

# Suggestion box

We have come up with this idea of a suggestion box. This is for your wish list of what you would like us to do at future meetings. The form is on our web site. If you have any suggestions, please fill it out.

There will be a suggestion box at all meetings and you are invited to place your suggestions in the box. If the box is not there, ask one of the directors at the 50/50 table and they will bring the suggestion box out to the table for you.

<http://www.nanaimocomputerclub.com/Suggestions/SuggestionBox11.pdf>

## Contents

Page ##

### Greetings from the President

The Presidents New Years Message to all Club Members- - - - - 03

### Computer News

Soon, majority of users will no longer use IE - - - - - 04

The reign of IE is coming to an end. New numbers from analytics firm Net Applications put Microsoft's Internet Explorer at a mere 67.5 percent market share, having dropped more than 7 percent last year.

An updated Google Earth changes the learning game - - - - - 04

If Google Earth had been around when I was a kid, I might have done better in science, geography or even history classes. The Web app - which released version 5.0 this morning - is an explorer's oasis. (Believe me.)

Windows 7 - Revolutionary or evolutionary?- - - - - 05

Note: A couple of weeks ago Ed Bott and I decided that we'd each write a piece offering up our view of what's new in Windows 7.

Skype 4.0 released, with full-screen video calling- - - - - 06

Skype today announced the launch of Skype 4.0 for Windows, a new version offering full-screen video calling,

Google to make monitoring energy consumption simple - - - - - 07

Get better information about how you use energy and what you can do to be more efficient.

Snitch on the Conficker worm author, collect \$250,000- - - - - 08

Happen to know who put together the Conficker worm that's making the rounds and is estimated to have infected millions of Windows-based PCs? If you do Microsoft is offering a cool \$250,000

OLFURVRIWW,(&RPSDWLELOLWXLVW,VLWZRUNLOJ"

Internet Explorer 8 (IE 8) is nearing the finish line, with a March release to manufacturing looking like a distinct possibility

Microsoft's competitors are continuing to pile onto the Opera antitrust complaint against Microsoft over Internet Explorer (IE).

### Computer Tips and Tricks

RLG|HW)JHEW HIGLWK\$W LYLVIHROE|

I have Norton Internet security, yet my computer has been infected with the Antivirus 2009 program. How can this happen and how do I get rid of it? – Glenn

:DWRXVRXOGGRDERXW:LOGRZVØVWD

Every day, people ask me whether they should order their new PCs with Windows XP or Vista, while others wonder whether they should hold off for Windows 7.

And there are those who are already running Vista and want to know what they can do to overcome its problems.

2XWORRN([SUHVVØFNXS

The following procedures were tested on Microsoft® Outlook Express® 6.0. The author makes no guarantees that this procedure will work on other versions. However, the key element to backing up your data is locating the correct folder and files. Once this is accomplished, you simply copy the folder to your backup location.

/RVVRI&ODULWLQ-3(\*,PDJHVE\HLO-5XEHQNLQJ

Q: I want to preserve my digital camera photos and my scanned paper photos. I understand that JPEGs degrade.

,V:LNLSHGLD5HOLDEOHXPPLHVFRP

The creators of Wikipedia are the first to admit that not every entry is accurate and that it might not be the best source of material for research papers. Here are some points to consider:

R1RW)RUZDUGØUXV:DUQLQJV\$ERXWFRP

Virus warnings received from others are generally always hoaxes. [Great Resource: Symantec's Virus Hoax Page or hoax busters ) Especially if an email tells you to forward to everyone you know—don't!!

ØQGÿRROVLQOLFURVRIW:RUGRX3UREDEORQW.QRZ\$ERXWE\HLO-5XEHQNLQJ

Microsoft Word is full of tools that can help you work faster and smarter—but only if you know about them. Here's a list to remind you of just what Word can do for you.

6WLOOØRUH&RQIXVLRQRYHUW&RPSXWLQJ/RG&DVH

Q: I imagine that my system must use a 64-bit processor to use 64-bit software, and with that the whole motherboard and all hardware must be 64-bit capable—is that so?

%Ø5FEDUHIXOZKIUHRXFOLFN1HZELHVFRP

Experts reckon that millions of PCs in the US alone are infected either by viruses or, more commonly, Trojans

:ØWLVDQØB\$GGUHVV";VLWWWKVDPHDVØPDLQ1DPHØ

You see this "IP address" expression more and more. Your computer has an IP address, your phone has an IP address ( phone number). But what exactly is an "IP address"?

5HWLUH7ØW&RPSXWHUØRUH6DIHO\

If you're ready to replace, sell, or retire your old computer, it's very important to eradicate personal data stored on its hard drive before unplugging it for the last time.

2IØHLVDEOHV6SHOOLQJ&KFNLQJ,Q2XWORRN([SUHVVEØIØH:DWFK

Office Watch friend, Peter Mc writes: "So you upgrade to Office 2007 and it breaks the spell checking in Outlook Express (as I have just discovered with my wife's PC). "

## **Greetings from the President**

Good news. Thanks to Fred Horn's suggestion, I was able to revive the club computer and it is working fine now. All it took was a new cmos battery for a cost of less then \$6.00.

I had taken apart the computer numerous times and tried every troubleshooting procedure I could find on the internet. I even did a bare bone test outside the computer case.

Who would have "thunk" that? Well, Fred did and I am thankful for his guidance.

Thanks Fred.

