Bits of Blue

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

July in Tampa

Meeting

Understanding

Microsoft & DevOps

by

Blain Barton

Wednesday, July 6, 2016

[1st Wednesday - Not 2nd]

6:30 PM

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meeting Preview: Blain Barton from Microsoft will give us a look at the newest technologies for building infrastructure in the cloud from a Developer and Operations perspective.

Merle Nicholson will lead the Windows SIG for the first 30 minutes of the meeting.

Editor's Comments

By William LaMartin, Editor, Tampa PC Users Group
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Thanks to Merle Nicholson's article on Windows 10, there is very little room for anything else in the newsletter this month. And that is fine with me, since it is usually, but not always, a struggle to find enough material each month.

This July meeting is moved up one week from the usual second Wednesday to the first Wednesday of July 6

In the small amount of space Merle has left me, let me say I have done the unthinkable: Purchased an Apple iMac. Now, don't get the idea that I am going over to the dark side. This iMac is to serve a special purpose. I have decided to extend my app publishing to include iOS devices in addition to my

August Meeting: To be announced

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 June Meeting

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
Tampa PC Users Group
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The Windows Special Interest Group (SIG) opens our monthly meeting. Merle Nicholson, the SIG moderator 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 Merle demonstrated using the Windows Store and how to keep Microsoft from hijacking your local account.

The presentation was given by a long-time member, Brian Lance, on Google Maps and Google Earth. He demonstrated a lot of useful capability that just isn't obvious. Cameo by Google Earth searches businesses and routes, drag and drop way points on route, a menu to embed and share map boundaries and custom saved maps.

He demonstrated fine measurement of closed polygons in a Google map to get area in acres. Draftlogic.com has plugins: Google Maps Area Calculator tool, Send a position, and Maps Guestbook. Staticmapmaker.com is a service that generates HTML to display an imbedded map on your website. All in all, this was a very interesting and useful demonstration of the uses for Google Maps. Thanks must go to Brian for an entertaining and useful presentation. ◆

Windows and Android apps. And to do that I needed an Apple computer on which to compile the code that is created in Visual Studio using Xamarin. That was not necessary when I wanted to use Xamarin to create Android apps from my already existent Windows 10 Universal apps. Android was happy to be compiled on a windows computer. But Apple is special in this regard. Thus, I made my first Apple purchase since the mid-1980s when I would have been purchasing items for the Apple IIe I had back then. ◆

Windows 10 Priority One For New Installations

By Merle Nicholson, Secretary,
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I'm using Windows 10 successfully, but only after being satisfied that I've done all I can to change some of the behaviors through policies and settings. Let's face it, it's rough around the edges. The start menu and PC settings are a work in progress, as is Edge. Some Windows 10 settings are just strange and inexplicable, and then some policies and settings just are not in your best interest. Fortunately, there are legions of technical people out there looking for solutions for us. Here's a compilation of what I've found and implemented myself. I consider every one of these mandatory for all computers. I have implemented all of these on my own computers and others as well.

Note to readers: Instead of typing the URLs referenced in this article, go to the TPCUG.org website, and on the first web page, open this current newsletter. There you'll find that all the links in this article are live. Just click on them.

Below is a link to an article that got me inspired to write this. I don't agree with the priority, and it's not complete, but it's worth a read, and it has some excellent instructions. But be sure to read my own advice below on some of these same subjects.
http://www.itpro.co.uk/operating-systems/25802/fourteen-windows-10-problems-and-how-to-fix-them-3
and this article is similar with a different set of issues.
http://www.howtogeek.com/227827/windows-10-is-great-except-for-the-parts-that-are-terrible/

The following is in my own priority order, with a quick explanation and the best solution I've found.

Convert to Local Account from a Microsoft online account Some will certainly disagree, but I believe that setting your login account and password on your computer and then giving it to Microsoft over the Internet (daily) is an unconscionable risk. Yes there are

advantages to do that, but every reason is contrived to encourage you to violate a basic security principal. If you look at what every corporation does - many hundreds of millions of secure computers, you won't find one that does this because it's automatically turned off for Windows domain users. The initial Windows 10 installation setup assumes you want a Microsoft account, and actually obscures local account setup. Also, the Windows Store will hijack your local account if you're not careful. More on that later. Here's a good article to convert back to a local account.
http://www.howtogeek.com/230543/how-to-revert-your-windows-10-account-to-a-local-one-after-the-windows-store-hijacks-it/

I used the word "contrived" reasons to discourage local accounts. For instance, the Family Safety feature, which was a part of the "Windows Live" set of software is still there but now requires it be managed from on-line accounts and even requires an email address for each child. That's shameful and unnecessary. This was a very valuable tool to protect vulnerable children from predatory websites. PC Magazine now rates it at a very poor 2. Instead, Google search for "Best Family safety software". It appears that Net Nanny and Norton Family Premier is still prominent. In any case Microsoft is encouraging you to convert to Microsoft accounts to get something that they used to offer for free. That's a contrived reason. It's the same for Microsoft Games.

