Bits of Bytes

The Prez Sez

by Joe Nuvolini, President, P*PCompAS

I hope you all found Ilene's and my presentation on CES 2012 of interest. I know the video on Windows 8 was well received. It looks like a dramatic change is coming.

The Annual Volunteers' Luncheon went well. The food at Bambino's was great, especially the chicken and rice soup. All the volunteers received flash drives which I brought back from CES. I think everyone had a great time.

Since I finished this month's Nuggets before I wrote this piece, I thought I would bring you up to speed on the final item. I ordered the Slingbox Adapter on January 11th for $99 while still at CES. I received the $99 credit card from Dish Network on the 13th of February. That's relatively fast for a rebate. I've tried streaming my Dish content using Internet Explorer, Firefox, and Chrome browsers. The plug-ins for IE and Firefox loaded and work just fine. The Chrome plug-in, a .CRX file, could not be installed on my desktop but it did install with Chrome on my laptop. Dish Support advised that there are problems with Chrome, so if you decide to use the Slingbox Adapter, keep this in mind.

Received an e-mail reminder from APCUG/CAMUG (Canton Alliance Massillon User Group) about their Regional Conference scheduled for July 13-14th in North Canton, Ohio. Early registration (before April 30th) is $50. It will be held at Walsh University on 2020 East Maple St NW. If you're going to be in the Canton area in mid-July, check it out.

Glad to see a nice turnout at the Social Breakfast on the 18th of February. When I got home, I gave Bill Kennedy a call at the rehab center and he was in the process of checking out and heading for home. Hopefully he will mend quickly and be able to join us again at our events.

The program at the March 3rd Membership Meeting will be on "Safety and Online Social Networks." The presenter will be John Roberts. ☺

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 3 March 2012

John Roberts will give a presentation on "Safety and Online Social Networks."

Meeting Minutes

by Pat Krieger, Secretary, P*PCompAS

President Joe Nuvolini called the 4 February Membership Meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

OFFICER REPORTS

Treasurer Jim Way gave the treasurer's report:

Savings: 5799.77
Checking: 681.20
Total: 6480.97

Joe Nuvolini reported the Annual Volunteers' Luncheon was a big success.

Greg Lenihan brought in two books that O'Reilly had donated to our club. He put them in the drawing. We all know computer books from O'Reilly are the best.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ilene Steinkruger reported that member Bill Kennedy suffered a broken hip and will be in therapy for several more weeks. Also, Norm Miller has been ill. Everyone wishes both members a speedy recovery and looks forward to seeing them back here in good health.

Bill Everett had a phone on which anyone who wanted could call anywhere in the world free. *(Wouldn't you just know I had left my address book home that day. Never again!)*

AROUND THE ROOM

Dennis Conroy said his wife's computer is running slow. He received suggestions on what steps to take, one of which was to remove a program that may be causing the problem.

Pat Krieger continues to be annoyed by an unsolicited pop-up

In This Issue

Articles

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Joe Nuvolini
Gene Bagenstos
Bill Berkman
Toni Logan
Norm Miller

Meeting Minutes (Continued from page 1)

warning of a big number of errors in the registry which the company invading her desktop promises to clear out for $29. She has tried to delete this pesky item without success. Being of a timid, cautious, and suspicious nature, she asked for advice on what to do about the registry because she is terrified of messing with it after listening to horror stories over the years from those who have tampered with theirs and come to hideous grief. John Pearce recommended CCleaner (Google this), which has a feature to fix registry problems.

John Pearce showed us the program Desktop Operating System Share Trend, which showed the current most popular operating systems. Windows XP and Windows 7 now are, with Vista far down on the list. John has an older computer that freezes up. He described the symptoms and there were a plethora of suggestions from many members on how to thaw it. After much discussion, someone asked, "Why put money into an old machine?" This was followed by a chorus of "Just get a new one." John seemed highly pleased at this suggestion.

Joe Nuvolini says he defrags his computer every Friday and recommends the process to all of us.

