Bits of Bytes
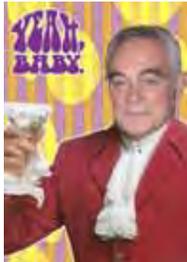
Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, CO

The Prez Sez

by Joe Nuvolini, President, P*PCompAS

First, a big thanks to Warren Hill for his excellent presentation at our December meeting. When your current computer outgrows its usefulness, remember to contact Warren, Bill Kennedy, or Bill Everett so you can donate your old machine to this worthy cause.

Next month, through the efforts of one Ilene Steinkruger and O'Reilly Media, we have been able to obtain a copy of a Mike Halsey Webcast on "Troubleshooting Networking in Windows 7."

Since Bonnie has been gracious enough to stay on as Vice President/Program Chair, I would like to enlist the aid of all of you to lend her a hand in performing that latter task. I know many of you have a favorite program that you use more than the average person. Usually, you will learn a lot of tricks you can do with it that would be of interest to the group. An example of this was Gene's program on Excel he did a few years ago. Another is the presentation that Ann Titus gave on Irfanview for us some time ago. So, if you are an "expert" in some area of computing, step up to the plate and let Bonnie know.

I know it's January, but I want to put out a plea for volunteers. CoSNUG went "under" December 31st because no one would step up to the plate and run for office. I wouldn't want to see this happen to P*PCompAS,so it's never too early to start thinking about next year.

Since I don't leave for CES

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 7 January 2012
A prerecorded O'Reilly Webinar titled "Troubleshooting Networking in Windows 7" by Mike Halsey will be shown.

Meeting Minutes
by Toni Logan, Substitute Secretary, P*PCompAS

The meeting was called to order at 9 am by President Gene Bagenstos. Coffee and donuts are free to first time guests and members may donate, if they wish. The coffee is donated by Laura at the Barnes & Nobel Citadel Starbucks.

Warren Hill introduced two guests, his wife Betty and friend Bob Werschky. The minutes of the last meeting were approved by motion from John Pearce and seconded by Joe Nuvolini.

OFFICER REPORTS

Treasurer Jim Way was out of town and the report was given by the President and filed for audit. We have a total of $6321.61 in the treasury.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan reported that the next newsletter deadline is December 24.

Membership Chairwoman Ann Titus reported that we are half way to the full membership being paid for the next year.

APCUG Rep Joe Nuvolini reported that he had talked to an APCUG representative from Australia and their membership was down from 10,000 to 5,000. Wow! They used to publish a

glossy magazine like Time, but now put it on a CD and mail it. Joe also reported that our website is updated weekly with audio/video files. Most of them are "How To," and Windows tips.

OLD BUSINESS

Toni Logan asked if any thought had been made as to a gift for the church this year. Joe Nuvolini said that he would talk to someone at the church about it.

NEW BUSINESS

The election of officers for the next year went smoothly. The officers elected are: President, Joe Nuvolini; Vice-President, Bonnie Snyder; Secretary, Pat Kreiger; Treasurer, Jim Way; and the new Board of Directors member is Norm Miller.

ANNOUNCEMENT

The next social breakfast is on December 17 at the Country Buffet

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In This Issue

Officers
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Editor: Greg Lenihan
Librarian: Paul Major
Membership: Ann Titus**

Committees
**Hospitality: Pat Krieger
Programs: Bonnie Snyder
Publicity: Bonnie Snyder
Nominating: Bill Berkman**

Board of Directors
**Joe Nuvolini
Gene Bagenstos
Bill Berkman
Toni Logan
Norm Miller**

Meeting Minutes (Continued from page 1)

and the next meeting is on January 7, 2012.

AROUND THE ROOM

Joe Nuvolini had a problem trying to create a folder in Windows XP like he does in Windows 7, but found out that it never could be done the same way in XP. Also he had a neat little portable speaker for a laptop that he had bought from 3BTech online. The speaker is rechargeable and has great sound.

John Pearce had checked the speed of the Internet connection at the church and noticed that it was very slow. He suspected that it was a DNS problem. On a personal note, John plugged in a USB mouse and had intermittent problems with it. He noticed that his USB ports acted differently. A suggestion was to try a powered hub or use a different connection.