A friend of mine is really into Picasa. I had a look at Picasa 3 and I am quite impressed about this free program for editing your photos. There also are numerous tutorials available. I have mentioned You Tube earlier as a source. The one I really like better is the expert village site .

<http://www.expertvillage.com/search.htm?s=Google+Picasa>

Use the above link to go directly to tutorials on Picasa 3

Expert Village has help and information on all kinds of topics. Give it a try. I am certainly glad I "discovered" it.

Have fun computing,

Steve

# Computer News

## Soon, majority of users will no longer use IE



The reign of IE is coming to an end. New numbers from analytics firm Net Applications put Microsoft's Internet Explorer at a mere 67.5 percent market share, having dropped more

than 7 percent last year.

The bulk of that loss comes from users of IE 6, an eight-year-old browser that many users appear to be replacing with Firefox, Safari or Chrome, instead of the latest version of Internet Explorer.

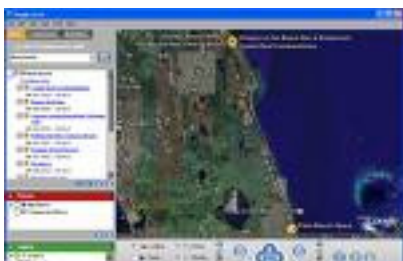
What's more, 20 percent of web users still use IE 6 — and could, too, defect to Mozilla, Apple or Google's browsers instead.

Microsoft has lost more than nine percent of browser market share in the last two years.

With the news that Microsoft's latest incarnation of its browser, Internet Explorer 8, won't address speed and "lightweight" concerns the way Firefox and Chrome do, the #1 browser's market share with regard to cheap laptops and Netbooks may erode even further.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## An updated Google Earth changes the learning game



If Google Earth had been around when I was a kid, I might have done better in science, geography or even history classes. The Web app - which released

version 5.0 this morning - is an explorer's oasis. (Believe me. I got lost in the app this morning, not realizing that I'd been exploring for more than an hour.)

I have to admit that I haven't really spent much

quality time with Google Earth since its launch in 2005. Oh sure, I flew around the globe a few times, popping in on Paris, New York, London and even the remote Seychelle Islands off the coast of Africa. (We have some friends from there. Fascinating place.) But after that, I never really went back to it.

But with the upgrades from version 5.0, the app has hit primetime as a learning and discovery tool - especially now that the depths of the oceans have been added. Yes, you can now "dive" under the surface - without scuba gear - and explore on your own or with a tour guide courtesy of images and web clips from National Geographic, Discovery, Cousteau Ocean World and others.

The new version also includes historical imagery, which means you can go back and time to see how some regions have developed over time - things like farmland becoming office buildings or homes being cleared for highways over the years. There's also a new feature that allows users to take a virtual tour of Mars with NASA, though I couldn't find that feature in my installed copy. Finally, the kicker is the touring feature, which allows to create a recording as you navigate through Google Earth and add in a voiceover narration. (Check out Google's demo video.)

This version of Google Earth changes the way I feel about it. I would love for my kids to come home one day and talk about how they learned something about marine life in the Indian Ocean or earthquakes in California by using Google Earth in the classroom. My 10-year-old son has been asking questions about the earth's rotation with the sun. Using the historical imagery, I plan to zoom out on the planet tonight and start the clock so he can see how it really works.

Google Earth can probably explain it better than I ever could.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## WOMAN'S PERFECT BREAKFAST

She's sitting at the table with her gourmet coffee.

Her son is on the cover of the Wheaties box.

Her daughter is on the cover of Business Week.

Her boyfriend is on the cover of Playgirl.

*(Continued on page 5)*

And her husband is on the back of the milk carton.

## Windows 7 - Revolutionary or evolutionary?



Note: A couple of weeks ago Ed Bott and I decided that we'd each write a piece offering up our view of what's new in Windows 7. This

is my piece. You can find Ed Bott's thoughts on the subject here. I think that it's interesting that we both agree on two things - that performance is key in Windows 7, and that the new OS has no single killer feature.

I was lucky enough to get my hands on the Windows 7 beta 1 before Christmas, and I have to say that the more I use the new OS, the more I like it. But what's new in Windows 7, and will this be enough to convince users to embrace the new OS?

Gallery: Windows 7 beta 1

Revolutionary or evolutionary?

Is the new Taskbar revolutionary? In my mind no. It consists of little more than a few evolutionary tweaks, and I can't help but feel that most of which are of dubious benefit to the end user. One thing that Windows 7 brings with it is a revamped interface, and since this is the first thing that most people will notice about 7, it's Microsoft's first opportunity to create a good impression. In this refresh of the Windows OS Microsoft has made some radical changes, such as introducing a new Taskbar that's not only visually different to the XP or Vista Taskbar, it also brings with it new features such as Jump Lists and a revamped Preview Pane. Is the new Taskbar revolutionary? In my mind no. It consists of little more than a few evolutionary tweaks, and I can't help but feel that most of these changes are of dubious benefit to the end user.

The revamping of the UI goes much deeper than making visual changes, and Microsoft has added new methods of managing Windows through technologies such as Aero Shake (shaking a window to minimize other windows that are

visible), Aero Peek (a way of seeing your desktop without minimizing open windows), and new ways of maximizing and tiling windows. These additions, while small, are in fact revolutionary and something that I found myself quickly growing fond of and missing when I moved to Vista or XP (or Mac and Linux for that matter). Technologies such as Shake and Peek do in fact feel revolutionary in that they change the way you interact with applications.

