Bits of Blue

A Monthly Publication of the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.

September in Tampa

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Meeting

Kevan Sheridan
on
Android Smartphone

Wednesday, September 12, 2012

6:30 PM

Pepin Distributing Co.
4121 N 50th Street
Tampa, Florida

Meeting Preview: Kevan Sheridan will lead us through all the features of the Android Smartphone. As usual, Bob LaFave will conduct the Windows SIG at the beginning of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
william@lamartin.com

Thanks to our contributors, Merle Nicholson, Robert Davis and Ron Weinberg, I have very little empty space to fill.

The big news, I suppose, is that Apple was successful in its lawsuit against Samsung for patent infringement, and they will now try to block the sale of a number of Samsung Android phones in the US. I don't know if Kevan will be using one of these phones in his presentation or not.

In other news, Microsoft will be releasing Windows 8 to the general public in October. People who have certain Microsoft subscriptions, as does Merle Nicholson, were able to download it a couple of weeks back. Today, August 29, Samsung announced that they would have both an ARM processor and an Intel Core i5 processor version of their Windows 8 slate computers that will be available in Europe on October 25. I am sure other manufactures will soon follow suit. There was no mention of the US date. Finally, Windows Phone 8 and Visual Studio 2012 are also due very soon. ◆

October Meeting: Steve Singer on new hardware

Bits of Blue is published by the Tampa PC Users Group, Inc., a State of Florida registered non-profit corporation, to provide educational information about personal computer systems to its members. Our mailing address is P. O. Box 3492, Tampa, FL 33601-3492.

However, for business concerning this newsletter, Bits of Blue, please contact the Editor, William LaMartin, at 813-251-3817, or william@lamartin.com.

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Minutes of the July Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. The meeting began as usual at 6:30 PM. The SIG is devoted to a discussion of all aspects of the Windows Operating Systems and of computer-related subjects in general. The SIG moderator, Bob LaFave, introduces new or little known products and technological developments for discussion by the group. He accepts questions and requests for help in solving problems from attendees.

This month Bob touched on a variety of subjects – the main subjects were ISO files, and their use, ISO Buster to view the contents of ISO files, ImgBurn to create and to burn ISO files to CD/DVD; there was also a brief mention of Portable Apps and running from the hard drive, and Roboform. As usual, an excellent and informative SIG session.

The presentation this month was given by myself, Merle Nicholson, on the subject of passwords and the necessity of having a system to manage them, the importance of not re-using passwords, and the advantages of a program like Keepass or KeepassX to store them. I mentioned what I thought is the best method of remembering the Keepass lock password and how the brain stores and retains this type of thing.

Also shown was the online e-edition of the Tampa Bay Times, and some directions on how to navigate this and what it has to offer. There seemed to be plenty of interest in this, partly from its convenience, but also the cost savings.

Also demonstrated was inSSIDder, a free program to capture and analyze local WiFi signals when you need to locate a suitable WiFi connection, and incidental to that a quick demo on WiFi sharing from a smartphone, for which, in my case, having an Android phone, I have an app called FoxFi.

Windows 8 – first three hours

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
merle@merlenicholson.com

I guess after saying I didn't have time to look at the Win 8 release, I was lying. My plan was to eventually build a computer with parts I have around here and install it, but I went ahead and installed a Virtual Machine (VM)in VirtualBox. My curiosity just got the best of me.

Eventually I'll have to test my commercial applications because a customer will buy a new notebook with Windows 8 installed and then call me to ask if that's ok. I can't really say no, because sooner or later no one will have a choice. And that time is coming in October.

I tried to upgrade a Windows 7 Virtual Machine. The Upgrade failed, with the error below, so I created a new virtual machine and then making a new machine failed.
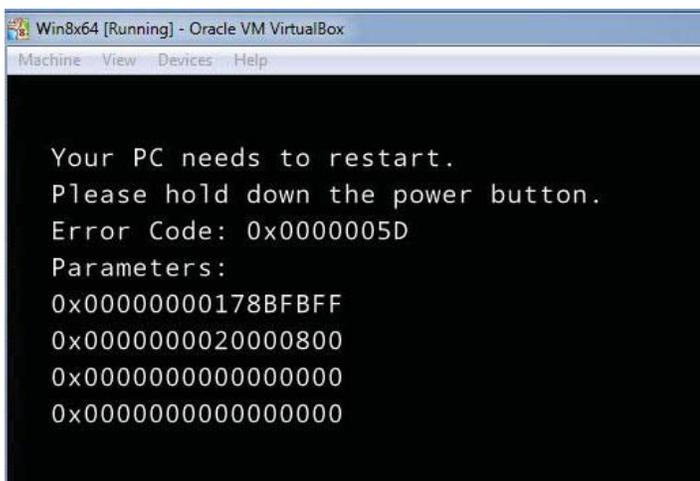
Research on the Internet came up with a BIOS setting in the motherboard that fixed it. "No-Execute Memory Protection" needs to be enabled, as found at:

http://www.tech-recipes.com/rx/26800/windows-8-on-virtualbox-and-vmware-your-pc-needs-to-restart-fix/

I don't know why. There are a lot of incidents on the Internet with this error; some were fixed by this, and some by other things. This was after the third attempt to install.