Norm Miller showed some slides of his computer room at home where he has a single server, several monitors, and over 20 external hard drives. Norm also remarked on the many years that he has been working with different types of communications while he was in the service. Early in the history of the PPCOMPAS club, there were several members who were doing Packet Radio. Nowadays, he Skypes with his son.

Warren Hill mentioned that his guest started QualTech and that his wife doesn't like mice, so be careful when talking about reviving a mouse.

Bill Everett said that he also had a history of sideband equipment. He also reminded us of the fact that his bank can accept a check scanned and sent over

the Internet and it is deposited immediately. Bill also talked about the slow Internet service at the church and said that he had loaded a program called Open DNS to see if that helped. He didn't tell us if it did or not.

Gene Bagenstos was having trouble opening the first 31 lines in his Excel spreadsheet and the rows were not hidden. One suggestion was to reload the file and see if that worked. Gene said he hasn't had time to look at the problem as it only occurred the night before.

PROGRAM

Bill Everett made a short presentation concerning a cell phone company "Republic Wireless." The cost is $19.00 per month and the phone is $200. It uses wi-fi when it is within range, but if not, it uses the cellular network. Cost is reduced by using the wi-fi network, which most people can do close to home.

Warren Hill presented the program on a Rotary Club Sister City Project between Colorado Springs and Nuevo Casas Grandes in Mexico. He mentioned that there are six Sister Cities since 1996. He described the area where Nuevo Casas Grandes is located. It is in Pancho Villa country and he is very popular there. Schools are named after Pancho Villa. The tradition of making pottery

Nybbles and Bits
by John Pearce, P*PCompAS

About nine months ago, Microsoft announced their intention to issue updates to Internet Explorer using Windows Update. This is a significant change to Microsoft's previous policy of having the user take the initiative to update the IE browser. If you use Vista or Windows 7 you may have already seen IE 9 offered as an update. In Win XP, IE is considered an add-on. In Vista and Win 7, it is considered part of the base OS.

Microsoft plans to start offering IE 8 in 2012 to Windows XP systems running IE 6 or 7. The rollout is planned by country or region starting in Asia so it may take a while before you see IE 8 in Windows Update. The update is reported to be a high priority. If you automatically install updates, it will be installed without you taking action.

If you are still running IE 6, you should manually upgrade to IE 8 very soon. Support for IE 6 ceased when IE 8 shipped. Even though Microsoft still offers IE 7 for download and continues to provide support for it, if you are running IE 7, you should consider upgrading to IE 8.

IE 8 is reported to be the last IE version for Win XP because XP has reached end of life status. Extended support for Win XP ends in April, 2014. The latest IE, version 9, is available for Vista and Win 7. IE 10, slated for delivery with Windows 8, will reportedly run on Win 7 and not Vista. ☺

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was almost lost except for Juan Quezada. He recreated the pottery business and his pottery is of museum quality. The quality of life has been improved by the pottery business.

The Rotarians offered to help in getting the city fire engines. The first truck was a 1964 truck from Missouri and was driven from Missouri to Mexico. More trucks were bought on eBay and then school buses were bought for Nuevo Casas Grandes. Eventually, they got five buses. Warren mentioned that driving to Mexico in a caravan was an adventure.

Colorado Springs School District 11 also donated school furniture. The freight to send to Mexico was paid by the Mexicans and they had six semi loads of furniture.

The Rotarians visited Mexico and were treated very well. The Mayor of Nuevo Casas Grandes visited Colorado Springs to thank the Rotary Club. Cimarron Hills donated a ladder truck and their Mayor was here to take delivery. There has also been cross-training and the donation of surplus fire suits.

A new fire station was built on donations and money from the Rotarians. It is a two-way street. Colorado Springs got an international grant for dental work on indigent children here.

Another grant project was to supply rural schools with computers. This is where our club comes in. Bill Kennedy and Bill Everett have repaired used computers and they are sent to Mexico. They have done 25 computers so far. This also spurred a request for school supplies, which would keep 120 kids in school for one more year. They have to supply their own school supplies after the 8th grade.

