

Bits of Bytes

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

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The Prez Sez

by Joe Nuvolini, President, P*PCompAS

Thanks to John Pearce for his in-depth presentation of IPv6 at the May meeting. You may have noticed Norm Miller was absent from the meeting. I later found out that he was in the hospital with a blood clot in his leg. It has since been remedied and he is back home.

Thanks also to Greg and Ilene. It turns out that Pat and Warren could not attend the May meeting so we needed someone to take the minutes and to pick up the doughnuts. Greg did the former and the new Ken's chick the latter. By the way, it looks like the apple fritters were a big hit as they were all gone at the close of the meeting. Probably should get them for future meetings. However, they do cost a bit more so it would be appreciated if all would make the voluntary \$1 contribution to the coffee fund if they partake of the coffee and doughnuts.

And let's not forget our very own "pineapple man," Stanley Rapaport. Once again this year, Stanley brought several cases of pineapples for the group. Thanks, Stanley. You are most generous.

We had only a fair turnout for the May Social Breakfast. I guess now that summer is near, many are off on vacation. Let's see if we can do better next month.

The June program will be "Computers 202." Member Jeff Towne of Jeff's Computer Service will be the presenter. Bring your problems to this meeting and Jeff will do his best to solve them. ©

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 2 June 2012

Jeff Towne presents "Computers 202." Bring your questions.

Meeting Minutes

by Greg Lenihan, Faux Secretary, P*PCompAS



Nuvo blew the whistle to start the 5 May 2012 membership meeting at 9 am. Stanley Rapaport wheeled in six crates of pineapple for those in attendance. Ilene Steinkruger brought the doughnuts (with apple fritters) this month. A motion was made by Toni Logan to approve the minutes of the last meeting and seconded by Ann Titus. The minutes were approved.

Stanley Rapaport surprised us again this year by bringing pineapples for those attending the May meeting.



newsletter and proclaimed the next deadline was the weekend of 19 May.

Webmaster Joe Nuvolini said that our site was running well.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS

Jeff Towne, who will give the presentation next month, asked that members bring computer questions to the meeting.

AROUND THE ROOM

Joe Nuvolini showed us a small, cylindrical speaker that makes a speaker of anything you put it on. He placed it on a table and a wall, and said it works well on his microwave oven. It comes with a cable so you can use it as a speaker for a device. It has a lithium ion battery. You can plug an SD card into it. He received it for his birthday. Next month he will bring a PCI card that supports both IDE and SATA drives that cost only

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OFFICER REPORTS

Vice President Bonnie Snyder was not in attendance, but it was announced that the presentation in June would be "Computers 201" by Jeff Towne.

Treasurer Jim Way said we had \$5801.92 in savings, \$795.92 in checking, for a total of \$6597.84.

Membership Secretary Ann Titus mugged new member Jeff Towne.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan handed out several copies of the

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Norm Miller

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\$10. Joe has another device that can convert between IDE and SATA connections.

Joe said his brother-in-law is now a believer in Acronis True Image. He bought an HP PC at Costco that had problems. He backed it up, sent it off, and when it came back, he was able to restore it with no problems.



Jeff Towne, left, was mugged by Ann Titus at the May meeting.

Ilene Steinkruger has a neighbor that needs help cleaning off the hard drive of a Macintosh, if anyone is familiar with Macs.

Dennis Conroy has a printer that squeaks as the printhead moves across the bar. Nuvo said he had some lubricant that he has used, but could not remember the name.

Jeff Towne cleans up old computers and gives them away. He said that Microsoft no longer supports Win XP SP1, but you can get an SP3 CD for \$10 if you want to give away a PC with an operating system.

Jeff bought a Carbonite account (for offline backup), but there are certain things it won't back up, like databases. (A visual "dot" means that it has been backed up.) He found that if he renames the database and extension, it will fool the service into backing it up.

Chris Pratts has a Website that one of his computers cannot connect to, while he has other computers that can. He tried cleaning out the cache files and uses the same browser. One suggestion was to check the host file in the Windows directory, because malware will sometimes change the way the computer is directed to Websites.

