

The

Computer Link

January 2012

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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for **NEXT ISSUE**,
One week after meeting

Windows 7 - Hints, Tidbits and Commentary

Brian Riley, Vice President of the NNCUG, was the featured speaker at the December 17 General Meeting. He spoke to us about the features of Windows 7 and some of the neat things that one can find in this Microsoft operating system. Brian has many years of experience in IT and as a Web site designer.

Brian indicated that **Win 7 is basically Microsoft Vista ideas that actually work.**

He indicated that Win 7 is one of the few operating systems that Microsoft got right the first time.

The first question is "**what do I need to run Windows 7**"? A dual core processor, at least 4 gigabytes (GB) of RAM, a video card with 512 or more megabytes (MB) of ram, 250 GB or larger hard drive is what Brian recommends. Microsoft lists minimum specifications that are lower (1 to 2 GB of RAM, 16GB available disk space, 1 GHz or faster processor). At that level, you don't "run Windows 7; like that, you

crawl it"! There are four different editions of Win 7 commonly available to home users, beginning with the basic Starter edition, followed by Home Premium, Professional, and the "highest" level - Windows 7 Ultimate.

Brian indicated that Home Premium is somewhat limited, and that Ultimate is probably not worth the extra cost for home users. **If you are going to upgrade, Windows 7 Professional is probably the best choice.** The Microsoft web site describes various Windows products, and it will walk you through the operating system options and give a recommendation.

Can I just still use XP? If you are not doing heavy graphics work and are able to upgrade your machine to at least 2GB of RAM at a reasonable price, the answer is yes. However, be advised that Microsoft plans to discontinue the currently limited support for XP in 2014. The company is not continuing



Brian Riley

Photo by Alan Christensen

browser support for XP - Internet Explorer 9 will not work with XP. Over time you will be limited to third party browsers to view web-sites. In addition, older equipment such as scanners that run fine on XP may not work with Win 7 due to the lack of supporting drivers.

So why is now the time to upgrade to Win 7? The hardware has caught up with the operating system. 1. Current standard video cards support Win 7 capabilities. 2. Memory prices have come down. You can now put 24GB of RAM in a computer for \$135. 3. While XP may support multiprocessing, it has problems doing so.

What does multiprocessing do for me? A multi-core processor can run several processes at once to do program instructions. This spreads out the load and increases overall speed.

32 vs. 64 bit versions of Win 7? Microsoft has been supporting 64 bit computing since XP. However, due to hardware considerations and a relative lack of vendor support, 64 bit computing has not gotten widespread usage – until Win 7. At this point many software packages are written in 64 bit, particularly graphics intensive ones. Some of them, like Adobe CS5 + are **ONLY** written in 64 bit (CS stands for Creative Suite).

Why choose 64 bit? 32 bit operating systems are limited to 4GB Ram – that is all they can address. (That is why the largest file on a FAT 32 disk is 4GB, no matter how large the hard drive. NTFS file systems do not have this limitation.) With graphics applications, considering that a picture can take up 24MB or more, 4GB of memory runs out of space pretty rapidly.

Cons of 64 bit? Windows 7 64 bit can support 64 bit and 32 bit processing, but not 16 bit. If you are using legacy software that is 16 bit, you cannot use it on a 64 bit system. Windows 7 32 bit operating systems can support 32 bit and 16 bit processing, but cannot use 64 bit and there is the 4GB memory size limit. There is also a problem with using legacy devices (printers, scanners and other peripherals) due to lack of drivers.

So what's new and cool with Win7? Windows 7 is designed to help you streamline your workflow. It puts programs you commonly use right where you can access them. You can define your own libraries and customize as you want. You can set up a library and then fill it with folders that you can monitor from one place. It is much better at finding things it needs on the Internet, such as updates and drivers, and at self-repair. There are a number of useful new utilities such as the Snipping tool. It can be used to make a full or partial screen shot and place it in a document. It replaces the old print screen function. In practice it is a cool tool but is a pain to access. Another new approach is Pinning programs that allow one to pin a program to the Start Menu or to the Taskbar. Brian also noted that finding files is easier in Win 7 by use of Libraries and the Search function.

Finally, any neat Odds and Ends? YES! Brian then showed the group some interesting extras. Windows 7 has a **Magnifier** found in Accessories>Accessibility that makes it easier to see items on the screen. Other odds and ends include a **Calculator** with scientific and programming functions (lacking in earlier versions of Windows), and an assortment of **Gadgets**. A fun and convenient item is the Sticky note. It looks and acts like a “post-it”, that you can use to leave notes or short bits of information on the display. However, it is not a formal document. When you turn off the computer, it disappears. The **Paint** program has been enhanced, but Brian feels it is still not the best. He also noted that most gadgets use the Internet and can slow down your computer if you have a slow Internet connection.