They can always use more computers and computer equipment. If you have something you would like to donate, contact Bill Kennedy or Bill Everett.

Thanks, Warren for telling us about these important projects that the Rotarians do around the world.

DRAWING

Radio Modulator—Bill Everett
Camera and cables—John Eure ☺

2012 until after our January meeting, I guess I won't miss the meeting or the social breakfast this year. Ilene, Frank, and I will be attending again this year, so it looks like our annual February program will be a recap of the show again this year.

Finally, I want to give a special thanks to all of you who stayed on in your various positions this year to assist me in running the organization. Our annual volunteers' luncheon will be held on January 28th at Bambinos. Don't worry, that's the weekend between the NFL Conference Championships and the Super Bowl! I will be sending a message to those invited before the end of the year and another about a week before. ☺

I doubt that any of you had this occur, but after Googling what I thought was a problem, I found that I was not alone. On my netbook running Windows 7 I noted that when you right-click on a directory, you have the option to create a New Folder or Shortcut. For some reason I thought that this option was also available in XP. I thought that something had changed to take away that option. Turns out, it never was an option in XP! The best reply I got was indeed from Google that it was never available in XP. Instead, in XP when you select a directory, the New option is only available by right-clicking on the File menu option on the top bar in Explorer. Just thought I would mention this for those still running both operating systems.

A computer conference is coming to Arizona! The Computer Technology Conference will be held from March 22–25, 2012, at the beautiful 4 Diamond Radisson Fort McDowell Resort and Casino. This conference is for computer users of all capabilities. Early adopter? Interested in current and future technology? Computer club leader or member? Enthusiastic supporter of consumer technology? Want to learn more about what's available in the marketplace?

Nuggets from Nuvo
by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS

See the website for details at **http://www.comptechconf.com**. As you can see from the photo, it looks like a nice venue. With some luck, I plan to attend. It's worth a trip to the link above to see what all is taking place, and, hopefully it will be a lot warmer there than it will be here at that time of year!

I took the plunge and picked up a low-end tablet, a 7" Pandigital Novel. I wanted to see if I liked it before I took the plunge and got a more pricey one. It is only running Android 1.5 so it won't run a lot of the more sophisticated apps out there. I found it at **http://www.geeks.com**. It ran about $69+ shipping and picked up my wireless 802.11g wireless router nicely. It was quite easy to set up my e-mail account and the browser worked quite well. I did download a few apps. One app streams radio music; another app shows maps of the metro system for cities around the world. However, many I downloaded would not install because of the archaic Android OS it had installed. It was nice to play with but I think I will stick with Toshee, my netbook. I think the unit was originally meant to be a reader. There were some B&N books preloaded so you could try it out. Luckily, my daughter-in-law wants a reader so she will probably get it as a belated Christmas present as I would like to tinker with it a bit more before passing it on. Look at it this way—it probably saved about a $300 expendature and it will make my daughter-in-law happy, and that's always a good thing! ☺

When analysts say that Christmas sales got off to a good start this year, our digerati can take part of the credit.

They met at the Country Buffet on Saturday, December 17th to get the holidays off to a good start. Nuvo showed off his new tablet as others started making plans to go see Santa right after breakfast.

We'll have to wait until the January meeting to see how successful the efforts were and how much the econony was stimulated.

Microsoft Offers Free "Windows Defender Offline Tool"
Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

WEBSITES:
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/what-is-windows-defender-offline
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/windows-defender-offline-faq
http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/windows-defender-offline-faq#section_2
https://www.techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm?page=0,2
http://www.raymond.cc/blog/13-antivirus-rescue-cds-software-compared-in-search-for-the-best-rescue-
   disk/

One major problem detecting and neutralizing much of the current crop of malware is that the malware very effectively protects itself from detection and removal by many of the more traditional security methods. Since many of today's most prevalent PC security threats load when the computer is booted, and often involve a rootkit, common security software may either be unable to detect the malware. or may actually be deactivated by that malware, but still appear to be running normally. According to Wikipedia (wikipedia.org/wiki/Rootkit), "A rootkit is software that enables continued privileged access to a computer while actively hiding its presence from administrators by subverting standard operating system functionality or other applications." Many users erroneously believe that they are always protected from all malware threats because they purchased name-brand security software that is supposedly updated automatically, and that by periodically running a security scan with that same software, their computer is clean and free of malware. That is not always the case.

