photo or put together a video for sharing these are the programs I go to.

Photoshop Elements consist of two programs, an editor and an a photo / video organizer. Premiere Elements consist of an editor and uses the same organizer.

There is not a lot of difference between version 7 and version 8 from all the reviews I've seen but Premiere Elements has been tweaked enough to earn a 94 out of a 100 from [PC World](#) and Photoshop Elements has received an Editor's Choice from [PC Magazine](#). You can read more about both through the two links above. I'll report more in the coming months after I've had time to use both products.

You can buy the programs individually for \$99.99 US (on special for \$79.99 right now) or \$149.99 for both (again, on special for \$119.99) on [Adobe's web site](#) as an immediate download.

How We Use Our Computers (Personal Usage)

Facebook. This is, without a doubt, one of the most popular web sites on the net. Millions of people the world over use it. I use it. In my opinion it's great for communicating broadly to family and friends.

It's not so great for expressing every little thought that comes to mind as a young woman in Kamloops, B.C. found out recently when she appeared before a judge in an attempt to have her probation conditions changed. The 23 year old woman posted on her Facebook page "they better give me what I want, or all hell will break loose". She also invited all her friends to come over to her home to smoke pot in a celebration of her new probation terms. Unfortunately for her, her Facebook page was monitored by the Crown and needless to say her probation order was not changed.

Personally, I like to see the photos and comments from my friends and relatives. I don't have time nor do I like being invited to take part in the 8,623 different apps that appear on Facebook. I may have exaggerated the number of apps, but, surely not by much. Also, on my personal account I don't have hundreds of friends nor do I want to invite a friend of a friend of a friend... you get the idea, to be my friend (I may want to start a business account, where I'll want all of those folks, not sure yet).

I have just one thing to say about Facebook - be very careful and thoughtful about how you use it and know everything that is posted on the internet is there forever and available to anyone, forever. Think about it.

How-To (software/hardware)

I hate to admit it, but, I'm getting older. It's true. And my eyesight has deteriorated. Mind, it has never been all that great to begin with but getting worse is somewhat depressing.

Where am I going with this? I spend a lot of time reading and researching all things computer on the internet and I find the typography to be too small much of the time (my eyesight changes from day-to-day since I had cataract surgery last year, very strange). I need help viewing pages and I prefer that help not being in the form of a magnifying glass!

What to do? Here's a very neat shortcut I discovered not too long ago and it works for both Internet Explorer and Firefox. You can increase the text size in both of them by holding down the CTRL key and tapping the '+' sign at the top of your keyboard. Each time you use this key combination the text size will increase by 25% up to 200% at which point it recycles back to 100%. Try it, I think you'll like it.

Software Review

Microsoft's Security Essentials

This came out yesterday, September 30th. It is a collection of an antivirus and antispyware program designed to give a 'one program' solution to the problem of viruses etc. It has gotten pretty good coverage and reviews.

So, I decided to try it today on a new machine with a 3 GHz Core 2 Duo computer with 4 GB RAM memory, 500 GB hd, and an Nvidia 860 video card, a nice system with a new 600w CoolerMaster power supply. I installed it and thought, 'great, I only need one freeware program from now on'.

Wrong.

Just after I installed it I started getting crashes from the explorer program, it kept freezing on me. I didn't think the problem was related to the new program, I thought maybe it was because I hadn't finished installing all the updates and service packs. So I trudged on loading everything amidst crashes every five minutes. It was driving me crazy! I started removing extra programs thinking it was one of the motherboard related programs. Nope.

What to do?

And then it dawned on me, could it be the new MS program? I removed it and all was right with the Vista world.

Maybe it was a fluke; I'm willing to give it another try. One more try. I'll keep you posted.

UPDATE

October 9, 2009 - I have installed Security Essentials on several different computers now, three being laptops and have not experienced the problems I outlined above on any of them.

I will keep testing and reporting for you here.

Your Q & A's

Please feel free to send in your questions and I will answer two each month.

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> .

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