Bits of Bytes

The Prez Sez

by John Pearce, President, P*PCompAS

We had a good turnout for the Social Breakfast on March 15th with a lot of good conversation. Thanks to those who attended.

The April program is the Vice President's choice of video presentations.

See you on April 5th. ☺

Meeting Minutes

by Toni Logan, Secretary, P*PCompAS

President John Pearce called the 1 March 2014 meeting to order at 9 am. He announced that there was some free stuff on one of the tables in the front. He also announced that coffee was free for first-time guests and a donation for others. The coffee is compliments of Laura at Starbucks at the Citadel Crossing.

The program today will be presented by Ilene Steinkruger and Joe Nuvolini on the CES meeting in Las Vegas in January. Gene Bagenstos made a motion to accept the minutes of the last meeting and Bob Blackledge seconded the motion. The motion passed and the minutes were accepted as printed in the newsletter.

OFFICER REPORTS

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 5 April 2014
VP Bob Blackledge will show a selection of Lynda.com video tutorials.

Vice-President Bob Blackledge has a list of videos lessons from Lynda.com and he asked the members to look it over and choose ones that are of interest.

Treasurer Dennis Conroy reported that we have $5812.55 in the savings account; $1073.18 in the checking account, for a grand total of $6885.73 in the treasury. The report is filed for later review.

Membership Chair Ann Titus reported that there are only 10 members who have not renewed their memberships for this year. They have be expunged from the membership list.

Editor Greg Lenihan reported that the deadline for the next newsletter is March 22, 2014, which is the week after the breakfast meeting.

APCUG Representative Joe Nuvolini mentioned that the web meetings from APCUG were on Saturdays which conflict with our meetings. They will try to vary the times of the meetings to adjust for that.

Media Representative Ilene Steinkruger has been forwarding information about new books to the members. She has on hand several books from O'Reilly, "Designing for Behavior Change," "Art of Community," and "Mobile HTML5." She is holding them for anyone who wishes to do a review, and then they will be in the library.

OLD BUSINESS

We are still waiting for a suggestion from the church as to what they might need or want as our contribution for this year.

NEW BUSINESS

The breakfast for this month is on March 15, 2014 at the Country Buffet and the next meeting is April 5, 2014. The business meeting was adjourned.

AROUND THE ROOM

Some of the topics in Around the Room were concerning lost DLL's; net speed; Acronis; compatibility problems with USB 2 and 3; and a suggestion that using Rabbit on a computer can cause you to pick up a virus.

PROGRAM

Ilene Steinkruger and Joe Nuvolini gave their impressions of the CES meeting in Las Vegas using photos and videos. It was interesting as usual.

DRAWING

Book—Dennis Conroy
Speakers—Pat Krieger
Scanner—Warren Hill
Small Speaker—John Linder ☺

In This Issue

Articles

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Toni Logan
Norm Miller
Bob Blackledge
Warren Hill

Nybbles and Bits
by John Pearce, P*PCompAS

Bluetooth, the wireless technology, has been around since 1999 when the v1.0 specification was released. At that time, it seemed like it was a solution looking for a problem to solve. In my mind, Bluetooth was hanging around but I didn't have any use for it. The situation sure has changed in the last ten years.

Apple started supporting Bluetooth in 2002 and Microsoft integrated Bluetooth support in the Windows OS starting with Win XP SP2 in 2004. However, Bluetooth languished for a while because the hardware was fairly expensive and, in my opinion, the concept of a personal area network (PAN) of Bluetooth devices just didn't make sense to people. Wireless networks 802.11a/b got more attention, again my opinion, because it was easier to see the benefit of the technology.

Like other technology, Bluetooth has continued to grow and evolve. The current Bluetooth spec is v4.1 released in December, 2013. The list of Bluetooth enabled devices has grown beyond headsets, cell phones, keyboards, and pointing devices to include media players, tablets, game consoles, watches, medical devices, smart home technology, and wearable technology. A recent announcement indicates future hearing aids may include Bluetooth capabilities.
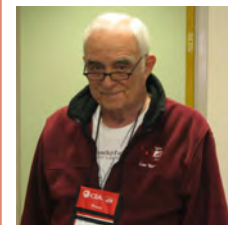
My interest in Bluetooth started with my 2012 Camry and the ability to pair the audio system with my Galaxy SIII phone. The Camry has two profiles for the Galaxy

SIII: phone and media player. The media player allows applications like Pandora to play through the car audio system.

