NIBBLES & BITS

CORTADO WORKPLACE
for desktops, smartphones, and tablets

- **Boost your mobile productivity**
- **Read create, edit, save, move, and print documents**
- **Use it on any device & any platform**

presented by
Ted Wirtz

CORTADO WORKPLACE

for Android, iOS, Windows, Macs, Linux and others

- **Get more from your smartphone, tablet, desktop computer**
- **Cortado Workplace is a multi-function, multi-platform solution**

Have you wondered how you can print from your Android, Apple or Windows tablet?

Ted Wirtz will show you an app that makes that task easy to do at our meeting February 11 at Coco's. He will demonstrate Cortado Workplace with a Power Point presentation.

Ted said, "Cortado Workplace appears to have some unique and useful features. What appears to be most useful is that it has versions for Windows, Mac, Apple, Android, Blackberry and perhaps others.

"Using the cloud as a repository

iOS screenshot

for files you select you can easily move files back and forth between the various platforms. I can create a Word .docx file on my laptop, sync it to my tablet and read or continue to edit there.

"I can also print from my Android tablet to my home networked printer (a printer that is connected directly to the user's local Ethernet or WiFi), which really has me jazzed because printing from Android is normally rather limited.

"It looks like Cortado will be quite useful, and of interest to other members," Ted said.

feedback

ROBERT ELGINES, PRES/EDITOR
CRCC, COLORADO

Microsoft Update Warning — If you are using Windows XP, Vista or 7, beware of Microsoft updates destroying drivers in the Operating Systems since 2012. Why, because they can! They own the software and of course they want you to upgrade. The biggest problem is you will have to update all of your programs not just Windows. (Thousand of dollars, do they care, hell NO!)

Windows XP

In January, 2014, Microsoft Updates created PRINT problems for 16-bit programs. In 2012, Deleted my Volume Control on the Task Bar.

Windows VISTA

Microsoft Updates cuts your speed in half and destroys MEDIA PLAYER operation and the SOLITAIRE GAME.

Windows 7

Microsoft Updates shuts down virtualizations, destroying their own program for running Win XP Mode.

You can do what you wish, but I will not update without backing up my entire system beforehand.

Then after updating make sure everything works.

TED WIRTZ
ORCOPUG, CALIFORNIA

I've heard of similar complaints about Microsoft updates before. There are now so many malware attacks active that MS is getting rushed to issue patches, and some are not as thoroughly tested as they should be because MS is trying to stop currently active attacks.

I don't know if a total backup is required every time, but one should probably be sure they have a recent restore point.

IRA WILSKER
COLUMNIST, EDUCATOR

There are three utilities that I use to verify a computer is free of malware, since no one product is 100% reliable.

I have found that MalwareBytes and SuperAntiSpyware tend to compliment each other, regardless of the order that they are run, typically catching something that the other missed.

I use the Emsisoft Emergency Kit 4.0 last only if I have any suspicions or have a special concern. http://www.emsisoft.com/en/software/eek/

This EMSISOFT product arguably has the best detection BUT is so sensitive that it sometimes picks up false positives.

Anything new that it finds I check against VIRUS TOTAL https://www.virustotal.com/for verification. VirusTotal uses about four dozen updated engines; if they say that a file is safe, it probably is.

NEIL LONGMUIR
WPCUG, CANADA

Camera Facts about the Kodak/AP NC2000, 1994: Kodak collaborated with the Associated Press to create a digital SLR that met the needs of photojournalists. Based on a Nikon N90 body, the 1.3-megapixel camera had removable memory cards and enough sensitivity (ISO 1600!) to shoot in available light. The Vancouver Sun became the world's first newspaper to convert to all-digital photography with theses cameras. Price: $17,950, but discounted to $16,950 for AP members.

See the rest of the 30 Most Important Digital Cameras of All Time at http://bit.ly/1mJ5yHF

TONY LAKE, RETIRED
DESERET, UTAH

Video mail in a blink—The easiet way to create and send video mail is at http://corp.eyejot.com/

feedback

Terry Currier, editor
WINNERS, California

I liked your article, "The World at our Fingertips," January 2014. Your comment about Office though — why keep upgrading if what you have works. I don't really believe MS Office online only will give them enough money and in the future they will switch back.

As to Linux taking over—when penguins fly.

Lothar Loehr, Program Chairman
ORCOPUG, California

Following is an email sent to Bob Gostischa, Avast presenter. —LG

After your presentation a few month ago I installed AVAST on one of my computers.

Now they offered a free trial for the full protection. I tried it and yesterday I cancelled the free trial setup. I did not use the computer after that and today I tried to run it .... The Internet does not connect anymore. Dead OUT!!

I am leaving just today for a 8-day vacation and will contact you again after I am back on the 8th of February. I have to use my 2nd computer which has AVG on it to send you this e-mail.

I am sending a cc of this e-mail to Linda Gonse, our newspaper editor and see if we should warn all the computer club members (not only ours) that there is a chance to get completely disconnected.

As I am leaving now I don't have time to get more into the trouble. There was nothing else done on that computer and it has to be connected with the cleanup from AVAST of the total security.

I hope that is not a normal procedure from AVAST and maybe you have heard about it already and you have an idea how I can fix my problem when I get back from vacation.
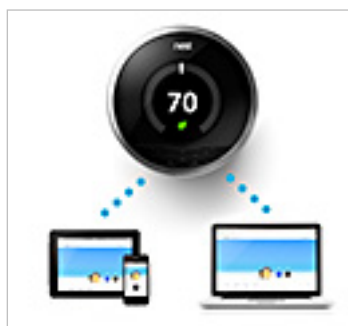
"Nest learning thermostat – it learns everytime you turn the ring. It programs itself."
http://bit.ly/1fyQXxq

A recent article said "Google's deal for Nest turns off fans of 'smart' thermostat. Some consumers fear the search giant will use the Internet-connected home device to gather more information about them."
http://seattletimes.com/html/busi-nesstechnology/2022669758_googlenestxml.html
    Frank Bollinger commented on it (see next letter). —LG

Frank Bollinger
ORCOPUG, California

I approach all online activity as though it could end up on the front page of the L.A. Times. Given that, I assume anything I do with a computer, phone, or tablet may become public. So, if I don't want something known, I don't do it online or with an Internet connected device.

Board of Directors
PATACS, Virginia

The saga of the flakey iTunes update for Windows computers continues.

This issue with the 11.1.4 update also causes problems with Outlook, so you're well-advised to avoid it.

(Go to page 12 for information and links to help you recover from this really bad update. —LG)

Cynthia Watson
InkDotLady@yahoo.com

You can remove me from the email list. I have gone out of business.

two quick **word** tips

Quick Access Toolbar
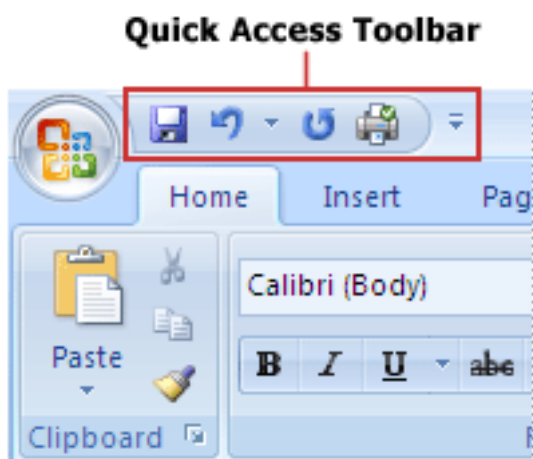
back up the quick access toolbar

If you've spent a great deal of time customising the Quick Access Toolbar (QAT), it's all too easy to forget about it if you ever need to reinstall Windows. Thankfully, you can create a backup of the toolbar, which means it can be brought back without any hassle, or copied to other machines that you work with.