Stanley ("Pineapple Man") **Rapaport** says he goes by astrology to know when King Soopers and our meetings are aligned to know when the best time is to buy pineapples. Leftovers will go to those working where his wife is recovering from shoulder surgery.

Jim Miller is having a problem with Acronis True Image 2012. A couple of weeks ago he ran an incremental backup but the list of backups came up blank. He called Acronis and they used TeamViewer to work on it for 30 minutes. They said his user privileges were not adequate. To use Acronis now, he created a third user account that he uses. His question was whether two user accounts could be merged into one. No one was sure.

Phylis Butler bought an HP wireless printer. She hooked it up to run wirelessly, but found out that her desktop PC wasn't wireless. A question was posed as to whether she could run it with her wireless router. People seemed to think that you needed to have to PC talk directly to the printer.

Bill Everett said that he and Bill Kennedy accept old computers that they refurbish for a school in Mexico. Donations have dropped

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P*PCompas welcomes any comments, letters, or articles from members and non-members alike. Please send any articles to the editor (see last page for address). The editor reserves the right to reject, postpone, or edit for space, style, grammar, and clarity of any material submitted.

Mighty Dwarf 5W Vibration Speaker by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS



This review is about an item seen at CES last January—the Mighty Dwarf Vibration Speaker. It transfers sound vibrations to whatever surface you place it on. My brother-in-law recently asked me what I wanted for my birthday and I asked for one of these. I love to get things I would like, but do not want to spend the money for. Well, he ordered me one and I was delighted with it.

It is cylinder-shaped and measures 2 1/2 inches high by 1 7/8 inches across. It has a gel pad on



the bottom which is where you attach it to whatever surface you choose. This keeps it from giving it a vibration sound on low bass notes. The device can be used as an external speaker for an MP3 player, lap/netbook, or any other unit with a like output audio jack. You

can also load up a Micro SD card with the music of your choice and slip it into the Micro SD slot on the device. When using the Micro SD card, the volume is controlled by the unit itself. When using it as an external speaker, the volume is controlled by the unit producing the sound.

The connection to the player is made via a supplied cable that connects to a mini USB jack on the speaker and a USB and audio port on the player. It has a Lithium Ion battery that can be recharged from a USB port on your computer or a USB AC adapter. There is a power light that blinks red when the battery is low. When you charge it, the light is red

until it is fully charged and turns green. There is a switch on one side which is used to select off/on or the SD card. The final control switch is a slide switch used to control the SD card output. The neutral position is in the center. Pushing it momentarily to the left or right will play the next or previous track on the SD card. Pushing and holding it to the left or right controls the volume. If you press the switch in, it causes the music to pause or resume.

The basic unit includes the unit and the USB power/audio cable. There is also an accessory pack available that includes a Micro SD card and SD adapter, a USB AC adapter, a glass mount and porous surface mount.



The device plus accessory pack sells for \$65 from the company through Amazon.com. The accessory pack alone runs around \$20.

Similar units can be found for less on Amazon. Almost all the reviews on Amazon were quite positive. You will find it quite interesting to try it on different surfaces. It really sounded great when placed on my microwave! For more information on this product, visit <http://www.mightydwarf.com/product/5w-mighty-dwarf>. ©

Meeting Minutes (Cont. from pg 2)

off lately, so he wanted to remind members that they can still give. You can bring your donations to the next meeting. He received an iMac as a donation, and is not familiar with it enough, so said he would give it to someone that could use it. Bill also said that the old MCI/Verizon building has a prairie grass (or blue grass) lawn that is very water efficient and that he has also planted it on his lawn.

IPv6 PRESENTATION

An IP address is comparable to a telephone number, and like years



John Pearce presenting in May

ago, we supposedly were running out of phone numbers. The Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) assigned the last large blocks of IPv4 addresses in February 2011. The Asia Pacific region reported in April 2011 that they have “exhausted” their IPv4 addresses. IPv6 expands the number of TCP/IP addresses available.