Then, there is the not-quite-new flat screen TV at my house. I was poking around the TV's settings and discovered I can pair my laptop computer and/or cell phone with the TV (up to 5 devices can be paired with the TV). This makes searching Netflix and YouTube a whole lot easier than using the TV remote control. The laptop or cell phone is used to do the searching and the selection plays through the TV. The TV uses its own network connection for the video so the laptop/phone isn't needed after the selection is communicated to the TV.

Are you using Bluetooth technology for more than your cell phone headset? Look at **http://www.bluetooth.com/** for more information on this technology. ☺

Our two presenters at the March General Membership Meeting

Joe Nuvolini (top) and Ilene Steinkruger (right)

Well, another Acronis True Image save, this time on our club's Toshiba laptop. IE 11 began acting squirrely at the end of the March meeting. I spent a couple of hours working on it there, but eventually brought it home to work on it. Since I couldn't resolve the issues via System Restore, I decided to restore a recent Acronis image. I had not done a restore using True Image 2011 and I found the restore interface a lot less friendly that the version 9 I have on my XP machines. In any event, a restore from my most recent backup did not fix the problem. I finally restored a 2012 image and that did ultimately fix the problem. I wound up with IE 9 and did update it to IE 10 so that's what we have on there now. I also had to update a number of programs and install some maintenance programs I had installed since 2012. I also had to install a bunch of Windows 7 updates. It looks like all is well for now once again, thanks to Acronis!

Nuggets from Nuvo
by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS

I recently received a promised Plantronics bluetooth M55 mobile bluetooth headset from

the Plantronics media representative whom I met at CES in January. While similar in style to the M20 I was currently using, it does have some new features. First, while both have talk and standby times of 11 hours and 16 days respectively, the M55 has a deep sleep mode which lasts 150 days. Both units have noise cancelling. The m55 can be paired to two phones at the same time and answer calls from either. The M55 will charge fully in two hours. The M20 weighs 11.5 grams, the M55 just 8 grams. The M55 can also be worn in two different ways. The first is the traditional loop over the ear. The second mode is shown in the image. The soft plastic loop shown at the rear goes inside the ear and against the rear of the ear, pressing the rest of the earpiece forward, holding it in the ear. I prefer the second method. The M55 also has two additional voice commands that my M20 did not have. You can say "answer" or "ignore" to an incoming call. No more having to press the call button to answer a call. Of course you can hear music, videos, and driving directions from your smart phone as well. In all, I am well pleased with the M55. So, if you're in the market for a lightweight, moderately priced, mobile bluetooth headset, this could be the one for you. For more information visit **http://www. plantronics.com/us/product/m55#overview**.

AND REMEMBER, SUPPORT FOR WINDOWS XP ENDS THREE DAYS AFTER THE APRIL MEETING! (See my Windows Update, dated 18 March 2014, below.) ☺

It was two days before St. Patrick's Day when the digerati gathered for breakfast. There wasn't much blarney spoken, but there was a good deal of gaiety and discourse. There was a promise to meet again next month; same time, same place.

Free Online Backup Services

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

WEBSITES:
**http://pcsupport.about.com/od/software-tools/
tp/free-online-backup.htm**
**http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/best-
free-online-backup-sites.htm**
**http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_storage_
service**
**http://winsupersite.com/skydrive/bing-rewards-
members-get-100-gb-free-onedrive-storage-
one-year**
http://www.speedtest.net

At the local computer club meeting earlier today (gtpcc.org), we had a brief discussion on the subject of online backup services. For those who might not be aware, there are literally dozens, if not more, online companies that provide remote backup services, often using the term "in the cloud." Unlike the more traditional in-house backup methods, such as an external hard or flash drive, which are very common today, these online services utilize an Internet connection to send and receive the data to a distant server to be stored on that distant server.

While there are advantages to local drive-based data backups, mostly their relative fast speed, there are also distinct advantages to distant, remote storage of critical data files. Locally, we have a recent history of hurricanes, massive flooding, other natural disasters, and other accidents such as house fires that could compromise our data stored in our homes on external backup devices. While there are a variety of fire resistant and waterproof hard drives available, as well as waterproof and fire resistant safes to store our personal data backup devices, the redundancy of remote and distant Internet connected server storage provides protection for our critical data that may surpass the data protection that we might individually provide.