Questions? What would software cost to upgrade to a Windows 7 operating system? Probably around \$175 to \$200 for the Win 7 Professional UPGRADE version. How will I know if my current programs can run on Windows 7? The Microsoft web site has a page where one can check to see if your software can run with Windows 7.

Our thanks to Brian for this overview of Windows 7, and for all of his helpful hints.

Anne Moss

Nominations for NNCUG Officers

It is time to nominate candidates for NNCUG officer positions for 2012-2013. Positions to be filled are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Member-at-Large.

The **Nominating Committee** consists of: **BJ McMillan**, Chair, (804) 580-8666, **Alan Christensen**, (804) 438-4828, and **Phil Allan**, (804) 776-6699.

If you have a nominee for any of these offices, please provide the name to one of the Nominating Committee members. Nominations also will be accepted from the floor at the January 21, and February 18, 2012, meetings.

The **election** will be held at the **March 19, meeting** at Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury.

Ed.

Collectables and the Internet

At the next Membership meeting, **David McDaniels, Buyer for "50 East Church Street"**, will describe how he combines his knowledge of collectable items and the Internet to find specific details on the items brought to his shop.

David is kind enough to encourage members to **bring ONE item to the meeting** on which they would like to get information.

Please join us at the next Membership Meeting on Saturday, January 21, at Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury. Coffee and donuts available at 09:30 am, and the meeting starts at 10:00.

ED.

Google Earth for Genealogists

Rob Mink, Proprietor and Partner of Northern Neck Computer Consultants LLC., will **demonstrate how to use Google Earth to locate your ancestral homes.** Using geographic information found in Deeds and addresses from other sources may be marked on historical maps, which can then be overlaid on modern Google maps.

Rob will also show how to create maps reflecting ancestral migration routes. In addition, he will discuss how to use an API key to imbed Google maps in a web page and other add-ons to enhance your maps.

Please join us at the next **Genealogy SIG meeting on Thursday, January 12, 2012**, at 1:00 p.m., Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury, Irvington.

Ann Thompson

December Photo SIG

Members of the Photo SIG were encouraged to explore the concept of "Ghosts" for December. This image was contributed by Linda Boyatzies.



Please go to the NNCUG web site to see what Linda and Marianne Miller did with this theme.

ED.

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Password Tracking – Windows and Mobiles

*By Merle Nicholson, Secretary, Tampa PC Users Group, FL
September 2011 issue, Bits of Blue
www.tpcug.org
merle (at) merlenicholson.com*

Tracking passwords has always been a problem for me. Years ago I started a password Document to track everything, and, while it worked, it left a great deal to be desired. The problem was much larger than just username and password. I needed to save the URL to log in to websites. I needed to track expiration dates for subscriptions. I needed key codes for software. I have five different logins with Microsoft. Yes, I could reuse some of those, using the same login and password, but not always. For instance, sometimes your login is the same as your email address, but most times not. Making it more complicated, different sites have different login and password requirements.

And Verizon! I have SIX different logins with Verizon: Call Assistant, Verizon Central, Verizon FIOS, Verizon Mail Account, Verizon Mail and Verizon Wireless.

So I developed some “password rules” for myself. I decided that if I could remember more than just a couple of passwords, it was because 1) I had to reuse them (a bad thing) and 2) they were too simple. So something had to go. I decided I need really good passwords and I couldn't handle it in my head.

One of my sons suggested the KeePassX database he'd been using for a while, and I started using it sparingly, slowly embracing its features as I got used to it.

The program is maintained professionally and is available free of charge. You can look at the program at <http://www.Keepassx.org/> to see if this will suit your own needs. Of particular interest is the variety of devices that it works on. You won't see any mobile versions at the website, but each of the mobile devices has a version available from its own app store. I use the Android version on my Motorola Droid X.

The program uses an encrypted database, and I guess ideally there should be a way to automatically update or synchronize be-

tween devices. I own several computers and my Droid, and I need the database on all of them. I could use Microsoft Live Mesh or Dropbox or something like that for synchronization, but I dislike the idea of my password database being in the “cloud.” So for now I use a flash drive to copy the database file to my computers, and I connect my Droid to my base computer via USB and drag and drop the file.

I've found that, in practice, I don't have to refresh the files very often. None but the one on my main computer is up to date at any one time, but it never seems to matter.

