

MOUNTAIN BITS & BYTES

The Award Winning Monthly Publication of the Mountain Computer User Group

Vol.12- Issue #1

Computer Club To Discuss Using Flash Drives

On Monday, January 9th, the Mountain Computer User Group (MCUG) will host a presentation at the Young Harris College on "Things To Do With A Flash Drive". The presentation will be given by our Vice President, Randy Gehring. Flash drives and memory cards/sticks will be presented as to how to use them for

storage, file transfer, slide shows, video movie shows, virus scrubbers, page memory, portable application devices, system recovery and more. Anyone considering one of these devices or just wanting to find out what everyone is talking about will enjoy the program. As always, a key part of the session will be the questions the audience brings to share.



A technology "Q&A" session will begin at 6 PM (prior to the feature presentation) so bring your questions and we will try to find you an answer. Join us for an interesting evening discussing personal computer related subjects. The meeting will be held in the Goolsby Center (Wilson Lecture Hall), Young Harris College. All the Mountain Computer User Group (MCUG) meetings are open to the public the 2nd Monday of each month. Great door prizes are awarded to members present. For more information please go to www.mcug.org.



2011

**HAPPY NEW
YEAR TO
ALL!!**



2012

Mountain Computer User Group
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MCUG Monthly Meeting Schedule

The regular monthly meeting of the Mountain Computer User Group (MCUG) is held on the second Monday of every month, at 7 p.m., in the Wilson Lecture Hall (Room 201) of the Goolsby Building on the campus of Young Harris College in Young Harris, GA.

All regular monthly meetings and SIGs are open to everyone regardless of membership status.

MCUG Membership

Annual dues are \$20 and extend membership privileges to two (2) members of a household. Membership privileges include: special discounts on vendor products, access to products for evaluation and review, and association with a great bunch of people.

Affiliation

The Mountain Computer User Group is a member of APCUG, a nonprofit international organization dedicated to promoting communications between PC user groups and the computer industry.

Group Purpose

The Mountain Computer User Group is a nonprofit, tax-exempt educational organization without corporate or vendor affiliation. Its purpose is the encouragement and advancement of computer information and knowledge through "users helping users".

What U C Inside!

Christmas Party Recap	Page 2
This and That - Return of 6°	Page 3
Bits & PCs Swap Shop	Page 4
Tom's Tips	Page 4
Technology Stimulates The Economy	Page 4
Presidentially Speaking	Page 5
Save Money on Telephone Calls	Page 6
In Memory of Steve Jobs	Page 7
Birthday's, Anniversaries & Calendar.	Page 8

CHRISTMAS PARTY RECAP!

We would like to thank all members and guests who were present at the Christmas Party/Auction for making it a hugh scsess. The dinner was delicious as was evidenced by the fact that very few leftovers remained at the end. The auctioneers, George and Jim were at their very best; Over one thousand two hundred dollars were raised for donation to several local and worthwhile causes.

There are more contributors and members who were instrumental in this endeavor. We shall have a follow-up article in our next issue so we can be more specific in our thanks. Thanks again.

President Art and the Board of Directors

THIS AND THAT - Return of 6 Degrees

By Elizabeth B. Wright, Member, Computer Club of Oklahoma City

September 2011 issue, CCOKC eMonitor www.ccokc.org wright599new@sbcglobal.net

Using the 6 degrees of Separation rule to apply to computer glitches, here are 6 steps to follow when in trouble. Remember, only four steps lie between you and your goal.

Going on the theory that all programs are written by people who can't remember a time when they didn't know how computers work, their output tends to become difficult for the rest of us to comprehend. But if you apply the 6 degree rule, then whatever stumps you should be within reach of a solution. But the problem is, where to start? I am not addressing hardware problems here, only software. Hardware is best left to the techs if you really need help. But for your ordinary day-to-day use of your software, there are some steps to follow when things go awry.