In Windows XP, use Explorer to navigate to 'C:\ Documents and Settings\ [username]\Local Settings\Application Data\ Microsoft\Office', while in Windows Vista or 7, you should head to 'C:\ Users\[username]\ AppData\ Local\Microsoft\ Office'.
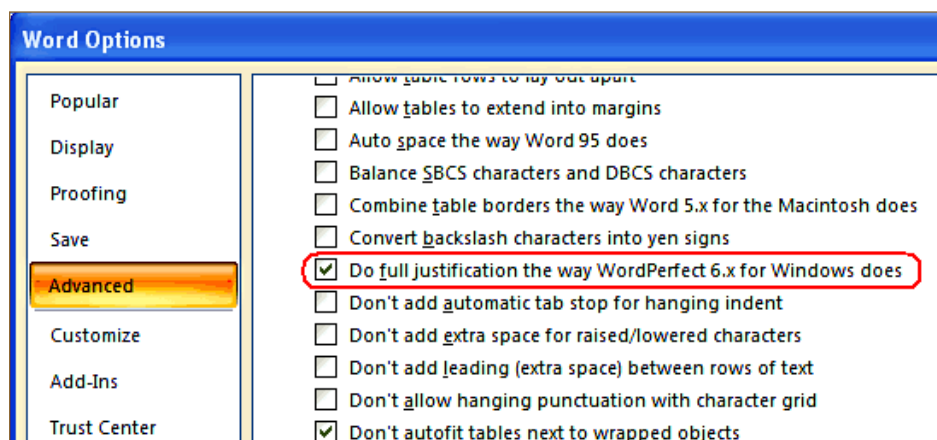
Here you'll find a file called 'Word.qat' – this can be duplicated for backup purposes, or copied to another computer.

change full-justification formatting

When full justification is applied to a paragraph, Word ensures that text is vertically aligned on the left and right of the page by adjusting the spacing between words. While this usually isn't a problem, there are occasions when it can lead to a lot of visible white space.

By opting to use the justification style that's utilised in WordPerfect, the spacing between individual letters on each line is adjusted to allow for better-looking text when it spans from margin to margin.

To activate this option, click the 'Office' button, followed by 'Word Options', and then click the 'Advanced' link on the left. Scroll to the bottom of the advanced options and expand the 'Layout Options' entry. Now you just need to tick the box labelled 'Do Full Justification The Way WordPerfect 6.x For Windows Does', then click 'OK'.

Like these tips? For eight more go to http://www. techradar.com/us/news/software/applications/10-cool-microsoft-word-tips-and-tricks-905849

excel 2010
video shows you amazing tricks & tips

An eight minute video of useful tricks in Excel 2010 to make your work faster and more convenient is shown on YouTube. See a demonstration of how to do the tasks shown in the screen shots below plus how to tackle several other Excel features, at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lcMFxVoH6Uo
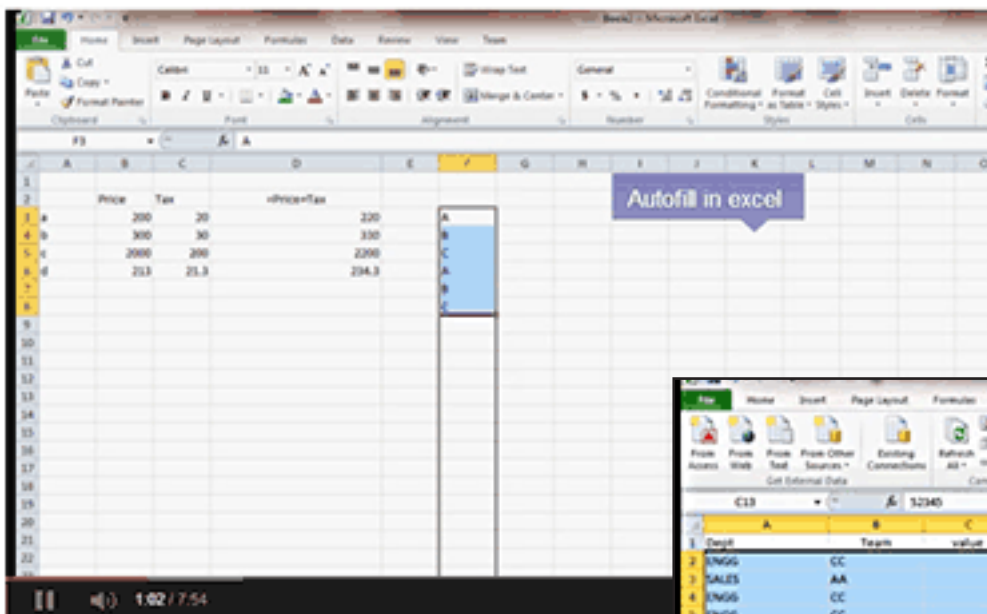
Using Autofill for various data

How to change values in cells
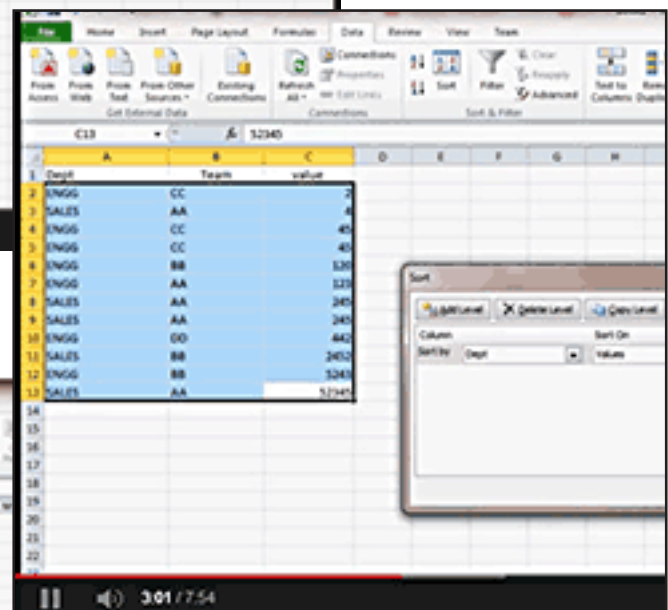
Sorting data and columns
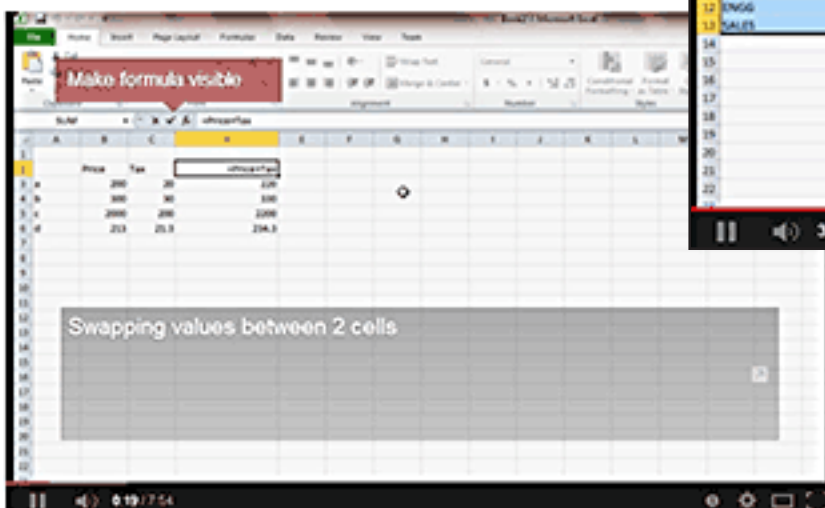
Ask Pamela

by pamela tabak

Why do I get the error message that my email is over quota?

Your ISP (Internet Service Provider) only gives you a certain amount of space for email and when you exceed it, all your emails will bounce back and not be delivered. You may already have missed some important emails by having it over quota.

I suggest that you clear your Inbox and Deleted Folder at least once a week or maybe more often if you receive a great deal of email including spam.

How often should I save my work when working on a document?

It's always a good idea to save your work every ten minutes when working on a document especially if it is a lengthy document.

There is a quick way to do this using a 'shortcut.' Hold down the CTRL key and press the 'S' key.

Why are the emails in Microsoft Outlook not in date order? All the dates are mixed up and the most recent emails are not at the top of the list. What has gone wrong?

You can view your lists of emails in many ways and you will find it very useful to be able to sort them differently according to your needs. If all the dates are mixed up they are sorted by 'conversation' instead of by 'date' and that is the reason that they appear to be jumbled. Right click on the bar at the top of your email list and you will see a menu of choices. Select the first preference 'Date' and the most recent emails will be shown at the top of the list. You can change the order for sorting at any time.

