



SVECC Newsletter

Sunland Village East Computer Club

September 2010

Volume 7 Issue 9

Inside this issue:

XP Long Haul	2
XP Long Haul	3
XP Long Haul	4
Internet Scams	5
Computer Help	6
Calendar	7
Exit laughing	8

Monthly Reminders:

- Run Disk Cleanup
- Run CC Cleaner
- Defrag your hard drive
- Manually Update Windows
- Update Super Anti-spyware
- Run your Anti-virus

Meetings

resume

September

13th

Downloading a Program

Many, maybe even most of the programs you will install are for sale in stores, but you also can download many programs online.

To download a program, go to the company's Web site and click the appropriate link.

Usually software is available under a Software, or Downloads link.

Follow the instructions on-screen to download the software. If you pay by credit card be sure the site is secure and look for a little padlock icon at the bottom of your browser window) before you fill in the re-

quired fields (usually noted with asterisks [*]) and follow the instructions to complete your order.

Begin the download by clicking the program's download link.



The exact appearance and location of this link varies from site to site.

When the File Download dialog box appears, click Save. This is generally safer than clicking

Open to launch a file automatically after download. In the Save As dia-

log box, click the down arrow next to the Save In drop-down menu and click to select a location for the downloaded file.

Your My Documents folder may be a good location in which to store downloaded files.

Click the Save button to begin the file download.

Once the download is complete, click the Open Folder button to see the directory in which you saved the file.

Write down your file information when you first do these types of downloads so that you will remember later.

XP for the long haul



Preparing Windows XP for the long haul

Microsoft's support for Windows XP may be fading, but a loyal horde of XP users plans to stick with this venerable OS for as long as possible.

If that's your long-term goal, there are a number of steps you can take now to ensure a finely tuned XP system for months — possibly years — to come.

Windows XP is almost a decade old, which in both computing and dog years makes it very long in the tooth.

Microsoft has officially dropped support and security updates for all XP versions through Service Pack 2. The only version of 32-bit XP that still qualifies for Microsoft's security patches and major bug-fixes is the Service Pack 3 edition. XP has had a long and excellent run, but SP3 is the end of the line.

That said, XP is *not* dead, and it's still the best OS for older hardware designed with XP in mind. (I have XP on several of my older systems.)

If you're still using an XP

box by choice (or necessity), there's lots you can do to keep things humming along until you eventually move to new hardware — which will almost assuredly come with the excellent Windows 7 already installed.

Here are some key steps you can take to get — and keep — your XP system running great! And if you move to Windows 7 (or are also running Vista machines), many of these techniques can also help you.

Start with a thorough XP system checkup

► **Check the hardware.** Hardware? Yes! No operating system can be better than the hardware on which it's installed, and older systems are prone to age-related problems. One often-overlooked problem is dust buildup, which can cause chips and drives to overheat and malfunction. These hardware errors can masquerade as software problems, causing you to waste time troubleshooting the wrong thing.

► **Check your hard drive's "physical" health.** Most new and XP-era drives are equipped with Self-Monitoring, Analysis and Reporting Technology, also known as SMART reporting. SMART data is

stored within the hard drive itself and can often alert you to impending problems before they get serious.

It's easy to check the SMART data. Two tools I like are PassMark's Disk-Checkup (<http://www.passmark.com/products/diskcheckup.htm>) and Active@ Disk-MonitorFree (<http://www.disk-monitor.com/download.html>). Both programs are free for personal use and also come in commercial versions for organizations.

► **Check your hard drive's "logical" health.** Run **chkdsk.exe** to check the integrity of your hard drive's files and to repair any errors.

Click Start and Run, then type **chkdsk c: /f** into the Run dialog box. Hit OK.

Chkdsk may tell you that it can't check the drive because the drive is in use. It will then offer to check the drive at reboot. Type **Y** (yes) and hit the Enter key.

Repeat for all drives/partitions on your system.

► **Correct driver errors now, while you can.** Just as Microsoft is providing less support for XP, third-party vendors

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XP for the long haul

are withdrawing support for older hardware. Someday soon, you may discover that the drivers you need are no longer available. Fix problems now!

