January 13, 2007

Upgrading a Laptop

by

Robb Lang

FUTURE MEETING DATES AND TOPICS:

February 10, 2007	Round Table (Ask the Gurus)
March 17, 2007	Master of your Domain (R. Long)
April 14, 2007	Elections and Annual Dues Due
May 12, 2007	Open Office

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador
Mr. Mike McEnery

Membership

Membership for LCACE is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only $10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the LCACE News Journal and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline, and are now available on our WEB site at - http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on the second Saturday of each month at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page - $15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card - $5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 21st of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are FREE to all paid members.

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President's Ram

Happy New Year!

I hope this holiday season has been as enjoyable for everyone as it has been for me. We are approaching the end of 2006 and ready to welcome in 2007. In 2007 I am looking forward to new demonstrations – Microsoft Vista, Microsoft's Office 2007, and my personal favorite… Flight Simulator X. Please contact Julio to schedule any new items you would like to demonstrate to the club.

The Holiday Party was another great success. Special thanks to Linda (our chairperson, I think she volunteered to do it again next year), Robin for finding the freebies, Dorothy and Winnie for manning the door and managing the money, Donna for the kitchen stuff, J.J. for the ham , turkey, and, of course, his passion for taking pictures, Jim for being Santa's helper, and, last but not least, Dave for supplying the great music. Everyone had a good time. If I have forgotten anyone please don't hesitate to let me know.

With the new year, our attention is on nominations and election of club officers. Nominations start in February and conclude at April's meeting with the election of the new board. So now is the time to start your campaigning – What office would you like to hold?

Now for some sad news, I would like to extend my and the club's condolences to Jack and Winnie Frost on the passing of Jack Frost, Sr. Our prayers and thoughts go out to you.

Looking forward to seeing you all at the next meeting.

Mike

I would also like to thank everyone on my committee and especially to all of you who attended our Holiday Party. I think it was a great time and not because I won a few prizes. This year I can say that I actually didn't win the most prizes.

If you continue reading, you will have to listen to me "brag" just a bit.

As you are all aware there was a terrifying (at least to me) snow storm on December 1st, the day before our party. As luck would have it, I took a snow day off on that Friday. I had no intentions of going anywhere that day… except that I HAD to pick up the building key so that we could get into the extension site on Saturday.

I did put it off as long as I could. I must have made 300 phone calls to the extension site to see if anyone was there to give me the key. They never did answer the phone, but I decided at 2:30 p.m. that I couldn't wait any longer to brave the elements and try to get the key.

SanDisk introduces 32GB Flash-based notebook drive

January 4, 2007 @ 9:34PM, by Matt Woodwardc

The hard drive is a critical component of every modern computer system. It loads and stores practically everything about the computer, from the OS to all the programs to every data bit and document. Yet the hard drive is based on a mechanical spinning disk system that is ultimately prone to failure, usually due to the stress of heat and motion. Laptop hard drives typically take more abuse than their desktop counterparts and therefore have an even higher rate of failure. Fortunately, SanDisk has taken the first steps to potentially ending all of this. The company has developed a new solid-state 32GB hard drive for notebooks that is based entirely on NAND flash RAM.

The 32GB SanDisk SSD UATA 5000 is only a 1.8" form-factor drive, but it has mighty impressive specifications despite its size: 62MB/sec sustained throughput, 0.12ms average access time, and it draws only 0.4 watts. This means that the SanDisk SSD has an average access time that is more than 100 times faster than any notebook hard drive, and it draws 50 to 87 percent less power than most notebook hard drives. While its sustained throughput is roughly on par with most notebooks, it should be noted that the throughput is the same regardless of whether it is reading at the beginning or the end of the drive. (Hard disks typically have higher throughput rates on their outer tracks and slower throughput rates on their inner tracks.) In addition, everything is solid-state, so there are no moving parts. Even if you are the type to drop or bang your laptop around on a regular basis, there are no hard disk heads to crash into spinning platters.