Used with permission. More questions and answers at ComputerTutor's site at http://www.computertutorinc.net/frequently-asked-questions-2/
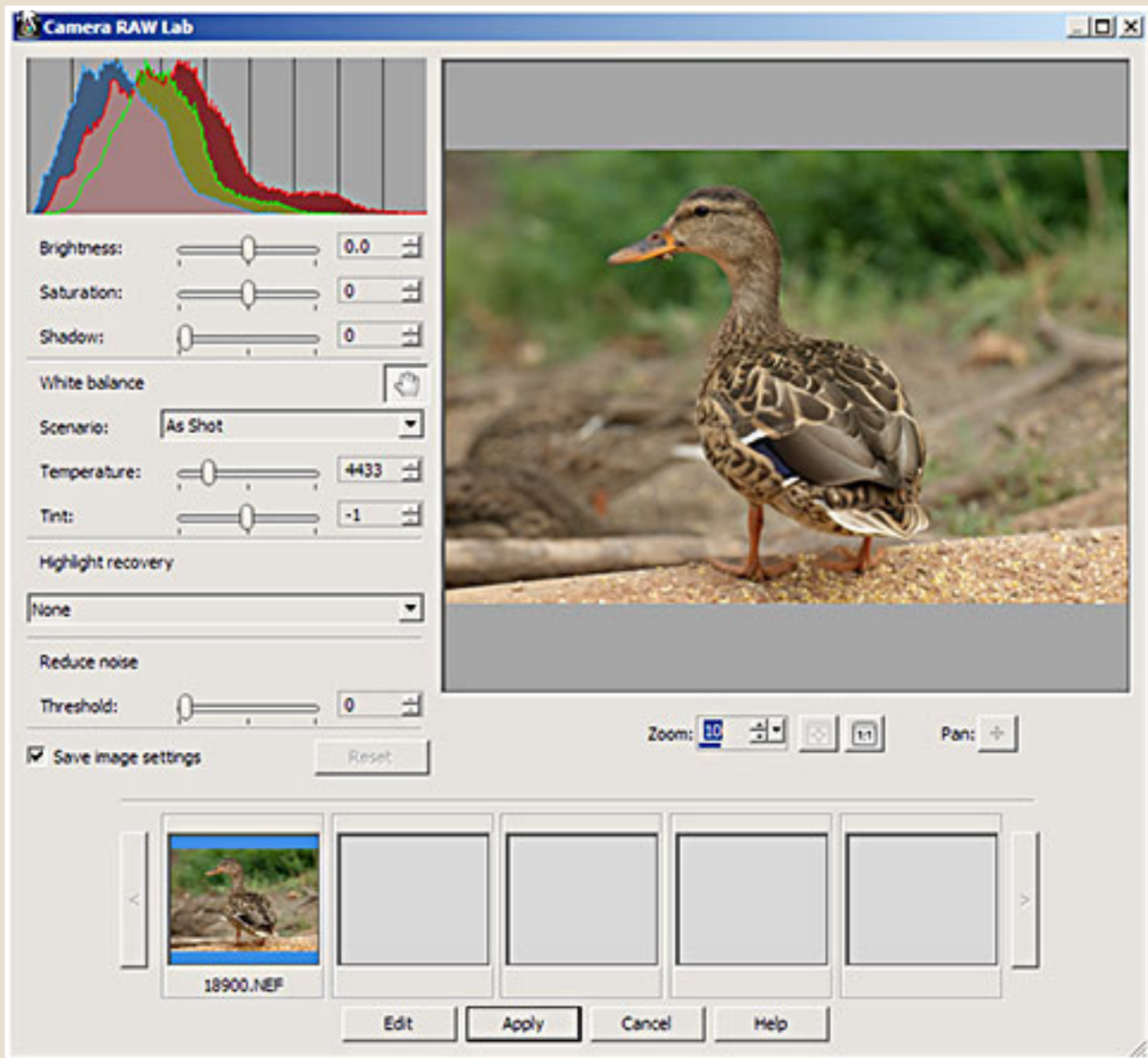
review
PAINTSHOP PRO X6

Figure 1: RAW Dialog Box

by Neil Longmuir, WPCUG

The question now is there a real alternative to Adobe Photoshop CC. I've been asked this question a lot lately which made me look into Corel's PaintShop Pro X6. Given the monthly cost of using Adobe Photoshop CC made look seriously into Paintshop Pro X6.

The software costs retail without any specials $69.99 but can be found for prices as low as $39.99. The software can be bought online with the buyer receiving an e-mail with the product key and a download link. This is very efficient and the end user can be up and running in a very short time.

The features between Adobe and Corel are very similar but Corel's features do not work exactly the same as they do in Adobe Photoshop.

I did my testing on two machines. One is a desktop with a dual core 64 bit AMD 3.0 MHz processor, 8 gigs of ram, two 500 hundred gig drives and an ASUS motherboard running Windows 7 Professional. The second machine was a older Acer Ferrari 4000 notebook with 4 gigs of ram running Windows XP. T

he Corel software for Paintshop Pro X6 contains both the 64 bit and 32 bit versions of the software and is smart enough to know which version to install.

When installing the 64 bit version of Paintshop Pro X6, the end user is given the option to install both the 64 bit and the 32 bit version. Why would you want to install both versions?

The answer, not all the Nik software that came with previous versions works with the 64 bit version. I for one, would purchase the entire Nik software collection when it's running on the 64 bit version. Now for the real surprise, the 32 bit version ran really well on the Acer Ferrari 4000 notebook.

The Acer Ferrari 4000 has an excellent monitor for photo editing, perhaps the best I have seen. One thing I did get a preview of while I was away was the next genera-tion of notebook screens. To put it simply they are amaz-ing and I feel they are even better than Apple's retina pro notebook displays.

The first thing a new user to Paintshop Pro X6 is that

the tools are not in the same place as they are in Adobe Photoshop. Thus a new learning curve is required. For example, a friend of mine bought a copy and asked me for a few pointers. His learning curve was a lot shorter because he had never used any of the Adobe products.

Overall Paintshop Pro X6 is a very good package with a few rough edges which I will discuss later. The software is a bit slow on start up but once it's on screen, the software works well. It is not as fast as Adobe's Photoshop but it is not that far behind.

Adobe has been developing Photoshop for a lot longer time. Adobe is a business with deeper pockets than Corel so it has the resources to optimize it's code and add new features.

Bringing RAW file images, Figure 1, into Paintshop Pro is not as sophisticated as Adobe's ARC converter but it works.

This is one area that a new user will be sort of lost because a lot

Figure 2: Adjust Menu Dialog Box

Figure 3: Brightness and Contrast Dialog Box

of the tools that are in the Adobe ARC are found under the Adjust: Figure 2— Menu item, the Image menu item; Figure 3—Brightness and Contrast; Figure 4, is very well laid out and when combined with the Adjust menu items, im-age editing becomes a lot easier.

This is where a new learning curve is in store. While the Corel RAW converter is different from Adobe's ARC it brings the image *Turn to next page*

Give Corel credit though, the User Manual is available online as a PDF file and there are a lot of learning videos on the Corel website.

Rotate Right

Rotate Left

Free Rotate...   Ctrl+R

Resize...   Shift+S

Canvas Size...

Add Borders...

Crop to Selection   Shift+R

Picture Frame...

Smart Carver...

Object Extractor...

Flip Horizontal   Ctrl+M

Flip Vertical   Ctrl+I

Image Information...   Shift+I

Palette   ▶

Decrease Color Depth   ▶

Increase Color Depth   ▶

Greyscale

Negative Image

Count Image Colors

Split Channel   ▶

Combine Channel   ▶

Delete Alpha Channel...

Arithmetic...

