



Go Green with Freecycle

By Ellen Smatlak, L.C.A.C.E. club member

What is Freecycle?

Deron Beal started the Freecycle Network™ in May 2003 in an effort to help save the desert landscape around Tucson, Arizona from being taken over by landfills. The popularity of his email group has grown into a worldwide electronic forum allowing individuals and nonprofit organizations to "recycle" unwanted items at a local level.

Today, the Freecycle Network is comprised of 4,835 groups with 6,602,000 members across the globe. Freecycle.org is a nonprofit network of people who give and get good stuff for free by posting notices online. People freely give away all kinds of things—no trading or money is involved.

Join Freecycle and you'll soon agree—one person's "trash" can truly be another person's treasure!

How does Freecycle work?

Members post emails announcing what they have to give away (OFFER) or an item they are seeking (WANTED). Other members respond to those postings and make arrangements for handing off/receiving the goods. Givers or receivers then post a notice announcing that their item has been TAKEN or RECEIVED.

You can choose how you want to receive Freecycle postings—individual emails as they are posted (expect to get buried in emails!), via a daily email digest, or only when you decide to log into your Freecycle Yahoo! Group.

How do I get started?

I suggest you go to www.freecycle.org and read the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) before signing up. Then you'll have a better idea of what is allowed, what isn't, and how to participate.

1. Use your internet browser to get to Freecycle's home page: www.freecycle.org (shown below).

2. Hover your mouse pointer on **FAQ**. When the drop-down menu displays, click on **Member FAQ**.



3. Read the FAQ topics of interest to you. **Basic Rules and Etiquette** are especially important to newcomers.

Now, if you're ready and willing to freecycle, start by finding a convenient group to join. To do so:

1. From the Freecycle home page, click **Browse groups**. A U.S. map displays.
2. Click on the state of your choice (likely Illinois, if you're an L.C.A.C.E. member).



3. A list of towns that host a Freecycle group display. Illinois has a LONG list...scroll down and find the

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L.C.A.C.E Logo designed By JR. Johnson.

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts LCACE c/o Group Ambassador "J.J." Johnson

Membership

Membership in 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 Saturdays 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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town closest to you. Click on the town of your choice.

Active groups in the Illinois region :

[Other regions of United States](#)



Addison	Freeport	Northbrook
Algonquin	Gallatin County	O Fallon
Alton	Geneva	Oak Forest
Antioch	Glen Ellyn	Oak Lawn
Arlington Heights	Glendale	Oak Park
Aurora	Heights	Oregon
Barrington	Granite City	Ottawa
Bartlett	Gurnee	Palatine / Mt
Batavia	Hamilton	Prospect
Belleville	Country	Palos Hills
Bensenville	Hancock	Park Ridge
	County	

For example, I chose Lake Zurich, so the Lake Zurich Freecycle welcome page displays.

Lake Zurich

Group info My Freecycle

988 Members ModTeam: lakezurichfreecycle-owner@yahoogroups.com

Welcome to the Lake Zurich Freecycle group!

The Freecycle Network™ is made up of 4,836 groups with 6,506,408 members across the globe. It's a grassroots and entirely nonprofit movement of people who are giving (and getting) stuff for free in their own towns and thus keeping good stuff out of landfills.

Membership is free, and everything posted must be FREE, legal and appropriate for all ages. To view the items being given away or sought in Lake Zurich, you must be a member of the local group. To view the local group posts, visit the local Yahoo Group where they are located by clicking on the link below.

If you are already a member, you may use the "Post" tab on the top right of this page to make your post to the local group. Otherwise, go to the Yahoo Group linked to below and click on "Join" first in order to view the posts. Thanks so much and have fun!

[Visit the Lake Zurich Yahoo!Group page](#) ←

DISCLAIMER: FREecycle NETWORK MEMBERS USE THE LIST AT THEIR OWN RISK. Please take reasonable measures to protect your safety and privacy when posting to the list or participating in an exchange. By joining the list, you agree to hold neither the list owners and moderators nor anyone affiliated with Freecycle.org responsible or liable for any circumstance resulting from a Freecycle-related exchange or communication.

[Visit the Lake Zurich group and see the posts](#)

Please login or sign up to My Freecycle to join this group.