Your router uses Network Address Translation (NAT) to make these IP addresses work. You can probably run 24 to 48 computers connected to your home network with one router. We seem to have reached that limit at our club meetings with the old router.

There are 4.2 billion IPv4 32-bit addresses. With IPv6, there will be 340 trillion, trillion, trillion 128-bit addresses. That’s enough for many trillions of IPv6 addresses to be assigned to every human being on the planet. As IPv4 addresses run low in the future, if you go to an IPv6 site, you won’t be able to

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I'd like to cover an incident that occurred on one of the computers at the office running Windows XP. This unit would reboot on its own every 10 minutes or so. A Google search pointed out that such action could be due to a software issue, a hardware issue, a heat related issue, a computer virus, or an OS issue. We ruled out a heating issue as it occurred during the cool time of the year and the unit had a 120mm cooling fan. We also tried a new power supply, but to no avail. We also checked many of the connections inside, as well as swapping the memory, and still no luck. It appears that our problem was either a software or virus issue. To isolate the problem we did the following: Right click on My Computer, click on Properties, then in the System Properties window click on the Advanced tab. In the Startup and Recovery window, we unchecked "Automatically restart" in the System failure area. When you do this, if the computer generates an error, the unit will still reboot but will display the offending item in a DOS window. In this case, it turned out to be a file named sbhips.sys. We did a file search and found that the file appeared on three locations on this computer, two of them being in the Ad-Aware program area and one in the system32\drivers area. An attempt to uninstall Ad-Aware was unsuccessful, resulting in a reboot. We renamed the file to sbhpsx.sys in all three locations. After the renaming, we were



Nuggets from Nuvo

by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS

able to uninstall Ad-Aware and the self-rebooting problem disappeared. The offending files were still in the locations mentioned above. We deleted them manually to complete the process. If you run across this problem there is a good article on solving this issue located at <http://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch000605.htm>.

Back to Windows 8. I have listened to a lot of opinions about Windows 8 on YouTube. The consensus seems to be that virtually every reviewer feels that Metro is fine for tablets but not for a desktop computer. Think about this one example. You need to go left and right in the Metro environment and the mouse wheel goes up and down. One reviewer said his wrist was sore from all the left and right mousing he had to do. One reviewer showed how to turn off Metro and get the traditional desktop environment. It required a registry hack. However, it must have been in an earlier version as the key was no longer in the registry. Most also said that industry would never "buy off" on the Metro interface. I have said this from the first time I tried Windows 8. If you want to see what folks are saying, do a Google search for "Windows 8 fail" and "Windows 8 succeed." Even on the succeed side, most said it would be a fine OS for tablets and I would agree on that. How many of your friends are using a Windows cell phone or own a Zune. I think Microsoft will be missing the boat with Windows 8 as well. ☺



Another group booked our private room at the Country Buffet in May, but that didn't discourage Nuvo. He arrived early enough to push some tables together where the digerati could hang out. Maybe it was the nice weather that kept our attendance lower than average, but everyone enjoyed the morning.

Gizmo and TechRadar List the 100 Best Ever Free PC System Tools

Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

Websites:

<https://www.techsupportalert.com/content/list-100-free-pc-system-tools.htm>

<http://www.TechRadar.com/news/software/applications/100-best-ever-free-pc-system-tools-705029>

<http://www.techsupportalert.com>

<http://www.thewindowsclub.com/repair-fix-windows-7-vista-problems-with-fixwin-utility>

<https://www.comodo.com/home/backup-online-storage/data-recovery.php>

<http://www.stardock.com/products/Fences/>

I have long been a proponent of free software. Much of the free software available is often as good, if not superior, to its commercial competitors. Many of the free software products are written by altruistic individuals in order to solve a particular problem or to fill a specific niche, while many others are free versions of commercial software where the publisher hopes that the user will be so satisfied with the free version that he will willfully upgrade to the paid version, which often offers additional features. While many of the free software utilities are indeed totally free, and lack any commercial support activities, some of the free software products are fiscally supported through paid advertising displayed in the program, or by a revenue stream generated through the use of added toolbars or affiliate sales deals. When a user installs free software it is incumbent on the user to view the installation screens and knowingly approve or reject any default or displayed selections where the program asks

to install additional toolbars, change default search engines, add eBay affiliate links, promote shopping services, and other revenue generating techniques.