The term "in the cloud" or "cloud storage service" is defined by Wikipedia (en.wikipedia. org/wiki/Cloud_storage_service) as "A file hosting service, cloud storage service, online file storage provider, or cyberlocker is an Internet hosting service specifically designed to host user files. It allows users to upload files that could then be accessed over the Internet from a different computer, tablet, smart phone or other networked device, by the same user or possibly by other users, after a password or other authentication is provided. Typically, the services allow HTTP access, and sometimes FTP access."

Radio listeners and TV viewers may have heard a myriad of commercial spots promoting one or more of the several commercial online backup services personally endorsed by prominent celebrities; while these remote backup services are of decent quality and value, priced well within the reach of typical computer users, there are also a wide assortment of free online backup services available to anyone. Two of the popular computer technical review websites, Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com and About.com Computing PC Support have recently published updated (March, 2014) reviews and recommendations on the free online backup services. What is especially interesting is the fact that these two highly respected services distinctly differ on which of these free services are the best; Gizmo's top three recommendations are not even listed by About.com, and About.com's top three recommendations are not listed by Gizmo.

Gizmo's TechSupportAlert recommendations (techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-backup-sites.htm) suggests that users consider and evaluate the free (and paid) online backup services based on several listed factors and features. These features to be considered when choosing a storage services include: Storage Size (more free storage is better); Document Synchronization (documents and files created or changed need to automatically be uploaded to the backup server); Long Term Reliability of the Site (will your files be there available several years from now); Security (encryption); File Location (some backup services require a special folder to be created on your hard drive); and Ease of Use (the service should be menu driven and intuitive when selecting the files and folders to be backed up). Gizmo also has a suggestion for those who have more critical data to store than the space allowed by the free remote storage service, "One possible strategy is to use several free sites. Use one site for photos, a second for general documents and a third site with pre-upload and post-download

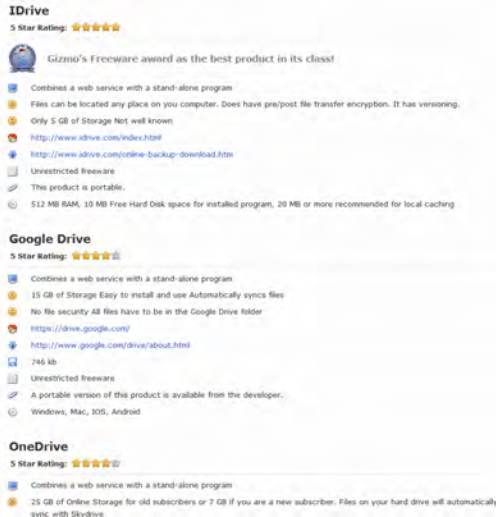encryption for your financial documents and other documents you want to keep private."

While Gizmo reviewed and commented on eight free online backup services, its current top recommendations only include four services. Gizmo gave its highest five-star rating, and "Gizmo's Freeware award as the best product in its class!" to IDrive (idrive.com). According to Gizmo, IDrive, "Combines a web service with a stand-alone program; Files can be located any place on your computer. Does have pre/post file transfer encryption. It has versioning." IDrive is also available in a portable version that can be run from a flash drive. The only downside of IDrive noted by Gizmo was IDrive's relatively low limit of online storage, currently capped at 5 GB.

Gizmo had a three-way tie (four star rating out of five for each) for its other recommended free products, Google Drive, Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly called SkyDrive), and Spideroak. Google Drive (drive.google.com) is both a web service and a stand-alone program that offers 15 GB of storage, ease of installation, and automatically synchronizes files between the connected devices (Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android devices). According to Gizmo,

IDrive
5 Star Rating: ★★★★★

Gizmo's Freeware award as the best product in its class!

- Combines a web service with a stand-alone program
- Files can be located any place on you computer. Does have pre/post file transfer encryption. It has versioning.
- Only 5 GB of Storage Not well known
- http://www.idrive.com/index.html
- http://www.idrive.com/online-backup-download.htm
- Unrestricted freeware
- This product is portable.
- 512 MB RAM, 10 MB Free Hard Disk space for installed program, 20 MB or more recommended for local caching

Google Drive
5 Star Rating: ★★★★★

- Combines a web service with a stand-alone program
- 15 GB of Storage Easy to install and use Automatically syncs files
- No file security All files have to be in the Google Drive folder
- https://drive.google.com/
- http://www.google.com/drive/about.html
- 746 kb
- Unrestricted freeware
- A portable version of this product is available from the developer.
- Windows, Mac, IOS, Android

OneDrive
5 Star Rating: ★★★★★

- Combines a web service with a stand-alone program
- 25 GB of Online Storage for old subscribers or 7 GB if you are a new subscriber. Files on your hard drive will automatically sync with Skydrive.