Boot XP and right-click My Computer. Select Properties, Hardware, then Device Manager. (Or, click Control Panel/System/Hardware/Device Manager.) Click View and select **Show hidden devices** to make sure you're seeing everything.

Correct any problem indicated by a yellow exclamation mark or a red X; in most cases, you should get correct or updated drivers from the hardware vendor's site.

It might also be wise to save copies of any special drivers your systems needs; burn 'em to a CD or DVD, and tuck the disc away in a safe place.

Review and update your PC's security system

► **Patch and update XP and apps.** Starting with Windows Update, make sure your operating system is fully up-to-date with all necessary patches, fixes, and updates. Do the same for all your non-Microsoft software, visiting the vendor sites to download any new updates and patches for your applications and

utilities

► **Verify system security.** Regardless of the antivirus and anti-malware tool(s) you're using, visit a competing vendor's site and run their free **live** or online scan to verify that nothing slipped past your usual defenses.

Next, check that your firewall is providing the protection it should. There are many good, free, online firewall-test sites, such as [Hackerwatch](#), Gibson Research [ShieldSUP](#), and [AuditMyPC](#).

Give your computer a thorough file cleaning

► **Take out the trash — all of it.** Needless file clutter makes a system harder to use and slower to operate. For example, AV scans and Windows' indexing both take longer when they have many junk files to process.

Start by deleting old **\$NtUninstall{xxx}\$** files from XP's **C:\Windows** folder; these files can occupy a shocking amount of space! You need these files only when a Windows Update fails and you (or the OS) have to roll back your system. If your system is working fine, **\$NtUninstall** files serve no purpose.

Next, wade through your hard drive, folder by folder, making sure files are

where they're supposed to be and that you're not storing needless duplicates or other useless files.

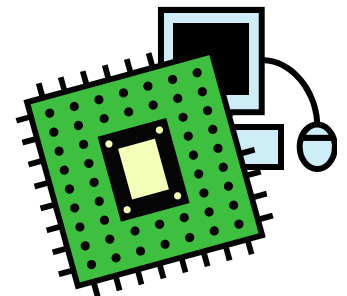
Next, uninstall obsolete or unused software.

Finally, use a tool such as Piriform's free CCleaner to rid your drive of useless junk files and broken or obsolete Registry data.

► **Rein in XP's three worst space-hogs.** System Restore, the Recycle Bin, and browser caches are like black holes for data, and your system can run better if you limit their voracious appetites.

System Restore is at best a limited recovery tool, so I don't feel it's worthwhile to devote vast amounts of disk space to it.

Windows' default Recycle Bin can consume hundreds of gigabytes on a large drive. Pare this down to a reasonable size by right-clicking the Recycle Bin and selecting Properties. Reduce the size of the Recycle Bin to a smaller percentage of the total disk space. (Click the disk tab — e.g., Local Disk (C:) — to determine its reserved Recycle Bin space in gigabytes.) I set it to around 500 MB (0.5GB) on large disks and 250MB (0.25GB) on smaller ones.



Rein in XP's three worst space-hogs. System Restore, the Recycle Bin, and browser caches are like black holes for data, and your system can run better if you limit their voracious appetites.



XP for the long haul



To reduce *Internet Explorer's* cache size, click Tools and Internet Options. Then, under the Browsing History section, click Settings and adjust the cache size downward to, say, 50MB.

For *Firefox*, click Tools/Options and then click Advanced. Under the Network tab, look for the settings box in the Offline Storage section.

Chrome's cache-size adjustment uses the command line, as described on a Chrome Help forum.

► **Defrag.** Once your disk is rid of all unnecessary files and is organized the way you want, run your defragmentation tool to reorder your files for optimal performance. If your disk was badly fragmented, it may take several iterations of defragging to achieve maximum benefit.

Use disk imaging to preserve your new setup

Once you've worked through all the above,

your XP system should be lean, clean, defragged, and fully up-to-date. Wouldn't it be great if you could somehow preserve your PC's current software state so that, should you ever need to in the future, you can bring it back to this nearly perfect condition in just minutes?