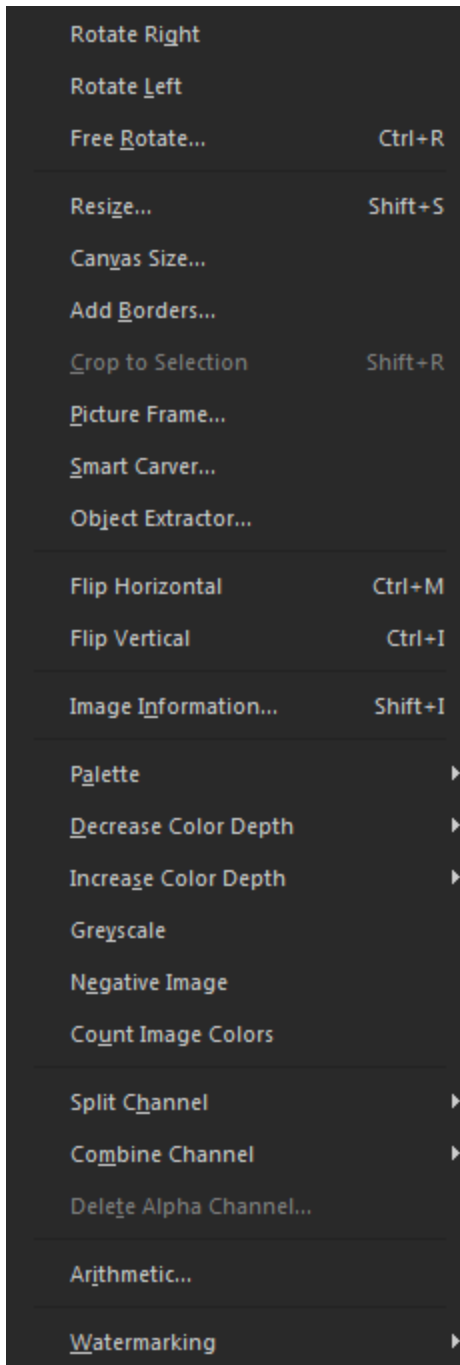Watermarking   ▶

Figure 4: Image Menu

editing all on screen. Once the end user is past the initial learning of where the tools are located, image editing becomes second nature. In may cases,

the arrangement of the tools is very well thought out. They are where you expect them to be.

Give Corel credit though, the User Manual is available online as a PDF file and there are a lot of learning videos on the Corel website.

The learning centre is available with detailed instructions of how to use each the tools. The tools work the same as Adobe Photoshop except for example the clone tool in Adobe Photoshop uses the Alt key to select the area to clone from whereas Paintshop Pro use the Shift key. The end result is the same, you clone from the selected area.

One of the first things you will notice is how Paintshop Pro X6 handles it Curves feature. The curves feature is found under Adjust – Brightness and Contrast. The Paintshop Pro curve opens up a dialogue box with the before image on the left and the after image on the right. There are some other changes that a new user will not find easily.

How do you resize the box so that it is larger and how do I use the eye dropper? First, the dialogue box can be resized by dragging the lower right or left corner to make it larger. The next question that is asked is how to use the eye dropper. The black, gray and white eye droppers are shown but they do not work the same as they do in Adobe Photoshop.

First instinct is to take one of the eye droppers and click on the image on the screen just like you do with Adobe Photoshop. When the end user does this nothing happens.

The eye dropper in Paintshop Pro works by selecting the eye dropper you want and clicking on the appropriate area in the before dialogue box. If you have trouble finding the area in the before box you can use the zoom tool to increase the size in the before dialogue box. Now what happens if you really like the curve change that you have made to the image. There is a little save as button that will let you save that curve setting as a preset which can be used again on other images.

One final hint — the last curve adjustment that you made shows up the next time the curve adjustment is selected. To start from scratch click on the reset button. My experience with the curves adjustment tool is that it works very well and in some cases even better than Adobe Photoshop. One final note, curve adjustments do not have to be made on just the RGB master. Curve adjustments can be made on any of the individual color channels, Red, Green or Blue which makes the curve adjustment tool very powerful.

Another common tool end users use is the Levels adjustment tool, also found under the Adjust – Brightness and Contrast menu item. This tool works the same as

Adobe Photoshop. Now the question becomes, do you just make your adjustments to your image on the background layer, your actual image or do you do them on a separate layer.

Paintshop Pro supports layers and all the adjustments that can be made on layers in a similar manner to Adobe Photoshop. The best part about using layers is that you can change any individual layer at any time. Take some time and learn to use the layers feature.

Be sure to check out the Effects Menu items, Figure 5. For example, the Photo Effects menu, Figure 6, gives the end user more options to improve the image being edited. Note: the second last item on the Effects menu is Plugins.

Paintshop Pro supports plugins but they may not be exactly the same ones that work with Adobe Photoshop. Included with Paintshop Pro X6 Ultimate is Face Filter 3.0 plus some other tools which I have not had a chance to fully explore. One thing that will not work with Paintshop Pro is any actions that end users have for Adobe Photoshop.

Paintshop Pro X6 and previous versions support scripting which is the equivalent of Adobe Photoshop actions. A great feature that could be added is a Adobe Photoshop action to Paintshop Pro script converter. Adding this feature even as a stand alone program would make Paintshop Pro an even more powerful image editing program.

As I mentioned earlier, there are some rough edges. The two tools I had problems working with were the crop tool and how to make slide shows. I like to create custom preset
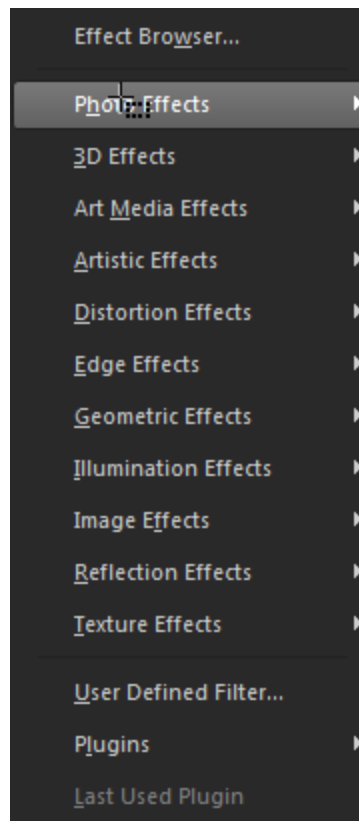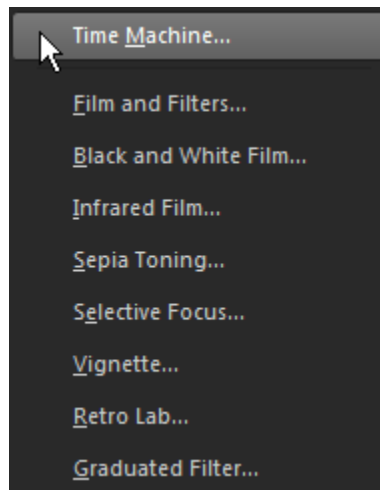

Figure 5: Effects Menu

Figure 6 Photo Effects Menu

sizes for printing. In Adobe Photoshop CS6 I have common sizes such as 16 x 20, 8 x 12, 8 x 10, 12 x 8, 10 x 8, 4x6 and 6 x 4. Then I just select the print size I want from a drop down dialogue box.

In Paintshop Pro X6 crop your image the way you want and then go to the Menu, Image and Resize which lets the end user re-size the image to the final size. Adobe Photoshop and Elements cropping feature is simpler and easier to use. Paintshop Pro's cropping feature is not intuitive.

The other feature I had problems with was creating a slide show. I tried to create a slide show from some of my recent images but Paintshop Pro would not let me create one because I did not have the GPS information.

Also, Paintshop Pro X6 limits the end user to 200 images per slide show. This is a real short coming of the software. I was never able to create a slide show using Paintshop Pro X6 which is a shame because the rest of the software works very well.

If you really want to create great slide shows I recommend Pro Show Gold which is a full featured program that creates fabulous slide show.

How does this software stack up against Adobe Photoshop CC?

I created some composites in both products. While the selection tools in Paintshop Pro are not as refined as Adobe Photoshop, they did work very well and my composite looked great.

One feature I would like improved is the "healing brush" in Paintshop Pro. I was unable to follow curved lines with the scratch remover tool. Adobe products healing brush follows curve lines making it easy to make remove objects. It just takes time to learn a new product. Patience is a virtue.

In my opinion Paintshop Pro X6 is a very good alternative to Adobe Photoshop CC.