Bill Everett said two members have brought old computers to him, which he works on, and when they are in good order, gives to Warren Hill to be donated through his Sister Cities club to a school in Mexico. Very commendable. Bill can always be depended on to educate us on the latest technology, especially regarding telephones. Today he

recommended Net Talk Duo VoIP, an Internet telephone that costs $50 the first year and $30 the following years, and which he says is better than magicJack. Also, Page Plus Cellular, which costs $12.17 per month for 256 minutes and this is on the Voyager network. He warned not to go to Page Plus Wireless.

Discussion came up on how to transfer files from an iPad to a computer. Answer: Send the files from iPad to iCloud, then to the computer.

Toni Logan said she can access her iPad from Windows (and vice versa? Check with Toni) using Logmein. She puts in her name and password, and she put encryption on the router to protect her computer. She made a dreadful mistake—she turned off her computer while it was still closing down. When she next turned it on, it wouldn't boot up. She started it in safe mode, but it booted up only partially, then stopped. She had made a backup in Acronis, but it was a year old. Windows repair didn't work. She hopes her computer isn't destroyed. John Pearce suggested taking the hard drive out, and getting a USB conversion kit that costs $15–$30, which can be plugged into another computer. Then reinstall Windows 7.

Bill Jones said the Pellar Institute offers classes for retired people. They work with College America. They are in need of a system administrator who can adapt files for access to other computers. Anyone knowledgeable and willing to help, call Bill.

Warren Hill said one of his

The Microsoft Development Team for Windows 8 has been writing a blog about its development. The first post was in August, 2011. The frequency of posts varies from a few days to a few weeks. I have often wondered why certain design decisions are made in the Windows OS. The blog attempts to discuss some of those issues as related to Windows 8.

Based on what I have read in the Microsoft blog and in the computer trade press, I think Windows 8 will be both exciting and challenging. Windows 8 will run on legacy x32/64 hardware as well as the ARM processor found in tablets. The blog posting related to the ARM processor called this Windows on ARM or WOA.

You will have your choice of Windows 8 on a desktop, laptop, net book, ultra book, or tablet.

Nybbles and Bits
by John Pearce, P*PCompAS

The look and feel of the Metro interface will be the same across all the hardware platforms. The difference is the physical control of the interface. If you want to use the touch interface with your desktop PC, you will need a touch enabled screen, otherwise you will still use the mouse. You can also revert to the old style desktop if you must.

In some ways, Windows 8 reminds me of the transition in Windows that happened with Win 2000. A benefit of melding the Windows 98/Me product line with the NT 3/4 product line was a way to run games that wanted to have direct control of the display screen. The dark side of the Win 2K release required new drivers for devices because Microsoft changed how drivers interact with the OS.

Windows on ARM generally requires new code. Porting most of the existing applications is not allowed because the ported applications would negatively affect battery life and would require more system resources than programs developed specifically for WOA. And there is the issue of designing the interface for Metro rather than the traditional Windows desktop.

The Windows Consumer Preview (otherwise known as a Win 8 beta release) is scheduled to be available by the end of February. The release is reported to be open to anyone who wishes to download and install the software. The hardware used to run the preview must meet the minimum requirements for Windows 7.

Microsoft is saying there is lots of work to do before the first release candidate is ready. There are few hints about the Windows 8 release schedule. It appears Microsoft is aiming for a grand slam event with Windows 8 on tablets (ARM processors) and on x32/64 hardware. ☺

Meeting Minutes (Cont. from pg 2)

computers is not reading CDs. Joe Nuvolini said to get a disk cleaner that has a brush on the bottom.

Gene Bagenstos wondered how to determine the speed of the Internet. Suggestion: Speedtest.net, and the download speed is probably greater than upload. Ilene Steinkruger suggested Centurylink.net. Google this.

Joe Nuvolini said at his office the computer wouldn't boot. Acronis backed it up quickly. He said magicJack has had a big price hike to $29 a year or $99 for 5 years.

