



## A Review of the Windows 7 Beta from a Consumer Viewpoint

by Jeff Dowley

On Thursday, March 12<sup>th</sup> our user group hosted Microsoft employees Steve Lindsay and Greg Dinan for a special presentation on Windows 7, Microsoft's next consumer operating system. This event was directly an outcome of the strong feedback that our members showed last May at the **APCUG Conference**, where the pair of them presented a talk on Windows Vista. Both Steve and Greg are anointed as special technology enthusiasts within Microsoft. Called Windows Champions, only 90 people worldwide that hold this special title. We were very fortunate to have two of them presenting to us. Topping it all off was that they had driven up from Long Island only after putting in a full day at work prior to leaving for Poughkeepsie. Now that's enthusiasm!

Greg joined the pre-meeting computer problem Q&A with both some helpful answers and a short discussion of some of the unique and compelling features of Windows Home Server. In fact, several of the attending members expressed enthusiasm for more presentations that review this recent addition to the Microsoft consumer products family.

On to the main topic for the evening: Steve and Greg presented some pre-release insight into the best features and most noticeable Graphical User Interface (GUI) changes to Windows 7. While exact ship dates are not yet known, the current progress of the beta trial for this operating system (OS) and other public statements by Microsoft management combine to make the release date to customers likely to be in time for the 2009 Christmas shopping season.

Who could be better than a Windows Champion to explain in detail the kinds of changes and new features in Windows 7 without layering on a lot of marketing?

Steve and Greg gave a direct and stimulating explanation of many features of not just Windows 7, but also both Internet Explorer 8 and the Windows Live family of products and services. In fact, although he started his presentation a good 20 minutes early, it was still a fast-paced ride for the audience all the way through to the end.

To overcome some of the current customer perceptions of Vista, there needed to be a number of changes in Microsoft's next operating system in order for it to receive a warmer public reception. Generally the majority of operating system sales are in conjunction with the purchase of a new PC. But for both enthusiasts and those still wishing for a better experience on a PC they already own, an operating system that delivers on a promise to be better than Vista will be very important. Fortunately there appear to be just such changes afoot.



In Steve's presentation he was able to cover a number of key differentiators between Windows 7 and the previous OS's. They are:

- a dramatic increase in speed and responsiveness
- a smaller and better managed footprint of the installed OS itself
- better stability
- better power management
- improved hardware support and install process
- decreased exposure to malware and viruses
- new attempts at simplifying setting up and connecting to networks
- major feature changes in backups using *Restore Points* and its interface
- better security notifications with a unified problem reporting and resolution interface
- sweeping changes in the GUI that either make the interface follow a unified theme, or faster to find and use built-in features.

Let's look at some of those claims one by one.

**Speed.** 7 boots, starts applications, and shuts down far faster than either XP or Vista. Great, but aside from a few minutes and seconds saved at boot or shutdown, how will you notice? Everything starts faster and responds better because 7 needs less re-

(Continued on page 7)

**Mid-Hudson  
Computer User Group, Inc.**  
PO Box 1962  
Poughkeepsie, NY 12601-0962

#### Officers

President: Dan Sullivan.....229-0241  
VP (Prgm): Dick Kranz.....896-7376  
VP (Activ): Linda Ritch .....(cell) 489-2798  
Secretary: Jim Walsh.....229-0609  
Treasurer: Eli Cohen.....897-5921

#### Board of Directors

Past Pres.— Dick Kranz  
Jeff Dowley.....889-4850  
Rolf Nijhuis ..... 635-8612  
Les Muldorf..... 462-2636  
Jim Peabody.....473-5888  
Ray Polivka.....462-2698  
Ron McDermott.....561-0564  
Ed Terpstra.....462-4441  
Bob Morales .....246-4244

#### Standing Committees

WebSite: Jerry Clark.....  
Database: Dan Sullivan.....229-0241  
Publicity: Ed Morzen ..... 849-1231  
SIG Chair: Jack Marsella.....632-1478  
Membership: Open

#### Monthly Meetings

Scheduled the second Thursday of every month. Check [www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org) for possible changes to general and SIG meetings. Local radio stations will be advised if a meeting is cancelled unexpectedly.

#### microCHIP staff

Harry Elder, Editor  
email: [editor@mhcug.org](mailto:editor@mhcug.org)

#### Advertising

Peter Dowley, Ad Manager  
email: [pdowley@juno.com](mailto:pdowley@juno.com)  
\* 889-4850  
Ad Rate Sheet: [www.mhcug.org/library.htm](http://www.mhcug.org/library.htm)

#### Notices

Permission to reprint or publish original articles is granted to any User Group or nonprofit organization, provided credit is given to the author(s), *microCHIP*, and MHCUG. All rights reserved. Opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the editors and authors; not necessarily those of the MHCUG. Mention of a product does not constitute an endorsement of the product by the MHCUG.

\* All area codes are 845 unless shown otherwise.

**Website: [www.mhcug.org](http://www.mhcug.org)**

## Thursday April 9: Print Directory vs. Internet

Kevin Weingartner, Media Consultant

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group will host a Print vs. Internet presentation given by media consultant Kevin Weingartner at the user groups open public meeting 7:30 p.m. on Thursday, April 9 at the Mercury Grand Hotel (formerly Best Western Inn) 2170 South Road, Route 9 town of Poughkeepsie NY.

Traditionally consumers would scan through printed local phone book directories to find nearby products and services. Local phone companies always sponsored an "official" directory which correlated with their customer phone numbers. Most localities generally have one or two competitive printed advertising directories. Consumers and advertisers alike now face a dilemma with Internet growth.

Internet advancements have spawned a proliferation of search engines, electronic directories and web sites. There has been a phenomenal explosion of new Internet directory services. All such media services look to advertisers for the almighty dollar. Consumers subsequently pay that bill. Advertising costs are invariably added into the price you pay for products and services.

So now, advertisers must make tough decisions determining where to place their (your) advertising dollars. Likewise, consumers must choose which media will best suit their requirements. Consumers and advertisers are invited to join us for this free presentation while Kevin helps us sort out the dilemma. All are welcome to attend our computer oriented Q&A session which precedes the presentation at 6:30 p.m.