All went well after that. I did some settings and realized that I was really tired of getting to "Apps" from the desktop with no Start Menu. Apps are there, but you have to leave the desktop to get to this tiled-list. I knew about this because everyone writes about it, but it's just tiresome.

Ed Bott on ZD Net has some good Win 8 articles, http://www.zdnet.com/eight-things-to-do-right-away-after-you-set-up-windows-8-7000002693/. One thing he points out is strange. You have to set your time zone. It used to come up automatically on installation, but it does no longer. So you start out with Pacific time. When you realize this, you have to wade through settings to change it. I think they intend for "Location Services" to catch up and change it, but I don't know when that is, and I turned that off anyway. William LaMartin is pretty sure it's a bug. On the other hand, I have a desktop unit with no GPS.

I took Ed's advice and added several items on the Taskbar by right-clicking on the Metro Tile and selecting to add to the Taskbar. Otherwise I may have never found them. (Maybe not "NEVER.") Notably "Run," "Help" and "Cmd."

I relied on Ed's articles when I switched to Windows 7, and he's holding true to form now. These articles are very useful: http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/.

Your default logon account seems to be your Windows Live account. You can change that to a Local account – and I did this and entered a new password for that, and it created an administrative account with that name and password. You really aren't aware you need to do that until you realize that your login password is the same as your Live account. And you just THOUGHT you were entering the Live account and password so they could send you a message in case you've forgotten your account information. Yep, maybe, but that became your account login also. Until you figure it out and change it. They SHOULD be different. Your Live account is probably all over the place; it's not suitable for locking your PC.

Also, there's no obvious way to Shut Down, Restart, Sleep or Hibernate. Believe it or not, it's in Settings from the Metro screen. I had to find Help first so I could find that out, and – I may be wrong here – I had to go to Charms, Search, type Help. I eventually was able to get a Help icon on the Taskbar. Then I made a Shutdown and a Restart shortcut on the desktop.

Windows 8 doesn't have a Start Menu. If you put the cursor at the bottom left corner, you get a little pop-up that when clicked goes to the Start screen [below]:

And when you right-click the Start screen, you can get to the Apps screen, as captured at the bottom of the left column:

The Apps screen is difficult for me to grasp because all the Start Menu programs are here, and when I'm done installing all my applications, I'll have five times this many tiles. It reminds me of people who have their
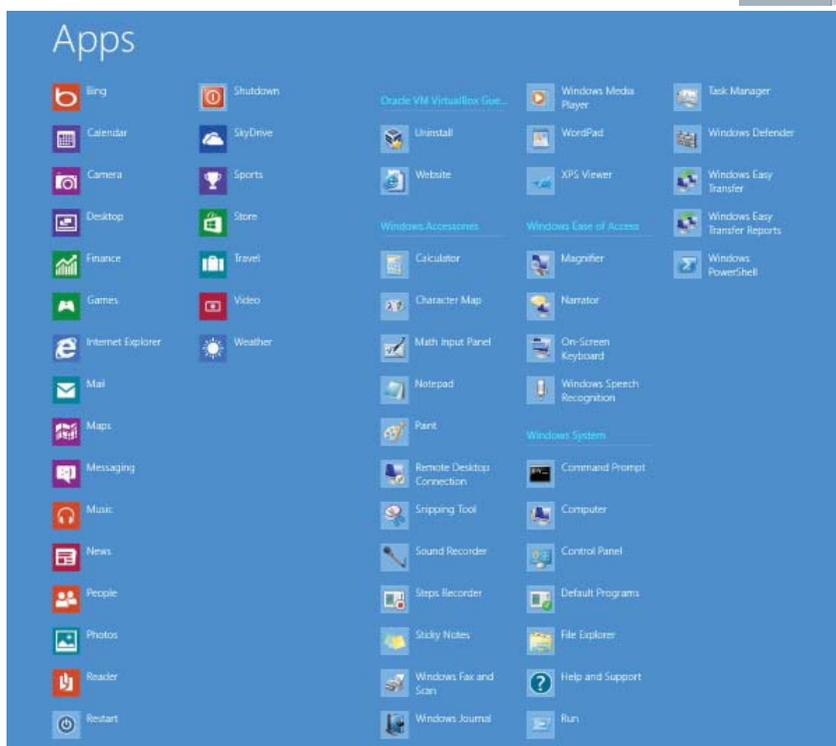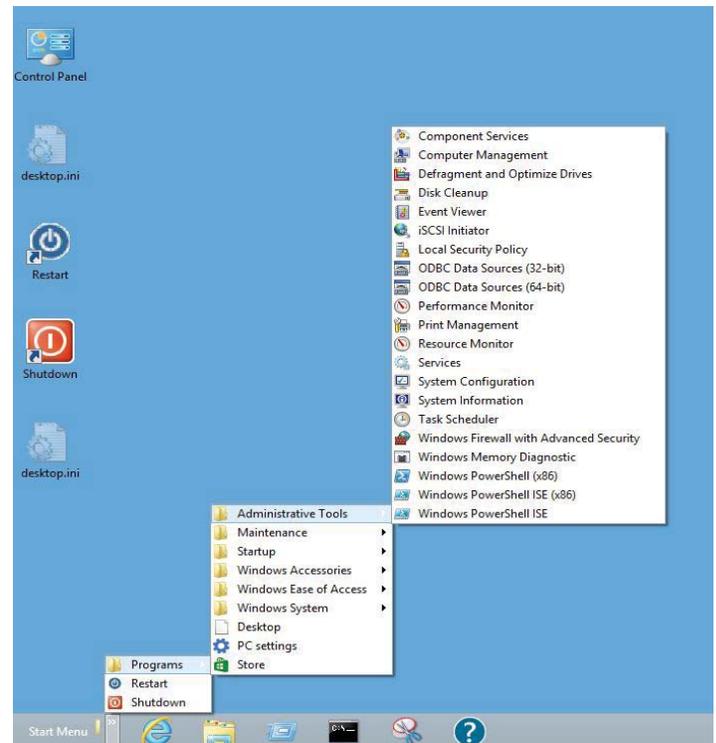
desktop covered in icons and haven't discovered menus.