To read, post, or respond to Freecycle offers, you must first join a group. To do so:

1. Navigate to the welcome page of the Freecycle group you want to join. (Follow the previous set of steps to get to the welcome page for the town of your choice.)
2. Click on the link near the center of the welcome page: [Visit the \[town name\] Yahoo!Group page](#).
3. On the group's home page...
...If you are new to Yahoo!Groups, click **Sign Up** in the upper-right corner of the screen and follow the instructions to join Yahoo!Groups. You need to pick a unique username and enter a valid email address that you can access—you will be sent an initial password for your account (which you can later change).
...If you already belong to Yahoo!Groups, but aren't signed in, click **Sign In** in the upper-right corner. Then enter your Yahoo/AT&T email address and password.
4. Click the blue **Join This Group!** button on the group's home page and complete the instruction page that displays.
Important: The profile information you set up here includes the email you wish to receive Freecycle information and how you want to get postings (individual emails, daily digests, or visit the Freecycle group page yourself).

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Robin's RAMblings

A special thank you to Lois Berg-Wells and Alden Wells for bringing the delicious coffee cake, homegrown apples, and coffee to our October 10th meeting. Dorothy Sutherland won the 50/50 prize (again!). Many thanks to vice president Mike Mc Enery for leading our gurus. Thank you to Lester Larkin for demonstrating magicJack and to J.J. Johnson for showing us JibJab (Loved seeing Dorothy dancing!)

On November 7th, LCACE and the Grayslake Area Public Library will co-sponsor Debby Abbott's program on Social Networking. Have you always wondered about sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn? This is your opportunity to learn about them.

Upcoming meetings are:

December 12-Holiday party-State Bank of the Lakes, 50 Commerce Drive, Grayslake; 1-5 pm

January 9, 2010-Microsoft, Hewlett-Packard, and Staples of Mundelein

February 13, 2010-Thippy Nguyen-*Smart Computing Magazine*

March 13, 2010-Best Buy of Mundelein-Gaming

April 17, 2010-Elections, LCACE's 27th anniversary party, Show and Tell, Ask the gurus

Please note the new location, date, and time of our holiday party. State Bank of the Lakes is on the southwest corner of Center Street and Commerce Drive in Grayslake. You will find directions and a map on our website (<http://lcace.org/News/StateBankOfTheLakes.htm>). We plan to have a "drive by" at the conclusion of our November 7th meeting to show everyone how to get there. It's just a few minutes away from the Grayslake Area Public Library.

Everyone always has a wonderful time at our party. LCACE has some *great* cooks. Start thinking now about what healthy dish you will bring to pass. The club will provide ham, turkey, rolls, condiments, pop, and ice cream. As always, family and friends are welcome to attend. Please volunteer to help.

I hope you're all busily selling tickets for our holiday raffle: first prize is a 17" Toshiba laptop with 3GB of RAM, 250GB hard drive, built in webcam and microphone, etc.; second prize is an Acer Aspire one 10.1" netbook, 1GB of RAM, 160GB hard drive, etc; third prize is a Flip Ultra 120 minute digital camcorder with 2" screen; a one year membership to LCACE is our fourth prize. Tickets are \$1 each, 6 or \$5, or 25 for \$20. You can't win unless you buy tickets! Winners do not need to be present so plan to sell tickets to out of town family and friends.

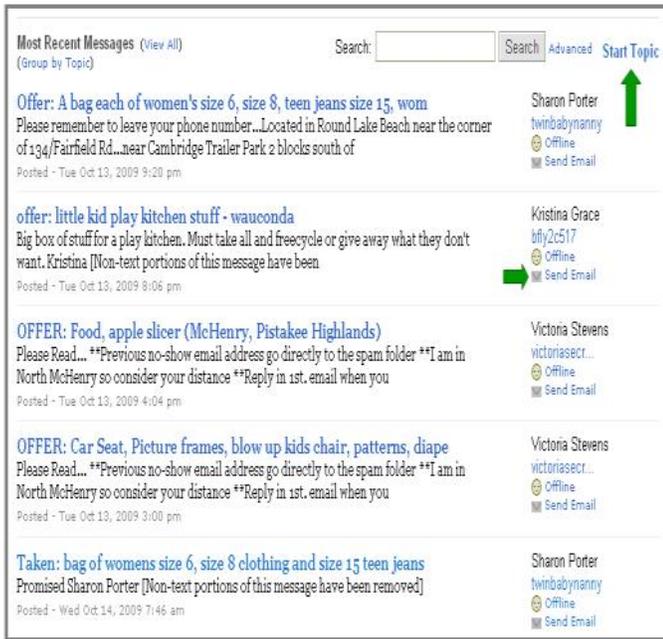
Buy tickets for yourself, and plan to pick up tickets to sell at our November meeting. The person who sells the winning first prize ticket and also the person who sells the most tickets will receive a prize at the holiday party.