Mid-Hudson Computer User Group is a 501©(3) nonprofit educational organization. **See map on page 11.** □

## Upgrade and Repair

Ray Polivka

The February 27th Upgrade and Repair Special Interest Group met to a very full house with over 20 people in attendance. While crowded, do know that there is always room for more since there is an extra stack of chairs there waiting to be used.

One person reported an unusual event. He was having a touchpad error which he pursued by calling Toshiba. There was much confusion in the conversation until they discovered that the serial number on the laptop did not match the model number. When that was discovered things went smoothly.

Is there any way of cleaning up bad blocks on the hard drive without losing data? This question was the root of the discussion that occurred. A fairly new 512 GB drive was acting up. This produced a comment that hard drives either fail soon in the first year or after three years. Unfortunately cleaning up the hard drive will destroy data. Microsoft does provide the Check Disk command (chkdsk.exe). Chkdsk checks the hard disk for errors. Microsoft also offered several warning messages. If you issue it, don't stop it. Also, any changes made through it cannot be undone. I guess you need to be

(Continued on page 4)

## Technology Workshop

By Harry Elder

Dick Kranz conducted our February 2009 meeting. He showed us a digital to analog TV signal converter that he just got with the forty dollar coupon obtained from [www.dtv2009.gov](http://www.dtv2009.gov). Go to this site for official information on the conversion to digital TV, continuing until June 12, 2009. We discussed aspects of watching TV from an antenna, which under digital will provide crystal clear reception. Off the air TV channels often come with sub-channels, allowing you to view more content. Cable and satellite compress signals to save bandwidth, which degrades the picture. Generally, you need the converter box only if you use an antenna, and have an analog TV. If you subscribe to cable TV, they will handle the conversion for you, you don't need a converter. Satellite TV is already digital. Ray Polivka has a friend whose subscription to McAfee Antivirus is expiring, and wants to know what to replace it with. We didn't come to an agreement. Opinions ranged from 'renew McAfee', 'use Free AVG' (mine), 'Norton 360', etc. At least one member doesn't use any antivirus protection. Confused? Consumer Reports publishes ratings on computer security products, with additional advice for the average user on staying protected.

Ray also asked what ActiveX meant. The group helped out here. When you use Internet Explorer, some pages will prompt you to run ActiveX. You have to explicitly allow or disallow this. ActiveX is a way for web pages to run some pieces of code on your system. Sometimes it's simply animation, other times it may be required to collect or modify data. It's possible for rouge web sites to inject viruses in your system with ActiveX, which is why the default in Internet Explorer is to prompt you.

*(Continued on page 6)*

## Computing Tidbits

Ray Polivka [Polivka@acm.org](mailto:Polivka@acm.org)

Editor's note: This article was printed in part, but not in whole, in last month's newsletter. It is re-printed in it's entirety here.

Prologue: The computing field is immense, exciting, and extremely important. It pervades so many aspects of our daily lives. What follows is an attempt to call attention to various aspects of it. Small tidbits or news items will appear under this title as we come across them.. Perhaps they may be interesting to you. Any reader contributions are welcome.

### Microsoft's Internet Explorer

According to a Wall Street news item on January 5th, Microsoft's Internet Explorer is losing market share. It dropped from 74% in May to 68% in December. The challengers are the open source Firefox browser, Apple's Safari, and Google's Chrome. Firefox captured 21% up from 18% in May, Apple's Safari went from 6% to 8% and Google's Chrome browser rose to just over 1%. Recall that Chrome was only released in September. Has anyone used Chrome? Some feedback would be welcome.

## Xobni

One of the regular columnists in the Wall Street Journal, Walter Mossberg, writes about new and interesting computer related items. In July he wrote about a free plug-in for Outlook Express called Xobni. It is pronounced "Zob-nee". If you spell it backwards it is "inbox". I suppose that is one way to get a name for a product. Its purpose is to add a set of social-networking and data-mining features to Outlook Express. This plug-in is able to organize messages by people, relationships, and histories. This is done through a side bar on the right side of the Outlook window. Xobnni starts by indexing messages beginning with the most recent ones. Having done that, it is able to show you a profile of any sender of e-mail in your inbox or other folders. At the top of the Xobni side bar is a search box which Mossberg says is much faster and better than Outlook's search. He felt that this search box alone is worth installing the program. You can download and get more details about it from [www.Xobni.com](http://www.Xobni.com). If you are a user of Outlook express, you may find Xobni interesting.

## Clock Numbers

In passing, at the dinner table the other night I noticed something interesting on the clock. If you look at the number on the face of the clock you will find that most of the sums of adjacent pairs add to prime numbers. Thus 12+1, 1+2, 2+3, 3+4, 5+6, 6+7, 8+9, 9+10, and 11+12. Only 4+5, 7+8, and 10+11 do not. Well ok, it has nothing to do with computers, but it is interesting. Now can you rearrange the numbers on the face of the clock so that all adjacent sums add to a prime? I suspect that there are several solutions. Give it a try. Let's see how many we can get. Recall that a prime number is a number divisible only by itself and one. □



(Continued from page 2)

careful here. A general discussion concerning malfunctioning hard drives followed. In the course of the discussions someone said to type "Smart Utilities." In Google. However, if you do -- you will get a mixture of the items related not only to hard disk utilities but also items related to electrical utilities. Two entries "S.M.A.R.T. Disc Monitor" or "Active Smart -- Hard Drive Diagnostic" looked interesting. However, some additional guidance is necessary. This could be a topic for the technology's special interest group.

When you right-click on the C drive to get the properties, on the following General tab, you find a check block box asking if you wish to compress the drive. It was advised not to check it.

One of the attendees was having a problem with Skype, and paying for her overseas calls. It was worked out partially by calling another person who had Skype in the room. She was encouraged to pay Skype online directly to Skype.