You can! Use a **disk imaging tool** to create a perfect, complete, working copy of your current setup. You'll never again have to rebuild your system and reinstall all your software from scratch!

XP requires third-party disk-imaging software (Win7 has it built in) such as Acronis' U.S. \$30 True Image.

There's plenty of free disk imaging software available, too. For example, see Freebyte's titled "Free disk image software;" TheFreeCountry's of "Free hard disk and partition imaging and backup software;" or OptimizingPC's "Create free

bootable Windows XP image disk."

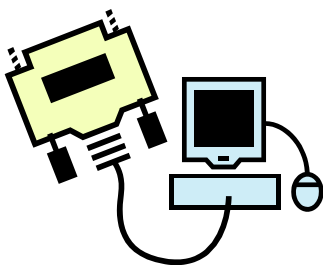
Run through the above steps once or twice a year to keep your system in tip-top shape, and make a fresh disk image from time to time — especially if you make any significant changes to your hardware or software. Store your disk images in a safe place (off the hard drive), such as on CDs or DVDs stored away from your PC.

With this kind of routine maintenance, your XP system will most likely run well for as long as you need it. And, should the worst (major crash, hard drive failure, etc.) happen, you can use your disk images to rapidly restore your system to the near-perfect state you just created.

You're now set for the long haul!

Snip It Good: When you want to clip out a piece of your Desktop and send it to someone, forget the hassle of Print Screen and cropping in an image editor. The Snipping Tool built into Windows 7 and Windows Vista offers this time-saving functionality straight from the OS (operating system). Click Start, select All Programs, Accessories, and Snipping Tool. The Snipping Tool comes up as a small window you can just drop into a corner of your screen. The pull-down menu alongside the New button lets you pick from creating snips from a free-form pen, rectangular mouse drag, the active window, or the entire screen. Once you make the snip, the graphic comes up in the Snipping Tool editor, where you can add pen and highlighter markups. Finally, you can save snips in JPEG (Joint Photographic Experts Group), GIF (Graphics Interchange Format), PNG (Portable Network Graphics), or HTML (Hypertext Markup Language) formats, or copy and paste them out of the editor into whatever application you like.

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Debunking Internet Scams, Hoaxes, and Urban Legends

Here's a list of outstanding sites to check out things that seem a little iffy, too good to be true, or say "send this to everyone you know!".

Internet scams, hoaxes and urban legends take many forms so it's good to have a few places you can go to see if something is true or not.

[snopes.com: Urban Legends Reference Pages](#)

Launched in 1995, snopes.com is one of the first (and best, in my opinion) sites to target this growing area of interest and usually the first place I go to check on something.

[TruthOrFiction.com](#) is another reliable site with the top 20 stories

on TruthOrFiction.com in the last hour being a good way to keep an eye on the latest items making the rounds.

[About.com: Current Internet Hoaxes, Email Rumors & Urban Legends](#)

The about.com page on current internet hoaxes, email rumors & urban legends has a short but good list of items and includes a FAQ that defines the differences between a hoax, a rumor and an urban legend.

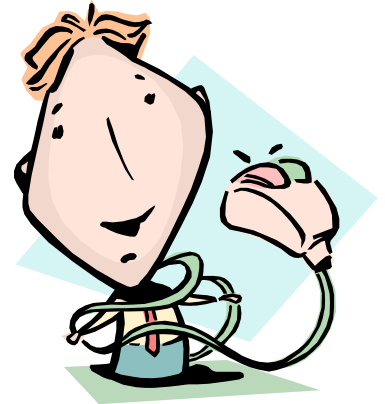
[UrbanMyths.com: Urban Myths, Legends, Hoaxes and Rumors: Debunk Your Life](#)
urbanmyths.com has a wide focus with good content in an easy to read format.

["Scambusters.org -](#)

[Internet Scams, Identity Theft, and Urban Legends: Are You at Risk?](#)" Another excellent site that cover not only myths, scams, and hoaxes, but phishing, ID theft, and credit card fraud. Their [email scams](#) page keeps on top of most recent items making the rounds.