What is so useful about this program is that I can store any useful information along with the URL and the logon and the password. For instance, my Amazon/Kindle account logon has the names and Kindle email addresses of two Kindles, two Droids (smart phones) and two PCs. It's a logical place to keep all this stuff. Right now I count 82 database entries, and I'm very careful to keep it trimmed of anything not useful. It has a configurable password generator and the ability to look at the password when you want to instead of a line of *****.

I got an email to my Droid with a notification of an event on the TPCUG forum before I would even think of firing up my main computer. I needed to log on using a regular account on the forum. The peculiarities of a smart phone with just an on-screen keyboard that needed a complex login and password should have been just too daunting. But on the Android version of KeePassX, when you select the group (TPCUG) and title (User Logon), the database puts two little buttons in the notification strip at the top of the screen. So when you open the browser to the site, you just poke the login notifier, then poke and hold on the login box and a paste menu appears that you poke and it's pasted in place. Then the same for the password and I was in and out in seconds.

What a deal, and **it's free. There are versions for Linux, Mac OSX, Windows, iPhone, PocketPC, Blackberry and Android.** And if you think you don't need one, your passwords are too simple and you're using the same one for everything. [Http://www.Keepassx.org](http://www.Keepassx.org).

December 17 Meeting Notes

TREASURER'S REPORT: 104 members.
Treasury Balance: \$3,435.11.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT: **Chris Christensen** told us of two personnel changes. **Betty Lehman** has recruited **David Mower** to replace her as the NNCUG **Webmaster**. He brings a professional background in web site management. He will be looking at the web site and redoing it to be even more user friendly. **Jim Sapione** has asked to retire from his post as **PhotoSIG** leader. After ten years of leadership he will still serve in an "emeritus" role. The group is exploring possible new formats, including the possibility of shared/rotating leadership.

SIG REPORTS:

PHOTOGRAPHY: The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the Lancaster County library in Kilmarnock. Anyone with an interest in photography regardless of skill level is invited. The group uses Photoshop Elements 7 (however, other versions are useable). If you have a

laptop, bring it and join in an interactive experience. Right now they are working on having a series of programs ready, with the possibility of a different leader for each topic. **B.J. McMillan** added that that SIG photos will be displayed at the Lancaster Community Library during February.

GENEALOGY: **Ann Thompson** reminds us that the group meets at 1p.m. on the second Thursday of every other month at RWC. The next meeting is January 12. **Rob Mink** will demonstrate how to use Google Earth to locate your ancestral homes as well as other features.

NEWSLETTER: **Bruce Mc Millan**, editor of *The Computer Link* has been exploring ways to reduce mailing and printing costs for the newsletter which consumes approximately 65 percent of the NNCUG budget. Switching to e-mail distribution for those who request it has lowered the number of copies that need to be mailed out from about 85 to 12 (saving approximately \$32 a month). Bruce estimates that costs can be lowered an additional 60 percent by changing printing methods.

Membership Report - December 2011

Welcome - Rob Mink

RENEW January 2012 - John Bowles, Carol Hallett, Fred N. Lee, Anne Moss, Bill Pregnall, Barbara Shore, Barbara Touchette, George Van Sant.

RENEW December 2011 - Linda Enders-Bailey, Peter Kane.

Membership dues are \$20 annually. Please send to:
George Cadmus, Treasurer, NNCUG, 150 Pine Drive,
White Stone VA 22578

SPEAKER: **Brian Riley**, Vice President of NNCUG, presented an overview of Windows 7, including the basics, opinions and nifty things you can find in the program.

RAFFLE WINNERS: **Roger Fortin** – SanDisk flash drive and a Case Logic 6 flash drive case; **Bruce McMillan** – Adobe Photoshop Elements 10; **Brian Riley** – Barnes and Noble Nook E-Reader; and **Doris Lundegard** - key chain/picture holder.

Anne Moss

The Computer Link

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NNCUG Meeting Dates

NNCUG GENERAL MEETING
Third Saturday, 10:00 a.m.

Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room

BEGINNERS SIG

*Meets three times a year. Those interested, contact
B.J. McMillan at 580-8666*

GENEALOGY SIG

*Meets bi-monthly, 2nd Thursday, 1:00 p.m.—RW-C
Contact Ann Thompson at athompson@kaballero.com
to get on the mail list for announcements.*

PHOTOSHOP SIG

*Second Tuesday, every month, 9:30 a.m.
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831
or message Bird@kaballero.com*



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Coming Attractions

*Membership - Jan 21, Collectables & Internet, D. McDaniels
Genealogy - Jan 12, Google Earth & Genealogists, R. Mink
Photo SIG - Jan 10, 09:30 am, Lancaster Community Library*