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One other comment, is that you do not always need all the features of either product. Paintshop Pro has good Manage and quick Adjust modules. The Manage module works similar to Adobe's Bridge feature while the Adjust lets the end user make quick changes to images. I still prefer using the Edit module to make any changes to images.

The best part of all is that there is no immediate need to update your software to the next version immediately. Take the time to learn how to use the current version and purchase the next update when you feel you need some of the new features of the next version and the software won't cost you an arm and a leg.

The cost of purchasing the next version is very reasonable.

Better yet, download the trial version and see if it meets your needs, it does not cost a thing to try it out. I'm still learning the in's and out's of the program but in general I have been pleased with it. Paintshop Pro is a very good, full-featured product.

Neil Longmuir is a longtime member of the Winnipeg PC Users Group, in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. He is retired, and is a talented, freelance photographer.

WARNING!
itunes 11.1.4 update is buggy

by Linda Gonse

I just experienced an extreme bug in iTunes 11.1.4 update on February 1. Then, the next day, I received a warning message from PATACS (Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society, Inc.), about the flaky update.

My problem started when I took time to handle the installation of the iTunes update that is pushed to my desktop (it arrives automatically with a message to download and install). But, after dowloading it and beginning installation an error message popped up near the end of completion.

Years of computer use made me aware that installation can sometimes go wrong and can be fixed by rerunning. That's what I did. But, same message. I was a little perplexed.
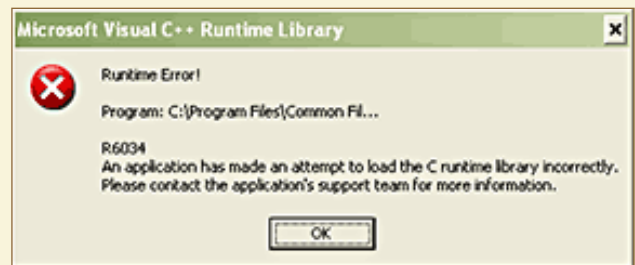
The iTunes program is made by Apple and is used with my iPhone and iPad and for years has not been a troublmaker on my computer.

So, I rebooted and tried again. Same result. Error message.

I went to Google and typed in *"iTunes installation error."* It produced results from earlier dates, but I chose a few for the past week and opened those. They were all in the Apple discussion forum. It appeared that a significant number of iTunes users were encountering the same problem, albeit with some different error messages depending on their OS and its version. (I have Windows XP, SP3.)

I found a knowledgeable solution from an experienced user that several others had tried and vouched for. I followed the sinple instructions.

Although it was a straightforward fix, it was time consuming.

The basis of it was to uninstall iTunes and its components, *in the order given,* and reboot. Then, download the newsest iTunes and install it.

I did all that and it worked! And iTunes is running again.

Look for user "turingtest2." His instructions turned things around for me — https://discussions.apple.com/message/24645606#24645606

As he said, "Some users may need to follow all the steps in whichever of the following support documents applies to their system. These include some additional manual file and folder deletions not mentioned above.

"HT1925: Removing and Reinstalling iTunes for Windows XP - http://support.apple.com/kb/ht1925

"HT1923: Removing and reinstalling iTunes for Windows Vista, Windows 7, or Windows 8 - http://support.apple.com/kb/HT1923"

finding apps for that new android tablet or smartphone

by Ira Wilsker

I recently added a new member to my stable of technology products; I purchased a tablet computer. I wanted something lighter to carry than my well used notebook (laptop) computer, with a screen large enough to be able to easily read my collection of e-books. It had to have fast Wi-Fi capability, a reasonably sharp and bright screen, long battery life, fast processor, a lot of memory, and had to be reasonably priced.

As is typical before making any major technology purchase, I researched the potential choices currently available, mentally noting those tablets that impressed me. I looked at some of the newer

Apple iPad models, which met all of my requirements, but were the most expensive of those that I saw.

I examined some of the newly released tablets running a flavor of Microsoft's Windows 8, and found them interesting, but somewhat expensive (though less than comparable iPads), and lacking the enormous variety of apps available for the other major operating systems.

In the local big box stores and online, was an enormous selection of tablets running versions of Google's Android operating system; these tablets varied greatly in size, features, and price. Published sales reports still give Android a market share of

over 75% (some say 80%) of the smart phone and tablet market, which is triple the combined market share of Apple iOS and Microsoft Windows powered devices.

I already have an Android smart phone, but I am very willing to try something new, if practical and cost effective.

I ended up purchasing a generic branded Android tablet running Android 4.2.2 (Jelly Bean), with a 10.1 inch (diagonal measured) screen, a lot of both operating and storage memory, and a host of other desirable features. I found this particular model listed on a "daily deal" website that

Turn to next page

compiles the best current deals both online and in-store, and after seeing the bundle of extras that it came with, along with an excellent price, from a domestic seller with a very good reputation, I bought it.

This particular tablet (on right) came with a fast, dual-core ARM processor, a 10.1 inch 1024x600 HD resolution screen (not the highest resolution available, but more than adequate for my purposes), 1 gigabyte of DDR3 memory (for operations), and 8 gigabytes of NAND Flash memory for storage. There was also a slot for a readily available 32 gigabyte memory card (which I purchased separately).

This tablet included two digital cameras, a moderate resolution front mounted camera "web cam" for video conferencing, and a higher resolution rear mounted digital camera. With a normal complement of speakers, microphone, two micro USB ports, HDMI television port (can directly play content on an HDTV), video accelerator, GPS, G sensor, speaker jacks, a high capacity Li-Polymer battery , and a variety of other features on the tablet made this too good to pass up for the price.

Bundled in this "daily deal" was a leatherette case that included an almost full sized USB connected keyboard, stylus, and ear bud headphones. All of this, including shipping, was under $120. An optional two-tear extended warranty from one of our local big box electronics stores was offered for $12.99, which I added to my purchase.

I must give a warning about some of the very low cost Android tablets available; I did see both locally and online, a large number of Android tablets running obsolescent versions of the Android operating system, mostly version 2.2, that could not be readily updated, and were also incapable of downloading apps from the massive Google Play Store.

I cannot recommend those tablets that have much older versions of Android, and the inability to access most apps, no matter how cheap.

My Android tablet

Another warning has to do with a particular brand of tablet (and other electronics); according to the Consumers' Reports magazine blog, the Consumerist, Coby Electronics, a brand widely available in big box and discount stores, has ceased operations, leaving owners without any factory warranty protection or support (source: http://bit.ly/1eLqARQ).

While almost all Android tablets come with a small collection of apps, there are currently about a million Android apps and games available.

The granddaddy of app stores is Google's own Play Store (play.google.com/store/apps) which can be accessed directly by clicking on the Play Store icon. The Play Store will display a menu of file types consisting of apps, games, movies and TV, music, books, and magazines. While the Play Store is the single largest source of apps
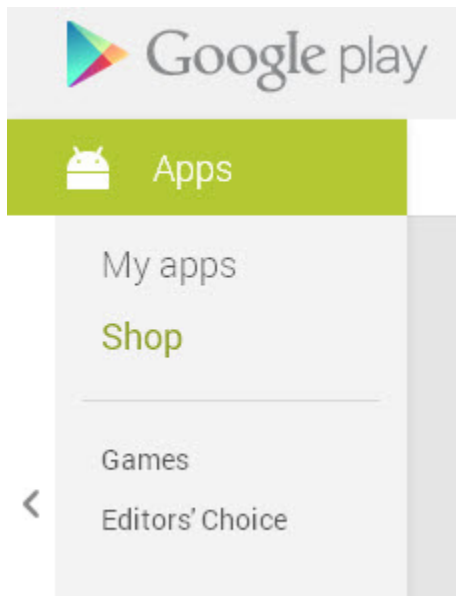
and other material for Android devices, there are also some other excellent Android app resources available that offer independent ratings and evaluations of thousands of apps, as well as direct downloads.

My personal favorite is the Android section of Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com. News and tips about Android apps and devices is available from Gizmo at http://bit.ly/1kBGWBw . According to Gizmo, "This list of Best Free Android Apps now includes 220 apps in 118 categories." Each of the recommended apps has been tested and evaluated by the community volunteers that regularly perform that service for Gizmo, and present diverse opinions on the apps listed.