Another feature that's not entirely revolutionary but has the scope to changing the way that people interact with the OS are the new multi-touch features. Personally I've not too sure as to how widespread support for multi-touch will be, so it's hard to gauge just how much of an impact it will have over the lifespan of the OS, especially given that Tablet PCs are more of a niche product than ever and interest has shifted to low-cost ultra-portables.

Windows Explorer also sees some changes. Two that stand out are libraries, which are used to aggregate content as documents, music, pictures, and videos into virtual folders, and federated search which takes search beyond the hard drive. Revolutionary? No. Useful? I'm undecided on that one. While both no doubt offer some degree of upside, both also have the scope to confuse the end user.

For those times when things go wrong, Microsoft has developed some new and innovative troubleshooting tools that attempts to diagnose and fix problems. While they're not perfect, but they're a darn sight better than any troubleshooter previously shipped with Windows so that puts them into the revolutionary category.

Then there are changes to the core of the OS itself. I'm not going to bore you by listing all the minutia because there's one change and one change alone that will benefit everyone - increased performance. With Windows 7 Microsoft took the revolutionary step of making performance the top priority. Great end user performance is, without a doubt, the killer feature of Windows 7. It's the killer feature because it's one that everyone benefits from. Not everyone will like the new Taskbar, and not everyone will bother to learn how to get the most out of features such as Peek and Shake,

*(Continued on page 6)*

but every single Windows 7 user will benefit from the performance improvements. Users will experience a performance boost when they boot up their system, work with files, run applications, play games. In fact, almost every single aspect of the OS benefits from improved performance

Here's the killer question - is Windows 7 just Vista with a new wrapper, or is it the OS that will finally put the nail in XP's coffin?

Gallery: Windows 7 install/UI

Beta 1 is well-polished, robust, reliable and highly backward compatible with the current hardware and software ecosystem. To answer this question we need to go back in time a few years and look at why Windows Vista got the bad reputation that it did. Rather than rehash the whole debacle, I think that the main issue comes down to the RTM release being plagued by performance and compatibility issues that took Microsoft a good year to fully address. By that time the early adopters had made their mind up about the OS, made sure plenty of people knew how they felt, and that sealed the fate of the OS.

There's very little doubt in my mind that Windows 7 is different. The pre-beta and beta builds that I've handled are some of the best code I've seen come out of Microsoft for a long time. Beta 1 is well-polished, robust, reliable and highly backward compatible with the current hardware and software ecosystem. On top of that, the improvements that it brings, while not all being revolutionary, are good additions rather than being hollow and superficial (I'm looking at you Aero!). That said, a system that's still running XP because it couldn't handle Vista is unlikely to be much better with 7. OK, performance-wise, things might be a little better, but the fact remains that the XP to 7 upgrade is likely to mean spending on new hardware and software - which might be too much of a price to pay under the current economic climate. If you're looking at 7 and thinking that it's a magic bullet for compatibility headaches then you're in for a disappointment.

Windows 7 still needs to pass the real-world security test (it'll be interesting to see what effect the tweaked UAC will have on security)

but that's a test that every OS is continually up against. Here it's hard to offer up any more than a "wait and see" ...

But what will existing XP and Vista users make of 7? So far, feedback from people running Beta 1 has been very positive indeed, and there doesn't seem to be any one feature that's attracted too much negative feedback.

So far, so good. Roll on the RC release

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Skype 4.0 released, with full-screen video calling



Skype today announced the launch of Skype 4.0 for Windows, a new version offering full-screen video calling, clearer call quality and a tweaked interface in

addition to to program's bread-and-butter services such as free voice and video calls to other Skype users, instant messaging, SMS, and calls to landlines and mobile devices at low rates.

Welcome improvements for the program, which is growing in popularity among business users.

Face-to-face video calling is the program's key new feature, backed by a new built-in bandwidth manager optimizing the video calling experience, even on a low-bandwidth connection. With a connection at 400 Kb/s or higher and a dual-core processor PC, Skype delivers up to 30 frames per second of video.

The company also says call quality is substantially improved, and a new audio codec achieves wideband audio quality using 50 percent less bandwidth than previously required, the company says. It also introduces super wideband audio that "delivers crystal clear, richer and warmer sound to those using a compatible headset and a high quality broadband connection." The bandwidth manager interacts with the codec to adjust quickly to fluctuating bandwidth conditions to produce the most reliable sound, according to the company.

*(Continued on page 7)*

A new Conversations Tab makes it easier to keep track of multiple conversations in one place, and you can switch easily between communication methods (video, audio, SMS, etc.). The program also has introduced a compact view to complement the full-screen experience.

Today Google announced that it has been working on something called Google PowerMeter — a tool that will help you monitor and measure your energy consumption. Currently, most people simply pay their power bill blind — only being able to guess where that money is actually going.

This new iGoogle gadget will let you take advantage of “Smart Meters” — which will become a lot more common going forward.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Google to make monitoring energy consumption simple

Analyze:

Get better information about how you use energy and what you can do to be more efficient.

Save:

Reduce your energy bills and carbon footprint by making smart decisions about your energy use.

Access to information like this is very powerful for consumers. It will help them reduce their energy consumption, and at the same time, save money. Google PowerMeter could actually have a significant impact on energy usage in the United States.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## WOMEN’S REVENGE

‘Cash, check or charge?’ I asked, after folding items the woman wished to purchase.