The Voluntreer's Luncheon took place on January 28th at Bambinos

PROGRAM

Ilene Steinkruger and Joe Nuvolini gave us a report with pictures to let us know what we missed by not going to the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas this January. There was so much to see: Ilene had a copy of the pre-show planner, and it looked as thick as the Boulder telephone directory. Items were grouped by kinds of technology, called Tech Zones.

Ilene talked first of non-TV or sound items such as a massage lounger that will massage a person from head to toe. She said it feels so great, but it cost $5000. There were robotic devices that would be a help around the house. She also showed pictures of gorgeous cars, some gasoline powered, but many electric. There were also electrical hookups and fill-up stations displayed. Toni and Bonnie would have loved the accessories for iPad. One booth showed waterproofing for electronic devices, which I'm sure means soon we shall see people texting in swimming pools.

Joe's talk dealt mostly with computers,

Here's a little follow-up on last month's power supply problem on my desktop computer. The new (450 watt) power supply did last me through my CES trip, but not long after I returned, my main computer shut down again. I put in another 450 watt supply and it ran for about 40 seconds before it shut down. Luckily we had a 700 watt supply at the office that we had just taken out of our old server. It was fairly new as we had to change out the supply on it awhile back. I brought that one home and installed it on my desktop computer and it has been running just fine. This computer is pretty loaded down so I should have used a larger power supply to begin with. By the way, the other two power supplies were still okay. I tested them on our test computer at the office. They had not failed; they just could not support the load on the desktop!

Nuggets from Nuvo
*by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS*

And here's a little follow-up on the simple upgrade to my Dish Network receiver I reported on in my CES article last month. While I did get a good deal on the Slingbox 700U Adapter, the installation proved to be a bit more difficult than I expected. I connected the adapter thinking that my Dish receiver was connected to my router via the powerline adapter. This was not the

SLINGBOX 700U

case. The adapters were on different circuits and therefore made no connection. Dish support sent me a USB wireless adapter for my receiver at no cost and it made the connection. However, the signal strength was not very high since the router is on the second story while the receiver was in the basement. While it worked okay, I was afraid the signal was too low, so I picked up a Netgear WN3000RP Universal Range Extender at Staples. I had learned about it at the Netgear press conference. I hooked it up and it did extend the range of the router, but the Slingbox adapter would not work. Dish support, after a time, decided I might have a bad adapter so they sent me another. It still wouldn't work. I decided to give it up and returned the Netgear adapter. Once that was removed, the Slingbox adapter worked. I built a small reflector and boosted the WiFi signal enough and now all is working fine after about 10 days of messing with the system. By the way, the cost of the Slingbox 700U was $99 with a $99 credit card rebate, the Netgear Range Extender was $75, and the reflector was made from parts I had around the house! ☺

Netgear WN3000RP

Tips and Tricks for Enhancing the PC Visual Display, Part 2
*by Bonnie L. Snyder, P*PCompAS, BonnieLS21@Gmail.com, http://tvvip.org*

A quick and easy way to magnify the information on the screen is to hold down the Control key and roll the mouse roller forward. The more you move the roller forward, the larger the display will be come. This feature does not work in all programs, so you'll have to just try it for each one. Interestingly, in Firefox, the most recent magnification done this way is "remembered" so that when you return to a Web page that you

initially magnified with the control key, mouse roller, it will be already magnified. You can lower the amount of magnification by rolling down. This feature works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Display Tuner (Dtuner) is really nice freeware for adjusting many facets of the video and audio. When you run it (after installation), an icon remains in your system tray so that you can access it any time you feel the need to make the video display better for the comfort of your eyes. Again, this program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Is that mouse cursor just too

small? Well, Bigger Cursors can solve that problem. This is another freeware. All you have to do is unzip the cursors into the Windows/Cursors folder and then select the one you want via the Control Panel/Mouse listing. Once chosen, the cursor will remain that way until you wish to change it. This program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Next month I will tell you about more display adjustments that will make screen viewing more comfortable for you. ☺

Happy 30th Anniversary, PPCOMPAS
by Toni Logan, P*PCompAS

In March, 2007, on the event of the 25th anniversary of PPCOMPAS, I wrote a history of the club. This month I wanted to acknowledge the 30th anniversary with an update of the last five years.