If I had to personally choose only a single source of app information and recommendations for any of my Android devices, Gizmo's listing of the "Best Free Android Apps" would be that resource.

Gizmo has another shorter listing of Android apps that it calls "9 Superb Free Apps that you Simply Must Install on your Android Device" online at http://bit.ly/LFG2b1 .

This particular listing is for Android versions 4.0 and higher (Android code names "Jelly Bean" and "Ice Cream Sandwich"), but a similar list is avail-

able for older versions of Android (version 2.0 and its variations).

The latest iteration of this list says that the nine (free) apps that should be installed on all newer or updated Android devices running Android 4.0 or higher (Ice Cream Sandwich and Jelly Bean) are: X-plore File Manager (Gizmo calls this " Best Free File Manager for Android"), AirDroid

(wirelessly connects tablet or smart phone to PC, sharing a desktop), Barcode Scanner (QR code scanner), Pocket (article bookmarking and retrieval utility), Kingsoft Office Free (full featured office suite, compatible with Microsoft Office), KeePassDroid (secure password manager), avast! Mobile Security (comprehensive security software with lost device detection), Llama — Location Profiles (automatically manages user profiles, Wi-Fi, and airplane settings), and 1Tap Cleaner (comprehensive cache cleaner, history cleaner, call/text cleaner and default cleaner). Gizmo provides links to download these nine utilities directly from the Google Play Store.

Another personal favorite source of Android news and apps is Ashraf's DotTech. The section with the latest android news, tips, and tricks is online at dottech.org/tag/android-tips-and-tricks. One recent article that may be of utmost interest is

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dated October 25, and titled "How to remotely locate, lock, or erase your lost or stolen Android smart phone or tablet" (dottech.org/132687/how-to-locate-lock-erase-data-android-device).

Devices running Android 2.2 and later all include the capacity to perform those functions (remotely locate, lock, or erase your lost or stolen Android smart phone or tablet) on a missing device.

This feature would be very valuable in the event that an Android device is "misplaced" or stolen.

For those who prefer a more comprehensive lost device app, Ashraf recommends that users download and install avast! Mobile Security (dottech.org/22962/best-free-anti-theft-app/) which includes avast! Anti-Theft, which may also be run as a free-standing app.

Ashraf and his volunteer crew also test and evaluate Android apps, posting their findings online at "Best Free Android Apps" (dottech.org/best-free-android-apps).

Ashraf has distinct recommendations for the best communication apps, file and document utilities, productivity apps, privacy and security tools, multimedia players and editors, network and internet tools, and miscellaneous apps.

An Android device user who installs the top rated apps in each of these categories will have a very productive device.

Dallas based MakeUseOf, a small, family run technology resource with an excellent reputation, also has a comprehensive list of recommended Android apps, hints, and tips. The MakeUseOf hints and tip page is online at makeuseof.com/service/google-android, and is typically updated several time a day with the latest information; this page is an excellent resource for those who may wish to be kept informed about the latest Android news and ideas.

MakeUseOf also lists its top rated and recommended apps on a single page, "The Best Android Apps" at makeuseof.com/pages/best-android-apps, which displays images and information on the 154 apps that it top-rated. According to the publisher, "On this page, you will find the best Android apps for all your needs.

We've taken the effort to categorize the apps and picked only those we believe to be the best ones and which will most likely be useful to you."
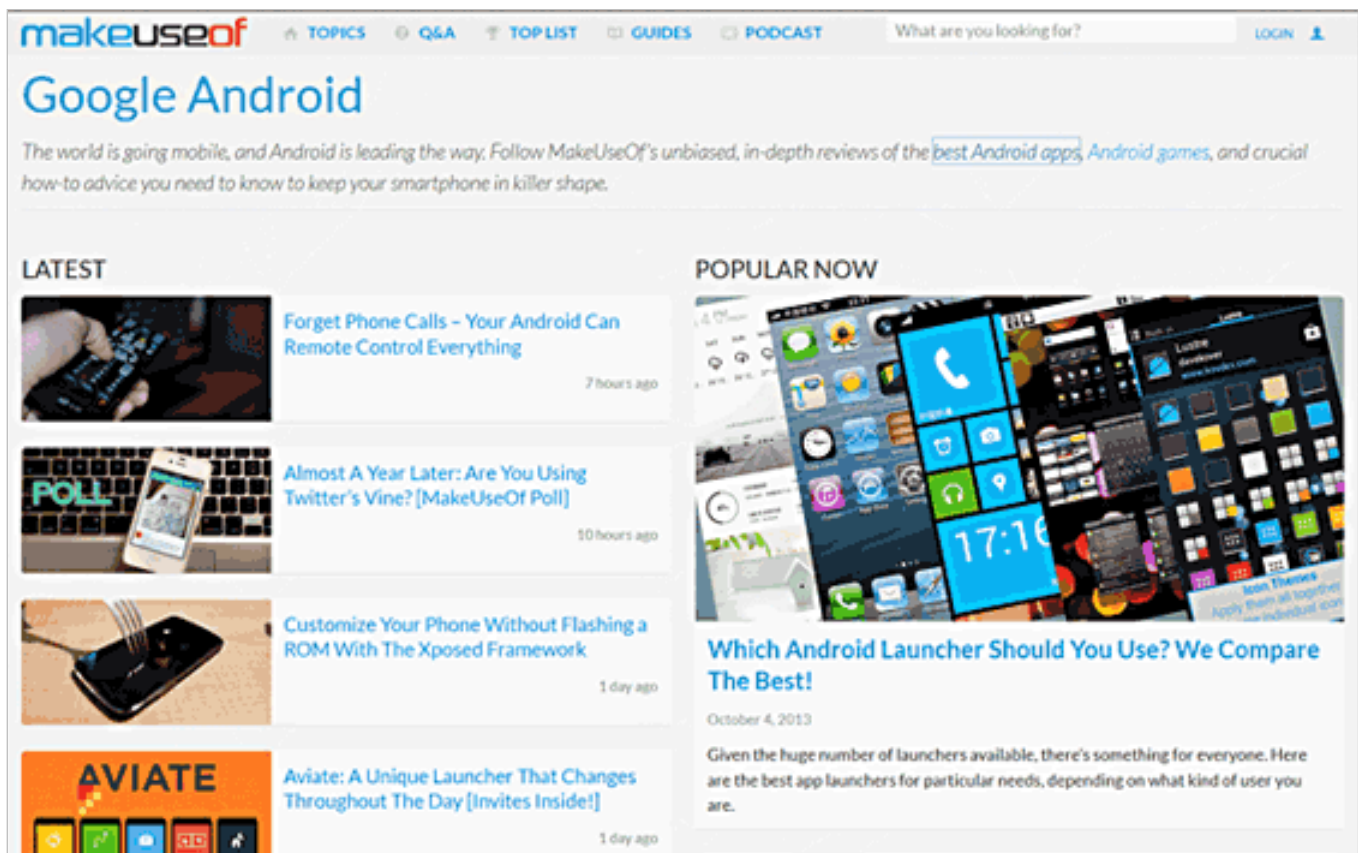
While the majority of the recommended apps listed are free, there are several apps listed that have a nominal charge, and a small number of apps where MakeUseOf explains why it recommends the paid app instead of the free version of the same app.

Not to be outdone, Amazon also offers an extensive library of over 129,000 Android apps. These can be located with a simple search on Amazon for "Android apps" which will open the Android selection. Many of these apps are free, and many are paid, but any charges are clearly displayed before they are downloaded. Clicking on the icon for any of the apps will open what may arguably be the most comprehensive information about each of those apps.

Just as in the Google Play Store, it is common for thousands of app users to post their ratings and comments about each app listed. personally, I utilize these ratings to help decide which apps that I want to download. Amazon can directly send any free or purchased app directly to any registered device. An Amazon account (free) is required, but it is necessary to enter a credit or debit card number in order to have full access to the download services.

In future columns I will list some of my personal experiences and recommendations for Android apps, as well as information on how to safely install apps that the Play Store says are not compatible with users' devices. I will also be writing about the hundreds of thousands of free books and magazines that can be downloaded for free to Android and other portable smart devices.

After having an Android smart phone for quite a while, this new tablet will be a lot of fun. Exploring through over a million Android apps and games will be fun; you can inexpensively also have fun with these apps.