A question arose concerning the prevalence report supplied by AVG. Its function is to send to the user information about viruses and related malware. Several persons said they deny it, but others allow it. When another person started up his computer, he gets the message asking "Do you want to run the Advance Registry Optimizer." It was said to be an advertisement and should be ignored. In addition this person was getting a lot of spam from Europe. He had been sending it to Abuse@CB.Net (I must have misunderstood, since this site gets you radio items.) When he gets this spam while using webmail through Optimum Online he asked whether he should mark it as spam to rid himself of it. Others, who said they did that, said it didn't work for them. Part of the problem of marking a message as spam not working is that the spam is sent from a different source. It is interesting to note that not replying to a webmail does not prevent the sender from getting your ID. If the webmail interface allows images, the server can put in any one pixel by one pixel image from which the server can then get your e-mail address as you open the message. If you check the delete box next to the message and then delete it without opening the message no e-mail address goes back to the server. Merely reading a message with an image in it could reveal your location to the sender. If you have the option of turning off images in the message, it is a good idea. Also it is better to embed images in your message rather than making an attachment of them. In any case, an important point is always to be aware of the source of the message. The person who was getting this spam even considered changing his e-mail ID. At this point. Spamgourmet.com was mentioned as a possible useful application. The following is what you get when you go to [www.Spamgourmet.com](http://www.Spamgourmet.com),

## "How spamgourmet works

If you give your email address to everyone, you are bound to receive spam emails, and you won't know where they came from. Wouldn't it be convenient to give a different email address to every business or web site, while getting all your email as before? Wouldn't it be easiest to *assume* the address will be given to spammers, and have it work as a spam blocker by shutting off automatically unless you decide otherwise?

That's exactly what spamgourmet offers! There is nothing to install on your computer, and *once you're set up, it's likely you won't ever have to come back here*. This is what makes spamgourmet one of the most convenient and effective anti-spam tools available.

Protect yourself from spam in three easy steps:

1. If you haven't done it yet, create a spamgourmet account. Enter your user name and the email address you want to be protected. You will be asked to identify the word in a picture and pick a password.
2. Spamgourmet will forward to this address all the emails sent to your spamgourmet disposable addresses -- that way you don't have to tell anyone else what it is -- this is why it's called the *protected address*. Of course, this protected address must exist. That's why you have to confirm it. You'll receive an email asking you to confirm.

3. After you have confirmed your protected address, you can give out self-destructing disposable email addresses whenever you want. The disposable addresses are like:

**someword.x.user@spamgourmet.com**

where **someword** is a word you have never used before, *x* (optional) is the number of email messages you want to receive at this address (up to 20, and the number 3 will be used if you leave it out), and **user** is your username.

For example, if your user name is "spamcowboy", and BigCorp wants you to give them your email address (on the web, on the phone, at a store - it doesn't matter), instead of giving them your protected address, give them this one:

**frombigcorp.3.spamcowboy@spamgourmet.com**  
(**frombigcorp.spamcowboy@spamgourmet.com** will work the same way)

This disposable email address will be created here *the first time BigCorp uses it* (you don't have to do anything to create it), and you'll receive at most 3 messages, forwarded to your protected address. The rest will be indelicately consumed.

If you want more options, choose the "advanced mode" tab above."

One person reported that he had some folders that he was not able to open. When he tried, he got a quick DOS like message that came and disappeared too quickly to be read. Interestingly, he had the same folders on to other systems in which he could open the folders. It was suggested that perhaps he had the wrong access. Right-click on the folder and select properties. The Sharing and Security tab should show you your status and give you the ability to change it.

Another person related an interesting tale. He had a machine at work, from which he printed data on an old teletype printer. After putting the machine online, he found that the machine often would crash. He discovered that part of the cause was that automatic update was set on. This caused the machine to be turned off. (A timeout may be?) He would prefer to choose when to do the updates.

Another problem addressed was how to read a file with the extension PMD. PMD is an old extension from page maker. Adobe's In Touch should be able to tell how to open that file. Also the old PageMaker version 7 should be able to open the file. There was a discussion about the following situation. A laptop had only a 40 GB hard drive. The desire was to replace it with a much larger hard drive and move the contents of the 40 GB hard drive to it. The scheme that involved was to install the new hard drive in a USB attached external box, clone the old hard drive to it, then replace the old hard drive by the new hard drive.

(Continued on page 5)



(Continued from page 4)

A further discussion occurred concerning several mostly free programs. The firewall Comodo was mentioned and recommended by some. It provides a free firewall and an antivirus suite. Go to Google to get more information about it. However, be aware of the caution about not using two firewalls or two antivirus programs together. Download from <http://personal.inet.fi/business/toniarts/ecleaner.htm>. A word of caution, if you go to ToniArts Easy Cleaner directly, I noticed it did not list Vista as an operating system under which it would run. Note, anyone attending these gatherings might consider bringing a jump memory with them. Often, others bring in various free applications, which can be quickly loaded into your jump memory. For example, Easy Cleaner, AVG - free, and Skype version 4. were available.

There was some further discussion on hard drives with respect to block detection, partitioning, and shrinking partitions, and other related material. I failed to capture the details. However, one person did state that he trusted Disc Director more than PartitionMagic. PC Magazine has an application, Hard Drive Detector, that displays all the Smart information. If you go to Google, enter "S.M.A.R.T. Disc Monitor". The third entry down will get you to the free download of the SMART Disc Monitor. Actually, it gets you to a free download Center where you can explore it at will. Look at the huge list in the categories left sidebar.

Finally, one of the valuable sources of information that our club members overlook is our own website, [mhcug.org](http://mhcug.org). Go take a look at it. The webpage is full of information. For example, if you click on the links button on the left sidebar, you will get a set of links to various area activities. The webpage is well done; browse through it. □

We are catching up with past SIG articles. \_ Ed

## Upgrade and Repair.

Ray Polivka.

January 26th was the first Upgrade and Repair Special Interest Group of 2009. There was a full house of 21 attendees. One of the persons had a battery problem with his laptop. If he leans on it, it works. Otherwise, it doesn't. It would appear the problem may lie in the connection.