The club has been pretty stable over the past five years, but computer technology has changed, because that is the nature of computer technology. The social aspects of the club are one of the main reasons that the club has lasted so long as well as the efforts of the individual members who have served in some capacity over the years.

We still meet at the Springs Community Church, but we now have our breakfast at the "new" Country Buffet. Our membership has remained about the same over the years as we lose some and others join us. We lost our WebBoard but we still have a home page. We honor our volunteers with a lunch in January every year. Many of our members are involved in community affairs and one of our original members was elected to the Colorado Springs City Council.

We have a program at each meeting and most of them are provided by our members. The programs are varied and always teach us something new. We have heard from the Gazette, the KKTV weatherman, and a tech

from the regional library. We don't have the glamorous items for drawings, but again, the members have provided them.

Finally, we have gone from Vista and XP to Windows 7 and many of the members bring their netbooks or iPads to our meetings. We have an Internet connection at the church so we can use SKYPE and have Webinars. We've grown in technology, but the friendships are the backbone of the club. I hope we go on for many more years.

The original history of the group can be found in the March 2007 edition of Bits of Bytes or on the PPCOMPAS home page. ☺

Meeting Minutes (Cont. from pg ')

movies (3-D is still a big thing), and sound equipment. Talk with him about new receivers called "Copper" with sub-receivers called "Jeep" that can be put in other rooms. He had pictures of much that looked tantalizing. Since it was Joe, much of that was pictures of food.

Ilene Steinkruger

One shot amazed me—that of some of the *140,000* people who attended. Isn't that about the population of Colorado Springs?

Joe also showed a 20-minute film of a man demonstrating the features of Windows 8. It had many features of items that could be personalized, such as menus that looked like cookie dough rolled out

Joe Nuvolini

and cut into squares, each with pictures or meaningful text on them. The man was very excited about this and other changes, and I hope others in the club considered them advances. For me, I sensed another Vista and zoned out. But consider the source.

DRAWING

Safety and Online Social Network—Ray Weikart
Office 2010 book—Lois Weikart
Photoshop Elements 10 book—Bill Gardner
Videowave Professional—Toni Logan

P.S. Ann Titus says that if anyone wants to receive a membership list as a PDF, contact her.

Digerati seen at the February breakfast at the Country Buffet

Have Fun With Your Digital Images Using JibJab
Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

WEBSITES:
http://jibjab.com
https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=jibjab

SAMPLE "STAR WARS" JIBJAB CREATED FOR THIS COLUMN:
http://sendables.jibjab.com/view/liMDHNAWjGLB2wRq

This past week, three of my family members had birthdays. Rather than send them traditional paper birthday cards, or canned e-cards, I decided to do something a little different; I created a series of humorous musical videos using their faces in the videos. Some of the videos I e-mailed directly, while others were posted on Facebook, as a public celebration of their birthdays. The Website that I used to create these videos is JibJab (jibjab.com).

You may have seen JibJab videos in the past and not known it. Some of the local morning news shows have created and shown JibJab videos using the faces of local celebrities in the comical videos. On several occasions, on some of the cable news channels and cable comedy shows, JibJab videos have played a prominent part in a funny or satirical presentation. Imaginative individuals have posted over 16,400 JibJab videos on YouTube, which is a good resource to see what creative people can do on JibJab.

For those who might not be aware of JibJab, it is a Web-based service that offers its users over a thousand personalized e-cards, and over 500 "Staring You" videos and photos that can be personalized with the faces of anyone who has their image on a digital photo. While there are often a limited number of e-cards and videos available to anyone for free, often with a nearby holiday theme, JibJab requires a paid membership in order to make full use of its services. A typical membership on JibJab costs only a dollar a month ($12 per year), but sometimes discounted deals are available; I recently paid $6 for my annual membership, taking advantage of a daily deal posted on dealnews. com. A user can login to JibJab using an existing Facebook account, or the user can create his own JibJab account.