WEBSITES:
https://play.google.com/store/apps
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Read Ira Wilsker's weekly computer and technology column in the Examiner at http://www.theexaminer.com/feature/ira-wilsker
You can email Ira at iwilsker@sbcglobal.net

ask leo!

by Leo A. Notenboom

do I need to *stop*
using microsoft security essentials?

I read an article last week that basically said Microsoft had give up competing with other anti-malware tools and that Microsoft Security Essentials wasn't going to be any good any more. The article recommended that I quit using it immediately and switch to something else. What do you think? Do I need to stop using Microsoft Security Essentials?

N o you don't. If you've been happy with it, you're perfectly welcome to keep on using it as you have in the past.

To put it a different way, I'm not changing my recommendation. Microsoft Security Essentials remains my recommendation for most people. I'm also not changing what I use myself, which is MSE.

As it turns out, the majority of the "journalism" on the topic over the past couple of weeks has simply been repeating a single source of information. Worse, the repetition included not only a couple of quotes without full context from a Microsoft spokesperson and also addition-al speculation by the author of that original piece. As the story was repeated, even more speculation was added and assumptions were made.

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> Statements were made by a Microsoft spokesperson that some interpreted as implying that Microsoft was giving up on Microsoft Security Essentials.

Is Microsoft committed to making sure that consumers who choose to use MSE are safe and will remain so in the future?

The result was quite the kerfuffle.

Now, I don't call myself a "journalist" – I'm just a geek with a voice on the web trying to help people use their computers. But even I know that just repeating and embellishing what others are saying about what others are saying isn't the right way to approach something like this.

So I took a different approach. I went to the source and contacted Microsoft directly for clarification.

Should people using MSE today be concerned?

I managed to contact Holly Stewart, the person quoted in the original article, who pointed me at some recently posted official clarification. She also directed me to others who were able to confirm my understanding of the entire situation.

At the top of my list of concerns was simply whether people currently using MSE (Microsoft Security Essentials / Windows Defender1) should be concerned — is Microsoft committed to making sure that consumers who choose to use MSE are safe and will remain so in the future?

The answer is clear: there's no need for concern, MSE remains a fundamentally safe choice.

In a subsequent blog post on the Microsoft Malware Protection Center blog, Our commitment to Microsoft antimalware, Dennis Batchelder, Partner Group Program Manager of the center concludes a general discussion about Microsoft's commitment to the technology with this statement:

We believe in Microsoft antimalware products and strongly recommend them to our customers, to our friends, and to our families.

Recommending the technologies to your friends and families – especially when it's the technology you're respon-

sible for – doesn't sound like giving up to me. That's a statement of belief in the product.

You're ProtectedIt's one thing when I recommend a product to my friends and family – if it breaks I can blame the manufacturer. When you're a Microsoft person working in the Malware Protection Center, making that recommendation implies that when something goes wrong you're the manufacturer, and you'll have to answer grandma as to why your product didn't protect her computer. That takes commitment. (I know, I've lived this with other products. :-))

A test is not the real world

One of the most unfortunate interpretations the original article deals with Microsoft seemingly "giving up" by saying that they were shifting focus away from "predicting test results." Specifically:

"We used to have part of our team directed towards predicting test results and figuring out what might be in someone's test. There's always a cost to that. If they are doing that work, they are not looking at those threats that are affecting our customers. We always felt that was wrong. There's something not right about that —we're not doing the best job for our customers," Holly Stewart said and was quoted in PCPro.

What this says to me is that Microsoft has shifted resources away from trying to look good in random

Security Essentials
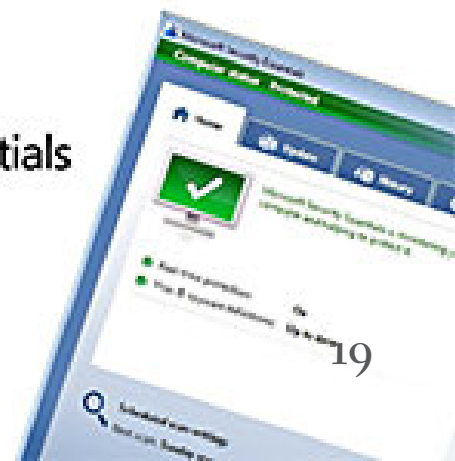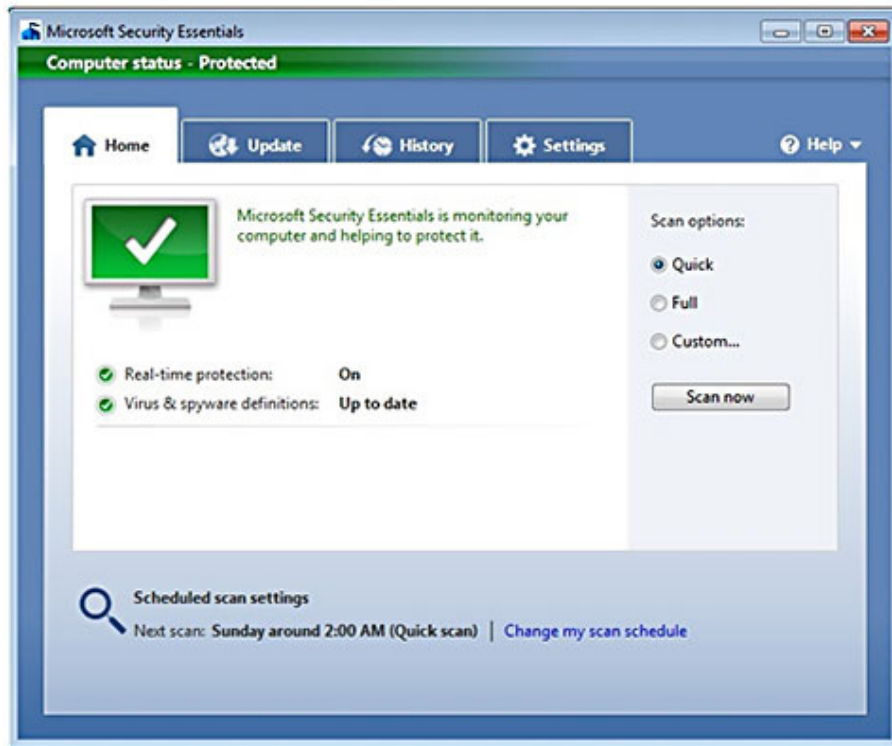
tests, and applied those resources to being good in the real world. It's as if they had said "we're walking away from the comparison testing game, because we believe our efforts are best spent elsewhere".

That's not giving up. You may disagree with the strategy, you may consider independent third party testing to be a valid and valuable approach for anti-malware tool comparison. However, simply choosing a different approach to making the product better is certainly not something you can interpret as "giving up."

And those "efforts best spent elsewhere"? They benefit all the anti-malware vendors. Which is what makes this so complex.

The complex world of anti-malware tools and Microsoft's role in it

Unfortunately Microsoft has a difficult time giving short, clear and

definite answers in situations like this. While the published blog post Our commitment to Microsoft antimalware is strong on commitment to the process and technology, and to a certain degree a commitment to the specific products, it still reads as very …vague. Very "business like." To me it doesn't come out and nail the issue as clearly or as hard as I would like.

But I understand why it must be so. In a word: partners.

When it comes to anti-malware tools, Microsoft actually needs to do two things:

• Produce an anti-malware tool (MSE)

• Help other companies – their partners – produce anti-malware tools

It's not difficult at all to see that these two roles have the potential to come into conflict.

If Microsoft were to come out and say "Hell's yeah, we're making the best darned anti-malware tool on the

planet! You don't need those other guys!" those partners that Microsoft still needs to work with are not going to be particularly happy.

Heck, for all I know internally they are trying to create the best darned anti-malware tool2, but it's not something they could ever say so strongly and so publicly.

Making MSE better makes everyone better

Microsoft's ultimate commitment is to making Windows users safer and battling … the true enemy: malware writers. What Microsoft does say publicly is simply this: "We share our telemetry and samples with the industry to collectively make all of us stronger against our true adversaries — the malware writers." What this means is that what they learn about malware they share with other anti-malware tool manufacturers. This allows those other companies to incorporate that information into their own products, and all products to get better.