I've been hearing rave reviews about *Windows 7*. Apparently Microsoft kept the good features in *Vista* and fixed most of the problems. Can't wait to try it.

If you're thinking of shopping on Black Friday, you may want to visit a site that claims to preview the ads: <http://dealnews.com/black-friday.html?iref=dnhd> Just remember that some items are just as cheap before or after Black Friday and you don't have to wait in line in the wee hours to get them; many online merchants now start their sales on Thanksgiving Day. Happy computing!



Here's an example of a few postings:



On this screen, you can reply to any of the people posting items (Send Email) or post a new message of your own (Start Topic).

So...think globally, recycle locally. Join in the fun of keeping good stuff out of landfills. Sign up and start to Freecycle today!

Install Those Updates

By Marjie Tucker, Newsletter Editor, Mountain Computer User Group, Georgia

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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

Are you taking every precaution to safeguard the data on your computer? If you answer "yes" because you have turned on the Windows Firewall and use anti-virus and anti-spyware software, that's great. However, you may be forgetting something very important - installing software updates.

Software usually contains bugs that are not found until the general public uses it. Because of this, all companies including Microsoft and Apple periodically make updates available to fix the bugs that have appeared. Many viruses and worms are written specifically to take

advantage of holes that appear in operating systems and other programs. If you don't install the latest updates to your computer, those holes will remain and your data will be vulnerable to the malware.

Both Windows XP and Windows Vista have the ability to automatically download the most important updates as they are posted. To ensure that this is happening on your computer use the Control Panel to go to the Windows Security Center and make certain that the Automatic Updates are turned on. If Automatic Updating shows a green On color, then the updates will be downloaded. If the function for Automatic Updates is disabled, use the setting available to turn it on.

When the updates have been downloaded to your computer you are notified of their presence. This usually occurs with a small golden icon in the lower right-hand corner of your taskbar that reads "Updates are ready for your computer." If you click on the icon and give permission, the update will install immediately, usually in the background so you can continue working. After it is installed you may be asked to give permission for your computer to reboot.

However, if you tell the computer not to install this update, the message that it is available may stay on your computer permanently, as it waits for you to click that it can now be installed. If you see the gold icon on your taskbar, check to see if you have updates waiting right now so you can protect your computer.

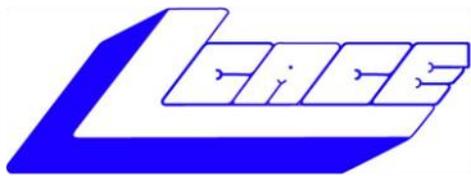
There May Be Additional Updates

Sometimes there are optional updates available that won't be downloaded automatically. For that reason it's a good idea to check the Microsoft Update website periodically. The easiest way to check is to use the link you can find on your Start Menu.

That link will take you directly to the Microsoft Update site where you can choose between the Express or Custom method of installing available updates. Custom is preferable so you can determine if there are any updates you don't want to install.

Click on the Custom button and then wait while the Microsoft site compares your computer's software against the Microsoft database. Eventually you will see a list of updates that are missing from your computer. Any High-Priority (important for security) updates will already be selected to be downloaded. However, you need to look at the Optional Updates to choose the ones you want to include. Click on Software, Optional and choose all that are shown. You should need all of these. If any Hardware, Optional updates are shown, you should be a little choosier. If your hardware is working properly, you may want to skip these driver up-

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

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HOLIDAY RAFFLE 2009



1st Prize:

Toshiba Satellite 17" Notebook

- Pentium® Dual-Core Processor T3400
- 3GB of RAM
- 250GB hard drive
- Webcam & Microphone
- Dual layer DVD±RW/DVD-RAM/DVD±R
- Windows Vista Home Premium-SP1

2nd Prize:

Acer Aspire One 10.1" Netbook

- Intel Atom N270 1.6GHz
- 1GB of RAM
- 160GB hard drive
- Windows XP Home-SP3.