Google Drive offers "No file security." Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) also combines a web service with a stand-alone program that offers a variable amount of storage (onedrive. live.com); earlier subscribers have 25 GB of storage, while new subscribers will only receive 7 GB of storage, with the opportunity to earn up to 100 GB of free storage on an annual basis, which Microsoft calls "a $50 value." OneDrive

users can get this free additional storage by signing up for Microsoft's free "Bing Rewards" program (bing.com/explore/rewards), and earning 100 points by searching the web with Microsoft's Bing search engine. Bing Reward Points can also be redeemed for gift cards, or donated to charity. Gizmo had one concern with OneDrive similar to the concern with Google Drive; that was (according to Gizmo) " No Security." Gizmo's last recommended free online storage service is Spideroak (spideroak.com) which had all of the recommended features, including "Pre and Post File Encription <sic>", but was criticized for its very limited 2 GB of free storage. Not stated by Gizmo, Spideroak offers an additional GB of storage for each friend referred to Spideroak who signs up, up to 10 GB of additional storage, for a total limit of 12 GB.

The About.com listing of "12 Free Online Backup Plans" (pcsupport.about.com/od/software-tools/tp/free-online-backup.htm), generally included a lesser known listing of "truly free" online backup services, ranked in order of available storage space. This listing ranged from a top-rated 10 GB of storage space from Symform (symform.com), to as little as 2 GB of storage from each of the six lowest rated services. Second on the About.com rankings is Cyphertite Basic (cyphertite.com/plans. php) which offers 8 GB of storage, followed by MiMedia Free (online.mimedia.com/www/v1/signup/free) with 7 GB, IDrive (idrive.com) at 5 GB, and Jottacloud Free (jottacloud.com/products), a Norwegian based service that offers 5 GB of free storage. The remaining About.com recommendations all offered either 3 GB or 2 GB of free storage.

One factor often overlooked by users of both the free and paid online backup services is the limiting speed factor of their broadband Internet connections. Most local broadband users were "sold" by their Internet providers on a possible top download speed, which published reports have indicated is often greatly overstated. Many users that I have spoken with were unaware that the advertised maximum speed of their Internet connection is the download speed, but that the upload speed is typically only one-half to one-quarter of the download speed, meaning that it will take two to four times longer to upload a file than it does to download the same size file. In one specific case that I heard firsthand, the user subscribed to one of the very good quality, highly advertised, paid cloud based storage services

Beginner Geek: Hard Disk Partitions Explained

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Original article at: *http://www.howtogeek.com/184659/beginner-geek-hard-disk-partitions-explained/*

Hard disks, USB drives, SD cards—anything with storage space must be partitioned. An unpartitioned drive can't be used until it contains at least one partition, but a drive can contain multiple partitions.

Partitioning isn't something most users will need to bother with, but you may need to work with partitions when installing an operating system or setting up a new drive.

What is a Partition?

Many drives come with a single partition already set up, but all storage devices are just treated as a mass of unallocated, free space when they contain no partitions. To actually set up a file system and save any files to the drive, the drive needs a partition.

The partition can contain all of the storage space on the drive or just some of it. On many storage devices, a single partition will often take up the entire drive.

Partitions are necessary because you can't just start writing files to a blank drive. You must first create at least one container with a file system. We call this container a partition. You can have one partition that contains all the storage space on the drive or divide the space into twenty different partitions. Either way, you need at least one partition on the drive.

After creating a partition, the partition is formatted with a file system — like the NTFS file system on Windows drives, FAT32 file system for removable drives, HFS+ file system on Mac computers, or the ext4 file system on Linux. Files are then written to that file system on the partition.
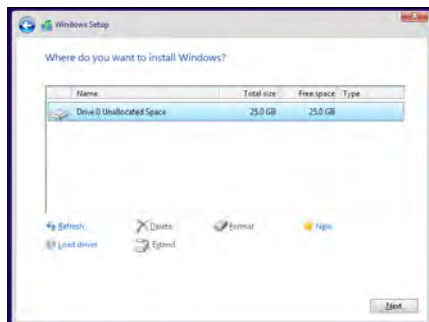
with enough capacity to backup all of the data on his hard drive. Running 24/7, it took him several days to upload his entire backup to the remote service; while uploading, his Internet download had slowed to a crawl, making it a slow process to open web pages and access his e-mail. If he had backed up his system to a modern USB external hard drive, it might have only taken a few hours to back up the same amount of data, a clear indication of the great difference of speed between the competing methods.