As she fumbled for her wallet , I noticed a remote control for a television set in her purse.

‘So, do you always carry your TV remote?’ I asked.

‘No,’ she replied, ‘but my husband refused to come shopping with me,

and I figured this was the most evil thing I could do to him legally.’

## Home Electricity Use



Strike up a little friendly competition to see how your energy consumption compares to your friends and neighbors.

## Snitch on the Conficker worm author, collect \$250,000



Happen to know who put together the Conficker worm that's making the rounds and is estimated to have infected millions of Windows-based PCs? If you do Microsoft is offering a cool \$250,000 reward for information that leads to the arrest and conviction of

those behind the worm.

Today, Microsoft Corp. announced a partnership with technology industry leaders and academia to implement a coordinated, global response to the Conficker (aka Downadup) worm. Together with security researchers, Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and operators within the Domain Name System, Microsoft coordinated a response designed to disable domains targeted by Conficker. Microsoft also announced a \$250,000 reward for information that results in the arrest and conviction of those responsible for illegally launching the Conficker malicious code on the Internet.

Microsoft's reward offer stems from the company's recognition that the Conficker worm is a criminal attack. Microsoft wants to help the authorities catch the criminals responsible for it. Residents of any country are eligible for the reward, according to the laws of that country, because Internet viruses affect the Internet community worldwide. Individuals with information about the Conficker worm should contact their international law enforcement agencies.

Gives you an idea of how much the Conficker worm is annoying Microsoft.

This isn't the first time Microsoft has offered a reward for information about malware authors. The author of the Sasser worm was caught based on information received through tipsters. But a reward isn't always successful - those behind the Blaster, MyDoom, and Sobig worms are still walking around with a \$250,000 bounty on their heads.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Microsoft's IE 8 Compatibility List: Is it working?



Internet Explorer 8 (IE 8) is nearing the finish line, with a March release to manufacturing looking like a distinct possibility. But is IE 8 — or, more accurately — Web site developers and owners — really ready?

I have been testing IE 8 since the code became available publicly. And one thing that hasn't changed much over the past several months is the fact that many Web sites still aren't compatible with IE 8.

I'm not blaming the site owners here. Microsoft officials have known all along that even though the IE team is doing the "right" thing by finally making IE more standards-compliant, they are risking "breaking the Web" because the vast majority of Web sites still are written to work correctly with previous, non-standards-compliant versions of IE.

Microsoft has tried to mitigate the effects of moving to a default standards-based view in a few ways. IE 8 comes with a "Compatibility View" button that will "fix" a seemingly broken site if a user knows to press it. Microsoft went a step beyond this with IE 8 Release Candidate 1, issued in January, by adding a downloadable list of sites that would automatically trigger IE 8 to move directly to compatibility mode, rather than standards mode.

(Here is the list of the 2,400 sites that are on Version 1.0 of Microsoft's Compatibility View list.)

The Compatibility View list includes some major sites — Apple.com, CNN.com, eBay, Facebook, Google.com, NYTimes.com — even Microsoft.com (!) — and lots, lots more. Users also have the option of adding IE-8-incompatible sites they visit that didn't make it onto the list that will be appended to the schema list they download.

The Compatibility List has made my IE 8 browsing

*(Continued on page 9)*

a lot more stable. When I go to the NYTimes.com site now, it just works. The Compatibility View button (the icon for which looks like a broken Web page and is typically located directly to the right of the URL address bar) doesn't appear at all (as is the case for all sites on the Compatibility List).

That said, there are a lot of sites I visit that aren't on the list. And more often than not, they fail to render correctly with IE 8. Sometimes I remember that I should try hitting the Compatibility View button to see if there are boxes and buttons and text there that I can't see because I am using IE 8. Other times, when I am visiting a site with which I'm unfamiliar, I don't realize what I'm missing.

I'm at the point now — if a site looks weird, is slow or just doesn't seem to be working right — I simply assume it is IE 8's fault. Sometimes I'm right (as I discover when I open the same site in Firefox or Chrome and it looks and works fine). Other times, I'm not — a site just might be down or broken. The bottom line is I've come to expect a rocky browsing experience when using IE 8.

I doubt the compatibility experience is going to change much, if at all, between now and the time IE 8 is released. For months, Microsoft has been banging the drum for site owners to update their code — either by adding compatibility tags or redoing sites to take into account the changes in IE 8. Many site admins and developers have said they weren't willing to take on that task until Microsoft delivered a near-final test release — at least a Release Candidate.

Some critics have said they think Microsoft is doing a disservice to developers by offering compatibility work-arounds. They say Microsoft created its own problems by delivering previous IE releases that flouted standards — which is true. And now Microsoft should bite the bullet and just go the 100-percent-standards route, they reason. That might be a better course in the long run for Web developers tired of having to do separate versions of sites and apps for standards-based browsers and for IE, but it punishes Web users in the interim.

What's going to happen when IE 8 goes final

and non-techie users have it pushed to them or get new PCs with IE 8 preloaded? I wouldn't be surprised to see further losses in IE market share, as frustrated users find only some of their favorite Web sites displaying correctly but don't really understand why. Perhaps Opera and its chums won't need the antitrust courts to get a leg up on Microsoft, after all....

What's your take? Is Microsoft taking the right course with Compatibility Mode in IE 8?