3rd Prize:

Flip Ultra 120 Minute Digital Camcorder

- 2" LCD color screen
- Convenient flip-out USB arm plugs
- Built-in FlipShare software

4th Prize:

1-Year's Membership LCACE

"Members Helping Members"

Tickets: \$1 each, 6 for \$5, or 25 for \$20

Drawing December 12, 2009

Winner need not be present

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Make Your Cell Phone Battery Last Longer: If your battery won't hold a charge very well or you don't always have access to a charger, there are a few things you can do to stretch your battery's charge time. When you're not using your phone, turn it off, unless you are expecting an important call. If you are in an area without service, turn your phone off so it isn't searching for signals. If you want to leave your phone on, you can also change a few settings on the phone to save battery. Turn your phone's vibrate feature off and use a basic ringtone on low volume. Also, turn your backlight off, as it will take up excessive battery power. Features like Bluetooth, Internet, cameras, etc. will drain the battery you have left, so try to use these features only when you absolutely need them.

In-Store Recycling: Electronics that are beyond repair or are no longer compatible with your current components don't serve a purpose around your home, other than taking up space. If you're ready to be rid of these obsolete items, including DVD players, cell phones, and computers, call around to local electronics stores. Often, stores will take in old electronics for recycling. Some stores will charge a small recycling fee for submitting items with screens, such as TVs and CRT monitors, but they'll sometimes supplement that charge with store credit.

Be Good To Your Hearing: The next time you take a flight and want to listen to some tunes, consider using a noise-canceling pair of headphones. Plane cabins are noisy, and in order to compensate, you're likely to turn up your audio to levels that can be harmful to your hearing. Because a noise-canceling pair of headphones will drone out ambient noise, you'll be able to enjoy your songs at a comfortable hearing level.

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dates. But if you are suffering any hardware problems, these updates may solve your problems.

After you have chosen the updates you want to download, click on Install Updates at the top of the screen and the download will begin. This may take quite a bit of time, depending on the number and size of the updates being downloaded. This would actually be a good time to take a coffee break or make that important telephone call.

You can view a list of the updates you have installed on your computer at the Add or Remove Programs lo-

cation on your Control Panel. At the top of the screen you will see a small box labeled "Show Updates." Click in that box and all your Microsoft updates will be displayed.

This screen is very useful if you encounter difficulty after installing an update or service pack. You can always find the update and uninstall it through this screen.

You can also easily see if your computer contains the latest Windows Service Packs by looking at the Properties of My Computer. Right-click over the My Computer icon and choose Properties. The most recently installed Service Pack will be listed on this screen.

Don't Forget Your Anti-MalWare Programs

Of course, it's also critical to constantly update your anti-malware programs. Viruses, worms, and spyware are constantly being developed and these protection programs work hard to provide fixes. When possible, also set these programs for automatic updates and regularly perform a manual update just to make certain that you don't miss any patches or new program features.

And, Remember Your Other Software

We've spent most of our time talking about Microsoft software. Your other programs, such as Adobe Reader and Java also receive regular updates. Look at the settings for those to be sure they are updating automatically. This is especially important if you have any difficulty while working with a program. The solution may be as simple as installing the latest patch.

Apple Software Updates

Apple also frequently releases updates that you can download and install. To check your Mac for patches, use the Apple menu and choose Software Updates.

You can also set your Mac to get Automatic Updates by choosing System Preferences from the Apple menu. Choose View and Software Update. One of the choices is Automatic and you can also choose a time for the computer to check the Apple website.

Stay Secure

Remember to set your operating system and programs for Automatic Updates, install those updates, and periodically check the websites manually to ensure that you have all the latest patches. This is an easy and inexpensive way to help protect your data.

Staff Reporter

We are looking for someone who would like to write articles monthly for the News Journal. The topics would be completely up to you as long as they are technology related. If interested contact Mike at vp@lcase.org

Optimize Your PC

Written by Jon Jackman, President, Fox Valley PC Association, Illinois
Fox Tales, August 2009
www.fvpca.org
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I saw an e-mail from PC World inviting me to speed up my slow PC. This directed me to a link for a "free scan" of my computer using PC Pitstop Optimize 3.0. Recently, we had a discussion at our general meeting of slow system performance, so I decided to give it a try and document the effort here. It may postpone an inevitable Windows re-install, but we will see.