A few weeks later, that same user called me angry with his broadband Internet provider; he had a large fee added to his Internet bill for "overage," as he went far beyond his "metered" limits of service included in his normal monthly data allocation by sending the massive amount of data to the remote server. Some Internet service providers "throttle back" the Internet speed, slowing it significantly, if too much data is transferred, not just making online backups, but also including streaming media such as Netflix and Hulu.

Prior to using any of the remote "cloud" backup services, free or paid, for anything more than occasionally backing up small numbers of files, it would be most worthwhile to check with your Internet service provider (ISP) and determine if there are any caps on monthly data, or "throttling back" of speed if large amounts of data are sent or received. I also recommend that users determine their actual upload and download speeds using a free utility, such as Ookla's free SpeedTest, at speedtest.net. Not just can the user accurately determine his real Internet performance and compare it to what was the advertised speed (it will almost always be lower than advertised), but he can also estimate data upload and download times using simple arithmetic by dividing the amount of data by the appropriate speed, as determined during the speed test. Often the user will find that the convenience of a remote cloud backup for anything greater than a few very critical files, is more than offset by the time and potential cost of the backup.

While I personally use Google Drive and OneDrive for remote storage of critical data files, zipping (compressing) sensitive personal data in password protected zip files to offset any "prying eyes," I still maintain continuous backups on a pair of USB external hard drives as my primary, comprehensive backup. I did the simple arithmetic, and with my current Internet connection, it is not practical to do comprehensive backups to a "cloud" backup server. If you are considering remote backup services, I strongly recommend that you do the arithmetic yourself to determine if comprehensive remote backup is appropriate for you. ☺

Why You Can Make Multiple Partitions and When You Might Want To

You probably don't want multiple partitions on your USB flash drive — a single partition will allow you to treat the USB drive as a single unit. If you have multiple partitions, multiple different drives would appear when you plugged your USB drive into your computer. However, you may want multiple partitions for other reasons. Each partition can be isolated from the others and even have a different file system. For example, many Windows computers come with a separate recovery partition where the files you need to restore your Windows operating system to its factory default settings are stored. When you restore Windows, the files from this partition are copied to the main partition. The recovery partition is normally hidden so you can't access it from Windows and mess it up. If the recovery files were stored on the main system partition, it would be easier for them to be deleted, infected, or corrupted. Some Windows geeks love creating a separate partition for their personal data files. When you reinstall Windows, you can wipe your system drive and leave your data partition intact. If you want to install Linux on your Windows computer, you can install it to the same hard drive — the Linux system will be installed to one or more separate partitions so Windows and Linux won't interfere with each other.

Linux systems are generally set up with multiple partitions. For example, Linux systems have a swap partition that functions like the page file on Windows. The swap partition is formatted with a different file system. You can set up partitions however you like with Linux, giving different system directories their own partition.

Primary, Extended, and Logical Partitions

When partitioning, you'll need to be aware of the difference between primary, extended, and logical partitions. A disk with a traditional partition table can only have up to four partitions. Extended and logical partitions are a way to get around this limitation.

Each disk can have up to four primary partitions or three primary partitions and an extended partition. If you need four partitions or less, you can just create them as primary partitions.

However, let's say you want six partitions on a single drive. You'd have to create three primary partitions as well as an extended partition. The extended partition effectively functions as a container that allows you to create a larger amount of logical partitions. So, if you needed six partitions, you'd create three primary partitions, an extended partition, and then three logical partitions inside the extended partition. You could also just create a single primary partition, an extended partition, and five logical partitions — you just can't have more than four primary partitions at a time.
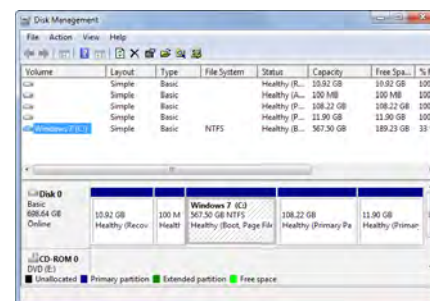
How to Partition

Partitioning with graphical tools is fairly easy if you know what you're doing. While installing an operating system — Windows or Linux —

your operating system installer will offer a partitioning screen where you can create, delete, format, and resize partitions. (Note that deleting or formatting a partition will erase all the data on it!)