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## MARRIAGE SEMINAR

While attending a Marriage Seminar dealing with communication, Joe and his wife Ann listened to the instructor, 'It is essential that husbands and wives know each other's likes and dislikes.'

He addressed the man, 'Can you name your wife's favorite flower?' Tom leaned over, touched his wife's arm gently and whispered, 'It's Pillsbury, isn't it?'

## Google seeks to join Internet Explorer antitrust complaint



Microsoft's competitors are continuing to pile onto the Opera antitrust complaint against Microsoft over Internet Explorer (IE).

The latest to seek the right to join is Google. Google announced its intentions via a February 24 posting to the Google Public Policy Blog. From the post:

"(W)e believe that we can contribute to this debate. We learned a lot from launching our own Google Chrome browser last year and are hoping that Google's perspective will be useful as the European Commission evaluates remedies to improve the user experience and offer consumers real choices. Of course creating a remedy that helps solve one problem without creating other unintended consequences isn't easy - but the more voices there are in the conversation the greater the chances of success."

(Why Google, which introduced its browser just last year would be allowed to weigh in as "experts" on Microsoft's long-standing policy of bundling IE with Windows seems odd to me. But

*(Continued on page 10)*

given the EC's track record on Microsoft antitrust issues, anything is possible....)

Microsoft isn't commenting on Google's move to become a third party in the case. Mozilla requested and was granted the same status last month.

Microsoft has until mid-March to respond to the European Commission (EC), which issued in January a "Statement of Objections" regarding Microsoft's policy of bundling IE with Windows. The Statement of Objectings is similar to a finding and is the result of an antitrust complaint Opera Software launched against Microsoft in late 2007.

The timing of this case is interesting for several reasons. Microsoft is expected to release IE 8, the latest version of its browser, to the Web possibly as soon as March. IE 8 also is integrated into Windows 7, which Microsoft is widely believed to be attempting to release to manufacturing in the third quarter of this year. If the EC rules that Microsoft needs to make other browsers available as part of Windows, could that possibly delay Windows 7's launch, at least in Europe? Should be an interesting few months ahead ....

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Computer Tips and Tricks

### How Did I Get Infected With Antivirus 2009? - Ken Colburn



I have Norton Internet security, yet my computer has been infected with the Antivirus 2009 program. How can this

happen and how do I get rid of it? – Glenn

Your question underscores an often mistaken mindset of many computer users: "If I have security software in place, I shouldn't get any infections." Nothing could be further from reality.

Anti-virus/anti-spyware programs as well as firewalls are of no protection if the user of the computer decides to click on links that generate

malicious code or download and run questionable files.

The user's interactions can easily override the installed protection and in some cases, actually disable your protection programs, but make it look like they are still running.

The fake anti-virus program scams actually started last year as "Antivirus 2008" and it was so successful that it lives on as many variations including "Antivirus 2009." A clever author of malware discovered a sneaky way to fool folks into installing malicious software into their computers, THEN extract money from them by posing as a legitimate program for removing the malicious software.

The reason that this approach has been so successful is that they very closely mimic Windows warning screens and legitimate antivirus programs. Virtually every legitimate antivirus company has a product called Antivirus 2009, which further confuses the uninitiated.

The most common ways to come in contact with this infection include maliciously coded Web sites that popup a warning message that you are infected, e-mail messages that trick folks into clicking on a link, Web sites that claim you need to download software in order to see a posted video and links or downloads that are spread through social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook as well as all of the Instant Messaging systems.

At this point in time, any form of popup or error message that refers to Antivirus 2008 or 2009 (including System Antivirus, Ultimate Antivirus, Vista Antivirus, Pro Antivirus or XP Antivirus followed by a number) should be considered extremely suspicious.

If you ever see any reference to a virus that is not specifically from the product that you have installed in your computer for protection, you should consider it to be a fake (Windows, itself won't ever alert you of a virus infection).

In the same token, any Web site that claims that you need to download a new video program or "codec" in order to view a video should be considered a threat.

*(Continued on page 11)*



## WIFE VS. HUSBAND

A couple drove down a country road for several miles, not saying a word. An earlier discussion had led to an argument and neither of them wanted to concede their position. As they passed a barnyard of mules, goats, and pigs, the husband asked sarcastically, 'Relatives of yours?'

'Yep,' the wife replied, 'in-laws.'

## Loss of Clarity in JPEG Images - by Neil J. Rubenking



**Q:** I want to preserve my digital camera photos and my scanned paper photos. I understand that JPEGs degrade. I'm not sure what actions cause this, whether it's

opening and closing to see it; screensaver viewing; copying to CD, external hard drive, or thumb drive; moving from folder to folder when filing; or simply spinning on my hard disk. I've tried simply renaming the extension from .jpg to .bmp, which results in a much larger file, but I don't know whether renaming actually converts a JPG picture to a bitmap. I've had only one computer class, in 1984. I learn by trial and error.—Claire Morland

**A:** The JPEG file format uses what's called a "lossy" algorithm to compress the image data for storage. This loss of detail becomes more evident as you enlarge the image. The image loses a tiny bit of detail when you save the file. That would occur at the time you snap the picture—and anytime you edit the picture and save it again.

There is no degradation possible at any other time. Viewing the file, copying it to another location, any action that does not involve opening the file in an image editor and saving a changed image will not affect the image's clarity.

Renaming a file does not in any way change its file format. It does not make sense that renaming a JPG to BMP would change its size. That would only occur if you opened it in an image editor and used File | Save As to save in another format. Maybe that's what you did?