Recently a student brought me her computer, which was very clearly taken over by one of the many rogue security software utilities that alleged that her computer was heavily infected by other malware. The software, "Vista Anti-Spyware 2011", informed her that for a fee of $39.95 charged to her credit card, this scam utility would remove all of the alleged malware and restore her computer to proper operating condition. If she would have done what was asked by the scammer, she would have given her credit card number, expiration date, and CVV security code to a crook, probably in Russia, who would not only not rid her computer of malware, but also likely have sold her credit card information to other Internet crooks! She had thought that her computer was secure as she had installed one of the major retail security

software packages, and had a second layer of security provided by a third party utility that was supposed to protect her from malware. While doing research for a term paper on one of the major search engines, she clicked some links on the top of the search results; one of the listings had been hijacked by an Internet crook, and the purloined website loaded the malware onto her computer. She was greeted by the pop-up Vista Anti-Spyware 2011 window that informed her that there were hundreds of different malware items on her computer, and that she had to pay to remove them. She tried to run her commercial security software, but either clicking on the icon by her clock, or the desktop icon, but whatever she clicked on, this Vista Anti-Spyware 2011 window appeared. If any other icon was clicked, including the word processor that she had been using to type her term paper, this scam window appeared; closing the window allowed all of the other programs to run except her security software. Even using Windows Explorer to go directly to her security software, and running it from there, only the rogue security program appeared; her name-brand commercial security software had been effectively destroyed. Using the security software I carry on my keychain flash drive, and booting into safe mode (F8), I was able to remove over 300 pieces of malware, but her computer was still heavily infested with malware. I had to create a bootable CD with an integral malware detection utility to remove the last of the infection, which included a rootkit.

There are several sources of utilities to create bootable CDs that contain some form of malware scanning software. Directories of free bootable utilities can be found on the Gizmo's

Buying a Gadget for Streaming Video

by Kim Komando (Tip from 12/13/11)

Q. I'm looking to stream movies, TV shows and Web videos to my TV. I heard about a few different options such as Roku and Google TV. One friend swears by Apple TV. What's your take?
- Steve from Bossier City, LA,

A. Roku, Apple TV and Google TV are examples of Internet-connected entertainment equipment. Other examples are Western Digital's WD TV Live and manufacturer-specific software for TVs. The main point of these gadgets is to stream Internet video to your TV.

Streaming video gives you more options than traditional cable or over-the-air broadcasts. You can watch shows whenever you want, for example. These can be free or paid, depending on the service. There are also options for watching movies and Internet-only videos and accessing plenty of other digital information.

Each streaming gadget connects with different services. Before purchasing any gadget, you'll want to make sure it has the content you want. Otherwise, it will disappoint you.

Let's start with the Roku player. It comes in four different models: the Roku LT basic ($50) and the Roku 2 HD ($60), XD ($80) and XS ($100). All models can connect to any TV via HDMI or composite output.

The LT and HD models output a 720p high-definition signal, while the other models output a superior 1080p signal. All the models support Wi-Fi for easy placement and simple connection to the Internet.

The XS includes a wired connection. This is a more reliable, if less convenient, connection for streaming large content around a network.

The Roku hardware is excellent for the price, but the important part is the software. It offers one of the widest varieties of compatible streaming services. That includes Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu Plus, Crackle and hundreds of other sources.

The one odd omission is YouTube. If you're set on watching user-created videos, you'll have to look elsewhere. Fortunately, Roku has plenty of other user-created-video websites you can access.

Roku doesn't just offer TV shows and movies. You can play games such as Angry Birds, watch sports broadcasts and access your Facebook account.

For price and performance, Roku is one of the best choices. You'll definitely want to put it near the top of the list.

There are a few other gadgets in the Roku price range. The Apple TV, for example, is $100. However, it lacks in hardware features even compared to the $60 Roku HD. It only plays 720p content, for example. You can get the full comparison with my streaming gadget chart (**http://www.komando.com/charts/tip_9596.asp**).