You can also use tools like the Disk Management tool in Windows and GParted on Linux to manage partitions on your system drive or other drives. You can't always modify a partition while it's in-use — for example, you can't delete a Windows system partition while you're running Windows from it! — so you may need to boot from a Linux live CD or use an operating system installer disk to make many changes.

These tools allow you to partition your system drives as well as other internal drives, external drives, USB drives, SD cards, and other storage media.

How Partitions Appear as Disks, But Don't Offer the Same Performance Benefits

Operating systems display separate partitions as separate drives. For example, if you have a single drive with 500 GB of storage on your computer, you'd have a C:\ drive with 500 GB of space available to you in Windows. But, if you partitioned that drive in half, you'd have a C:\ drive with 250 GB of space and a D:\ drive with 250 GB of space displayed in Windows Explorer.

These drives may look like separate physical devices, but they

3 Things You Need to Know About the End of Windows XP
by Kim Komando (tip from 3/21/14)

Hang on to your hats. The dreaded date is coming up fast. On April 8, Microsoft is ending support for Windows XP.

That means no more security updates. If hackers find a serious flaw, it will be open forever, which means your XP computer will become a magnet for viruses and other attacks.

Still, I know plenty of people aren't happy with Microsoft's decision. In fact, I rounded up some of the more extreme comments I received on the last article I wrote on XP's end of life. You can read them here.

However, Microsoft seems committed to dropping XP, so don't count on another reprieve. And, either way, XP is 13 years old, which is equal to centuries when it comes to technology. It's time to move on regardless to faster, more secure systems.

Before the big date arrives then, here are some things you need to know. Even if you aren't running XP, be sure to share this with people you know who are.

1. ARE YOU RUNNING XP?

OK, OK, this seems like a no-brainer. But I learned long ago not to assume anything.

Many people just buy a computer and use it without knowing anything about it. Just like many people buy a car and don't know anything about the engine.

If you aren't sure whether or not you're running XP, Microsoft made a handy site – appropriate named "Am I running XP?" - to give you a simple yes or no answer.

If you are running XP, it will give you some suggestions for upgrading, although your options from Microsoft boil down to upgrading to Windows 8.1, which many people don't like.

Future alert: Windows 8.1 update 1 will arrive next month as well. It's supposed to continue fixing Windows 8's annoyances. Check back for my review and recommendation.

2. FIND A REPLACEMENT

If you are running XP, I strongly recommend upgrading. For specific non-Internet tasks like photo organizing or scanning with an older scanner, you can keep your XP computer around and working. Just don't do any Web browsing with it.

As far as upgrading goes, almost any low-cost computer will work for you, and you can even find some with Windows 7, which is closer to an XP experience than 8 is.

For e-mailing, Web browsing, social media updating, casual gaming and basic computing tasks, you even might be better off with a tablet.

Click here for more on buying a cheap computer – or tablet – to replace XP.

If you want to spend a little more, Microsoft is offering a $100 credit to XP users buying a computer costing more than $600. Click here to learn more about that deal.

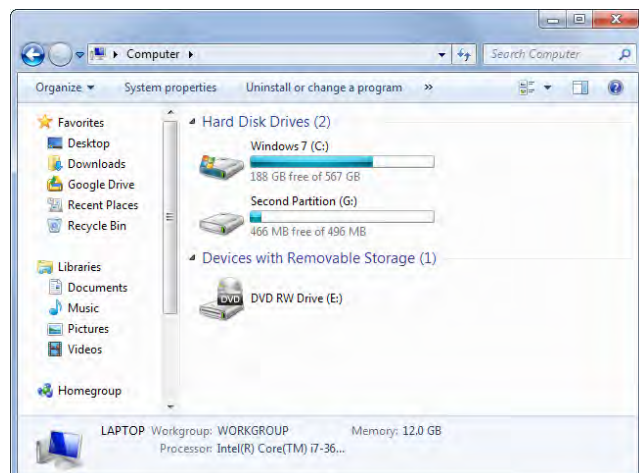As some people have rightly commented, upgrading from XP means more than just changing computers. You might have older