One of my favorite resources for information on free computer software is Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com, which has been reviewed and referenced in several previous columns. Gizmo has earned its reputation as one of the top sources on information and evaluations of free software, with the evaluations and ratings performed by a community of thousands of volunteers. Gizmo publishes frequently updated lists of the top free software available, and calls them its "Best Freeware Lists" where the reader can "Browse our super-lists. All our top selections in one place!" (www.techsupportalert.com).

Gizmo also posts information on other sources and lists of free software, and recently posted a recommendation on a competitive resource that has compiled a list of the "100 best ever free PC system tools". Gizmo commented on this by writing, "Do you like to keep your PC tuned up and humming along? Gizmo's offers plenty of top-notch free tools for maintaining the system and keeping it safe but it doesn't hurt to check out some other lists. Here is another large collection of free PC system tools that I came across." The website that Gizmo



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connect. IPv4 uses dotted decimal representation (192.138.0.1). IPv6 uses colon hexadecimal notation (FE80:0000:0000:0000:02AA:00FF:FE9A:4CA2), but this address can be compressed to FE80::2AA:FF:FE9A:4CA2 because of the zeroes (the double colon represents 3 units of zeroes).

For users, there should be

minimal or no hardware issues with IPv6. ISPs may have significant expenses, because their equipment is so specialized. John recommends that you verify IPv6 support in new purchases (modems – cable/DSL, home routers, and any network attached devices). You can install IPV6 right now on Windows XP and it is built into Windows 7. John suggests you consider upgrading to Windows 7 soon or

wait until Windows 8 to come out in the fall.

DRAWING

Green APCUG shirt—Gene Bagenstos

Tan APCUG shirt—Harvey McMinn

O'Reilly book certificates—Toni Logan, John Pearce, & Dorothy Bagenstos ☺

Gizmo & TechRadar (Continued from page 5)

was referring to was the UK based TechRadar.com which published the “100 best ever free PC system tools.” While this list was originally created in 2010, the time stamp displayed at the top of the TechRadar.com webpage as I am typing this says that it was last updated “4 hours ago”.

TechRadar.com says, “There’s a tool for just about anything you can think of in Windows. And if you look hard enough, you’ll find a freebie is more than capable of doing the job you want—in some cases, free tools outclass their shareware or commercial rivals.” This listing of its top 100 free PC system tools contains several that I have written about here in the past, including CCleaner, MalwareBytes, Crystal Disk Monitor, Microsoft’s Mr. Fixit, Recuva, and several others. There were dozens of programs listed that I had not previously heard of, but I have now downloaded and tried them, and was favorably impressed.

This TechRadar.com listing is divided into four distinct pages, each listing the top free utilities of that particular type. The four types of utilities that are recommended and listed by category are system health tools, desktop customization tools (the website uses the British spelling of “customisation”), cleanup and stabilization tools (again UK spelling is used on the webpage), and Windows security tools.

Under the category “System health tools” are free utilities that “Monitor the status of your hard drive, CPU, memory and software.” While some of the already mentioned and reviewed utilities are listed in this category, I found several other free utilities that I was compelled to try. The first one was FixWin (www.thewindowsclub.com/repair-fix-windows-7-vista-problems-with-fixwin-utility), a free utility that claims that it can repair 50 of the most common system problems in Windows 7 and Vista, both 32 and 64 bit versions. FixWin can repair a variety of problems with Windows Explorer, internet and connectivity related problems, Windows media, a selection of system errors and problems, and several Windows 7 or Vista specific features. The Windows 7-64 installed on my home desktop computer has always had issues running the original Microsoft Windows Media Player (version 12), and FixWin offered several one-click fixes that may be able to repair my Windows Media Player. With the many fixes available in FixWin, this free program is a “must have” for users of Vista and Windows 7. Some of the other

utilities listed under “System health tools” include a variety of system rescue (bootable) CDs, hardware information utilities, hard drive monitoring and repair utilities, backup and restore software, and many other useful utilities.