With Valentine's Day fast approaching, that special day will be a busy day for JibJab (sendables.

jibjab.com/valentines/category/valentines_day). JibJab offers a total of 136 Valentine themed e-cards and videos, some of which are available for free, without a paid membership. While the e-cards are cute, I personally prefer the customized videos using the images of my acquaintances. For those who may not be romantic, or want other genres', JibJab also offers large collections of themed e-cards and videos for other occasions, including birthdays, anniversaries, weddings and engagements, get well, Christmas, Hanukah, Halloween, Thanksgiving, 4th of July (and other patriotic holidays), thank you cards, friendship, and several other topics and events. Some categories are explicitly for children, often utilizing popular cartoon or nursery rhyme themes.

To create a JibJab video, open the Website at JibJab.com and choose a topic, event, or genre'. Under each of those is a selection of relevant e-cards and videos. The items that are available to all for free have a red "FREE" banner on the top-left corner, while all of the others require the paid membership. For demonstration purposes, I selected the "Dance" group which displayed four free dance videos, and 18 for members only. The four free dance videos, all of which can be customized to use anyone's faces, include Star Wars, Disco, Chippendales, and Justin Bieber. To create a particular video, simply click on it and follow the uncomplicated on-screen instructions.

For this column I chose to put myself in the freely available "Star Wars - A New Hope" video. Clicking on the "Get Started" button opened another window where photos in the JPG or PNG formats can be uploaded from the user's computer or imported from Facebook. Once uploaded, the

Buying a Home Network Router
by Kim Komando (Tip from 12/2/11)

To take advantage of all your gadgets, you'll need a wireless router. Fortunately, most modern routers are wireless.

At a minimum, you'll need a router that supports the 802.11n wireless standard. That's the latest and fastest version of Wi-Fi, and it has the longest range. An 802.11n router is typically backward-compatible with older standards such as 802.11g and 802.11b, so older wireless gadgets will still work.

All routers have several ports. There's the Wide Area Network port to connect your Internet modem. Then there are the Local Area Network ports for connecting wired gadgets, such as desktop computers.

Most routers will have four LAN ports, which is enough for a standard home network. However, some come with fewer LAN ports. Make sure you get a router that has enough for your needs.

The most critical part of any router is wireless security. You don't want to leave your network open to criminals and nosy neighbors, after all. Make sure the router supports

Images Using JibJab (Continued from page 6)

images can be zoomed, cropped, dragged, and tilted to fit in the template shown, with the eyes lined up on a specific line. If the face on the uploaded image is of unusual shape, there is an opportunity to fine tune the shape by dragging an outline to better fit the image of the face. Many of the videos have the characters talking or singing, so there is a step where the shape of the mouth is selected, again with the provided template dragged to the shape and size of the mouth in the image. The image can then be named and saved for later use. The process is repeated until the desired number of faces have been imported into the service. For the Star Wars video I used the faces of one of my granddaughters, my wife, Governor Perry, and my face. Total time to upload, align, and name all four images was about two minutes. I then had to drag and drop the faces onto the "question marks" in the video template, which only took a few seconds. I previewed the video to make sure that it looked ok, and then clicked "done".

In a matter of seconds, JibJab created my Star Wars video, which is now available for viewing at http://sendables.jibjab.com/view/IiMDHNAWjGLB2wRq. Total time from selecting the video, uploading and aligning the faces, dragging the faces into place, and showing the finished video was just under five minutes. For free, the finished video can be posted on Facebook, shared on Twitter and MySpace, e-mailed (the link), embedded on a Website (code provided), or downloaded (for a fee). If paid for and downloaded, the video can be uploaded to Facebook and YouTube, used in a PowerPoint, loaded on to a smart phone, or saved to a computer or other type of storage device or media. Non-members pay $4.99 to download a video, while members pay $1.99.