BMP files have no compression, and hence are huge. Typically they store either 3 or 4 bytes of information for every pixel in the image. If you took a moderate-size image (say 1,024-by-768), and saved it as a bitmap, it would require 1,024 by 768 by 3 bytes, or 2.25 megabytes. That number goes up if your pictures are higher-resolution (as many are).

If you really want to experiment with a different file format, the PNG (Portable Network Graphics) format is the one to use. Like JPEG, it supports the full range of possible digital colors, and it's a compressed image format. But unlike JPEG, PNG uses lossless compression. Of course the detail lost when you initially snapped the picture won't be regained, but you can edit the PNG without losing any more detail.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Is Wikipedia Reliable? – Dummies.com



The creators of Wikipedia are the first to admit that not every entry is accurate and that it might not be the best source of material for research papers. Here are some points to consider:

Look for a slant. Some articles are fair and balanced, but others look more like the

Leaning Tower of Pisa. If an article has only one source, beware.

Consider the source. Even if an article cites external sources, check out those sources to see whether they are being cited fairly and accurately — and do, in fact, reinforce the article's points.

Look who's talking. If you research the contributors themselves and find that they are experts in their fields, you can be more confident in the entry.

Start here, but keep going. Wikipedia should be a starting point for research but not your primary source for research material.

In December 2005, the scientific journal Nature published the results of a study comparing the accuracy of Wikipedia and the printed Encyclopaedia Britannica. The researchers found that the number of "factual errors, omissions or

*(Continued on page 13)*

misleading statements” in each reference work was not so different — Wikipedia contained 162, and Britannica had 123. The makers of Britannica have since called on Nature to retract the study, which it claims is “completely without merit.”

When visiting controversial entries, look out for edit wars. Edit wars occur when two contributors (or groups of contributors) repeatedly edit one another’s work based on a particular bias. In early 2004, Wikipedia’s founders organized an Arbitration Committee to settle such disputes.

Wikipedia does have some weaknesses that more traditional encyclopedias do not. For example

There is no guarantee that important subjects are included or given the treatment that they deserve.

Entries can be incomplete or in the middle of being updated at any given time.

The writers of entries often fail to cite their original sources, thus making it hard to determine the credibility of the material.

These issues should not deter you from using Wikipedia. Just weigh the limitations of Wikipedia — and, for that matter, reference works in general.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## CREATION

A man said to his wife one day, ‘I don’t know how you can be so stupid and so beautiful all at the same time. ‘The wife responded, ‘Allow me to explain. God made me beautiful so you would be attracted to me; God made me stupid so I would be attracted to you !

## Do Not Forward Virus Warnings! - About.com



Virus warnings received from others are generally always hoaxes. [Great Resource: Symantec’s Virus Hoax Page or hoax busters ) Especially if an email tells you to forward to everyone you know—don’t!! Delete those

emails and do not forward them! Definitely ignore those forwarded emails instructing you to delete files on your computer - they could be

critical files that your computer needs to operate.

Only warn friends if you know that your computer has a virus that you inadvertently may have passed on to them. Rely only on your virus software and your software provider’s Web site for the real scoop. If you get one of these wacky emails from a friend or associate, go to your virus software provider’s site and search for the virus name in question to confirm if it is accurate information or if it is a hoax.

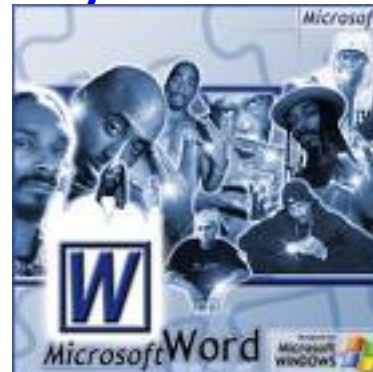
When you find it to be a hoax, let the person who forwarded it to you know that they are perpetrating misinformation and unintentionally alarming others. Read what your Virus Software provider has to say before you unnecessarily alarm folks and in the process end up looking rather silly to say the least. There are many urban legends purely in existence to watch all the Newbies screw up their computer’s configuration files or forward the fake email to “everyone they know” while looking rather foolish in the process.

You know what they say... There’s a Newbie born every minute!

It is clear... The need for a 24/7 real-time virus protection software is no longer a choice - it is your responsibility to remain virus free. You will also need to update your virus files regularly. Check for updates every time you log on so that your computer is protected from the latest releases or use the automatic update feature of your virus software.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Handy Tools in Microsoft Word You Probably Don’t Know About - by Neil J. Rubenking



Microsoft Word is full of tools that can help you work faster and smarter—but only if you know about them. Here’s a list to remind you of just what Word can do for you. You’re probably familiar with some of these. Your

*(Continued on page 14)*

neighbor knows a few, too, but not the same few. Time to learn something new!

Shrink document by one page. A document whose last page is mostly blank is a waste of printer paper, especially if you have to make a lot of copies. Your letters and mailings will also look more professional if they fill the pages nicely. If Print Preview reveals a skimpy last page, click the Shrink to Fit (Word 2003) or Shrink One Page button (Word 2007). Word will tweak the fonts in the document to make it a page smaller. Don't like the results? Just press Ctrl-Z to Undo.