Before you do anything, set your software to do an automatic backup every 10 minutes or so. If you are working with numbers and can use a number pad efficiently, then you might want to set the backup for every 5 minutes. You won't be interfering with your work to have this important asset working for you.

Now to the six steps to help you through a problem:

1. Stop where you are. Has something inexplicably changed on the screen or have you for some reason reached a brick wall?
2. Do your best to remember exactly which steps got you into your predicament. It's possible you won't remember, but give it a try.
3. Write down on a piece of paper the nature of the change from what you were expecting to happen to what appears on the screen. Use the exact wording of any error messages that might show up.
4. Save the work if possible, even though it is flawed, so you can get back to it if some trial and error attempts to fix it only make matters worse.
5. "How to" books are only helpful if you have read them beforehand. They nearly all are written to tell you what a program will do, but not how it does it. In other words, it won't tell you what you have done wrong. But if you get lucky, there will be something in the book that might trigger a possible solution.
6. Finally, for the short term, get help from anyone you know who uses the same software. No good asking someone who uses a different program for the same type of work. If no one can help you, try starting the project over again from scratch, re-enter your data (text, spreadsheet numbers, etc.) being careful not to hit any stray keys, and see if you can get past the problem area in this new document. If the problem persists then it probably is time to get serious about taking a class to learn the ins and outs of the program.

All of us need help from time to time. Don't be afraid to ask for it. Also don't call yourself a "dummy." Think of yourself as an expert in training.

BITS & PCs

" Beautiful Oak Entertainment Center, One glass door, One Wood door, room for tapes & Cd's, room for turn table and recorder. Includes 25 inch RCA Color TV size 60" X 19" X 52" Can furnish picture via e-mail



Tom's Tip of the Month

LOOK AT YOUR PERSONAL HEALTH RECORDS FOR FREE.

Google Health (health.google.com) This is very convenient if you use gmail or other Google tools because you do not have to have an additional log-on password. You can share family profiles and track who has access to them and find out who has looked at them.

Microsoft Health Vault (healthvault.com) This allows you to share selected parts of profile such as a single test result or set of records or a complete set of records or complete individual profiles. This is the engine that runs many other online health records, including the Mayo Clinic's popular Health Manager.

Technology Stimulates the Economy!

I think technology actually stimulates the economy. It makes it easier to buy things and justify having to buy them. Remember when they said we were going to become a "paperless society"? We are still waiting.

One thing that annoys me is to return to a business for service and find that I have to answer repetitive questions (like name, address, phone number, etc.) or fill out the same forms again (one or more pieces of paper), re-asking the same questions. Once I submit the completed form, they turn around and enter it into the computer (again!). Then they print out a completed form (one or more pieces of paper) and ask me to review and sign it. You would think if I'd been there before (repeat customer), they would already have my info on file and could re-use it! But then, all this redundant effort, wasted time and excessive use of paper must surely stimulate our economy.

Some businesses do make intelligent use of the technology and data already collected. A more pleasant service experience is when I give them my name and they immediately ask "Do you still live at "x"? This reassures me that they know I have been there before and I am one of their valued customers. And even more surprising is when they ask me to verify something I do not remember previously providing. Maybe they got it from Google? Remember, computers never forget so be careful what you personal data you give away.

Art Frenz, MCUG President

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BILL GATES, Why ...

is there a "Start" button, but no "Stop" button?

since we have Ms-Word, we have no Mr. Word?

is there is no "Any Key" Button on the keyboard but the computer frequently asks for it to be pressed?

Presidentially Speaking

By Bob Dooley, President, BPCA (Broward Personal Computer Association), Florida

September 2011 issue, C:\ BPCA News Bobflfl@juno.com

As I write this article, it is early August because when this appears I plan to be in Russia somewhere on the water floating down the river, lakes and canals between St. Petersburg and Moscow after having visited Helsinki, Finland and Tallin, Estonia. And, after that adventure, it will be home for two nights and then off to Peru for a week which will include a visit to the Peruvian Amazon Forest in Tarapoto.

Lest this seem like nothing more than a "Travel Letter" than a computer article let me advise that without the use of a PC my travels would not be as possible or as much fun or as simple.

By now, I trust that all of you know how to search for trips and tours, flights, lodging, car rentals, destinations and itineraries using your PC.

In other times, User Groups would spend time and energy to advise of sites such as Expedia, Travelocity and Orbitz. Our members already knew of sites for all of the airlines, hotel chains and rental car companies. Of course now there are sites like Kayak that give multiple searches for a particular itinerary.

But now we have sites like Mapquest and Google Maps where the traveler can "visit" the cities and areas where he is about to go, see the location of streets and landmarks. There are other sites to read about the places of interest and thus go pre-advised of what to see and learn of their importance, history and significance. Many locales have their own web sites detailing much of why they are and what they are about. Visiting times and entrance fees of places of interest, conditions and restrictions are most usually also shown.

On the road, PCs again come into play as the traveler stays in touch with home as the e-mail is read, bills are paid on-line and messages sent to friends and family. My "land line" is VOIP which is disconnected when I leave. All messages are then sent by my telephone provider to my "mailbox" and saved as a "voice file." An email is automatically generated to my mail account with the message as an attachment. Wherever I am in the world and can access my mail box, I can now play the voice file attachment and hear the message.

And just as PCs are indispensable in the planning, they are equally useful upon the return. With a choice of a plethora of free, almost free, and high end digital imaging programs the traveler can enjoy the memories of the trip. The U. S. National Park Service advises "leave nothing but footprints and take nothing but memories."

What better way to take those memories than with one of a vast variety of digital equipment. Gone are the bulky rolls of film, large batteries, flash bulbs and huge awkward bulky boxes. Today smart little cameras, camcorders and even most telephones serve up first rate visual images on tiny SD cards or even the mini SD card or sometimes a speck of internal recording space. Most work on just two AA batteries or less and charges last for a long time. Also available are portable chargers and even solar chargers.

If you find any of the contents of this message new or interesting to you and you are not presently a member of a User Group why not re-think that and remedy the situation and join one now.

Save Money on Telephone Calls

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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Many of us remember when we all paid a monthly fee to the telephone company for our landline and paid exorbitant rates for long distance service. If you had friends or relatives living far away, those monthly bills could really add up. You may even remember that when a call from afar would come in, the person who answered the phone would promptly announce that the call was "long distance" and the recipient of the call would rush over to the phone so the connection time would be kept as short as possible.

Thankfully, all of that is in the past. Technology has brought us many ways to keep in touch with friends, family, and business associates around the world quite inexpensively.

There are actually two different technologies that have greatly impacted our telephone-type communications. First is the emergence of cell phones. Today most of us are using cell phones for everyday communications. Since cell phones work on "minutes" rather than distance, you can basically call anywhere in the US more economically than you can with the old "long distance" service that the telephone companies provide. Each cell phone company offers somewhat unique features, but all are money-savers. For instance, some carriers allow you to call anyone else on that carrier at no charge. Some have special evening and weekend rates. Some allow you to list up to ten telephone numbers that you can call at any time with no charge.

Cell phone charges are generally much more expensive when you want to call overseas, but there is a great technological solution for that too. It is the second technology that has greatly impacted telephone-type communications. It is called VoIP, which stands for Voice Over Internet Protocol. VoIP uses the Internet to make telephone calls. Most of the major telephone and cable companies now offer some sort of "Internet" calling packages. Other companies like Vonage and Net2Phone have made a splash in this industry.

VoIP allows you to use your broadband Internet connection to make phone calls. VoIP service through a major carrier often offers additional features that you not generally offered through a regular telephone service plan. With a VoIP plan from a telephone or cable company you can often get voicemail, call forwarding, caller ID, and 3-way conference calling at no extra cost. Some VoIP providers also offer online account management, online voice mail, detailed call logging, and call-forwarding.