If you elect to stay with Microsoft Account sign-in, all the changes below apply, but there's more security and privacy setting that need to be done than is covered here. Start with "Settings", "Accounts", "Sync your settings". And a lot more.

Administrator Accounts If you follow my articles over several years, you will know that I advocate setting up a local Standard account for daily use and activating the Administrator account, invoking the Administrator name and password only when needed to install or make changes to the computer. Microsoft actually advocates this as well, but you have to deliberately go looking for it.

Windows 10..........Continued from page 3

Using your computer in a Standard account blocks any outside influences - ransomware, viruses, malware from installing anything on your computer. Or maybe 95% of it. Microsoft should have a wizard that helps you set up accounts and encourage every new installation to use it. Instead, they are actually making it more difficult. After years of doing this pretty much in my sleep, when it came to Windows 10 I gave up and started looking for a tutorial.

Activate the Administrator Account. Every Windows OS has a hidden Administrator account. Activate this account - it puts the name on the login screen - and give it a very good strong password. Using that account, convert your regular account to "Standard". Create separate Standard accounts for children or anyone else using the computer.

In Win 10, right click on the Start icon, select Command Prompt (admin). Enter: net user administrator /active:yes . Then set the password with: net user administrator . enter the password and then again to confirm. Here's a good article.
http://www.ghacks.net/2014/11/12/how-to-enable-the-hidden-windows-10-administrator-account/

Create a new local user account. If you try to add a new local account in Windows 10, you find as I did, it's incredibly difficult. A tip: when asked for the online Windows account name, click on the item that says you don't know it. That moves you forward, otherwise you'll never find it.
http://www.howtogeek.com/226540/how-to-create-a-new-local-user-account-in-windows-10/

System Protection, System Restore. This is the system that manages restore points so you can revert to the last good system or undo damage that an update or driver installation has caused. It's just as important now as it was in 2002 with XP. But in Windows 10 it's disabled by default. That's just astounding. But it's still there; it needs to be turned on.
http://www.howtogeek.com/237230/how-to-enable-system-restore-and-repair-system-problems-on-windows-10/

Boot into safe mode. If you think you can boot into

Safe Mode using F8 early enough - just after POST, think again. It's gone. But we can get it back. Actually you can go into safe mode in several ways but all of those ways require you to boot into Windows first, and I don't know about you, but every time I needed Safe Mode is because I can't boot into Windows. Or you can use a Rescue Disk or a Windows installation disk. Here's what it looks like.
http://www.howtogeek.com/107511/how-to-boot-into-safe-mode-on-windows-8-the-easy-way/

Add Safe Mode to the boot menu. This really works; I've done it, but I consider it technically challenging. Look at this first, but the best way is the subject after this - activating F8.
http://www.howtogeek.com/245175/how-to-add-safe-mode-to-the-windows-8-and-10-boot-menu/

Add F8 Safe mode on boot. This article was written for Windows 8, but Windows 10 is the same. This option gives you the white text menu on black screen with a lot of options. It looks identical to Windows 7. You press F8 repeatedly very early in the boot sequence. I do have one computer where this does not work, I suspect because of a dual boot system in place. So I implemented the option above this one.
http://www.howtogeek.com/164001/how-to-make-the-f8-key-work-for-safe-mode-in-windows-8/

Restart to BlueScreen. This appears on systems back to XP. If you have a serious enough hardware problem you get BSOD, Blue Screen of Death. But sometimes not. You can actually set it to automatically restart! after a System Failure and as a result, boot right back into the failure, and leave yourself confused as to the reason. This is supposed to be Unchecked, but I find it time and again on computers as checked, don't know why. I check for this on every computer I set on my workbench, perhaps 20 a year, and I always find some to change to unchecked. The setting is called "Startup and Recovery, System failure, Automatically restart"

Control Panel, System, Advanced system settings, Advanced tab, Startup and recovery is seen in the leftmost screen capture at the top of page 6. Then click the Settings button there and get what is shown in the

Internet Picture of the Month

Brexit

A screen capture from http://www.bbc.com taken at 12:59 AM Eastern Time of the page at the BBC's website displaying the current status of the British vote to leave the European Union. At that moment the exit side had prevailed. On another page at the site, they were running a live broadcast of talking heads giving their opinions on this, the majority saying that it would have dire economic consequences.

right-most screen capture at the top of page 6.