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Partitions (Continued from page 7)

don't function that way. Although they appear as different disks, they're still the same physical piece of hardware. There's only so much speed to go around. You don't gain the performance benefits from using two separate partitions that you do from using two separate physical drives.
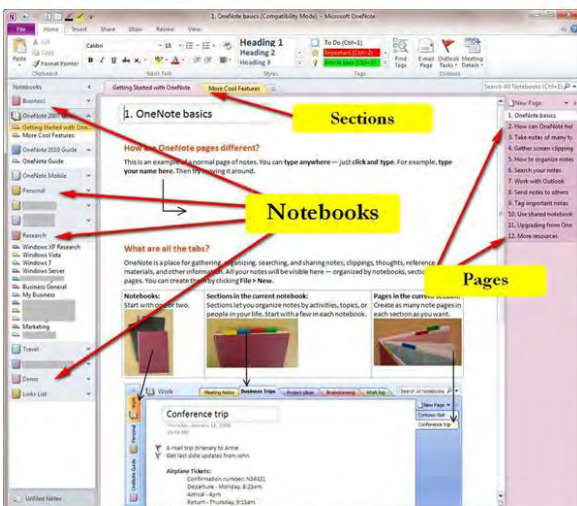
Most people won't have to worry about this, as drives generally come with a single partition set up, operating systems partition automatically, and so on. However, it's helpful to know how partitions work when you need to get your hands dirty. ☺

Microsoft is Giving Away OneNote
by Greg Lenihan, P*PCompAS

Microsoft is offering their OneNote product for free. OneNote allows you to take notes on a page and add to-do lists, images, drawings, files, videos, links, math symbols and equations, and other things. With these notes, you can create multiple sections and multiple notebooks. Up till now, it has been sold as part of Microsoft Office. You can get a copy at http://www.onenote.com.

The free version of OneNote stores your notes in Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive), which is in the cloud. The nice thing about this is that your notes are accessible on your phone, tablet, other computers, or from anywhere on the Web. If you are familiar with EverNote, then you probably know about OneNote and their similarities.

The desktop version of OneNote has been around over a decade, and Microsoft will still offer a paid version that provides additional features like SharePoint support, version history, Outlook integration, and the ability to save notes to your desktop. In addition to Windows, OneNote also runs on the Mac, Android, iOS, and the Web.

Notebooks can be shared with others, either to collaborate or to edit. There is a OneNote Clipper that works with every major browser to clip content from web pages and insert them in your notes. If you want a full-featured note-taking application that is searchable, then consider OneNote. ☺

End of Win XP (Cont. from pg. 8)

programs, scanners, printers and other accessories that aren't compatible with Windows 7 or 8.

Before you upgrade, check out Microsoft's Windows Compatibility Center to know the full extent of what you're facing.

When it comes to upgrading, there's an option I don't mention much. If you're really strapped for cash or want to try something new, however, you might consider switching over to Linux.

This is a free operating system that's incredibly secure and runs well on older hardware. You can install it on your XP machine and won't have to buy new hardware.

Many versions of Linux work very much like Windows XP, so you shouldn't feel too out of place. And

it comes with most of the software you need pre-installed.

You can run major browsers like Chrome and Firefox. It handles image editing with GIMP and productivity with LibreOffice. Plus, there are hundreds of other free programs you can add to do just about anything you want.

Of course, if you have any special Windows programs, those won't work, but you can probably find a suitable free alternative.

If you do want to research Linux, I suggest checking out Linux Mint. The MATE Edition should run better than XP on older hardware.

3. TRANSFER YOUR FILES

The biggest fear when you completely change computer systems is losing your irreplaceable
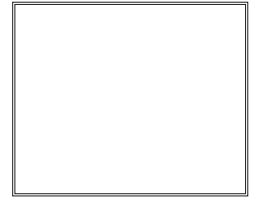
files, whether they're financial information, family photos or that novel you've been working on.

If you are buying a new computer, this isn't such a worry. You can copy the files to the new computer and keep the old computer around until you make sure everything made it over.

But the copying over process itself can be a headache. To make things easier on XP users, Microsoft is making Laplink's PCmover Express for Windows XP available for free. Learn more and download it here.

Of course, if you have an online backup service like my advertiser Carbonite, you're already set. It can easily restore your backed up files to a new computer. Click here to learn how. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:
Next Membership Meeting: 5 April, beginning at 9 am (see directions below)
Next Breakfast Meeting: 19 April @ 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.
Newsletter Deadline: 19 April.

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