Although flash memory can be known to eventually "wear out" due to writing to the same area repeatedly, modern flash memory controllers have automatic "wear-leveling" to ensure longevity of the device by making sure that sectors are being written to evenly and bad sectors are dynamically remapped to good ones. According to SanDisk, the SSD UATA

somewhat prohibitive at $600. It would seem that SanDisk's target market is currently the enterprise user, but naturally as flash memory prices continue to come down and more flash manufacturers get into the hard drive business, we should expect to see them in consumer-grade laptops in the proverbial three to five years.

Submitted by Jim Rutledge

from the New York Times

MicroSoft and Ford Combine Products

By John Markoff
Published January 7, 2007

LAS VEGAS, Jan. 7 — Bill Gates, the chairman of Microsoft, is using the Consumer Electronics Show here to highlight several new consumer-oriented products and to unveil a partnership with the Ford Motor Company to build Microsoft technology into several Ford models.

The show, the largest trade event in North America, has become an annual forum for Mr. Gates to mix product announcements with computer-filled visions of future Microsoft-based technologies.

In remarks prepared for delivery on Sunday night, the eve of the show, he sought to differentiate Microsoft from other companies by showing how its software products tie together a range of consumer activities including games, interactive television, communications and music. A Microsoft executive briefed reporters on the presentation on Friday.

Among the announcements was the introduction of a hardware upgrade to the Xbox 360 video-game system that will permit the system to deliver the Microsoft interactive television service being offered by partners, including AT&T. The system will duplicate many capabilities of the Media Center version of the Windows operating system, like the ability to record and play back digital video.

Microsoft and Ford are to offer a system called Sync, a voice-activated method for connecting cellphones and media players — like Microsoft's Zune — to a vehicle. Similar systems are widely available in Japanese and German automobiles. Sync, the first major commercial introduction of the Microsoft Auto software, offers hands-free phone dialing and can read incoming text messages through the car's audio system.

Microsoft is also introducing a consumer software product called Windows Home Server that will be marketed with several partners, including Hewlett-Packard. It will be an appliancelike device that will

BBC News—January 5, 2007

Web users are being urged to upgrade their Adobe reader software as a security flaw is found in older versions of the program.

Millions of people use the reader software to view documents prepared in the popular PDF format.

Security researchers said malicious hackers exploiting the flaw could view victim's hard drives

The Reader software is used by millions of people

or use it to make phishing scams look more plausible.

So far there is no evidence that the bug is being exploited in the wild.

The flaw is found in the web browser plug-in of the Adobe Reader software. Ordinarily this allows PDF documents to be viewed in a browser window.

But by exploiting the flaw hi-tech criminals could use links to PDF files stored on any website to attack vulnerable Windows PCs.

Information about the flaw in the Adobe reader software was first revealed at the annual conference of the Chaos Computer Club - a venerable German hacker group.

Since then security researchers have investigated and found that it could also be used to view files on the hard drive of a vulnerable PC.

Writing about the flaw Symantec security researcher Hon Lau said: "The ease [with] which this weakness can be exploited is breathtaking."

So far no cyber criminals are thought to be actively exploiting the Adobe Reader flaw but code to do so has been produced.

Initially it was thought that only users of the Firefox web browser were at risk but now it is known that Internet Explorer users are vulnerable too.

Upgrading to version 8 of the Adobe Reader software removes the risk of falling victim to the flaw.

connect to a home network and perform functions like network-based backup and media and file-sharing as well as functioning as a Web server. The price will be between $400 and $500, according to Microsoft executives. The product will be based on Windows Server 2003, and not the company's newer Windows Vista operating system.

On the program with Mr. Gates was Robbie Bach, the executive in charge of the company's consumer products, to demonstrate game play involving a PC user running Windows Vista competing against a home user playing the game on an Xbox 360. There is no public timetable for such a capability, a company executive said, adding that the feature would not be available for all of the Xbox 360 games.