The next time someone sends you email exclaiming "send this to everyone you know!" you know where to check it out.

Better yet never forward any of this junk, the odds of you being the first to hear these things is slim and none. Therefore it serves no useful purpose to have you forward them.



The next time someone sends you email exclaiming "send this to everyone you know!" you know where to check it out.

Computer Vocabulary

Icon: A graphic symbol (usually a simple picture) that represents a program, command or data file that is activated by a mouse click.

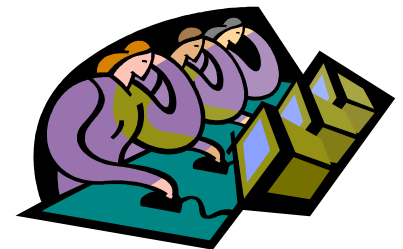
Shortcut Icon: An icon or file that serves only to point towards another file, making the opening of that file quicker.

Documents Folder: The typical location on a Windows Vista Computer where an individual user can store his own documents and other files.

File: A set of related information on a computer that is assigned a unique name.

Folder: A file that contains other folders and files for the purpose of organization.

Drag: Dragging refers to moving an object on screen by selecting the object with the left mouse button and whilst keeping the mouse button pressed moving the object to another part of the screen. When you release the mouse button the object will be dropped and will remain at that position.





911 Call to help group

What it costs elsewhere

Geek Squad in home call \$149.00 per hour

Serving Online Seniors in home call \$85.00 per hour

On line help \$79.95 subscription + \$24.95 per month

a gratuity to your SVECC helper is recommended

Name _____ Phone _____

Address _____

Brief problem description

Computer Help Group

Group Leader Joe Zagar

Joe Zagar	480-373-9373	all systems and programs
Levern Swensen	480.986-5997	Hardware Installation

September 2010

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13 <i>Computer Club</i>	14 <i>Patch Tuesday</i>	15	16	17	18
19	20 <i>Computer Club</i>	21	22	23	24	25
26	27 <i>Computer Club</i>	28	29	30		

Computer Tips Windows 7

Windows 7 'pins' programs to the Taskbar (at the bottom) instead of the Quick Launch Bar that was common in Windows XP. Floating the mouse over any of the icons will show you how many windows are open for each program, but did you know that Windows 7 added Jump Lists to these icons?

Each application has various tasks that you can access without having to reopen it by simply right-clicking on each one.

For instance, media programs such as iTunes or Media Player will show recently or frequently played songs or Outlook will allow you to add new messages, calendar events, etc. with the mighty right-click!



SVECC

Check us out at svecc.com

President
Delores Bruno

Sunland Village East Computer Club

Founded for the Residents of Sunland Village East

Mission: To help each other learn about Computers
Membership is open to all residents of SVE
Dues are \$20.00 per Year
Due October 1st



The things you really wanted to know

SVECC

Check us out at svecc.com

People helping
People

- * The largest cell in the human body is the female egg
- * The smallest cell in the human body is the male sperm
- * A full bladder is roughly the size of a soft ball
- * It takes food seven seconds to get from your mouth to your stomach
- * One human hair can support 3kg
- * Human thighbones are stronger than concrete
- * The attachment of human muscles to skin is what causes dimples
- * A woman's heart beats faster than a man's
- * If the average male never shaved, his beard would be 13 feet long when he died
- * Men with hairless chests are more likely to get cirrhosis of the liver than men with hair
- * There are about one trillion bacteria on each of your feet
- * Side by side, 2000 cells from the human body could cover about one square inch
- * Women blink twice as much as men
- * The average person's skin weighs twice as much as their brain
- * When you are looking at someone you love, your pupils dilate
- * ...They do the same when you are looking at someone you hate
- * It takes twice as long to lose new muscle if you stop working out than it did to gain it
- * You're ears secrete more earwax when you are afraid than when you aren't
- * Your body uses 300 muscles to balance itself when you are standing still