Control Updates and turn off forced updates. Windows 10 is set by default to automatically download and install all updates, then reboot. There are changes you can do that will mitigate some of this like notifying you first to reschedule a reboot.

Windows 10 Pro versions have an option to take total control of this. It's intended to be used by corporations who want to test all updates before deployment to thousands of their computers.

This following link is pretty comprehensive. It was here that I found a solution for a problem on my main
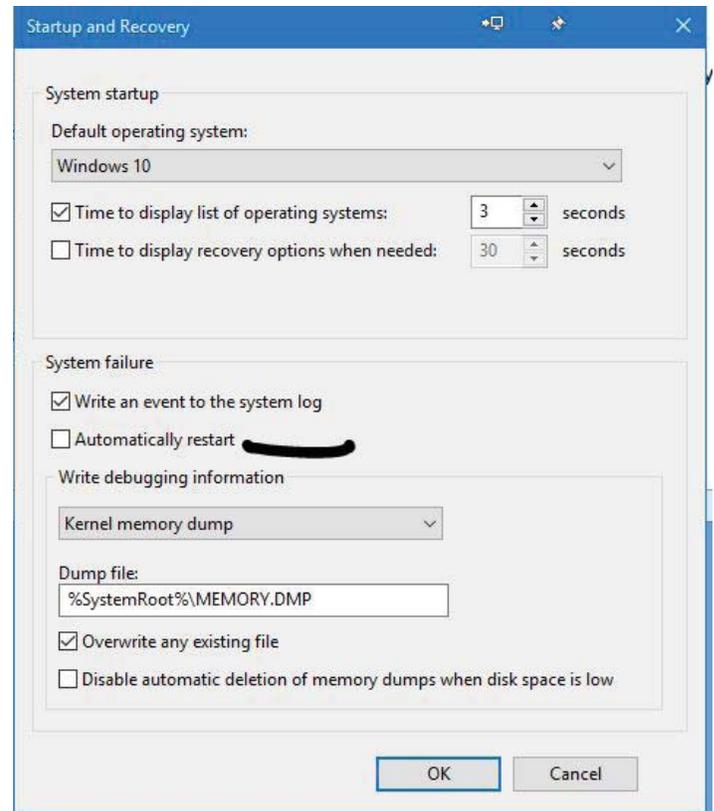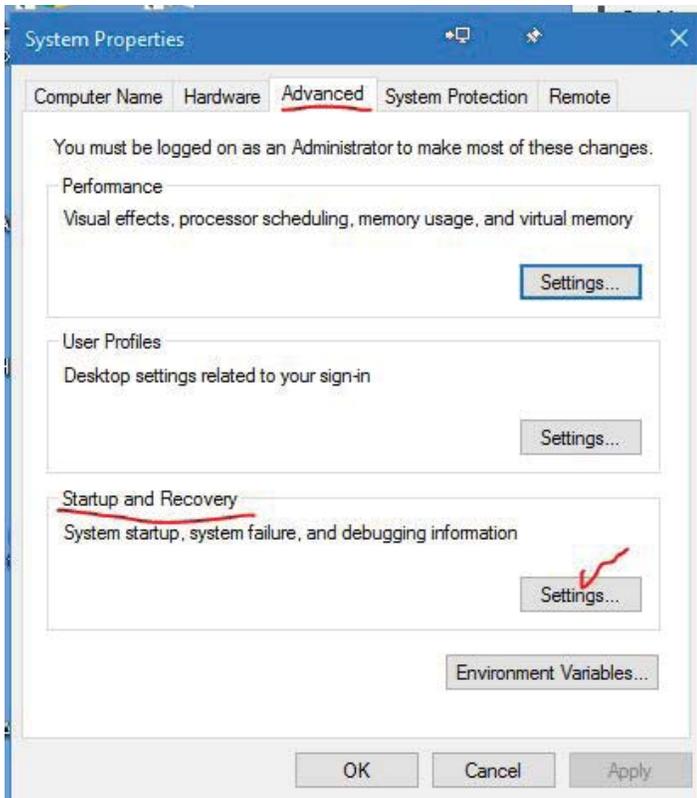
Windows 10..........Continued from page 5

desktop machine: An update that appeared every day - a printer driver - that installs fine, but doesn't go away. It installed daily for a couple of weeks. There's a downloadable Microsoft tool that troubleshoots update problems called wushowhide.diagcab. It's at https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/kb/3073930 . Look at http://www.howtogeek.com/223864/how-to-uninstall-and-block-updates-and-drivers-on-windows-10/ first. This worked for me. Standard (home) users don't have this beyond setting the reboot policy.