Another scheduled demonstration involved the current version of the Home of the Future, and installation at Microsoft headquarters with prototypes of home-oriented technologies. Applications chosen for the spotlight were radio-frequency ID tags and displays for the walls of children's bedrooms using organic light-emitting diodes.
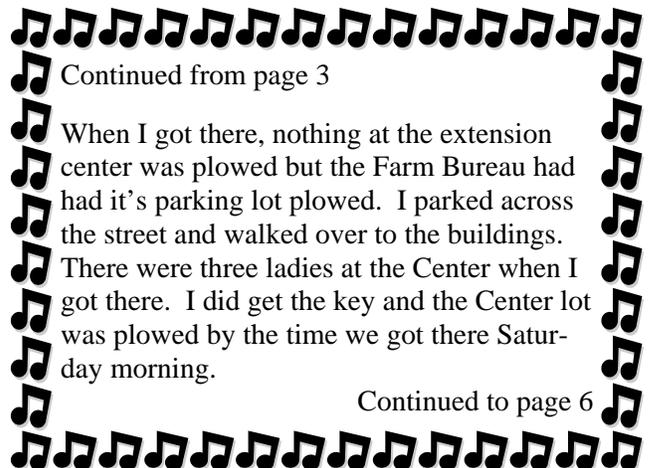
When I got there, nothing at the extension center was plowed but the Farm Bureau had had it's parking lot plowed. I parked across the street and walked over to the buildings. There were three ladies at the Center when I got there. I did get the key and the Center lot was plowed by the time we got there Saturday morning.

If companies like Kodak really want us to buy their printers to make prints, then they're going to have to think a bit harder about making it an economical choice. This epiphany came to me as I spent the holidays using Kodak's new EasyShare printer. Don't get me wrong—the new EasyShare G600 printer is marvelous. It's a dye-sublimation printer that lets you dock your Kodak camera or use a variety of transfer options from USB or memory cards. The printer is compact (it even has a carrying handle and can run on optional batteries) and does simple editing, including red-eye reduction. The dye-sublimation technology prints gorgeous 4x6 photos, and it's a cinch to use.

But if you do any sort of cost calculation, you'd need your head examined to use it.

I learned this the hard way when a friend with a new baby and a new Kodak EasyShare camera stopped by to show off the camera (and the baby). "Hey," I said, "I'm looking at the EasyShare G600 printer docking station for a review right now. I could make you a print and see how it looks." Famous last words. It turns out that I had already made eight prints, and my demo pack and ink cartridge were used up.

Eight prints from one ink cartridge? It turns out that one of the "features" of the new Kodak docking station printer is that each package of paper has an ink cartridge that's good for—get this—just as many pieces of paper as are in the package. My eight-pack was gone, and so was my ink (despite the fact that I had plenty of 4x6 photo paper at home).

You can get larger packs of ink/paper, but because every cartridge and paper pack lasts just as long as the paper, it was easy for me to figure out what a print costs. A replacement Kodak Photo Paper Kit with 50 sheets of paper and the ink cartridge is available for $25. That's 50 cents a print. Yikes! I went to Kodak EasyShare PhotoGallery to check the price of ordering 4x6 prints online, and it was only 15 cents a print. At rival online service SnapFish, a 4 x 6 print

is 12 cents, with the first 20 prints free for new members. At Walgreens, prints also cost about 12 cents each, but if you submit online you can pick up the photos an hour later at a store near you. And in-store kiosks at places such as Wal-Mart and CVS, where you stand at the photo kiosk in the store, insert your memory card, and make your prints, are also under 15 cents a print.