For only a dollar a month (discounts sometimes available), JibJab allows the user to create, post, and send any or all of thousands of highly personalized videos and e-cards. In addition to a few minute long video, using some third party media burning software, multiple JibJab videos can be burned to a CD or DVD and played in series. For a recent departmental Christmas party, I spent one evening creating about a dozen Christmas and Hanukah themed JibJab videos, burned them to a DVD, and entertained the group for a full hour of continuous guffaws and hysterical laughter. All of the images in the videos on the DVD were of my co-workers in a variety of musical, comical, and classical themes, some a little risqué. Watching my co-workers sing, dance, and act in classical and artistic roles was very funny. In one classical Christmas Story scene, my secretary froze her tongue to the schoolyard flagpole; in another classical JibJab movie a co-worker played the part of George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life", with other co-workers playing the other roles. Among hoots and hollers, we all watched ourselves square dance, disco, tango, break dance, Charleston, and perform other theatrical and circus acts.

Whether using the limited free selections, or the reasonably priced complete collection of videos and e-cards, JibJabs are fun and fast to create and share. ☺

Backup—Image, What's the Difference?

by Phil Sorrentino, President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida, www.spcug.org, president(at)spcug.org R

This topic can be very confusing because of the similarities and the differences between backups and images. Backups and images are similar in that they are both copies of something. The difference is in the "what" and the "how." Normally, a backup is thought of as a copy of a file or a folder or a collection of files and folders (that is the "what"). The backup copy is just a copy, an exact duplicate, and is not processed in any way (the "how"). The backup files can be used by any programs that could use the original files. The reason for having a backup file is to restore a file if it is accidentally destroyed or deleted.

An image, on the other hand, is a copy of the operating system and all of its components (referred to as the Operating Environment), as they exist in the memory of your operating computer (that's the "what"). The image can only be created by an imaging program (the how), and the image created can only be used by that same imaging program. The reason for having an image is to be able to re-install your "Operating Environment" if, or rather when, a virus or hardware problem makes your system unusable.

The topic can also be confusing because people, and even the literature, often use the terms backup and image in confusing ways. Often you will see or hear the term "backup

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Router (Cont. from pg .7)

WPA2 encryption.

You don't want a router that has only the old WEP encryption. A hacker can get through WEP in nothing flat.

That's all the information you really need to buy a basic wireless router. Any router from a big-name manufacturer, such as D-Link, Linksys or Netgear, will work. Expect to pay from $30 to $50.

There are some extra features, however, that might interest you. These can make your network safer, faster and more efficient. Just be aware that the features may require a more expensive router.

More routers are of the dual-band variety. They broadcast at two frequencies: the typical 2.4 gigahertz frequency and the higher 5 gigahertz.

Wireless gadgets such as cordless phones and baby monitors operate at 2.4 GHz. This leads to signal interference that can slow down your router and limit its range. The 5 GHz frequency lets the router bypass this interference. It's also a more-powerful signal so you'll get a more-reliable connection through walls.

Of course, buying a dual-band router doesn't automatically improve your network. Your wireless gadgets will need dual-band 802.11n wireless capability. You won't see any improvement with single-band 802.11n gadgets. Learn about methods for extending your network's range.

Some routers have built-in gigabit Ethernet. Its wired systems can handle speeds of 1,000 megabits per second rather than the usual 100. If you're streaming or copying large files over the wired network, you'll find the extra speed handy.

Note that your computers will need gigabit Ethernet as well. Until recently, computers only had 100Mbps connections. On older computers, you will have to add a gigabit port with a third-party networking card. Click here to learn more about gigabit Ethernet.

Now, having gigabit Ethernet doesn't affect wireless speed. Wired and wireless gadgets operate at independent speeds. Most routers have a maximum wireless speed of 150Mbps.

However, you can find high-end routers that go up to 300Mbps. That "up to" is very important. You will need 300Mbps-rated gadgets to get that kind of speed.

In addition to WAN and LAN ports, some routers have USB ports. These allow you to connect a printer or storage gadget. Then everyone on the network can access the gadget at any time. Not every router supports both storage and printers, so check the router's box.

Some routers have built-in safety features like content filtering and parental controls. Most routers have at least basic filtering capability. You can block a list of websites, for example, or set time when the Internet can't be used.