Prevent automatic downloading Updates For comprehensive help on controlling what you can, see: http://www.howtogeek.com/224471/how-to-prevent-windows-10-from-automatically-downloading-updates/ . OK, you may not want to mess with this and I can't blame you. But when you're in trouble, there's a way back.

Choose how updates are delivered. Incredible as it sounds, Windows 10 will use your internet connection to send updates to other PCs on your network and to PCs on the Internet to "save on bandwidth". By default, you give them permission to do so. You can

change that in settings. The quickest way to get there is type "advanced update" and click on "advanced windows update options" in the search list, then click "Choose how updates are delivered". There's an on-off button that is on by default.

Privacy There's a ton of privacy settings in PC Settings. There's the obvious "Privacy" category with 15 tabs on the left. But first go to the taskbar and click the Cortana window, then the settings in Cortana. "Search online and include web results" needs to be turned off, no question. This limits searches to your own PC, and there's no reason at all to wait until a Bing search covers the entire internet to find Windows FAX. I turn off the "suggestions, ideas, reminders, alerts" as well.

Then go to PC Settings, Personalization, tab Lock screen. Under Lock screen, change the Background dropdown to Picture or Slideshow. Windows spotlight allows advertising to your lock screen, along with "Get fun facts, tips, tricks and more … ". Turn that off too. See:

http://www.howtogeek.com/243263/how-to-disable-

ads-on-your-windows-10-lock-screen/

Then go through all of the privacy settings. Frankly, I don't see any of this is to my advantage. I just turn it all off. I'm happier.

Then while we're at it, if you're a Chrome browser user, you can set the default search engine to Google with the Chrometana extension. If you're also an Android phone or tablet user, you have about a hundred reasons to switch to Chrome. I find Edge to be a work in progress, and have seen no reason to use it. Indeed, there's one website that I use often for a client that doesn't even appear in Edge. I understand that the late June Windows 10 "Anniversary" update will improve Edge. Most of all, I can't see me using and maintaining more than one browser, so goodbye IE and Edge.

WiFi Sense If you're using a computer with wireless like all notebooks and tablets do, WiFi Sense connects you to suggested WiFi hotspots that your contacts share with you. And you with them. You must be signed in to a Microsoft account. Of course there's very little you can do in the way of security, and that makes just no sense at all. I've read an article lately that the Windows 10 Anniversary update to Window 10 is going to remove this "feature". In the meantime it needs to be disabled. I have read that it is enabled by default. In PC Settings, Network and Internet, WiFi tab, select "Manage WiFi settings", "Connect to suggested open hotspots" and "Connect to networks shared by my contacts". In "Advanced Options", turn "Metered Connections" off as well. This probably has no real impact, but it should not download updates to your notebook when your Wireless is 3G/4G.
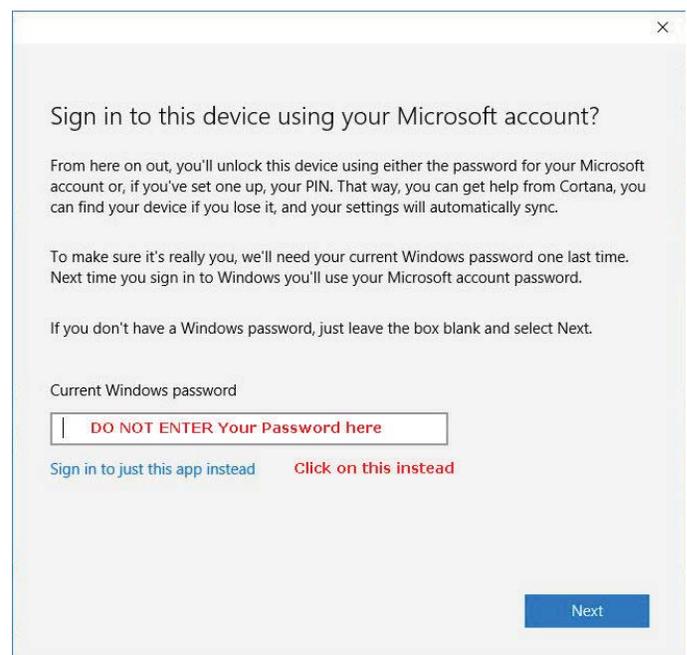
And speaking of 3G/4G, instead of connecting to unknown WiFi networks in public places, learn to use your cellphone's hotspot feature and connect to that for your travelling notebook needs. Obviously it should be used for essential purposes only, but if you have purchased a data plan that will allow streaming video to your phone, it may as well be on a notebook screen.