What this also means is that outside vendors get to use what they figure out on their own, plus what Microsoft has learned and shared with them. Does this make other tools "better"? Possibly, depending how good they are in general, and on your definition of "better." Does it make Microsoft's tools any worse? Not at all. Does it imply that Microsoft has given up on their own tools? Absolutely not.

Microsoft's ultimate commitment is to making Windows users safer and battling, as Mr. Batchelder put it, the true enemy: malware writers.

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They simply use a two pronged approach: making a good anti-malware product, and sharing data with other vendors so that they can do the same.

The net result is more choice for the user and a safer Windows experience for everyone.

My Recommendation

As I mentioned at the start, my recommendation has not changed.

I continue to recommend MSE as a convenient, low-overhead, low impact anti-virus and anti-spyware tool. It's easy, it's reliable, and requires almost no effort to set up or monitor. As others often recommend, MalwareBytes is a fine companion utility to add an extra layer of security should you feel so inclined. (I run with only MSE, and pull out Malwarebytes only as needed, which is quite infrequent.)

There are other good solutions out there as well — in part due to Microsoft's data sharing of information. If, for some reason, MSE doesn't work for you or you remain uncomfortable for some reason, "What Security Software do you recommend?" lists a few alternatives.

(Source: http://askleo.com/ do-i-need-to-stop-using-micro-soft-security-essentials/)

how to use chkdsk in windows xp

by Linda Gonse

You should regularly plan to use the Check Disk tool that is a diagnostic and repair tool built into Windows XP. It checks the integrity of file systems on hard disks. This includes searching for bad sectors, lost clusters, cross-linked files, and directory errors. Sometimes disk errors occur from unexpected shutdowns, or develop over the course of time and use.

Slow computer performance, difficulty writing (saving) to the hard disk, defragging problem, or regular maintenance are good reasons to run Check Disk. Check Disk examines disks and can correct many types of common errors on FAT16, FAT32, and NTFS drives (but not flash drives). Chkdsk displays error messages of problems it fnds and issues a status report. With your prior permission, it can also repair the errors when it finds them. (Check Disk can take hours to run, however, so be prepared.)

You might know Check Disk from Windows versions before XP when it was called ScanDisk.

You can launch Chkdsk through the command line in DOS. But, it will also run from My Computer or Wndows Explorer. Here's how:

1. Double-click My Computer, and then right-click the hard disk that you want to check.
2. Click Properties, and then click Tools.
3. Under Error-checking, click Check Now.

Then, the Check Disk Options dialog box opens. Select one of the following procedures:

- To run Chkdsk in read-only mode, click Start.
- To repair errors without scanning the volume for bad sectors, select the Automatically Fix File System Errors check box, and then click Start.
- To repair errors, locate bad sectors, and recover readable information, select the Scan For And Attempt Recovery Of Bad Sectors check box, and then click Start.

For complete details on starting Chkdsk from within XP, and from a command prompt, go to at http://support.microsoft.com/kb/315265

To use in Windows 7 or Vista, go to the HowToGeek. com at http://bit.ly/1gKj6p3

(Thanks to Frank Bollinger for his suggestions for this article.)

fcc signatures are "boffo!"

by Amy Kroin, FreePress.com

It's been just a couple of weeks since a federal court struck down the Net Neutrality rules, but we at Free Press haven't squandered a second in our fight to save the open Internet.

BUT THEY SAY WE'LL ALL BE BETTER OFF THIS WAY...

Last Thursday a Free Press-led coalition delivered over a million petitions urging the Federal Communications Commission to restore Net Neutrality — prompting Chairman Tom Wheeler's now-infamous "that's boffo!" comment.

FreePress associate policy director, Chancellar Williams, told C-SPAN how the free and open Internet is supposed to work:

What we've been talking about with Net Neutrality has nothing to do with regulating the Internet. It's about the access to the Internet, the on-ramps. And for many, many years our communications networks have always been treated as common carriers and what that means is that there's room for innovation; you don't have to ask permission to innovate. … There are all these things now like the World Wide Web and instant messaging that this technology enabled. It creates the space for technology to evolve and innovation to take place.

Meanwhile, Free Press President and CEO Craig Aaron, in a Seattle Times' Op-Ed, considers what the Internet might look like in the absence of Net Neutrality:

You'll experience videos that don't load, tweets and texts that disappear and websites that freeze and fail. The fast lanes will be reserved for the players with the deepest pockets, while the rest of us — independent content makers, upstart innovators, dissident voices — will be stuck on the slow road.

In a world without Net Neutrality, the Internet you know and love will start to look a lot like cable TV, where a big company picks and chooses the channels for you. Instead of the unlimited Internet, you'll see different tiers, exclusive deals and higher bills.

It really is us against AT&T, Verizon and all the other corporations that want to turn the Internet into their own private ATM. But the more we get this issue in front of people, the more we talk about how simple the fundamental idea of Net Neutrality actually is, the better our odds are. *(Source: http://www.freepress.net/ blog/2014/02/03/whats-really-boffo-free-press-week-news)*

Tell the FCC: Restore Net Neutrality
Please sign the petition at http://bit.ly/1fIOVN2

YAHOO! says email accounts were hacked

Yahoo has become the latest target of hackers, with user-names and passwords stolen from some of its estimated 273 million email customers.

"Recently, we identified a coordinated effort to gain unauthorized access to Yahoo Mail accounts," the company said in a blog post Thursday. "Upon discovery, we took immediate action to protect our users, prompting them to reset passwords on impacted accounts."

Yahoo — the second-largest email service worldwide after Google's Gmail — did not say how many "impacted accounts" there were. It has 81 million email accounts in the U.S. alone.

Yahoo says that based on its current findings, "the list of user-names and passwords that were used to execute the attack was likely collected from a third-party database compromise."

"Security attacks are unfortunately becoming a more regular occurrence," the blog post stated. "We regret this has happened and want to assure our users that we take the security of their data very seriously."

The Sunnyvale, California-based company says it has begun notifying users whose accounts were compromised and has started using second sign-in verification to allow users to re-secure their accounts. Some users may receive an SMS text, Yahoo says.

The Associated Press calls the compromise at Yahoo: "The latest in a string of security breaches that have allowed hackers to nab personal information using software that analysts say is ever more sophisticated."

(Source: http://n.pr/MqOz1D)

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time for renewal?

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JANUARY 1	Linda Gonse
	LeRoy Kaump
FEBRUARY 1	Charlie Moore
MARCH 1	Frank Bollinger
	Kevin Joe

submitted by Charlie Moore

thank you **members!**

Thank you to member presenters: Frank Bollinger, Bill Bowman, Larry Klees, and Ted Wirtz. And thank you to our Program Chairman, Lothar Loehr, for bringing us great programs. Won't you please help? Contact Lothar to sign up for your own program.

no secret keyword raffle for febuary

The Secret Keyword Raffle will not be held in Febuary.

thank you newsletter contributors!

Charlie Moore, Cynthia Watson, Frank Bollinger, Ira Wilsker, Leo Notenboom, Linda Gonse, Lothar Loehr, Neil Longmuir, Pamela Tabak, PATACS, Robert Elgines, Ted Wirtz, Terry Currier, Tim O'Reilly, and Tony Lake

march deadline
FEBRUARY 22

Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Mike. We miss you!

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User groups represent the spirit of the frontier, a community getting together to do things that no individual ought to have to do alone. The pioneers of the American west got together for barn raisings, cattle roundups, and the occasional party. The pioneers of new technology get together for installfests, new user training and support, and just plain fun. Being part of a user group is the best way to get more out of your computer, and lets you make friends while you're at it.

Tim O'Reilly, President
O'Reilly Media

where are the meetings, when are they held?

next meeting: Tuesday, February 11, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. — Coco's Bakery Restaurant

Regular meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at Coco's Bakery Restaurant, 1011 North Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, CA. Meetings are free and the public is welcome!

Planning meetings *are held the second Wednesday after the regular meeting every month at 6:30 p.m. at Carl's Jr., 3240 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92831. All members are welcome to attend planning meetings! Check with Charlie Moore in advance to be sure the planning meeting has not been cancelled.*