Calculate in tables. Sure, you can embed an Excel worksheet in a Word document, but if you just need a few simple calculations, you can use Word's own math skills. Select a cell at the bottom of a column and click Formula on the Table Tools Layout ribbon (Word 2007), or select Formula from the Table menu (Word 2003). Word will suggest =SUM(ABOVE), but you can select among over a dozen functions. Besides choosing ABOVE, BELOW, LEFT, or RIGHT to work with all cells in the specified direction, you can reference individual cells and ranges as you do in Excel—for example, =AVERAGE(A1:C3).

Merge to e-mail. Mail-merging to letters and envelopes is too-too 1990s, but you may still need to send a common message to a group of correspondents. That's no problem, since the familiar mail-merge feature in Word can also send e-mail messages. In Word 2007, complete your letter, click Finish & Merge in the ribbon and choose Send E-mail Messages from the menu. In Word 2003 select "E-mail messages" at the very first step of the Mail Merge wizard. Either way you'll be prompted for a subject (the same for every message) and for a data field that holds e-mail addresses of the recipients.

Compare two documents. Your newest client just returned a revised version of a contract document file but didn't mark his revisions. Is he trying to hoodwink you with sneaky changes? Rather than ruin your eyes poring over the old and new documents, have Word find the differences. In Word 2003 open the old document, choose Compare and Merge Documents from the Tools menu, and select the new document. In Word 2007 choose Compare | Compare from the

Review ribbon and select both the old and the new document.

Document inspector. Your Word 2007 documents may contain a lot more information than you realize--tracked changes, comments, hidden text, private properties, and more. Distributing a document with this kind of data present can be embarrassing. To make sure you're not revealing too much in a Word 2007 document, click the Office button at the top left, point to Prepare, and click Inspect Document in the resulting menu. Word 2003 has no precise equivalent, but you can get some benefit using the Security tab of the Options dialog. Check the boxes "Remove personal information from file properties on save" and "Warn before printing, saving, or sending a file that contains tracked changes or comments."

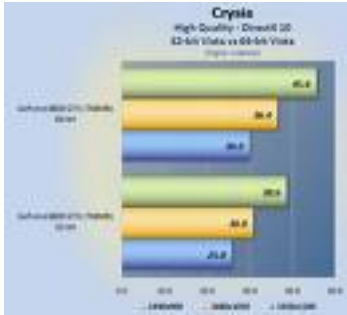
Built-in translator. The Research panel in both Word 2007 and Word 2003 includes an option to translate the selected text or the entire document between various languages. It's more useful when you're trying to puzzle out what a foreign-language document means than when you want to communicate your own thoughts with those who don't speak English. To see why, translate a few sentences from English to another language and then back to English.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

#### WHO DOES WHAT

A man and his wife were having an argument about who should brew the coffee each morning. The wife said, 'You should do it because you get up first, and then we don't have to wait as long to get our coffee. The husband said, 'You are in charge of cooking around here and you should do it, because that is your job, and I can just wait for my coffee.' Wife replies, 'No, you should do it, and besides, it is in the Bible that the man should do the coffee.' Husband replies, 'I can't believe that, show me.' So she fetched the Bible, and opened the New Testament and showed him at the top of several pages, that it indeed says 'HEBREWS'

## Still More Confusion over 64-Bit Computing - Loyd Case



Q: I imagine that my system must use a 64-bit processor to use 64-bit software, and with that the whole motherboard and all hardware must be 64-bit capable—is that so? Or can I install a 64-bit OS on any system, regardless of the hardware, processor, and motherboard?—Markco Velazquea

A: Yes, you need a 64-bit CPU to run any 64-bit software, including a 64-bit operating system. Put another way: If you want to run a 64-bit application, you'll first need to install a 64-bit OS such as the 64-bit version of Windows Vista.

But the only component that needs to be 64-bit "certified" is the CPU. Your motherboard needs to be compatible with the CPU, but all current-generation motherboards for Intel and AMD CPUs work with 64-bit Intel and AMD processors. To enable all your hardware to work properly, once you get the operating system installed, you'll need 64-bit drivers. If those didn't come with the hardware, you can typically download them from the manufacturer's Web site.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Be VERY careful where you click! - Newbies.com



Experts reckon that millions of PCs in the US alone are infected either by viruses or, more commonly, Trojans that give hackers control of the machine and enlist them in huge s p a h a m m i n g ( m i s s p e l l e d

intentionally) networks.

Nearly all of these infections come from victims clicking attachments or clicking on links that take them to bogus websites where more trouble awaits.

Worse still, many of these bogus sites are set up to look like genuine pages from trusted organizations like banks, asking for personal details that could be used in identity theft.

If you apply Tip #1, you'll be skeptical about all of these things. Again, ask yourself: What if ... ?

Here are a few safety measures you can take to limit the risk of being snared by one of these tricks:

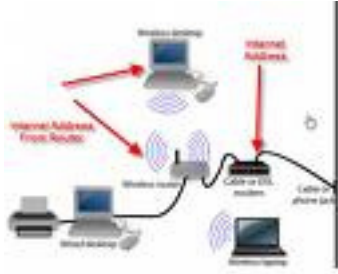
- \* Don't ever click on links in spaham emails.
- \* If possible, key in the website address yourself, so you don't activate hidden addresses often concealed behind legitimate looking ones.
- \* If you're one of those people who like to trade jokes and video attachments, agree on a simple code word you can all use when you forward stuff you've already checked out.
- \* Otherwise, if you have up to date security software and you think the attachment is genuine, save it to your desktop without opening it and run a virus scan on the file.
- \* Never update your Flash player or a video codec from an unknown website. 99% of the time, these are trojan horses or viruses. If you think your version of Flash is out of date, visit the Adobe site.