Many users like to tweak the appearance of their Windows, and the “Desktop customization tools” lists the top free utilities that can enable the user to perform the appropriate tasks. One that I especially like was Fences from Stardock (www.stardock.com/products/Fences) which enables the user to create a selection of areas on his desktop where similar types of software can be selectively clustered together. Stardock (www.stardock.com) also has a variety of other free (and paid) desktop utilities that can modify the desktop including LogonStudio (changes the Windows logon screen), and ObjectDock which can create a taskbar replacement or “dock” similar to the one used on an Apple MAC. Also included in the desktop tools are utilities to manage and repair icons, radically change the desktop, manage wallpaper, enable the use of Apple MAC desktop widgets on a PC, and other desktop enhancements and tweaks.

The third category of the top 100 free system tools is “Cleanup and stabilisation tools” <sic>, which are intended to “Keep Windows running smoothly with these streamlining tools.” One of the many reasons for a slow booting computer with sluggish performance is a cluttered startup, where too many unnecessary programs are loaded when the computer boots; these unnecessary programs not only lengthen the boot process, but they also consume system resources that can be better utilized by running applications, leading to degraded computer performance. Several of the free utilities listed are explicitly intended to streamline the boot process by managing which programs load at boot, which also leads to improved overall computer performance. Also included in this category of the best free system software are several system tweekers, hard drive defragmenting utilities, registry repair and defragmenting, bookmark managers (can also delete obsolete bookmarks and favorites from a variety of browsers), uninstallers, system cleaners (including my personal favorite CCleaner, available from www.piriform.com), and other performance enhancement tools and utilities.

In the final category, “100 best ever free PC system tools: Windows security tools”, are several excellent free tools that can, “Protect yourself and your PC with this collection of useful free security tools.” Included in this listing are real-time antivirus protection (Panda’s Cloud Antivirus), one of my

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The Control Panel - Extremely Useful

Published with permission from Sandy Berger, www.compukiss.com

Just as you can use a car without manipulating anything under the hood, you can also use a computer without changing any settings. However, at a certain point you will want to correct a setting, uninstall a program, change the way your mouse works, or add another user to your computer. All of these functions and many more are found in the Windows Control Panel. Don't worry though; the Control Panel is much easier to navigate than the cables, wires, and mechanisms that you find under the hood of a car....and you can use the tools in the Control Panel without getting your hands dirty.

In geek-speak, the Control Panel is the central location for all of the Windows operating system configuration needs. In everyday terms, it is the place where you can work with the many tools that Windows offers to change and customize all of the settings. The Control Panel is part of the Windows operating system's graphical interface. As such, you will find that it consists of easy-to-understand icons that are each labeled as to their function.

The Control Panel has been around since the first version of Windows. Over the years, it has morphed into a very useful set of management tools for your

computer. In a car you need to know where the hood release lever is, in Windows, you need to know how to access the Control Panel.

In Windows Vista and Windows 7, you can access the Control Panel by clicking on the Start button and choosing Control Panel from the right column of choices. In Windows XP, you will click Start, then choose Control Panel from the left column. If you don't see the Control Panel listed, click on Settings from the left column and then click on Control Panel.



The Control Panel is a little different in Windows XP than it is in Vista and Windows 7. So let's talk about XP first. By default, the Windows XP Control Panel appears in what is called "Category View." This means that various functions have been put into Categories. Previous versions of Windows

showed a list of icons, one for each function, in Windows XP, this is called the "Classic View." When you open the Control Panel in Windows XP, and you see several categories listed, you are in "Category View." If you see a window full of individual icons, you are in "Classic View." You can change the view by clicking on the words "Switch to Classic View" or "Switch to Category View" which is on the left side of the screen. Check out these two options and see which one you like. You can switch between them quite easily at any time.

