

Handout for OCNA Computer Club – Session #8

March 11, 2006

New Topics Covered in this Session

Computer Maintenance Processes

Each of us needs to keep our computers and hard drives in efficient and useful form. I recommend that you do the following procedures at least once per month. If you are a very active user, then you may want to do these once a week. Go to Start and Programs and Accessories and System Tools:

Disk Cleanup – will analyze how much space can be deleted and then you choose.

Defrag – this will analyze and allow you to resolve the fragmentation of disk files that happen as you delete files and create new ones. This is a long process.

Backup – using Windows Explorer (my favorite Windows program) to drag and drop file folders of data to a backup device (CD, DVD, web site, remote drive). You will need to make a list of critical data to backup; you don't want to or need to backup your entire C drive. You should keep all program CDs that came with your computer or that you purchases since. If you downloaded software, then you can download it again as needed. BTW: there are all kinds of backup software available; use Google to find options for free backup software or those that you may buy.

Remove Software – go to the Control Panel and select “Install or remove software”; it will bring up a list of all programs on your computer. Carefully review which programs you no longer want to use and specify “remove”. DO NOT REMOVE anything you don't recognize; it may be critical to Windows system performance. You can always do a Google search about programs you don't know.

Wireless Computing

You can buy/install a wireless hub in your home that will allow you to move your computer, printer and more to where you want without having to worry about wiring. Normally you would install a wireless hub if you have a laptop computer but you can also network all your computers, printers and stereo system together with wireless.

Local Free Wireless Locations include: Applebee's; Borders; Coffee Traders Intl; UW-Eau Claire, McIntyre Library, 105 Garfield Avenue; Panera Bread; Draganetti's and likely many more with certainly more to come in the very near future.

Between 2 to 5 neighbor wireless hubs can be seen from my notebook at home and all are encrypted except one. Setting up a wireless hub in your home is fairly simple but must include defining security or encryption to ensure that strangers and neighbors can not get on. I have an [installation considerations PDF](#) that I can email to you if you need one. Online course: <http://wireless-basics.workshops.help.com/>

Legality - using another's unsecured wireless hub to access the Internet is not yet illegal but it is not right to use and degrade a service that someone else is paying for. Currently there are no easy ways to detect other users on a home wireless service.

A new wireless device has recently been introduced that will hook up your stereo system to your home wireless network so that you can listen to “playlists” of “ripped” CD music from your computer. I have copied almost all of our CDs to our computers using the “rip” option in the free Windows Media Player. A database in your My Music folder is captured from the Web as you “rip” each CD, including the CD cover, the artist name, CD name, song name, length, and more.

You can also buy wire less speakers and headsets; here is just one example www.grfrequencies3.com/audio.htm

Broadband Internet Options

Available higher speed Internet services in the area include DSL from your phone company, cable modem from Charter, and Clearwire Wireless. If you want to test your current speed, here is a broadband test site - http://reviews.cnet.com/7004-7254_7-0.html?tag=nl.e776. Most venders include several levels of speed & pricing.

Web Browser Settings

On your IE Browser go to Tools menu, select Internet Options: Periodically “Delete Files” and “Clear History”. I personally don't “Delete Cookies” because I believe that they are more useful than harmful. How often should you do this depends how active a web user you are. Weekly, bi-weekly or monthly is up to you.

Your IE browser may often give a horizontal scroll bar at the bottom of the window because it has to slide to read the page. Likely your screen resolution is set fairly low – perhaps 800x600 pixels. Most Web pages are designed for higher resolutions. If your resolution is lower, part of the page will be hidden. IE adds the scroll bar so you can view the full page.

Increase your resolution by right-clicking on the desktop. Select Properties and the Settings tab. Use the Screen Resolution slider to increase the resolution. When you're done, click Apply and OK. This also means that fonts will appear smaller, and may be difficult to read. You can increase the font size by clicking View>>Text Size in IE. Select a larger size in the submenu.

There are other monitor settings. Click here for more tips www.komando.com/tips_show.asp?showID=7401

OCNA Newsletter and Web Site www.otter-creek.org

The tri-fold OCNA newsletter is currently created using Adobe Illustrator. It is printed on an association owned HP tabloid printer that prints up to 11x17 size paper.

Printing on Cloth

Recently I have developed a way to print on cloth using standard computer printers. The cloth is ironed onto waxed freezer paper which gives enough stiffness to proceed thru most printers. When done, the wax paper is peeled off. Using the association printer I have made very creative 11"x17" heirloom cloth hangings of family photos and stories. Let me know if you have some personal projects in mind and you will simply be charged for materials consumed in the process.