Where the Apple TV is tempting is its connection to iTunes. If that's where you buy your movies, shows and music, then Apple TV is your choice. No other streaming gadget or service connects to iTunes.

Apple TV can also handle popular sites such as Netflix, YouTube and Flickr. Plus, using AirPlay allows you to send content from other Apple gadgets to your TV.

Still, the Apple TV hardware is a little on the expensive side. If you don't need iTunes support or don't have other Apple gadgets, Roku still has the edge.

Western Digital is another manufacturer in the game with the WD TV Live. It's on par with the Roku 2 XS. The list price is $120, but it frequently retails online for $100, same as the XS and Apple TV.

The WD TV Live features all the major streaming services, including Netflix and YouTube. You can send it video, photos and music over your network and it supports a huge range of file formats. It also has some game apps you can download.

If you're looking in the $100 price range, and you can find it during a deal, it's definitely one to consider. However, you can get most of the same functions with a less expensive Roku unit.

Let's move on to Google TV. This isn't actually a piece of hardware like the others. Instead, it's an operating system that works on a variety of hardware, such as TVs or set-top boxes.

In theory, it's a powerful piece

TechSupportAlert.com website **(techsupportalert. com/content/probably-best-free-security-list- world.htm?page=0,2**) and at Raymond's " 13 Antivirus Rescue CDs Software Compared in Search For the Best Rescue Disk" (**www.raymond. cc/blog/13-antivirus-rescue-cds-software- compared-in-search-for-the-best-rescue-disk**). Among the recognized publishers of software that can create free bootable CDs (and sometimes bootable USB flash drives) that contain software to detect and kill malware are Kaspersky, Avira, F-Secure, Panda, BitDefender (USB), AVG, and several others. Using a bootable CD (or bootable USB flash drive) to detect and kill malware is quickly becoming the preferred method of malware removal, because when booted from the CD, the malware cannot load, even if it is a rootkit. The bootable CDs or USB flash drives typically contain a non-Windows operating system, usually some version of Linux or WinPE, thus the version of Windows on the hard drive never loads. Since Windows does not load, any infections harbored on the hard drive are not loaded, and then can likely be detected and removed by software on the bootable media. Not to be outdone by its smaller competitors, Microsoft has joined the fray by releasing a beta (pre-release) version of its new "Windows Defender Offline Tool (beta)."

What Microsoft has done is take an improved version of its Windows Defender security software. This popular security software is mated with bootable media, such that a CD or bootable USB flash drive created with the free downloaded software can be used to boot an infected computer, and then scan that hard drive for malware, including otherwise difficult to detect rootkits. Since the scanner is running outside of Windows, the malware

cannot easily protect itself from detection and removal.

To use the free Windows Defender Offline Beta, download the small 764 kb installer directly from Microsoft (**windows.microsoft. com/en-US/windows/what-is-windows- defender-offline**), preferably to another "clean" computer. The installer file is available for either 32-bit or 64-bit computers; most newer computers are 64-bit, while most older computers are 32-bit. Insert a blank CD or DVD into the CD drive, or insert a USB flash drive that is not password protected, and has at least 250 MB free space. Run the downloaded installer (mssstool32.exe or mssstool64.exe) which will open a window asking the user to select create a bootable CD or DVD, bootable USB flash drive, or create an ISO file to be installed to a CD. For most users, the bootable CD option is the simplest and most trouble free. The installer utility will download a large file from Microsoft (about 250 MB), and guide the user in the steps to create the bootable media. The installer contains all of the software necessary to create the bootable media; no other software or utilities are required. Once created, insert the bootable media into the infected machine, and reboot using the newly created Windows Defender Offline Beta media. By default, almost all PCs will automatically boot off of a bootable CD. If the computer does not boot directly from the CD or flash drive, it may be necessary to tell the BIOS to change to boot sequence, putting the CD drive or USB drive first in the sequence; instructions

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of software. It lets you stream content from hundreds of content sites and it includes a Web browser for full Internet access. So it's more versatile than any other streaming system.