In Windows Vista, you have the same choices, but you may have to click on "Control Panel Home" on the left side of the screen before you can click on "Classic View" or "Category View."

Microsoft made some changes in the Control Panel in Windows 7. They have eliminated the name Classic View. In Windows 7 you will see the words "View by" on the upper right side of the screen. Click on the down arrow next to those words and you will have three views to choose from: Category, Large Icons, or Small Icons. This Icon view is really the same as the Classic View. I prefer to use the Classic or Icon view, but again, you can check out all the views and see

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Gizmo & TechRadar (Continued from pg. 6)

favorite utilities to detect and neutralize malware (MalwareBytes), an excellent anti-malware utility that provides an extra layer of protection on top of other security software (Threatfire), firewalls, hard drive encryption, secure file deletion utilities, file recovery utilities, password managers, software update managers, clipboard managers, file compression utilities, file splitters, and several

other free security tools. Almost all reasonable PC security needs may be realized by utilizing a combination of these free security utilities.

For anyone who would like to try some of these top-rated utilities, both Gizmo (techsupportalert.com) and TechRadar.com offer a superlative selection of powerful and capable utilities to choose from. As I have often said in previous columns here, "free" is an excellent price that cannot be beat! ☺

Explaining Memory Cards

by Kim Komando (Tip from 4/30/12)

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Q. Greetings, Digital Goddess! Thank you for all the knowledge you share. I'm confused about SD memory cards. I've seen all kinds

of speeds on cards, but I don't know what they actually mean. I have a new camera with a burst mode feature—could you break down some of these classifications and tell me which will work best for me?

-Pat, from Downers Grove, IL, listens to my podcasts with her Kim's Club membership.

A. Hello, Pat! Thanks for the great question, and for downloading my podcasts. Kim's Club members can take my show on the go or watch online for exclusive behind-the-scenes features.

Think you only need to pick a storage amount for your card? Think again! Transfer speed is just as important as storage size.

Memory cards use multiple

classifications to advertise their read and write speed. You'll see everything from Class 4 to 133X to UHS-I. What do these letters and numbers really mean?

First, you have to figure out which type of memory card your device uses. Cameras usually use Secure Digital or Compact Flash cards. I'll focus on the more-common SD specifications first.

Transfer speeds for SD cards are represented as classes. These are—in order of speed—Class 2, 4, 6, 10 and UHS-I. UHS-I is the fastest, but it's compatible with only a few devices.

For continuous shooting modes like burst shooting, Class 4 or 6 will work fine. If you want to shoot HD video or pictures in the RAW format, buy Class 6, 10 or, if supported, UHS-I.

Some equipment is optimized for a specific class. Your manual should say which classes work with your device.

Here's a riddle for you: How are some memory cards like Archie

Bunker? Answer: They have no class!

Seriously, though, not every memory card uses classes. You may see numbers like 50x, 133x, 266x, 300x and 600x. These are used mostly for Compact Flash cards.

These numbers are based on 150 kilobyte-per-second transfer rates. You have to multiply the number on the card by 150 KB to find its true speed. For example, 133x equals about 20 megabytes a second.

I recommend buying 266x as a minimum. That will work for almost any situation.

One caution: Some companies will use the memory card's read speed as a rating. This is a little deceptive, since write speed is more important and often slower. Make sure you know how the manufacturer rates its cards before you buy.

Memory cards are incredibly important for many gadgets. ☺

Control Panel (Continued from page 7)

which one you like best.

There are 45 icons in the icon view in Windows 7 and about the same number in previous versions. If you look at the Classic or Icon view, you will see that the icons have labels, like Display, Sound, Power Options, Mouse, Keyboard, User Accounts, Folder Options, and Devices and Printers. You can click on any of these icons to open a window that will allow you to adjust, correct, and/or customize the settings of these areas. Take a look around. Check out the Mouse area first. When you click on the mouse icon a windows with options will appear. It will have tabs at the top. You can click on each tab to see even more options. If you have never looked at these before you will be amazed at the

number of things that you can do to customize your mouse. You can switch the buttons if you are left-handed. You can speed up and/or slow down the double-click speed. You can change the looks of the pointer. If you are using a mouse with a scroll wheel, you can even change how the wheel behaves.