To solve the Start Menu problem I added a ToolBar on the Taskbar and used the "Start Menu" folder as the Toolbar source directory. With some fiddling – this isn't easy, I moved the ToolBar on the left. And I now have a Start Menu. I manually added just a couple of items – the Shutdown and Restart shortcuts. It isn't pretty, but it's cascading. Yay [see screen capture immediately above]. Current score: Merle 3 and Microsoft 300,000.

I am used to having Windows Security Essentials installed for anti-virus, and at first

Internet Picture of the Month

Goats in a Tree

From the Wall Street Journal online, http/www.onlinewsj.com, in the photo section for August 27. The caption read: Goats climbed an Argan tree to get to its fruit near Essaouira, Morocco, Sunday.

look, it seems there is no anti-virus. Except while I was in Control Panel, Windows Defender was there, I opened it and found Windows Security Essentials inside there already running. It isn't in the system tray. This is interesting. I like it.

Since my Windows 8 foray is in a virtual machine it's hard to measure performance, but I can say this; I'm not disappointed by how well – and how fast – it runs. It isn't slow.

I'm still working with this, obviously. My immediate objective is to get Office 2010 and Access 2003 installed and some other programs I need and to try everything out so I'll be prepared to help my customers. I'm trying to keep an open mind and to keep from sounding curmudgeonly; maybe I'll find some advantage and grow to love it. ◆

September's Interesting World Wide Web Locations

Tampa PC Users Group (that's us)   http://www.tpcug.org/
TuneIn   http://tunein.com/
Ed Bott Blog articles   http://www.zdnet.com/blog/bott/
Google Nexus 7 Tablet   http://www.google.com/nexus/#/7

Donating or Transferring a Clean PC

By Ron Weinberg, Tampa PC Users Group
rswjbr@verizon.net

Getting a system ready for donation or transfer to another individual is distinctly different from adding another user to the system.

The objective is to remove all personal information including: data, passwords, financial information, emails, photos, videos, etc.

The most common way is to completely wipe the hard drive, which will make the information unrecoverable. Mere deletion allows most data to be easily recovered by using readily available tools. Repetitive overwriting with 0 or 1 or other character will make the data unrecoverable. There are many different standards for overwriting. The common tools offer various options. The more overwrite passes, the longer the process takes.

If you merely want to junk the PC and kill the hard drive there are various programs sold or available free to wipe the drive. Some of them are: CCleaner, Darik's Boot and Nuke ("DBAN"), Eraser, DP Wiper, WipeDrive, etc.

If you completely wipe the drive, you are left with an unusable piece of hardware because the operating system and all programs will have been destroyed. This would be of little use to someone else unless they had their own software or just wanted parts.