Unfortunately, Google TV hasn't caught on. Many manufacturers use their own proprietary systems instead. These can all access Netflix and usually a few other streaming services. Plus, they support some apps.

Panasonic, for example, uses

VIERA Cast and LG has NetCast Entertainment Access. The Xbox 360, PlayStation 3 and Wii all have their own proprietary systems. There isn't a lot of room for Google TV.

If you do want Google TV, your hardware options are limited. You can buy a new Sony Internet TV starting at $300 or there's the Sony Blu-ray player for $250. Logitech is no longer making its Revue set-top box, and announced in November 2011 that it will stop making Google TV devices altogether.

Of course, Google isn't giving

up. Google TV 2.0 was rolled out in October and it integrates with gadgets running the Android 3.1 operating system. Google's Eric Schmidt also recently said that "most" TVs shipped in 2012 will run Google TV. I personally think that's a tad optimistic, but you never know.

If you're planning on buying a new TV, a Sony model with Google TV isn't a bad choice. However, don't make it your determining factor. If you're sticking with an older TV, a dedicated set-top box is the way to go. ☺

Resolve to Publish a Book
by Kim Komando (Tip from 12/24/11)

Ready for the New Year? It's a good time to make an old dream come true. If you have a story to tell or knowledge to share, why not make 2012 the year you finally publish that book?

Writing and publishing a book can be very fulfilling. It can also be incredibly frustrating and difficult. Getting a deal with a major publisher is like winning the lottery.

Fortunately, the Internet has made self-publishing a viable alternative. You can bypass the traditional book-selling system entirely. However, that doesn't mean the process is easy. There are tools available to make it very doable, however.

Unless your last name is Grisham, your best bet is likely a print-on-demand service. It means less money spent up front, and you can order as many books as you want. Three well-known print-on-demand sites are Lulu.com, Blurb.com and CreateSpace.com.

Lulu and CreateSpace are both fairly basic. Lulu lets you download book templates in Word format. You can copy your manuscript into the appropriate template. Lulu also allows you to create the cover art.

CreateSpace requires that you upload a completed PDF file. It needs to be created exactly the way it should be printed. There are strict rules about spacing and page count. That can be cumbersome. Blurb, on the other hand, gives you a free layout program that offers you more options to set up your book.

Print-on-demand books are a little more expensive to make because there isn't mass production to reduce the cost. But even if you are printing just for your family, you can order in bulk, which can save money.

Blurb, for example, has a graduated price reduction starting at just seven books. Lulu requires a minimum of 250 books for bulk pricing. And CreateSpace has no

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Windows Defender (Continued from page 7)

for doing this are often briefly shown on the splash screen when the computer is first booted, and says something like "Press delete (or some other key) for setup" or "Press (a specific key) for boot sequence". If additional help is necessary, Microsoft has detailed instructions online at **windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/windows-defender-offline-faq#section_2**. This will open the BIOS window, and one of the selections is usually to choose the device from which the computer boots. Once booted into Windows Defender Offline Beta, the user can perform a scan for malicious software, and get rid of it. Once cleaned by the Windows Defender Offline scanner, remove the CD or flash drive, and reboot the computer. The computer should boot normally, free of the malware infection.

If it is ever necessary to perform another scan from bootable media, Microsoft recommends that a fresh CD be created, as an updated malware signature file will likely be available, as it is updated frequently. If a bootable USB flash drive was created, it will not always be necessary to create a new one, as the digital malware signature files on the flash drive can be updated by the integral wizard while on an Internet connected computer.

Since many of the contemporary malware types destroy the installed security software, leaving the computer open to subsequent attacks and infection, it may be necessary to reinstall a fresh copy of whatever security software is desired. Either the previous software can be installed and updated, or new software can be installed. Commercial software is readily available (I recommend the comprehensive suites rather than just the traditional antivirus software), or comparable free security software can be downloaded and installed (**techsupportalert.com/content/probably-best-free-security-list-world.htm**).

It is obvious that while offline bootable media may currently be an optimal way to detect and remove difficult malware, it is only a matter of time until the malware authors come up with some devious new way to hide malware to counter this method, just as they had done with the previous methods. Still, it is necessary to stay on top of the threats, and perform a variety of security scans using different methods, media, and software. ☺

bulk order system, but its overall pricing structure is lower.