Try a few things. The only caveat here is to document the changes that you are making so you can change them back if you want to.

Each of the items in the Control Panel allows you to change the settings in your computer. Look through and open up a few of them. There are hundreds of things that you can change and/or customize in the Windows operating system. Some of the Control Panel items are very useful for everyday tasks in Windows. Be sure to take a look. ☺

Turn Your Computer Into a DVR

by Kim Komando (Tip from 5/11/12)

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Q. Hi Kim. I ended my cable subscription and watch local TV with an antenna. The only thing I miss is a digital video recorder to record shows for later viewing. Is there a simple way to do this via computer? Thank you!

- Tom, from Reno, NV, listens to my weekly radio program on KOH 780 AM.

A. Hey, Tom! Many households are cutting the cord to their cable provider to save money on monthly bills.

However, one feature people miss most from their cable subscriptions, as you've found, is digital video recording. People still want to be able to watch their favorite shows without scheduling their life around the TV Guide.

You don't have to glue yourself to the couch to catch all your favorite shows, though. With a few modifications, turning any computer into a DVR is a snap.

The first thing you need is a TV tuner card, which will receive the signal from your antenna. If your computer doesn't already have a TV tuner, and most don't, prices start at around \$50.

Those handy with a screwdriver

can install an internal TV tuner card. Most people will prefer an external unit that connects with USB for easier setup. Hauppauge is a good brand to buy.

Most tuner cards come with their own software for managing TV recordings. This is great for XP and Mac users and some Vista users. However, Windows 7 users and some Vista users already have Windows Media Center installed, which is a quality DVR program.

Digital broadcasts will fill up your hard drive fast. An external hard drive will save you from having to constantly delete shows. You can grab a 1 terabyte model for about \$100.

You will have to connect your computer to your TV. Newer computers and TVs connect with HDMI or DVI for full digital video and audio. Older TVs will have to connect with VGA or component, which might require adapters.

You might consider dedicating a computer to being a full-time DVR. I use a Mac mini for that purpose. An older computer you have lying around the house might work as well. It should have at least 2 gigabytes of RAM and a 300 GB

hard drive.

Using a computer has other benefits as well. You can stream Internet video from Hulu or Netflix. Plus, you can turn it into a home media server for better sharing.

Don't settle for a basic TV setup. With some help from my buying guides, you can have a powerful entertainment center in your home.

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Windows 7: Creating a Recurring Alarm

You don't need a special program like Microsoft Outlook to have a recurring alarm that reminds you of regular events (such as: exercise, lessons, etc.). You can create one with the Windows Task Scheduler.

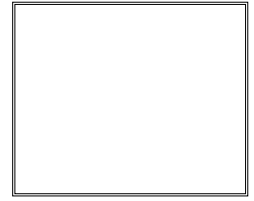
- Click the Start button in the Search field, type "**task scheduler**" and press Enter
- In the right **Actions** panel, click **Create Task...**
- In the **General** tab, type a name for the task, such as "*Reminder: Attend P*PCompAS Meeting*"
- Click the **Triggers** tab, and press the **New** button
- In the "Begin the task" dropdown menu select "On a schedule"
- Under **Settings** select the appropriate interval that (e.g. daily, weekly, etc.) that is applicable. Also select the appropriate Advanced Settings, such as "**Repeat task every X hours**". Check the **Enabled** checkbox, then press the **OK** button.
- Click the **Actions** tab to select what actions you want to happen to alert you (such as: running a program, sending an email or displaying a message on the screen).
- Press the **OK** button when done.

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Break time during the May Membership Meeting

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:

Next Membership Meeting: 2 June, beginning at 9 am (see map below for location)

Next Breakfast Meeting: 16 June, 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.

Newsletter Deadline: 23 June.

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