The scan yielded some interesting results and offered to do it for me if I purchased the program (for about \$30.) I looked at the results and wondered how I might be able to do this manually for free? I looked around on Google and found some step-by-step guides on basically accomplishing the same things that PC Pitstop's Optimize would do if I paid the \$30. I ran the program and it began to scan my system. Interestingly it ran 3 scans of my Download speed. Not sure what that was about. It then displayed several pages of results: Junk Files, Internet Settings, Startup Programs, Registry Fixes and Performance Tweaks. When I reboot, it reminds me of what it can do to make things run better by displaying red messages. I will try some manual fixes and watch to see if the start-up scan gets progressively greener.

Looking at what Optimize tries to do I first decided to run CCleaner, a free program that has been a recent DOQ offering (2009 DOQ-2). Alternately, you can download it from www.ccleaner.com.

Junk Files

The first Optimize Results screen listed the junk files that I could safely delete. In my case, Optimize listed Temporary Files, Recycle Bin and Internet Caches. Using CCleaner in the Cleaner option under the Windows tab, files for Internet Explorer, Windows Explorer and System are listed by default, so I ran the "Analyze" tool. I was reminded to close Firefox to enable the Internet Cache to be cleaned as well. After several minutes it was complete and it said that ANALYSIS COMPLETE - (526.859 seconds), 555.9MB to be removed. (Approximate size). As a comparison, Optimize indicated that 729 MB would be cleaned. I ran the "Run Cleaner" option.

Internet Settings

The second Optimize Results screen looks at Internet Settings and explains that they may be tuned for faster throughput and may provide a substantial increase in Internet performance. In my case, my con-

nections (HTTP, TCP/IP and Firefox) had no recommended adjustments. However, you may try using the Optimize free scan yourself and see that you have some that are recommended. In that case, you may try to Optimize your settings manually. Search Google for "TCP Optimizer", download and run it. Select "Optimal", then apply. Look around carefully and see what else you might optimize.

You will need to reboot.

Startup Programs

When Windows starts up it automatically loads a number of programs, many of which you may not need. As you install more and more programs, this list can continue to grow. In my situation, there were several Startup Programs that Optimize considered "unnecessary." (You could run the free scan and see what it says about your system.) The ones listed on mine were: InstallShield Update Service (2 instances), Adobe Acrobat SpeedLauncher, QuickTime Icon and Realtek HD Audio. Using CCleaner I went to Tools and then selected Startup. I looked at the programs that Optimizer 3.0 suggested and right clicked on them and chose "Disable".

Registry Fixes

Programs sometimes leave incorrect information behind in the registry, either because they uninstall improperly or because the files associated with the entries have been moved or deleted. Cleaning the Windows registry would hope to keep your PC in working order and keep the system running at peak performance. Using CCleaner, select Registry and then "Scan for issues". You can then choose to Fix them. Afterwards, not too many of the Optimize findings were changed.

Performance Tweaks

Optimize made some recommendations to adjust some settings in the Registry. Using the suggested tweaks I searched the Registry and made the adjustments to the keys that I could find, although not all of the ones recommended could be found. As always, back up your registry first! (CCleaner would have done that prior to fixing the registry in the step above.) Start, Run "regedit", then Edit, Find and enter the string. Right click and adjust the value.

Additional Fixes

Use Auslogics Registry Defrag

Defrag your hard drive!

Uninstall Optimize 3.0... You might want to reinstall it and run a new scan after you have done all of these steps to see if you made progress.

You should see a faster booting, faster running machine!

Good luck!

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LCACE CLUB PICTURES at:
<http://lcace.org/PhotoAlbums.htm>

TIME TO RENEW

All memberships are now renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the payment of annual dues will allow the treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you have not already renewed your membership, please see Sherry Florian or Winnie Frost.

Serving Lake County, Illinois



Visit us @ <http://www.lcace.org>

**NEXT MEETING
HOLIDAY PARTY**

**December 12, 2009
1-5 pm.**

at State Bank of the Lakes

November 7th

Social Networking

Presented by
Debby Abbott
From our friends at



Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
409 S. Elmwood Avenue
Waukegan, IL 60085

**POSTAGE
REQUIRED**