Tax Software – federal and state taxes can be done on your computer or online. Check out the following options that lead you thru a questionnaire to do your personal tax preparation. Many of the online options can be used for no charge!

- ✍ IRS.gov – www.irs.gov ***
- ✍ TurboTax – Intuit's tax software for your PC or MAC
- ✍ Tax Cut – H & R Block's tax software for your PC or MAC
- ✍ Wis.gov – Home Page www.wi.gov; income taxes www.dor.state.wi.us/

*** Seventy percent of the nation's taxpayers are eligible for free tax preparation software and free electronic filing. See if you are eligible.

Sound Capturing/Editing Software – **Audacity** is a downloadable free program that will allow you to capture audio streams from cassette tapes, from microphone input or Internet sources.

You will need to go to Radio Shack to get the proper hook up cords to connect your cassette player to your computer. Generally, you will want to get a double male stereo 6' cord that will cost about \$8. One end goes into the out jack of the cassette player and the other end into your computer mic input or audio input. Be sure to check the size of each jack before buying the cord. Jack sizes are 1/8" or 1/4".

Credit Reports – Each of us should take advantage of the free offer to get copies of our credit reports from all three of the major credit agencies. Here is an government FTC info web site: www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/pubs/credit/freereports.htm

To order, visit annualcreditreport.com, call 1-877-322-8228, or complete the **Annual Credit Report Request Form** and mail it to: Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281. The form can be printed from ftc.gov/credit.

Do not contact the three nationwide consumer reporting companies individually. They are providing free annual credit reports only through annualcreditreport.com

1-877-322-8228, and Annual Credit Report Request Service, P.O. Box 105281, Atlanta, GA 30348-5281.

Be careful of imposter web sites that try to hook you into a credit monitoring service.

Computer Security Considerations

All PC computer users should invest in security software and ensure that it is keep updated. The categories and some free or recommended options are:

Anti-Virus – this software will scan each incoming email, attachments/files and outgoing email for viruses. **Norton & McAfee** are the most used but include an annual fee to install and keep current. AOL users who update to the Security Edition Version 9.0 will get a very acceptable version of McAfee for free. This is what I have done and have been very happy.

Fire-Wall – is needed particularly if you are a broadband Internet user and spend a lot of time connected to the Web.

Anti-Spy – checks for downloaded programs that “spy” on what and where you go and report that to someone for marketing reasons or worse. Windows Defender and Webroot's Spy Sweeper. Other good ones - Ad-Aware, Spybot-Search & Destroy.

Anti-Spam – Many email services now provide this service for free but you can go further by specifying filters in your personal email service that routes Spam email to a separate Spam folder. You can specify by keyword or by sender email address.

Free Shareware security software options: www.komando.com/bestshareware.asp

Useful Internet Web Sites – the attachment has an accumulation of interesting and useful web sites that I have collected over the last few months. I also have two other pages of other links that I published for earlier class sessions.

The **Otter-Creek Association web site** www.otter-creek.org has been updated. Check it out. All eight computer class handouts will be posted within a few days.

Here are a few that are particularly interesting (in my opinion):

Amazing Google Earth Imaging <http://earth.google.com/>
White/Yellow directory online (combined search engine results) <http://argali.com/>
Federal government front entrance page (good start page) firstgovsearch.gov
Open dictionaries (creative & useful) www3.merriam-webster.com/opendictionary
www.wikipedia.org

Google sounds around the world <http://freesound.iua.upf.edu/geotagsView.php>

Newspapers by state/city (very useful) hometownnews.com

Top web sites www.web100.com/

Area Gas Prices <http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gas>

Home Evaluation – home values in your neighborhood zillow.com

Serenity sounds on your computer www.iserenity.com

All things Hubble – <http://hubblesite.org/>

Updated Useful Internet Links

OCNA Computer Class - Session #8 – by Duane Berglund - March 11, 2006

To go directly to web page, point cursor on an active link and then “ctl-left click”