Another person reported that his version of Vista Ultimate on his new laptop comes up very quickly. He was quite satisfied with his Vista system. However, he is not looking forward to upgrading to Windows 7. It is projected to be on the market by midyear. However, he will not be in any hurry to jump on board. One person reported purchasing two desktop computers. Under the IBM refurbished plan for about \$200 each. He wanted them for his family since they both came with XP Pro. So far they seem satisfactory.

There was much discussion on setting up a home network. It was noted that both PCs have to use the same name for the shared area. For Vista that name is WORKSHOP, but for XP. The name is MSHOME. If both Vista and XP are to be networked, they both need the same workgroup name. You also need to pay attention to

your wireless network to ensure that the set up is secure. In the wireless system, the hardware needs to support WPA or WPA2. Otherwise, anyone within the range of the radio could log onto your system. However, if you set up both PCs in a hard wired fashion, you do not need to worry about encryption.

One person was looking for a free program to clean his registry. When asked why he wanted to clean his registry, he reported that another program had reported he had 167 items in the registry. The program WinClear said he had over 100 unnecessary programs in the registry. Also he gets from 65 to 70 spam messages daily. He was even tempted to change his address to get rid of them. Even though spam does not go into the registry, it may bring unwanted material into the registry. EasyCleaner, a free program, is a convenient program that others have used successfully. It is from ToniArt.com.

He also had a hard drive question. He had two hard drives, one with XP, and another one with Win98. Currently the hard drive with XP boots up. He asked if there was some way to get the hard drive with Win98 boot up. One way to do this is to create a dual-boot situation installing Win98 as a dual-boot option. Another approach would be to get an external tray to hold an external hard drive into which you could put either the XP hard drive or the Win98 hard drive. This way, you can bring up the system depending on which hard drive is in the tray. In the course of the discussion, someone said he had a fairly new Intel 965 board that had an option to choose to boot from a USB port. Another option would be to change the boot order. This can be done when you are bringing up the computer. As the PC comes up, there will be a statement saying. Press F1 or F8 or the Delete key or something like that. What the key is depends on the model of the computer. In most cases, this has to be read quickly since it does not appear very long. Having pressed the right key, you gain access to the BIOS where the boot order maybe changed. A follow-on question, "Why do you want to run Win98?" was asked. The reason was to run applications and an access data there. He said he had not tried to run the applications under XP. He was urged to try. He really wanted to recover some personal data that would be hard to reproduce. He had used a word processor program called "Letter Writer". He did not know the extension it produced. Again, he was urged to try reading the data with a contemporary word processor.

Another fellow reported an all too common story. He received a panic call from a small business owner. The business office's temperature had dropped to 20°F. The PC's hard drive had really frozen out. The hard drive had stopped spinning. Yes, there was no backup. The club member was unable to get the drive to spin. He eventually took it to an independent computer shop where they were able to have the hard disk spinning in 15 minutes. To recover the data on the hard disk they used a product called R-studio. If you go to [www.data-recovery-software.net](http://www.data-recovery-software.net), you will find the following introductory statement:

"R-Studio is a family of powerful and cost-effective undelete and data recovery software. Empowered by the new unique data recovery technologies, it is the most comprehensive data recovery solution for recovery files from FAT12/16/32, NTFS, NTFS5 (created or updated by Windows 2000/XP/2003/Vista), HFS/HFS+ (Macintosh), Little and Big Endian variants of UFS1/UFS2 (FreeBSD/OpenBSD/NetBSD/Solaris) and Ext2FS/Ext3FS (Linux) partitions. It functions on local and network disks, even if such partitions are formatted, damaged or deleted. Flexible parameter settings give you absolute

(Continued on page 6)

Photo from Technology Workshop



(Continued from page 3)

You may trust the web site that you're on, but remember that 'phishing' sites, where criminals substitute known, trusted web sites with their own counterfeit versions, is prevalent. ActiveX settings are in the Security settings in Internet Explorer under Tools -> Internet Options -> Advanced.

I mentioned an article I read in the New York Times online that showed how Yankees third baseman Alex Rodriguez got caught in the steroid use scandal. Alex filled out a presumably anonymous MLB survey in 2003, no names given. In time, and with the right investigative tools, his real identity was found out, which led to his recent admissions. Lesson: you can never be sure that any information you reveal, however anonymously, will stay that way. Proceed with caution.

Our club webmaster, Jerry Clark prefers Symantec Antivirus Corporate Edition over Norton 360. It's meant to be managed from a server, but can be installed and run on individual PCs. Jerry feels that it's both light and powerful. The cost is low too, about twenty dollars plus tax and shipping. I didn't find it on the Symantec web site, but enter the term 'Symantec Corporate Antivirus' in Google, then scroll down a page or so. You'll see a picture and logo of the Symantec product, subtitled '\$17 to \$27 at 33 stores'. What about spyware? Jerry recommends 'Superantispyware' - <http://www.superantispyware.com>. Like Spybot and Adaware, there is a free version. Jerry says that this product has found many infections that other products missed. Next, insure that your firewall is doing its job. Download and run 'ShieldsUp' - from GRC. Yes, that's Jerry's initials, but it's not his company. GRC is General Research Corporation. [www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2](http://www.grc.com/x/ne.dll?bh0bkyd2). ShieldsUp tests all of your TCP/IP ports, which you want to be stealth. Jerry took us on a brief tour of his NoSpyWare web site, filled with excellent spyware detection and removal tools, and a lot more. The link is permanently on our 'links' section of our main web site, but repeated here for convenience - <http://www.grclark.com/nospyware/>.

Thanks to all club members for a great meeting. Please join us at our next MHCUG Technology Workshop on the third Monday, March 16, in Conference room "B" at Guardian Storage Business Development Center, 3 Neptune Rd. Town of Poughkeepsie. Contact Technology Workshop leader Dick Kranz for additional information. □

(Continued from page 5)

control over data recovery. "

The cost of that package is \$79.99. That business person had a close call. Sometimes one can get a hard drive spinning by rotating it in the plane of rotation or one can put it for a time in the freezer. The trick the computer shop folk used to get the drive spinning was to swap in a different controller of the same brand. In this case it restarted the hard drive.