You can also use VoIP with any "telephone-type" company involved. You simply use your computer to make calls. Skype is one of the most popular services of this type. And the price is right. Making Skype calls from computer to computer is totally free. If you hook up two



computers that have webcams, you can make video calls where you can see and talk with someone at the same time. You can also call from your computer to landlines and mobile numbers in the US and Canada for \$2.99 a month. If you don't want to be tied to the computer, you can purchase a Skype telephone that uses your computer to call, while you talk on a traditional-type telephone handset. You can also access Skype from many mobile phones. This lets you to place calls without adding to your minutes. There are many Skype competitors like GoogleTalk, Yahoo Messenger, and iCall.

There are also other unique VoIP solutions. You may have seen magicJack advertised on late night TV. It is a small device that plugs into the USB port on your computer. With magicJack you get your own telephone number. You can make calls right from the computer screen or you can attach a regular telephone to the device and use it to make free phone calls in the US and Canada. I have a set of wireless phones attached to the magicJack that allows me to make and receive calls anywhere in the house. If a friend or relative also has a magicJack, you can make free calls to them even if they are one the other side of the world. magicJack costs about \$40 for the device and first year of service and \$20 a year for service after that. It's pretty useful and inexpensive.



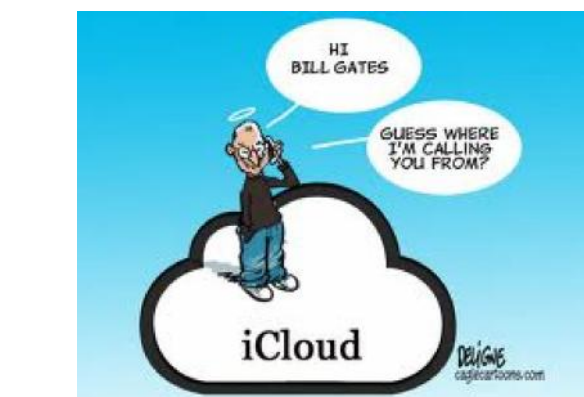
By the way, if you have a land-line telephone number that you want to keep, you can move it (port it) over to a mobile phone. magicJack says that starting this August you will also be able to use your old telephone number with the magicJack, as well. So you don't even have to give up your old number to use the new technologies.

Whether you use a cell phone or a VoIP solution, you should realize that VoIP call may not be perfect. Cell phones sometimes drop calls and have areas where you can get service. Services like magicJack and Skype are dependent on your broadband Internet connection. So if your connection speed is good, the call will be excellent, but if your Internet slows down, you may get a poorer call quality. Yet, both of these solutions will save you money and you may find, like me that occasional slight inconvenience is worth the cost savings. I gave up both my business and personal land line almost two years ago. I now rely on my cell phones, Skype, and magicJack. I am saving a bundle and enjoying every minute.

IN MEMORY OF STEVE JOBS (1955-2011)



TO BE HONEST, MR. JOBS, THE LAST TIME AN APPLE CAUSED SO MUCH EXCITEMENT AROUND HERE INVOLVED ADAM, EVE AND A SNAKE...



Mountain Computer User Group January 2012 Calendar

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
1 Happy New Year!	2	3	4 MCUG Board Meeting	5	6	7
8	9 MCUG Mtg Q&A 6:00 Mtg 6:50 Program 7:00	10	11	12	13 Make your dreams come true day	14
15	16	17	18	19 Last Day To Submit Articles !	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!

- | | |
|------------------|-------|
| Carole Kasa | 01/06 |
| Shirley Trindel | 01/11 |
| Carroll Miller | 01/12 |
| Tom Allen | 01/22 |
| Arliss Perriello | 01/22 |
| Doris Mott | 01/22 |
| Ed Dannemenn | 01/25 |



JANUARY

ANNIVERSARIES!!!



None in January