Computer Help Sites

Type to Speak http://vhost.oddcast.com/vhost_minisite/demos/tts/tts_example.html
Video Sharing Site www.filefactory.com/
Online Video Sharing Site www.youtube.com
Shared Videos Online www.open-video.org
Large File Upload/Download www.dropload.com
Folder Sharing foldershare.com
Organize your Favorites <http://favorites.live.com/>
Keyboard Hot Key qliner.com/hotkeys
Web Page Authoring www.nvu.com/
Text Messaging from your Computer www.teleflip.com
Run a Memory Check oca.microsoft.com/en/windiag.asp
Computer Registry Fix www.silentrunners.org/sr_download.html
Browser Anti-Phishing Add-on www.spoofstick.com
Desktop Wallpaper Site www.caedes.net
IE Browser Maximer Add-on www.jiisoft.com/iemaximizer
Large File Upload www.mailbigfile.com
Microsoft Office Alternative online.thinkfree.com
Computer Phone Calling www.yak.com/en/index.php
Power Line Carrier www.powerlinecommunications.net/whypowerline.htm
Speed Test http://reviews.cnet.com/7004-7254_7-0.html?tag=nl.e776

Travel & Map Sites

Flight Arrival/Departure Status www.flightstats.com
Your Info with You Everywhere <http://beinsync.com/>
Yahoo Flight Finder farechase.yahoo.com
Live Air Traffic Control Audio www.liveatc.net
New Microsoft Map Viewing <http://local.live.com/>
Flight Seat Selection Assistance www.seatguru.com/index.php
View Traffic Anywhere www.traffic.com
Google Map Service <http://maps.google.com/>
Travel Site nationalgeographic.com/adventure/adventure_travel.html
Yahoos Map Service maps.yahoo.com/beta

Helpful Sites

Books www.planetpdf.com/free_pdf_ebooks.asp?CurrentPage=1
Amazing Google Earth Imaging <http://earth.google.com/>
Best Search Engines Together www.jux2.com
White/Yellow Directory Online <http://argali.com/>
Find DVD or CD Covers www.findmycover.com
Catalogue your library online www.librarything.com
Hearing Test www.asha.org/public/hearing/disorders/Self-Test.htm
Quick Online Reference www.cleverkeys.com
Federal Government Front Entrance Page firstgovsearch.gov

S&H Stamps http://greenpoints.com/account/act_default.asp
Interesting News Site www.tenbyten.org/now.html
Free Medical Books freebooks4doctors.com/fb/special.htm
Mistakes found in the News www.regrettheerror.com
Open Dictionary www3.merriam-webster.com/opendictionary
Google Sounds <http://freesound.iua.upf.edu/geotagsView.php>
Innovate World Time Display www.timeticker.com
eBay Posting Mistakes – Help you Bid www.fatfingers.co.uk
Integrated Online Databases www.digitaluniverse.net/
Newspapers by state/city hometownnews.com
Home Evaluation Site zillow.com
Top Web Sites www.web100.com/
Gardening www.bbc.co.uk/gardening/design/virtualgarden_index.shtml
Science www.livescience.com <http://hubblesite.org/> www.pbs.org/exploringspace/
Five Museums Around the World www.guggenheim.org/
Medical Reference www.merck.com/mrkshared/mmanual/home.jsp
Area Gas Prices <http://autos.msn.com/everyday/gas>
Recipe Site www.epicurious.com/recipes
All About Homes/Apartments and more Homestore.com

Fun Sites

Shortest logical connection www.omnipelagos.com
Serenity Sounds on your computer www.iserenity.com
Online Games and More www.blifaloo.com www.gamedesign.jp/index_en.html
Puzzles www.gieson.com/Library/projects/games/matter/
Fun Face Morphing www.morphases.com/
Games www.shockwave.com/sw/content/dinerdash
Guinness Record Card Stacker www.cardstacker.com
Hubble Fun Game Site http://hubblesite.org/fun_and_games/
Online Jigsaw Puzzles www.jigzone.com
Puzzle Site www.brl.ntt.co.jp/people/hara/fly.swf
Sketch Online and Share www.sketchswap.com/
Online Scrabble www.themaninblue.com/experiment/SSCrabble
Online Chess Game Site www.media-division.com/flashgames/flashchess/chess.htm
Interesting Puzzle Games www.teagames.com/games/blueprint/play.php
John Wayne www.jvanders.com/Whyiloveher.swf

Photo Sites

Aerial 360 Degree Photos www.bigeyeinthesky.com
Best Photos of the Year www.time.com/time/yip/2005
Monterey Bay Aquarium www.mbayaq.org/efc/
Very Cute Photos <http://cuteoverload.com/>
Beautiful Message Site www.frontiernet.net/~jlbeam/specials/life/life.htm
Great Earth Photos from Space www.frontiermultimedia.com/the-good-earth.htm