Here is a quick estimate. For one copy of a 100-page, 6x9-inch, softcover book in black and white, Lulu comes in at $6.50, Blurb is $7.95 and CreateSpace is $3.66.

It would seem CreateSpace has the advantage. But be sure to compare book size, binding type, printing type and paper quality. One of the other services might be less expensive for your specific needs. Even a seemingly minor change can make a huge difference when it comes to printing costs.

Once you have a self-published book, it's then time for self-promotion. Selling the book is an art in itself.

All three print-on-demand services have stores, which means anyone can buy your book. The downside is that there are a lot of self-published books out there, so the field is crowded and competition is stiff.

Marketing is key, which also can cost you a lot of money. Fortunately, thanks to the Internet, self-marketing can be free. It's as good as you make it. You can promote your book on Facebook and forums, then just link to your book in the online store. If you are a strong social media user, this just might work. If that's not your forte, the publishing services also offer promotional help - for a fee, of course.

Online location of your book is an important factor. For example, CreateSpace has a basic eStore. However, the service is actually owned by Amazon, so that means you can market your book there if you want, as well. That puts you in front of millions of eyes.

So what happens when you finally sell a book? Well, you get money, of course. But exactly how much?

You get to set the price of your own book. But there is a minimum amount taken to cover printing costs. The print-on-demand service also takes a cut, so expect to get less than half of the sale price.

I checked out CreateSpace's royalty calculator. My test book was a 100-page, 6- by 9-inch book priced at $10. You would get $4.34 per sale if going only through CreateSpace's eStore. Selling on Amazon would net you $2.34. However, more people would see your book, so it creates the chance that you might actually sell more.

You have to decide what your eventual goal is. This will help shape how aggressive you want to be. But try to keep your expectations realistic. Don't expect to be the next J.K. Rowling – at least overnight.

Of course, this all presupposes you want a printed book. You could sidestep the entire process and start with an e-book. A good example is my Essential eGuide to Digital Photography.

E-books are easier to distribute. You can sell it yourself and cut out the middleman. Plus, e-book readers have become much more common just in the past year. They all support PDF files and other common formats.
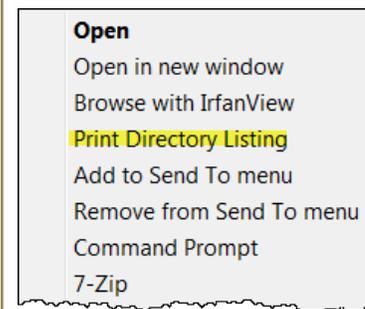
Be sure to weigh all your options, and best of luck to you! ☺

Tip: How to Make a Folder File List from the Windows Right-Click Context Menu

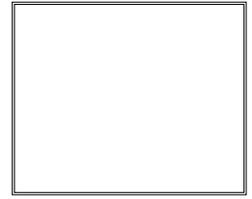by Vic Laurie, techsupportalert.com

This is a simple way is to add the capacity to print a folder file list from the right-click context menu of a given folder. Microsoft describes the procedure at **http://support. microsoft.com/kb/321379** and provides a "Fix-it" file that will add the desired command to all folder context menus. I have tried running the Fix-it file in Windows XP Professional and Windows 7 64-bit and it worked with no problems. A command "Print Directory Listing" is added to the right-click context menu of folders (directories). An example of a modified context menu is shown in the figure.

Whatever printer is designated as the default for your system will be used. Note that this need not be a hardware printer. Printer drivers exist for creating files in certain formats such as Adobe PDF or Microsoft XPS. Instead of a paper list you could create a list as a PDF file or other type of file format if you have a driver that you can designate as the default printer. Changing default printers is very easy so this method also provides a way to create files that list the contents of a folder.

There you have it- paper or file, a list of the contents of a folder in just two clicks. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:
Next Membership Meeting: 7 Jan, beginning at 9 am (see map below for location)
Next Breakfast Meeting: 21 Jan, 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.
Newsletter Deadline: 21 Jan.

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