You can resolve that issue if you have the OS and Program disks but reinstallation takes time and thereafter updates must be installed, often years worth. Nevertheless, those truly concerned with removing highly sensitive classified Government Security or extreme personal or business data and who fear their hard drive may be searched should only do a complete drive wipe.

Otherwise, you can remove only sensitive and personal data and leave the OS and programs intact using file wipe rather than disk wipe programs.

This will take considerably more time than just wiping the whole drive.

Here is the procedure I recently used to clean a Windows XP laptop.

1. First I removed junk, unused, questionable, and trial programs that may have come originally with the new system. Of course, you could omit this step and dispose of the PC with those programs still intact. I used "PC Decrapifier." CCleaner would also work. The Control Panel's Add/Remove Programs may be sufficient.

Use care if the system has any programs that use sensitive material such as Quick Books or a Password Storage Program such as Roboform, Keypass, or similar. Remove the program but be sure to determine the location wherein it stores data so that data is not omitted during the cleaning process.

2. Clear the browser cookies, temporary Internet files, passwords, and history using delete in Internet Explorer's Internet Options. Users of other browsers such as Firefox or Chrome would need to take appropriate action.

3. Locate and delete all the .dbx Outlook Express files (for Windows Mail .eml or for Outlook .pst) and the email account itself.

To perform the clean itself I used a combination of CCleaner and Eraser. It is possible to do the entire clean using Eraser alone. Both offer file wipe options.

4. Using Eraser, clean the My Documents folder and any customized folders. Repeat this for any additional users of the PC you are preparing.

Steps 5,6,7 are easy to perform. A Google search will provide easy to follow instructions.

5. Change the Owner on the General Page of System Properties to remove the name. This created a set of folders as if there were a new user.

6. Change the Computer Name if had been personal-

The Unknown Problem

By Robert Davis, Tampa PC Users Group
RobD234@gmail.com

Ever have one of those weird days where something goes wrong and you just don't know what it is or what caused it? Well, Friday the 17th was like a Friday the 13th for me. I logged onto my Google email and wanted to send a PDF file I had just scanned to my nephew's email. After attaching the file, I tried to open it to be sure it was the right thing. When I selected Open from the Google Open or Save options, my laptop went into mumble mode. McAfee virus software reported it stopped a program from creating a "Buffer Overload." Nothing worked after that except the mouse. I couldn't even get the Toolbar to come up. I did a Control-Alt-Delete and was able to shut down OK.

I started up the PC again and all looked well. I tried to open the PDF file again and zap – same thing. McAfee again claimed it stopped a program from creating a "Buffer Overload." Then nothing worked.

The technical area of PCs got away from me about when Windows replaced DOS, a long time ago. I called one of our club's technical gurus, Bob La Fave. With his assistance, I tried a Restore, but I didn't realize how long it takes to do a Restore and thought the PC was stuck again. I had to pull the battery to kill the restore. Bob suggested I bring it up in Safe Mode and do a Check Disk. The Check Disk ran and ran and ran, but I could see it was actually doing something. I told Bob I would call him if I needed more help. It checked out over 214,000 files and over 16 million clusters. It took over an hour to complete. Next per suggestion from Bob, I started a Restore again. I waited and waited for over an hour. Finally, I decided to just let it run until it busted or finished. I took my wife out to dinner leaving the Restore running. When we got home, to my surprise it had finished the Restore, and it came up normal. It was late in the evening so I decided to just shut down and do more checking tomorrow.

Saturday morning the PC came up normal again,

and I was able to open the PDF file with no problem. However, there was one final problem. McAfee Virus Software claimed I was unprotected and needed to run a full scan. But every time I started the scan, it would stop, claiming it had errors and to try again. I logged on to McAfee website. I selected their FIX option. It ran and fixed 2 of 3 problems. I tried to use the Chat mode but after waiting for about 20 minutes, decided to just download the whole thing and reinstall it. I guess they don't have free Chat on Saturday. Anyway, reinstalling the whole package fixed everything. The laptop is running fine again, thanks mostly to some great help from Bob. But what caused the problem in the first place is unknown. I just hope I don't have an unknown problem lurking in there that will come back a kill a tranquil day again. ◆

ized.

7. Remove the former user's Profile or Profiles. Repeat for additional users..

8. Clean the Recycle Bin with CCleaner and perform a defrag.

9. Use Eraser on the free space to remove remnants of previously deleted files. Defrag and Erase of unused disk space can be run unattended.

10. (Optional) Clean the Registry with CCleaner or other Registry Cleaner.

There is one limitation to using these methods rather than a complete removal of the operating system. Once Windows establishes a User it can never be completely removed. You can remove that user's data and profile but a folder with that user's name can never be removed because it is a System folder. Although empty, it will forever show in Documents and Settings. ◆

Tampa PC Users Group, Inc.
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