Some routers have more-elaborate filtering that can automatically block inappropriate content. Of course, there are free third-party solutions you can use. OpenDNS is a popular option that filters your Web surfing and speeds it up as well.

What I've already covered isn't nearly the end of router features you'll find. There are routers that let you create a separate wireless network for guests. Others are geared toward gamers. You'll need to decide what features work with your setup and budget. ☺

Backup (Continued from page 8)

image" which is meant to refer to a copy of an image. Well, an image is already a copy of something, so is this an image or is it a copy of an image? In order to keep things straight, I have tried to use the term "backup" to mean an exact copy of a file that needs to be saved. (I know that sometimes backup copies are "zipped" or compressed to save space, but those files are no longer exact copies of the originals and are not directly usable, so I would not call them backups, I would have to call them "zipped backups" or "compressed backups", to be accurate.) And I use the term "image" to refer to the resultant file (or file collection) that is produced by an imaging program such as Ghost, or Acronis True Image, or Macrium Reflect, or even Windows 7.

To be completely protected against potential problems (viruses and/or hardware problems) you have to address both issues, backup and image. You have to backup all of your important files, those that you really do not want to lose, and you have to have an image of your Operating Environment for re-installation when needed. (Just as a point of interest, Windows 7 includes the ability to do both, via the Backup & Restore Control Panel.)

The files to back up are those that you have created or collected, such as your pictures, music, videos, Word documents, and spreadsheets. Any file that you would really be hard pressed to reproduce, if it was lost, is a good candidate for backup. How often to back up is dependent on the file in question. Files that are changing daily should probably be backed up daily, but files that don't change need only be backed up on some weekly or monthly schedule. For backups, in general, follow "Chicago Politics" advice and back up early and often.

Also, be aware that there are many ways of backing up your files since it is only a copy operation. However, there are many programs that make the job quick and easy. If you have a folder of pictures and you only add a few pictures to the collection weekly, then there is no need to copy all of the pictures each week. You only need to back up the new pictures. Backup programs such as Microsoft Synctoy, and Synchromagic, check the collection of files to be backed up against the last backup and only copy the new files or those that have changed since the last backup. These programs make the backup process quick, efficient, and so easy that you will probably do it often enough. By now you are probably feeling

that you have got the idea of backup, but where do put these backup files? The best place for backup files is on an external hard drive that is normally not connected to the computer. Right before you are ready to back up your file collection, connect the external hard drive and fire-up the backup program and run the backup task. After the backup is finished, disconnect the external drive and put it away in a safe place.

Creating an image is a little more difficult than creating backup files because imaging is not just a simple copy operation. Because an image is a copy of your operating computer memory, the program must know a lot about the architecture of the memory. This is very specialized knowledge and is the essence of an imaging program. The imaging program must be installed on your computer for use in creating an image. And, it must create a bootable disk to be used when your system is not operating correctly. The image it creates can usually be put on a system drive (other than the C: drive), or an external hard drive, or a number of DVDs. The image created is usually a very large collection of files that may total from 20 to 60 GB. The imaging process can take many hours depending on the size of the image and the amount of compression that is selected. Imaging is a very lengthy process, and it creates such large files that you probably only want to do it when absolutely necessary. A new image is only necessary when the Operating Environment changes, when you add or delete programs, or when you update your operating system. You may not add or delete programs very often, but the operating system is updated, at least monthly, so you might want to create a new image every 3 or 4 months or whenever a big change is made to the Operating Environment.

So you can see there is a great difference between a backup and image. But, both are necessary if you hope to completely recover from a future hardware failure or malware infection. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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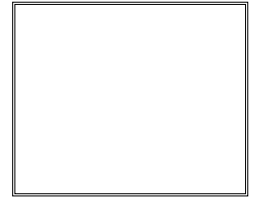
Coming Events:
Next Membership Meeting: 3 March, beginning at 9 am (see map below for location)
Next Breakfast Meeting: 17 March, 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.
Newsletter Deadline: 24 March.

Check out our Web page at: http://ppcompas.apcug.org