There was a lengthy WiFi discussion. It started when one person reported this situation. He had a network dealing with a laptop and a desktop. Every once in a while the laptop disconnected from the Internet. The hardwired desktop is the host and it worked properly. Questions were asked concerning the distance of the laptop from the router, the thickness of the walls between the laptop and the desktop, and whether code updates for the router were made. One person who reported the same type of problem solved his situation by changing the router brand. After the questioner mentioned that the router was type N, someone said that could be the problem since type N routers scan through the channels two at a time and could possibly have missed the laptop. Therefore his router did not have the problem of needing to drop back to G or B. The person whose router was dropping the laptop was urged to check on updates for the router. This led to the question of how do you update the router moving from G to N. One should go to the manufacturer of the router and download the updates to the desktop and send the file to the router. Another general recommendation was to stay with the same manufacturer when going to type N. This is a safe way to go since the type N specifications are still in a draft stage.

A second network question was related to cabling. What type of Ethernet cable should be used to run about 40 feet to where several PCs would be connected. The choices are a Cat5, Cat5e, or Cat6 cable. Since the maximum Ethernet cable length is 330 feet, either a Cat5 or a Cat5e would be adequate. In the room with the multiple PCs, a 16 port switch would work. They are fairly inexpensive, and do not require an IP address. Such a switch passes data at "wire speed". Thus, the actual speed is determined by the equipment on either end. The difference between Cat5, Cat5e, or is Cat6 is the frequency at which you can transfer data. Basically, the speed is determined by the number of twists that exists per unit distance in the cables. The more twists that exists between the 4 wire pairs in the cable the faster the data can be transferred. There is less crosstalk.

A discussion about AVG occurred. It was causing an error message for the user. A bug in AVG 8 was the cause. During the meeting the person started AVG scanning his 80 GB hard drive. He wondered how long it should take. That will depend upon the CPU speed. It was estimated that it would take a couple of hours to scan his 80 GB hard drive with a 1.6 GHz CPU. Again, it was mentioned that it is not a good idea to run several anti-spyware programs together.

The Seagate hard drive problem was discussed. Seagate created two different model numbers for their 500, 750, and 1000 MB hard drives. When they sent out a firmware fix around 24 January, It was erroneous. It made the data on the hard drives inaccessible. In order to determine the proper details, you can go to [www.seagate.com](http://www.seagate.com). There click on Download Center. Under "most popular downloads." click on "firmware recommendations for direct code 7200.11, ES.2,SATA, And Diamond Max 22 drives." Apparently the Seagate people have been getting a lot of angry e-mails on this situation. An-

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 1)

sources to run. If you run 7 on the exact same PC hardware that Vista demanded, you will find that it needs less RAM memory, starts fewer processes and services, and even uses less space on the hard drive than Vista for a standard install. In particular, Steve showed how snappy everything seemed, how fast his year-plus old laptop booted, went to sleep, or even shutdown.

**Smaller Footprint.** Furthermore, he explained that by no longer turning on all kinds of services by default (for features such as Bluetooth, or wireless) the result has multiple benefits. Fewer running services means a quicker boot-up. Once booted, Windows 7 has fewer running processes: a decrease of nearly half on his laptop as compared to when it was running the same way in Windows Vista. The lower number of features on by default helps three ways: it improves reliability, it decreases the amount of system resources needed (RAM, CPU), and it increases security.

**Stability.** A PC service not run will neither give software compatibility problems, nor will it leave a security hole for malware to exploit. Bingo, a major potential win over both Vista and XP that helps us the customers. But there's more. The way that Windows 7 works is that while these services won't be on by default, they will automatically load and run if new hardware is attached to the system that needs the dormant process. Microsoft calls this *Start On Demand*. For example, plug in a new Bluetooth device and just like USB it would be recognized and ready to run in a short time, but without any need for you to start the Bluetooth service or load any Bluetooth drivers. This is far easier than today's methods for adding such hardware.

Next discussed were some of the **hardware requirements** of 7 as compared to Vista. Basically if your PC could run Vista, it is expected to be able to run Windows 7. And may even run 7 very well. Windows 7 will be released in a similar number of versions to how Vista is marketed, but there may be a special release that will help 7 run on the white hot netbook category of hardware. Given that netbooks center around processors of about 1.6GHz speed, only a few dozen GB of hard drive space, and usually no more than 1GB of RAM, this is significant. In fact, a few members of our user group have already loaded the 7 Beta to their netbooks with favorable results. Back to Steve. He told us that his laptop running the demo was in fact the same one that he used almost one year ago to show the APCUG attendee's some of Vista's best features. This strongly implies that not only 7 can run on 1-2 year old hardware, but that you won't need to buy the fastest, biggest, most multi-core PC, and thus most expensive PC on the market.

Also improved in Windows 7 is **power management**. Laptops should use their batteries better and sleep more effectively. Aside from the better written operating system, I suspect that the low power states that modern CPUs and adapters feature are now better at being put in or taken out of low power states. That is, until they are truly needed (network adapters, USB ports, etc). Some of the other power saving is that functions like Sleep, Standby, and Resume from Standby now run far faster and by being called sooner (sleep) will save battery life. Steve demonstrated that his laptop both went to sleep and resumed in just a few seconds. Literally. That pretty much covers all the ways that speed has been found in 7. Hooray!

**Hardware support.** Another big improvement of Windows 7 over Vista is that a lot more hardware is supported and 'built-in' to be recognized by the OS itself as it is installed. By way of example, Steve didn't even need to load one driver for his year-old laptop

once the 7 install had finished. For hardware that Windows 7 doesn't have a suitable driver for, the *Action Center* will either give you link to the manufacture's web site, or allow you to report that device as unsupported. That should help in reducing support calls from new hardware.

Speaking of the **install process**, while Steve didn't demonstrate this, he described to us what some members, such as myself, have seen firsthand: even the OS install process has been markedly improved. An install takes far less time than either XP or Vista, has fewer steps, and needs almost no manual interaction at all. Oh, and it's even kind of soft on the eyes, not that that ranks important. Lastly, Steve pointed out how a default install of 7 may use only 2/3 the hard drive space as compared to Vista (for the OS itself). Club members who have installed this have installs of about 12 GB for 7 alone.

Moving on to new area, there is the fact that **networking** a Windows 7 PC with other PC's has changed a lot, both on the surface and below it. This is where the beta falls down. Setting up a network is now called a *HomeGroup*, and it is designed to pass a key code from the first Windows 7 PC setup to other Windows 7 PCs on the same network. By using some protocols that have a questionable degree of security (Universal Plug and Play (UPnP), Simple Service Discovery Protocol (SSDP) Microsoft has invented another way of trying to simplify setting up a home network. But, by making it easier only if every PC has Windows 7, Microsoft may have made another classic faux pas by making it harder for mixed OS networks.

For some testers, Windows 7 PCs didn't see XP or Vista PCs on a simple home network. It may have been an issue limited to the Beta, but if it should remain this way in the final product, it could become the single most hated part of 7. The issue is that in inventing something that no other operating system currently supports or even uses, it can be harder to build a network between a 7 system and other PCs running XP or Vista, or even a Mac. And it's doubtful that even Microsoft will back port the new *Homegroup* feature back to Vista, let alone to XP, so networking between OS's will take more steps than intended, thereby perhaps even nullifying the good intention to make this feature easier for non-technical users. Ouch.

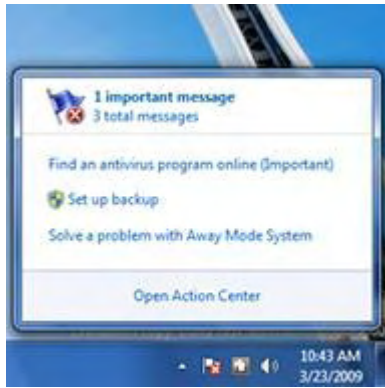
The next feature that we may find important wasn't mentioned next, but I find it too important to overlook any longer. Steve told us that **backup and restore** from backup have been in for a radical makeover. If you now need to use a **restore point** that is say a week old, you no longer lose the useful data and files you saved to your PC in that week between that restore point and 'now.' This means your data is more protected than ever and it makes choosing to use a restore point a far easier decision since you won't lose your work. Topping off the improvements to system restore is that aside from protecting your data, it can notify you if some specific application that was installed since the last restore point would be lost (uninstalled) as collateral damage (imagine the reason for restore was a bad printer driver) and inform you that that application will need to be re-installed after the successful restore.

The *Windows Security Center* has been refashioned and renamed. It's now known as the *Action Center* and it will be the place that PC-to-user messages are meant to pop up: be they driver problems, needed updates, or warnings about security issues.

(Continued on page 8)



(Continued from page 7)



**Image of action center**

Look for a small flag icon on the right side of the taskbar. Look for improved integration between the *Action Center* and 3<sup>rd</sup> party software (Firewall, Anti-Virus, Anti-Malware). However, this doesn't replace the *User Account Control* (UAC) that is meant to separate administration tasks from user privileged tasks. The UAC has been re-fashioned to try to stay out of your way more often. If you initiate a task like installing software, it will remember you did that and not re-prompt you at each stage of the install. Another change is that the security levels to the UAC are on a per-user basis, instead of just the on/off option in Vista.

In addition to the changes in the UAC, Steve mentioned how there is now a feature called **Secure Desktop**. Its purpose is to prevent malware from installing itself by automatically acknowledging UAC prompts. By limiting UAC acknowledgements to only those done by either the mouse or the keyboard, programs shouldn't be able to sneak install by imitating a user through send-keys scripts or registry entries.

Now it's time to discover that nebulous area that is the new **Windows 7 Graphical User Interface**. There are a lot changes here from Vista. And many, many more should you still be using XP. They vary from the simple changes of background color, or text, or a hundred other little things. Other changes are very noticeable and possibly counter-intuitive until you catch on to the new paradigm.

The first and maybe most noticeable changes to the GUI are on the taskbar.



**Image of taskbar**

As you can see, the size and shape of the icons change a good bit, but how they are meant to be used changes even more. Instead of rectangular icons appearing on the taskbar for every open window or application, there are smaller almost square icons that stay pinned to the taskbar even if the application isn't running. When an application is running, its icon changes to be lighter and surrounded by a thin square outline. Just clicking once and then hovering your mouse over the icon will change desktop focus: now the area above the taskbar will thumbnail preview (*peek*) any/all open windows for that application. If there are no open instances of a taskbar icon's program, then clicking on it will start the application in question. So, it's a little like the old taskbar *Quick Launch*

area, and a little like the start dock that Apple uses.

Some of the other GUI changes to the taskbar that Steve demonstrated were:

- applications can be *pinned* to the new taskbar (appear regardless of whether the application is on or off) – folders and documents can also be pinned – but there's an important note: any pinned application no longer appears on the Start menu MRU list
- application that are running (loaded) have a taskbar icon with a box around it
- as an application runs, its taskbar icon may even show as a progress bar with a thermometer of progress – for example an application installer in minimized mode
- right clicking a taskbar icon exposes additional features beyond what is present today in XP or Vista - called **jumplists**. It shows context sensitive menus with options to select the most used, or most recently used, or other application specific features. Right-click menus may be further customized to have interactive thumbnails of the application. Look at the image below:



**Jumplist image**

- the *Start* menu has *jumplists* of its own – but only for programs that have been developed for Windows 7, such as *Paint*, and *Sticky Notes*
- there are even more keyboard shortcuts than in previous OS's (Win key + [a character key]) to quick start apps if you prefer using the keyboard
- Steve also took the time to show off a host of other user interface changes. Most of these assist you in quickly finding the open window you want or allow you to see the desktop temporarily without closing any windows. They are:
  - **Instant search** - as in Vista, just opening the start menu and typing will search and find the application or feature you are looking for – this is Steve's favorite way to open new things
  - **Snap** – it sizes and places open windows to fill the screen with a simple mouse movement all the way to the top of the desktop
  - **Cover** – resize to view two windows side by side

(Continued on page 9)



(Continued from page 8)

and covering the entire desktop by dragging a window to either the left or right edge of the desktop

- **Peek** – if you just the hover the mouse pointer over a taskbar icon, it then shows a thumbnail of every open instance of that window. Furthermore, if you hover over the Show Desktop feature – see thru all open windows to the desktop, and you can “peek” at any gadgets you have on the desktop without closing any windows
- **Shake** – grab a window’s top bar and by shaking the mouse all the other windows minimize or maximize
- **Taskbar overflow area** – a new ‘parking’ spot for excess taskbar icons (anything more than 4) for the Right side of the taskbar

Here I’ll mention **Libraries** – a new feature that helps you better manage where you find your files, such as the four default categories Windows provides – *Documents, Music, Photos, Videos*. For example, instead of worrying about where you stored your collection of photos and on which drive or folder you left them in, you can access all your photos from one Library folder named *Photos*. In some way, each library is basically a giant folder of shortcuts to those places your photos are saved.

Next up Steve directed our attention to the set of *Windows Live Essentials* features. Windows Live is all about making a number of features previously integrated into the OS be standalone applications that can better be controlled and allow you to see your information and network relationships your way. Some of them are meant to part of cloud computing.

**Windows Live Search** integrates with IE8 to show rich context results. Start typing John Lennon into the Internet Explorer 8 search box and before you type your last n, it will be suggesting that name, and more.

**Windows Live Mail** is able to be your single mail application since it now will be able to deliver all of your mail to one common inbox, even for Gmail accounts.

Quick add – embed search results in email

**Windows Live Homepage** is a cloud enabled way of tracking all your online contacts, blogs, photos, and more. The idea is to blur the distinction between on and off the web, or between web clients and desktop applications. Email, photos, calendar, IM, and other services will appear on your own homepage, hope-

fully as your central.

**Windows Live Photo Gallery** allows you to send and save photos in mail or on the desktop, with a choice of sizes from thumbnail to high-definition. Another feature of Photo Gallery is facial recognition for photos. Tag someone once in a photo, and the application can find and tag all the pictures you have with the same person’s face.

If you upload photos, the tags are uploaded too

photos are fully synchronized between desktop and online, making them appear everywhere without effort.

Links directly to Photos.Live.com

**Live Calendar** allows you to share calendars with other people.

**Windows Live Sky Drive** – if you send mail with photos you upload from your desktop via Live Mail, it will automatically load the full definition photo up to Sky drive and only email a thumbnail to your recipients. When they open the message, they can then choose to download the full size image without it cluttering up their mailbox with large files.

**Windows Live Messenger** – instant messaging and more the Microsoft way

Picking up on another large change to Windows 7, Steve talked about **Internet Explorer 8**. IE8 is said to be the fastest rendering browser currently tested. It is also Microsoft’s first W3 compliant browser. Because the IE8 browser is so different than its predecessor, there will even be a set of IE7 and IE8 tags that can help webmasters develop directly for each version.

First up are changes to the **address bar**. Similar to how a lot of desktop search add-ons work in current OS’s and browsers, IE8 will now start matching (searching) what you type as you type it. So if there’s a web address you went to recently or have as a favorite, the drop down list will give you a chance to select from the results without you typing any further. Oh, and the address bar is now RSS enabled, but we’ll leave discussing that out of this for now.

**InPrivate browsing** is a new and special mode of IE8 that helps keep your cookies and history completely blank, as you browse, and not only afterwards. This can help you surprise that special someone with an online purchase, even if you share the same computer, and they sneak up on you!

**Web slice** is another new feature in IE8. It allows you to

(Continued on page 12)



(Continued from page 6)

other change that Seagate has made on its hard drives was to change their warranty from five years to three years. This was apparently done to match the warranties of other hard disk manufacturers. Great! It is not retroactive on currently owned hard drives.

A final question arose from the behavior of Windows when a jump drive was inserted into any USB port. Earlier it came up with a menu containing a selection of choices. Lately, this stopped happening. This probably occurred because at some earlier point, when a jump drive was inserted, an action taken was to set it to "automatic". Whatever action was chosen when the automatic was set was how the system will react whenever later drives are entered. Thus, the menu never appeared since Windows no longer had to ask.

So it went for another full house meeting filled with plenty of questions and answers. Learning occurred. Come join us.

## March Minutes Board of Directors

by Jim Walsh

Dan Sullivan, President, called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. The MHCUG Board of Directors meeting is held on the first Thursday of each month in Conference Room B of the Guardian Center at 3 Neptune Road, Poughkeepsie. The meeting is open to the public.

Officers and Board members in attendance were: Eli Cohen, Dick Kranz, Bob Morales, Rolf Nijhuis, Ray Polivka, Dan Sullivan, Ed Terpstra, and Jim Walsh. Jack Marsella, SIG Coordinator, Jerry Clark, Webmaster, Peter Dowley, former president, and members Peter Gum and Nancy Marsella were also present.

Dick Kranz proposed a motion to accept the Minutes of the February Board meeting as submitted to the microCHIP. The motion was seconded by Ed Terpstra and unanimously approved by the Board.

Eli Cohen, Treasurer, presented the details of the MHCUG finances as follows:

Monthly Income/Expenses - 2/1/2009 to 2/28/2009  
INCOME

Drawing	\$ 53.00
Interest Income	\$ .29
Membership Dues	\$ 280.00
TOTAL INCOME	\$ 333.29

EXPENSES

Meeting	
General Member	\$ 200.00
SIGs	\$ 90.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 290.00
OVERALL TOTAL	\$ 43.29

NET WORTH as of 2/28/2009

Cash and Bank Accounts	
CD - I2 - 6 month	\$ 578.81
CD - I2.2 - 6 month	\$1045.72
HVFCU S1 Savings	\$3172.88
HVFCU S9 Checking	\$1475.20
TOTAL Cash and Bank	\$6272.61
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6272.61
LIABILITIES	\$ 0.00
OVERALL TOTAL	\$6272.61

Linda Ritch, VP/Activities, was not present. Jack Marsella volunteered to work with Linda as co-chair of the proposed Flea Market - the date and details of this event have yet to be determined.

Dick Kranz, VP/Programs, confirmed the Windows 7 presentation by Microsoft for the March general meeting. Dick reported that the presenter for April had developed a potential schedule conflict and might have to reschedule her presentation.

Jeff Dowley, Membership, was not present.

For Newsletter, Dick Kranz related that Harry Elder was working on producing the microCHIP with help from Linda Ritch. Peter Dowley stated that he will outline to Harry the article submission and production schedule guidelines used by some of the former editors to produce the newsletter. Ray Polivka pointed out that the newsletter uses telephone numbers for contacting officers rather than email addresses and that the Help Line section needed updating. Gerry Clark offered to create email aliases for forwarding communications to officers. After some discussion Dick Kranz suggested that the matter be tabled and resumed at a future meeting.

The SIG reports will be submitted to the microCHIP.

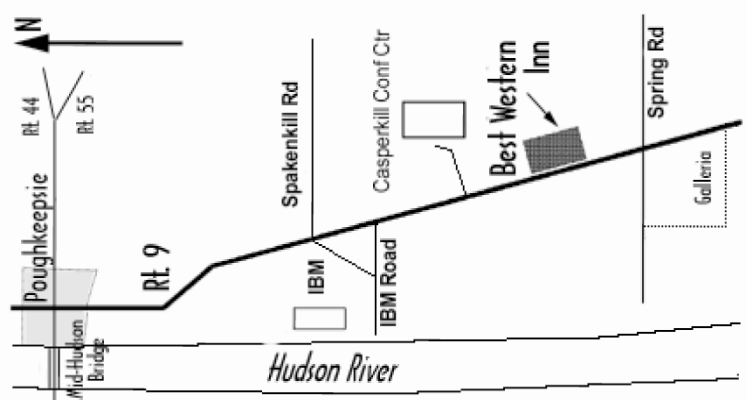
Dick Kranz reporting for Ed Morzen, Publicity, stated that two weeks lead time before publication was needed to have announcements appear on time.

(Continued on page 12)

Sam Wexler elected President of Florida Association of Computer User Groups

The VF Computer and Technology Club is very proud to announce that it's President Sam Wexler was elected President of the Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) earlier today at their annual conference near Tampa. He had been their Secretary for the past five years. The FACUG is the second largest organization of Computer & Technology User Groups in the country; California is first. His first act was to announce a first ever APCUG/FACUG joint conference in South Florida next winter. The APCUG is the largest in the world and Sam is their North East Advisor for the states New York to Maine. Editor's note: Sam Wexler is a good friend to many of us at MHCUG.

The 'Best Western Inn' (on map below) is now the Mercury Grand Hotel



## Subscribe Today

## Smart Computing

In Plain English

☐ **12 Issues \$29**  
USD\$37 to CANADA

☐ **24 Issues \$48**  
USD\$64 to CANADA

☐ **36 Issues \$64**  
USD\$82 to CANADA

☐ **Web-Only \$17**  
12 Months (no print magazine)

*Print Subscription:* An invoice for the full subscription price will arrive with your first issue.

*Subscription:* An invoice for the full subscription price will be mailed.

*Web-Only*

☐ **New Subscription**

☐ **Renewal**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

USER GROUP *Mid Hudson Computer User Group*

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

CITY \_\_\_\_\_ ST \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_

Prices in USD includes GST #EN125482788RT0001. Outside US/Canada subscribe at [www.smartcomputing.com](http://www.smartcomputing.com). Sandhill Publishing does not sell, trade, or release any information on its subscribers.

PHONE: (800) 733-3909 ONLINE: <http://www.smartcomputing.com/issues>

MAIL TO: Smart Computing User Group Program, 131 W. Grand Drive, Lincoln, NE 68521

11742

(Continued from page 10)

Jerry Clark, Web Site, had no problems to report. The Board thanked Jerry for his having personally paid for the renewal of the MHCUG domain name.

Dan Sullivan in the President's report described the resources available at the Family Partnership center in Poughkeepsie and suggested that SIG meetings could benefit from the enhanced computing and communication facilities there. Dan will continue to explore this possibility and pointed to the major savings on room rental to be achieved.

Under unfinished Business, Ray Polivka agreed to contact Bill Collier of the ACM while Dick Kranz agreed to contact the Guardian Center management to determine what could be done to resolve the ACM and the MHCUG Technology Workshop meeting time conflict.

Under new business MHCUG member Peter Gum described his efforts to introduce computer based technological innovation to the founding members of Hudson Valley Home Matters (HVHM), a nascent local organization. While he has already established forums, wikis and the like, he felt that a loose association to the MHCUG through something he was tentatively calling an "organizational membership" could provide further benefit to the HVHM. The Board agreed to review the concept and consider its implications.

At 9:28 p.m. Rolf Nijhuis moved that the meeting be adjourned and Ed Terpstra seconded the motion. The Board unanimously approved the motion. □

(Continued from page 9)

pin a web page to the browser's Favorites bar (the part that stays on the screen all the time) and then you can preview a thumbnail of that web page any time you hover over the link on the toolbar. So it's a quick peek at a web page without otherwise opening that page. Great for keeping up on an eBay auction you want to win.

Last of the big changes to Internet Explorer are **web accelerators**. They are a bit vexing to describe without a video, since they are a rather rich little compilation of features that happen in some windows or links with certain modes of highlighting and clicking on the search results. An accelerator is like a mini-web page that hovers over the main browser window when you click on an accelerated link. Except that accelerator thumbnail is fully functional like any other web page. So you can dive into an accelerator, find what you were looking for and then return to home base without leaving that main page. The most functional accelerators so far are largely any one of the Live services, so expect special things when you accelerate Photos, or directions (Maps), or whatever a 3<sup>rd</sup> party application cooks up as a mash-up of the web meets accelerator.

Look for a follow up article addressing some of information that could not fit into Microsoft's presentation by Steve and Greg.

See the publicly available information about Windows 7 and how it was designed.

For further reading, you may want to check out:

[http://www.winsupersite.com/win7/win7\\_beta.asp](http://www.winsupersite.com/win7/win7_beta.asp)

<http://windows7news.com/>

Both kudos and thank you very much to Steve and Greg for taking the time to share their enthusiasm with our user community. □