Windows Store You can log in to your Microsoft ac-

count for just the Microsoft Store without having your local login account hijacked (converted to a Microsoft account). If you're careful.

While you're logged onto your computer using your local account and you want to install your first app from the store, your local account is in jeopardy of being hijacked and converted to a Microsoft account. When you use the store for the first time on your computer and for your first app download, it asks for your Microsoft login and password and even offers to create an account. It offers a confusing explanation as to why it needs your Microsoft account password a second time, but believe me, this is where you can go wrong. Underneath that password box is a text **"Sign in to just this app instead"** click this; do not enter your password. You'll find you can use the Microsoft Store with no more nags for account and password, and your local login account will stay intact. The request for the second password says that the next time you log onto your computer you will need this password. And they're right. The login will be changed as well. Bad Microsoft.
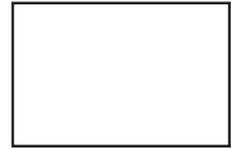
http://lifehacker.com/install-windows-10-store-apps-without-switching-to-a-mi-1723075610
and http://betanews.com/2015/08/03/you-dont-need-to-use-a-microsoft-account-to-download-apps-from-window-10s-store/

☐ *Member: Your membership is up for renewal*
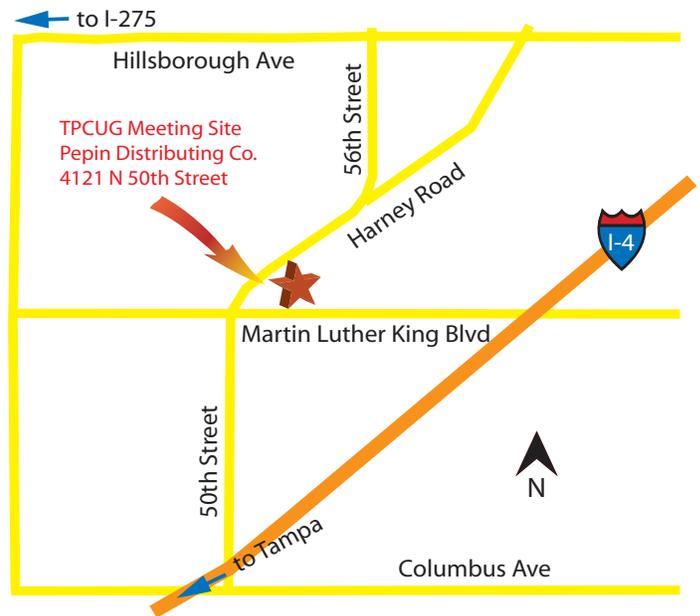
Lock Screen I'm not sure why they call it the "Lock Screen", when you first power Windows 10 up, the first screen is just a picture that you have to click through to log on. This is a just a nuisance in my opinion. If you're interested in eliminating this and booting to the login screen it takes some skill editing the registry:

http://www.howtogeek.com/134620/how-to-disable-the-lock-screen-on-windows-8-without-using-group-policy/

Other, not urgent but important stuff

- Classic Shell menu system. http://classicshell.net
- Windows 7 games http://winaero.com/blog/get-windows-7-games-for-windows-10/
- Vista desktop gadgets http://8gadgetpack.net/
- Windows Media Center http://betanews.com/2015/09/09/how-to-install-windows-media-center-on-windows-10/
- Turn off or uninstall OneDrive https://support.office.com/en-US/article/Turn-off-or-uninstall-One-Drive-f32a17ce-3336-40fe-9c38-6efb09f944b0
- Eight ways to customize the Windows 10 Start Menu http://www.howtogeek.com/197836/8-ways-to-customize-the-windows-10-start-menu/
- Trouble signing into Windows Store http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows-8/why-sign-in-windows-store ◆

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