*Submitted by: Greg.*

### The Silent Treatment

A man and his wife were having some problems at home and were giving each other the silent treatment. Suddenly, the man realized that the next day, he would need his wife to wake him at 5:00 AM for an early morning business flight. Not wanting to be the first to break the silence (and LOSE), he wrote on a piece of paper, 'Please wake me at 5:00 AM .' He left it where he knew she would find it. The next morning, the man woke up, only to discover it was 9:00 AM and he had missed his flight Furious, he was about to go and see why his wife hadn't wakened him, when he noticed a piece of paper by the bed. The paper said, 'It is 5:00 AM . Wake up.' Men are not equipped for these kinds of contests.

## What is an 'IP Address'? Is it the same as 'Domain Name'?"



You see this "IP address" expression more and more. Your computer has an IP address, your phone has an IP address (phone number). But what exactly is an "IP

address"?

Answer: IP address, or "internet protocol address", is a unique identifying number given to every single computer on the internet. Like a car license plate, an IP address is a special serial number used for identification.

How IP addresses look:

IP addresses are comprised of four numbers separated by dots:

e.g. 127.0.0.1

e.g. 253.16.44.22

e.g. 72.48.108.101

IP addresses use the above dotted-number format called "dotted quad". Each of the four parts of a dotted quad can be no larger than 256, for a worldwide maximum of 4.3 billion different IP addresses.

IP address is not the same as www domain name addresses:

For nearly every web server, the IP address is invisibly translated into a natural English "domain name" for ease of use. But technically speaking, the IP address is the true identifier of a web server...the domain name is simply a redirector pointer to help people find the web server.

Here are three IP addresses, with their corresponding domain names. Both the IP address and domain name URL can be used to connect to the same web server:

e.g. 72.246.51.15 = www.nasa.gov

e.g. 152.91.56.138 = www.gov.au

e.g. 208.185.127.40 = www.about.com

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## Retire That Computer More Safely



If you're ready to replace, sell, or retire your old computer, it's very important to eradicate personal data stored on its hard drive before unplugging it for the last time.

You should always remember that even though you manually delete computer files, an identity thief might still be able to recover them, possibly putting you or your family at risk.

Files you should remove before you donate or sell your computer:

E-mail contacts

E-mail messages

All documents

All files in the operating system recycle bin or trash folder

Internet files

All non-transferable software (most software is transferable if you have the original disks and product key)

Options for removing files from your computer:

Remove the files yourself at home using disk-cleaning software. To find software that works with your version of Windows, visit Windows Marketplace and search for "file shredder" or "secure file deletion."

Call the computer manufacturer's technical services department and ask how to delete personal files (your computer might need to be under warranty for this service).

Take your hard drive to a local reputable computer supplier to have them safely overwrite your files.

*(Continued on page 17)*

Once you've cleaned the personal data from your old computer (and you don't plan to or are unable to sell it), what should you do with it? Consider donating or recycling.

#### Donate

If your unwanted computer still works, donating it is probably the best way to go, and doing so will help keep toxins such as lead, mercury, and other electronic byproducts out of the environment.

Each computer dumped in a landfill is a missed opportunity to provide a computer for others to use through a nonprofit or school-based refurbisher.

In addition, depending on the current market value of your donated computer, you might be able to deduct its value from your taxes (refer to current federal and local tax laws for more information).

#### Recycle

If your computer is an older model (five years is typically the maximum for donating), doesn't work, or donating isn't otherwise an option, you can dispose of it responsibly with the help of a qualified recycler near you

*Submitted by: Greg.*

## **Office 2007 Disables Spelling Checking In Outlook Express - by Office Watch**

Office Watch friend, Peter Mc writes:

"So you upgrade to Office 2007 and it breaks the spell checking in Outlook Express (as I have just discovered with my wife's PC). "

It's true - when you install Office 2007, Outlook Express 6 (the one that comes with Windows XP) loses most of its spell checking ability.

Hunting around Microsoft Support you'll find this:

" You no longer have spell checking capabilities in some languages in Outlook Express 6.0 after you install the 2007 Microsoft Office "

For "some languages" in the Subject above substitute "English, German and Spanish". You're left with French spell checking.

The Microsoft non-solution is amazingly arrogant and quite incomplete. Microsoft's answer is to tell you to go get a third party product.

Microsoft probably arrogantly assumes people will switch from Outlook Express to Outlook (amazing they don't suggest that).

However that doesn't allow for the high sales and strong push by Microsoft of their 'Home and Student Edition' which does not have Outlook 2007. If you were hoping to use Word 2007, Excel 2007 and Powerpoint 2007 combined with Outlook Express 6 (from Windows XP) then you're in for a spelling shock.

Thankfully there are some solutions, not suggested by Microsoft:

If you have Office 2003, reinstall only the spell checker from there. From Setup choose the Custom option then disable all installation options except the language/s you want under Shared Features | Proofing Tools. This will work with any Office 2003 bundle or individual product like Publisher 2003 or FrontPage 2003.

Spell check for OE is a bit of freeware but its solution only gives access to the (US)English spell checking.

Upgrade from Outlook Express to its successor Windows Live Mail. This looks and acts like Outlook Express with modern features added. It's a standalone program that will work offline and with any email account (not just Microsoft email accounts).

*Submitted by: Greg.*