Sure, there are advantages to having your own printer and immediate gratification, but there are advantages to using online services, too, such as sharing your photos with far-flung relatives immediately and getting free storage space. While Kodak's newest printer makes it really simple to print fabulous photos, I'd say the pricing scheme needs further investigation. What about you? Are you printing at home or using the online services or in-store kiosks?
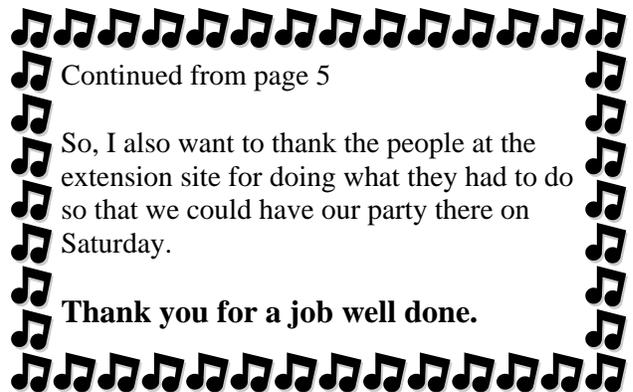
So, I also want to thank the people at the extension site for doing what they had to do so that we could have our party there on Saturday.

Thank you for a job well done.

EDITOR'S little CORNER:

OK? How many of you now own new computers? Tell us all the details—what brand, what processing speed, how much memory, what size processor, etc. How did you transfer everything from the old machine to the new machine?

Write down the answers to all the questions and … Wah Lah! … you've just written an article for the News Journal.

See how easy it can be.

Try it. You'll like seeing your name in a byline.

AUDITION NOTICE

Calling all Singers, Dancers, Musicians, Tech People, over the age of 18.

Join the cast of:

"The Magic of Music"

A Musical Revue to Aid the Homeless
Auditions will be held:

When: Tuesday, January 16
Thursday, January 18

Time: 6:00pm - 9:00pm

Where: Park Place Senior Center,
414 South Lewis Avenue, Waukegan

Come prepared to sing two songs, one ballad and one up-beat, and also to do some simple movement.
Music will be provided if needed.

Save the Date: 7:00pm
Performance: Saturday, May 19, 2007

Contact: Dianne Daluga,
Producer at 847-274-3274 for
additional information

From the New York Times

Tips for Protecting the Home Computer

By John Markoff

Published January 7, 2007

Botnet programs and other malicious software largely take aim at PCs running the Microsoft Windows operating system, because Windows' ubiquity makes it fertile ground for network-based attacks.

Using a non-Windows-based PC may be one defense against these programs, known as malware; in addition, anti-malware programs and antivirus utilities for the PC are available from several vendors. Windows users should use the Windows Update feature.

Microsoft itself entered the computer-security business last year and now offers a free malware-removal tool for download from its Web site. The company says the program removes about two million pieces of malware each month, of which 200,000, or about 10 percent, are botnet infections.

Like Windows, Microsoft's Internet Explorer browser is also a large, convenient target for code-writing vandals. Alternative browsers, like Firefox and Opera, may insulate users. Microsoft's most recent browser release, Internet Explorer 7, is said to offer significantly improved defenses.

Adding software to your browser like Noscript, a plug-in utility, can limit the ability of remote programs to run potentially damaging programs on your PC.

Security experts also offer these tips:

¶Don't share your computer (on which you pay your bills) with your children (who download games).

¶Use a firewall program that warns you about outgoing connections that botnets make to communicate with control software.

Don't use the same password on more than one financial site.

¶Don't let your browser store your password for such sites.

¶Don't buy anything offered by a spammer.

¶Don't click if someone offers you something too good to be true. It is.

members

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webmaster@lcace.org

Sign the Guest Book and tell us what you think
- ♦ **LCACE e-mail addresses**
- ♦ **LCACE information**
- ♦ **LCACE history and pictures**
- ♦ **LCACE meeting, location, and map**

NEXT MEETING
January 13, 2007

Grayslake Public Library
100 Library Lane
Grayslake, IL

12:30 — 3:00 p.m.

This month:

Upgrading a Laptop
By
Robb Lang
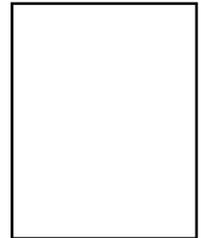
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED