INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Next Meeting
Wednesday 2nd December 2007
Pizza Night
(Doesn't it come round quickly??)
Judy Hall will talk on Email & Internet experience in Europe

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Ron's Ramblings

SHORT AND SWEET

MY COMPUTER HAS BEEN DOWN FOR SEVERAL DAYS

SO

WYSIWYG

RON BAKER

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2007

FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

With the end of the year 2007 rapidly approaching this month's editorial will be devoted to a timetable of events that will take place over the next couple of months.

Friday November 30— the monthly OPEN meeting is being brought forward to this day due to our Christmas luncheon being held on December 5, which would have been the scheduled date for the meeting.

Wednesday, December 5 at 10 am. The final tutors meeting for 2007 will be held. There will be some changes to our program in 2008 so it is important that tutors attend to discuss our plans for next year.

Wednesday, December 5 at 12 noon our well-publicised Christmas Luncheon will be held at the Country Club Links room. It is suggested that Members meet at OPEN after 11 am to share transport to the Casino.

Wednesday, December 5 at 7 pm will be the break-up function for the Launceston Computer Group with a Pizza Night being held.

Friday December 14th The final class for the year will be held from 10 am to 12 noon.

Friday December 21 at 10 am The Friday morning class will be holding a break-up morning tea (see Rob's notice in the VICTOR column).

(continued in next column)

Monday, January 7 "Summer School" starts! Some of the tutor group have elected to conduct classes on Mondays, Thursdays and Friday mornings. If you wish to continue your computer studies over the break or if you need to ask a question or two these classes may be of assistance. Please contact a tutor before December 14 for more details.

Monday, January 28 Will see our full class program resume for 2008. Make sure to book your class spot' If you don't intend continuing classes in 2008 please let us know so that other members have an opportunity to participate.

Wednesday, February 6, 2008 OPEN monthly meeting at 1.00 pm and
Launceston Computer Group Annual General Meeting at 7.30 pm

OPEN MONTHLY MEETING
CHANGE OF DATE

The December meeting will be held on Friday November 30th at 1 pm.

This is your opportunity to provide some suggestions on how the club should operate.

The committee is always on the look-out for members to lend a hand with the many 'behind the scenes' tasks that have to be done to keep the club running smoothly.

The OPEN Newsletter is part of the Launceston Computer Group's publication "Newstream".

"Newstream" is distributed by E-mail each month, or alternatively can be viewed or copied as a PDF document at OPEN.
[*The LCG web-site will available early in mid-October*]
The next newsletter will be February 2008

CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON 2007

A buffet lunch will be held at the "Links" at the Country Club Casino on

WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 5TH AT 12 NOON

The cost is $20 per person and prepaid booking should made at OPEN before November 27th.

Launceston Computer Group
Monthly Workshop
Wednesday December 5th 7.30 pm

Judy Hall will give a talk on her experiences with e-mailing and other computer topics that arose during her trip to Europe earlier this year.
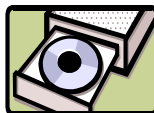
After that the LCG will wind up 2007 with the traditional Pizza Evening.

All members are welcome and if you weren't able to make it to the OPEN Christmas Luncheon this may be your opportunity for a final social get-together for the year.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2007

Launceston Computer Group
SOFTWARE LIBRARY
Dated 26th November 2007

DISK 2000 - Your Library on Disk

Disk 2000 is now available. The change from a floppy disk to a CD has enabled us to include much more in the way of games, information and utilities. Existing members can upgrade to the new CD version for just $1.50 . Ask at the club or contact Judy via the e-mail address shown below. This disk is free of charge to all new members.

AVAILABILITY OF LIBRARY

At present the Shareware Library is only available during the club's opening hours.

Speak to one of the tutors at the venue -
Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Road, South L'ton.

Email: opencomputingtas@hotmail.com

OTHER CLUB RESOURCES

In addition to the 'physical' library OPEN and VICTOR may be able to provide members with a variety of freeware programs as an alternative to downloading from the Internet. Free anti-virus programs such as AVG can now be as large as 25 Mega-bytes and would take hours to download for someone who only had a dial-up
Internet connection.

There are also quite a few video tutorials stored on OPEN 1 and these can be quite helpful in explaining how certain pro-grams and utilities work.

FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE
December 12 - 1 pm to 3.30 pm

Join Judy, Margaret and Robin to help trace your family origins.

New information is being added to our resources on an on-going basis to help you trace your family's origins. Contact the club for more information

Classes are limited to 8 people.

Family History classes resume Wednesday, January 30, 2008 at 9 am

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ADVANCED GRAPHICS
With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8

Wednesday December 12, 9 am to 12 noon

This class is designed for people who have completed the Basic Graphics classes, and involves more advanced features of the Paint Shop Pro graphics programs.

Numbers are limited to 8 people. Please check the notice-board or contact the club for details.

TUTOR S' MEETING

Wednesday, December 5, 2007 at 10 am

A short meeting to discuss classes for 2008 before traveling to the Country Club for the Christmas Luncheon.

NEW VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

As a by-product of our new broadband connection OPEN Computing has a **new telephone number.**

***** 6343 4928 *****

Members can be contacted at the clubrooms **during class hours** by telephoning the number shown above.
Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm

LAUNCESTON COMPUTER GROUP
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 6 AT 7.30 PM

The main business of the meeting will be to receive the Annual report and Financial Statements for 2007 and to elect office-bearers for the 2008 year.

Some of our current office-bearers have held their positions for several years and will be retiring at the end of this year.

If you have some time available to help in a particular role please consider standing for election.
Nomination forms are available at the clubroom.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

The **Friday afternoon Embroidery Group**
 is expected to resume in late February or early March next year. Check for details in the February 2008 newsletter.

The **Northern Tasmanian Camera Club** monthly workshops are in abeyance until further notice.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2007

OPEN Session Times

At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton

Standard Sessions $5.00 as from September 1

[Some special tutorial materials may incur additional charges]

Monday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	**Basics and Beyond**
Tuesday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners [all day]
	1 pm – 3 pm	**Mac [all day]**
Wednesday		Special sessions or Meetings
		As for mornings (see rosters)
Thursday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	E-Learn & Beginners
Friday	10 am –12	E-Learn & Beginners
2nd, 4th Fridays	1 pm – 3 pm	**Embroidery Group**
In Abeyance		**Northern Tas.Camera Club**

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

Date	Time	Topic	Details
December 5	10 am—11 am	Tutors Meeting	Discussions on the 2008 classes.
	12 noo	Christmas Luncheon at Links Room, Country Club Casino	**You should have paid for your booking by November 27. Please contact the club ASAP if you haven't paid.**
	7.00 onwards	**LCG Monthly Workshop and Pizza Night**	Judy Hall will give a talk on her computing experiences during her overseas trip.
December 12	9 am—12 noon	Advanced Graphics	Last chance to brush up your graphics skills in 2007
	1 pm—3.30 pm	**Family History**	**Judy Hall and the Family History tutors will assist you in tracing your Ancestry.**
December 14	10 am—12 noon	Last class before the holiday break.	
December 21	10 am onwards	Morning Tea hosted by the Friday morning class.	
January 7	onwards	"Summer School"	Classes will be available on Mondays, Thursdays and Friday mornings until January 28.
January 28	**onwards**	**Full class program resumes**	**Check notices, rosters and February 2008 newsletter for details**

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2007

TALES FROM THE VICTOR VAULT

Hello to everyone and a Merry Christmas ...

First off I would like to say thank you very much to everyone who has used the VICTOR program this year and special thanks to all those who have been able to help this year. As the year has gone on there has been a gradual decline in people who have been able to help with people leaving, family commitments, etc. Thank you to all who have been patient and beared with us when things got very busy - it is much appreciated.

Holiday arrangements for the holidays are as follows: I am not going away this year so the only days VICTOR program will be closed will be Christmas Day and New year's day.

I am very aware that if anything is going to happen it will happen over Christmas, with that being said I would like to stress only serious issues will be attended to over this period if you feel it is serious feel free to ring to check to see if it fits the criteria.

On a unrelated matter Friday morning class would like to invite you to a Christmas break up morning tea on the 21st December at 10am please bring a plate (with something on it would be nice!)

Look forward to seeing you all at the dinner and the morning tea

Merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2008

Happy Computing

Rob Tierney

VICTOR Coordinator

VICTOR PHONE NUMBER 0408 174 235

DEN's TALES FROM THE VAULT

As Rob hasn't related a 'tale of horror' in his column this month I thought I would step in and provide some advice for those members who may be considering upgrading from a dial-up Internet service to broadband.

During the past month I have assisted three people to convert to broadband internet. The first two both signed up with the "Extinct Bird' ISP and were provided with modems that connected to their computer with a USB cable i.e. the same sort of connection you might use for your printer, scanner or flash drive.

To say these modems are unsatisfactory is an understatement – one lady experienced constant drop-outs with her connection to the Internet while the other waited for periods of up to 90 minutes before the connection was established.

In each case I replaced the USB modem with one that uses an Ethernet (or network) cable connection. Of course this meant that both ladies incurred added expense of around $100 in order to ensure a reliable connection. The ISP online operators were quite helpful on the numerous occasions that each lady had to call them but their efforts could not overcome the deficient equipment that their company had supplied to its customers.

In the third case one of members tried valiantly to follow her ISP's instructions on how to install the filter/splitter to her phone line. The problem was that the so-called splitter only had one outlet so she was unable to connect the telephone and the modem to it. Solution?

NEW EQUIPMENT AND FACILITIES AT OPEN

The club has recently purchased a 3-user version of Microsoft Office 2007.

While it is only a 'Home and Student' version it contains the modules that most members would want to use i.e. Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint. Office 2007 has been installed on our new Vista computer and will be installed on two more machines as class demand increases

Office 2007 is a resource-hungry program that needs a fairly capable computer to run on so please check the system requirements before purchasing it for your own computer.

We have also received a donation of 4 older DVD burners which use the DVD+R format. I hope to fit a couple of them to computers that do not have DVD or CD-burning capability at present but please be aware that there could be compatibility problems— i.e. not all DVDs can be read by a DVD+R device. The affected computers will be marked accordingly.

Over the holiday break I also hope to integrate the 'Big Server' computer into our network to give our U: drive some added storage—160 Gigabytes compared to the current 20 Gigabytes. Members should not notice much difference other than the ability to store more files and photos.

The computer industry is continually changing and I'd like to say that I am impressed with the way members have adapted to many of the changes. It seems that the majority of members now use a flash-drive to move documents between OPEN and their home computers.

Who knows what 2008 will bring?

Dennis

Newbie Club Tutorial ...

"About Your 'Secret' Programs"

The Windows operating systems already come with a useful collection of pre-installed programs and even some games.

But one of the first things that Newbies do is download a boat-load of new programs as soon as their brand new system is plugged in and connected to the Internet.

So let's look at some of the programs that are included with most new systems and then ask you to consider if they're sufficient.

------------ NotePad and WordPad.

All Windows systems include the two text editors, "NotePad," and "WordPad."

Notepad is a plain text editor while WordPad is a rich text editor.

Both programs are capable of opening plain text, however WordPad can open Windows Write files (an earlier version of WordPad) as well as rich text files.

WordPad can also save documents as plain text, rich text, and MS Word documents.

So with WordPad, having the ability to read and create rich text; embed objects (sound, pictures, and video); and manipulate fonts, we have to wonder if other word processors, which do the same thing, are really necessary.

Although WordPad is certainly no match for Microsoft Word's internal spell and grammar checker or Word's Internet linking capabilities, I believe it's a great introduction to word processing in general for computer Newbies.

------------ Address Book.

There are hoards of advanced contact database programs floating around the Internet and on store shelves, but Windows provides a completely competent contact database of its own simply known as "Address Book." This small compact utility allows users to organize contacts by name, location, group, or number and it give users ample space to fully describe each.

Compared to Microsoft's Access database program, its user-friendly Address Book is a Godsend to new computer Newbies.

------------- Calculator.

Calculator has been a Windows accessory even from its first debut in Windows 1.0.

For the life of me, I can't figure out why anyone other than a rocket scientist would want to install a different version than this free one that comes pre-installed.

Windows calculator has two interfaces: an easy one, and a scientific one.

So perhaps a rocket scientist could fare well with Windows Calculator after all!

------------ Paint.

Windows' Paint program allows you to make changes to existing graphics, or create brand new ones at no additional cost.

Interestingly, I can count at least ten different graphics packages that are more popular and widely used than this free one.

While it doesn't offer as many editing tools, it does provide the essentials and it can open/save graphics in .bmp, .gif, and.jpg format (the latter two being the most commonly format used for Internet eye candy).

----------- Media Player.

Real Player and QuickTime are the first programs we think of when we think about multimedia.

But Windows Media Player, also free and pre-installed, does a fine job at transmitting Internet-bound sound and video.

With this application, you can easily listen to .wav files, .midi files, and even tune into a little Internet radio if you like.

----------- System Tools.

Although there are too many to list here, Windows provides more than a handful of useful utilities that will monitor system resources, organize files, repair damaged disks, and more.

Yet you can still find similar tools for sale at computer outlets and download libraries.

Why?

I dunno:-)

---------- What's going on here?

The truth of the matter is that the pre-installed programs are great tools for the beginning computer user.

At some point down the road, usage will dictate a need for more powerful applications.

You may need a word processor that can convert a document into an HTML page, or PDF document.

You may need a calculator that solves geometric problems.

Or you may need a multimedia tool that lets you create your own videos as well as watch them.

These capabilities aren't included with new systems, but there's no reason why you can't exploit the tools that you're given to their fullest.

"Essential PC Security

Advances in computer technology is a double-edged sword.

On one hand, it affords us quick and easy access to numerous conveniences such as bank statements, favorite shopping centers, school and health records, and more.

On the other hand, it can also grant the same access to those who aren't supposed to get it.

Although it's a rare occurrence ...

Hacking has become the biggest criminal nuisance in computer history.

Make no bones about it.

There's nothing innocent or cute about the hacker.

Today's hackers aren't the pimply-faced teen rebels you might be thinking of.

Instead, this generation of hackers are grown individuals who are more than likely earning a living by stealing the identities of innocent, law abiding individuals and then selling those identities to others.

(Continued from page 8)

And the only protection against these seedy people is prevention.

Computer security couldn't be more important than it is today, and that's why I've taken the time to introduce it to you.

I probably write more about this subject than any other in the Newbie Club Newsletter and articles.

That's because The Newbie Club Support Team gets more emails about crashed PC's and lost data (information and programs) than any other subject.

But you can reduce the probability of experiencing identity theft by making your computer as hacker-proof as possible.

All that's needed is a little software and a lot of common sense.

1.

Install an anti-virus/anti-spyware program.

Anti-virus/anti-spyware software will stop malicious code from downloading and installing onto your computer while you surf the Internet.

Known as viruses, worms, or spyware, this malicious code can destroy important files and render your computer good for only two things: sending sensitive data back to the server of an identity thief, and grinding your computer almost to a halt.

2.

Don't store sensitive data on your computer in the first place.

Should your computer get infected with a virus, worm, or spyware, you can thwart the individuals responsible by not storing your personal information on your PC.

So when and if your computer does send back data - it won't be anything valuable.

FUNERAL COSTS

Fred died.

His will provided $30,000 for an elaborate funeral.

As the last guests departed the affair, his wife, Helen, turned to her oldest friend.

"Well, I'm sure Fred would be pleased," she said.

"I'm sure you're right," replied Jody, who lowered her voice and leaned in close.

"How much did this really cost?" "All of it," said Helen

"Thirty thousand." "No!" Jody exclaimed.

"I mean, it was very nice, but $30,000?" Helen answered, "The funeral was $6,500.

One quick trick prevents AutoRun attacks

By Scott Dunn

The AutoRun function in Windows can launch installers and other programs automatically when you insert a CD or flash drive, but this convenience poses a serious security risk.

Unfortunately, simply turning off AutoPlay, a separate feature, isn't enough to prevent AutoRun from introducing a rogue program into your system.

AutoRun starts Windows programs automatically Every recent version of Windows has features known as AutoPlay and AutoRun.

These functions are designed to launch applications automatically from a external device containing the necessary AutoRun information.

This is what causes an installer window to pop up when you insert a software disc into your CD or DVD drive, for example, or makes a pop-up menu icon appear in the taskbar tray when you insert a USB flash drive.

(In some cases, the action doesn't occur until you double-click the flash drive icon in Windows Explorer.)

When a disc is inserted or a drive is connected to your system, Windows looks in the root directory of the new disc or drive for a file named **autorun.inf.**

If found, Windows executes the instructions in that file.

For example, an autorun.inf file on a CD might contain a line that reads open=setup.exe.

This tells your computer to launch a setup program as soon as the CD is inserted into the drive.

However convenient this might be, unfortunately, AutoRun also opens a huge door for viruses, Trojan horses, and worms.

All it takes is a USB flash drive with an autorun.inf file and an executable in its root.

Once inserted, a worm launched in this manner can infect every disk partition it finds, jumping from computer to computer as network users connect to an infected drive.

Shutting down AutoPlay is not a fix In both Windows XP and Vista, the default for USB flash drives is to prompt the user for a decision if autorun.inf tries to launch a program.

Inserting a CD or DVD into a drive, however, defaults to running any autorun.inf file that may be present.

In XP, you can change the defaults for AutoPlay on a given drive by right-clicking the drive in Windows Explorer and choosing Properties.

Click the AutoPlay tab and use the controls there to change the settings for different types of media.

Making changes in this dialog box, however, has no effect in preventing autorun.inf from being executed.

In Vista, end users can choose one of several options, even for software programs that use autorun.inf: (1) always launch the program, (2) always open a listing of the disc in a Windows Explorer window, (3) always prompt for a choice, or (4) take no action.

Unfortunately, none of the above steps can safeguard you against a malicious autorun.inf on removable media.

(Continued from page 10)

I'm no hacker, but I was able in just a few minutes to make an AutoRun file that would run, even with AutoPlay disabled in XP and "take no action" selected in Vista.

The exploit involves creating an autorun.inf file that adds a new default command to a USB flash drive's context menu.

If you have "take no action" selected in Vista, the flash drive doesn't automatically launch any programs when first inserted.

But double-clicking the flash drive icon in My Computer, for example, is all it takes to launch whatever commands are in autorun.inf (which the attacker has made the default command, in place of Open).

A clever hacker could make a worm that

(1) spreads itself to all your drives when launched in this manner and then
(2) displays the drive contents in a window, as expected.

This would make it appear that nothing unusual had happened.

Block AutoRun for all devices all the time You might think that you could proect yourself from AutoRun by using two keys in the Registry known as NoDriveAutoRun and NoDriveTypeAutoRun.

However, self-described "low-budget hacker" Nick Brown points out that these keys can be overridden.

A Registry key named MountPoints2 stores information about all USB flash drives and other removable media that have ever been connected to your computer.

Brown says this cache overrides the Registry settings that turn off AutoRun.

The solution is to globally block autorun.inf files from executing, without trying to use the dialog boxes in XP and Vista to do this.

Here's the procedure:

Step 1.

Start Notepad or another text editor.

Step 2.

Copy the following text from this page and paste it into your text editor (everything between the square brackets should be all on one line):

**REGEDIT4
[HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SOFTWARE\Microsoft\Windows NT\CurrentVersion\IniFileMapping\Autorun.inf]
@="@SYS:DoesNotExist"**

Step 3.

Save the file with a name like NoAutoRun.reg, taking care to include the .reg extension.

Step 4.

Right-click your .reg file and choose Merge.

Confirm any warning prompts to add the information to the Registry.

The next time you insert a flash drive, CD, DVD, or other removable disc into your system, Windows will not execute the information in any autorun.inf file that may be present.

(Continued from page 11)

Naturally, taking these steps means that the next time you put a game or installer disc into your CD or DVD drive, its software won't launch automatically.

You'll have to open a Windows Explorer window or use a command line to launch the desired executable.

The benefit is a big one: a rogue program that you never intended to launch won't silently take over your system if you happen to insert a Trojan-carrying disc into a drive.

Handle Registry editing with caution

In a Nov.8 (above)-article, I explained how to disable Windows' auto-run behavior to protect yourself from inadvertently running malware that might exist on USB drives or other devices you insert into your PC.

Be aware, however, that careless Registry editing can make your system malfunction or even keep you from starting Windows.

Use care making changes to the Registry Any tip that requires direct editing of the Registry (whether using the Registry Editor or merging a .reg script) should be approached with caution.

The best insurance policy in these cases is to set a Windows "restore point" before experimenting with such advice.

To set a restore point, choose Start, All Programs, Accessories, System Restore.

(In Vista, you'll also have to click Open System Protection.) Follow the instructions on screen to create a restore point.

If something goes wrong, launch System Restore again and restore your computer using the latest restore point.

(Windows periodically creates its own restore points automatically.)

In addition, keep in mind that some Registry tips require you to restart your system (or at least log out and log in again) before you see the effect of the change.

Open a text editor, not a word processor Regarding the AutoRun.inf tip, Gerald Ingle speaks for many when he writes: "I tried following your instruction to prevent auto-run access.
But when I try to merge the suggested file, I receive this error message: 'The specified file is not a Registry script.
You can only import binary Registry files from within Registry Editor.' "
Despite what the message says about "binary Registry files," this problem occurs if the .reg file you create is in any format other than plain text. For this reason, I advised using Notepad or another text editor.
Most word processors, such as Microsoft Word, will save to their own formats by default.
If you must use a word processor, take care to save your .reg file as a "Text Document," "Text Only," or a similar option.

Other readers had a different problem incorporating the NoAutoRun.reg file into the Registry. For example, Robert E. Lee writes:
"I created the file by copying the text from the Windows Secrets newsletter into an MS Word file, and saved it.

I right-clicked the file in MS Explorer but did not see a 'Merge' option.

Can you explain further how to merge this into my Registry?"

Unfortunately, with many word processors (including Word), just typing a name like NoAutoRun.reg in the Save As dialog box will not keep the program from adding its own extension after the .reg extension you typed.

Since Windows hides extensions by default, your file may look as if it's named NoAutoRun.reg when it's really named NoAutoRun.reg.doc.

Without the .reg extension at the end, you won't see a Merge command on the file's context menu. This problem doesn't occur if you use Notepad to create **.reg files.** To prevent a word processor from adding an extension when you type an extension of your own, put the entire file name in quotation marks in the Save As input box. For example, the following file name will not receive an additional .doc on the end when saved in Word:
"NoAutoRun.reg" To see the actual extensions on your file names, open Windows Explorer and choose Tools, Options. (In Vista, first press Alt to see the menu bar.) Click the View tab and uncheck Hide extensions for known file types.
Click OK.
If you take all these steps and still don't see a Merge command on your context menu when you right-click your .reg file, you can add a .reg file to the Registry using the following steps:

Step 1.

In XP, click Start, Run.

In Vista, just click Start.

Step 2.

Type regedit and press Enter.

Step 3.

Choose File, Import.

Step 4.

Locate and select your NoAutoRun.reg file and click Open.

> **Removing the NoAutoRun fix from the Registry A few readers suggested it would be a good practice to tell how to undo any tip.**
>
> **As David Edwards wrote:**

"So if we experiment and run the following, how do we reverse the situation if we find that we do not like it and are prepared to take risks like everyone else?"

To remove the information that **NoAutoRun.reg** adds to the Registry, do the following:

Step 1.

Choose Start, Run.

(In Vista, just choose Start.)

Step 2.

Type regedit and press Enter.

Step 3.

Use the tree pane on the left to navigate to:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE \ SOFTWARE \ Microsoft \ Windows NT \ CurrentVersion \ IniFileMapping Step 4.

If necessary, click the plus sign (+) next to IniFileMapping to see the icons nested beneath.

Right-click the AutoRun.inf icon and choose Delete.

Step 5.

Exit the Registry Editor and restart your computer.

Tutorial ...

"Inside Your PC

---------- CPU The Central Processing Unit (CPU), or sometimes just processor -is the brain.

Most of the mathematical manipulations that make computers operate are done by the CPU.

Other components may also have their own processors, but the results still have to be passed through the CPU.

The speed of your computer is usually measured by the speed of your CPU.

Even though there are other factors affecting speed, the CPU rating is usually seen the single most important measure of performance.

CPUs are usually rated between 2.0 GHz and 3.0 GHz, although you see some models in the 3.5 GHz range.

These numbers refer to the number of calculations the processor can make in one second, so obviously the higher the number the faster the computer.

Modern CPUs generate a tremendous amount of heat so it is vital that they have a heatsink and cooling fan in direct contact with them.

Heat build-up is a major problem in modern computers so anything that can aid in cooling the inside of the case is welcome.

Cooling fans are not an option -- without them the CPU would quickly burn out.

They usually come integrated with a heat sink -

a finned metal block that comes into contact with the CPU.

The heat sink has a large surface area to dissipate heat quickly and the fan is attached to the top of it.

The fan blows cool air down through the heat sink to maximize the cooling effect.

Cooling fans are also available for graphic cards and computer cases.

Cooling solutions are becoming increasingly sophisticated.

The latest generation of computer coolers are water cooling kits designed to provide cooling to all the internal components of the computer case.

The noise you hear coming from your computer case is the cooling fan, and if it starts making strange noises, attend to it immediately.

Otherwise your PC could burn out in a matter of seconds!

NOT a pretty site I can assure you!

--------- USB Ports

Many modern peripherals use USB (Universal Serial Bus) to connect to the computer.

USB devices include printers, scanners, keyboards, mice, as well as external storage devices such as hard drives, CD-ROMs, memory cards, and those storage 'sticks'.

It's a good idea to have plenty of USB ports installed in your computer.

More and more accessories are using USB to connect to computers and there is nothing more annoying than running out of ports and having to juggle between accessories.

Try to have at least two on the back of the computer and four on the front panel.

If you find yourself running short you can add a USB mini hub that gives you extra connections.

A USB hub is similar t a power multi-socket in that it enables you to add more USB devices than your computer normally caters for.

-------- Computer Case There's more to a computer case than meets the eye.

The computer case is not just a box!

It's an integral part of the computer.

It supports the motherboard and the internal drives, and also protects the delicate circuitry and provides airflow to cool the internal components.

Cases come in various shapes and sizes.

They are designed to hold motherboards of a particular 'form factor' - the size and layout of the motherboard.

The most popular form factor is ATX, and ATX cases are available in a variety of sizes.
Upright ATX cases are available as full towers, mid towers, and mini towers.

Smaller micro ATX cases are also available.

The size of the case plays a large part in determining how your computer can be upgraded.

Small cases have a limited number of bays which hold components like hard drives and CD drives.

If there are no extra bays available in the case, your only upgrade option is to replace existing components

---------- Network Adapters and Modems Almost everybody with a computer wants to use the Internet.

In order to connect to the World Wide Web you must have a modem.

There are two basic types -- dial-up and broadband.

Dial-up modems are much slower than broadband and also tie up the phone line while you are on the Internet.

Broadband modems are connected to the computer through a network adapter.

This is an add-on card that goes in one of your PCI slots.

Broadband connections give you speed advantages and also allow you to use the phone as you are surfing the net.

Network adapters are useful even if you don't use broadband.

They can be used to set up a home network by connecting 2 or more computers through the network cards.

The connections can be either physical (with wires) or wireless.

A home network allows computers to share peripherals such as printers and modems, and also allows files to be shared and transferred from computer to computer.

Home networks are easy to set up.

All that is required is a network card in each computer and a router or hub to connect all the computers together.

---------- Drive Cables Drive cables are flat ribbon cables that usually have three connectors attached to them.

Simple tips save power and the environment

By Scott Dunn

Computers and computer peripherals consume dramatic amounts of electricity every year, draining your budget and contributing to **greenhouse gases.**

But for little or no money, you can reduce the number of watts your system and peripherals use, saving cash and limiting the environmental damage

What's the easiest way to go green?

Too often, grand concepts like "green computing" are like the weather: everyone talks about it, but nobody does anything. Like it or not, the construction and use of computers still involves hazardous materials and the production of greenhouse gases. Is there anything you can do now without waiting for the perfectly constructed, solar-powered, recyclable computer? Fortunately, the answer is yes.

Without spending any money at all, you can reduce your power usage (saving on climate-changing CO2) and lower your electrical bill at the same time. And, if you're willing to spend a little on a couple of useful gadgets, you may be able to save even more. Here are a handful of ways to save money while you save the earth.

To sleep, perchance to save

Many of us think nothing of leaving our computers powered up while we go to lunch or even 24 hours a day. A study in PC World found that a running computer consumes between 195 and 305 watts, while a computer in suspend mode can consume as little as 10 watts. Hibernation mode consumes slightly less at 9 watts of power (assuming the PC remains plugged into the wall socket), but hibernation takes longer than suspend mode to wake up from.

You probably already know that Windows provides options for both modes via the Power Options control panel. But Windows consults your BIOS to

decide exactly what to do in suspend mode. Most modern BIOSes follow the Advanced Configuration & Power Interface (ACPI), an open power-management standard that was developed by HP, Intel, Microsoft, Phoenix, and Toshiba. (You can download a PDF version of the ACPI spec from the ACPI.info Web site

Depending on your particular BIOS, you may be able to choose from any of the following states:

S1. In this state, the CPU stops processing but remains powered. RAM is also powered, but some devices may be powered down.

S2. This option, omitted from many BIOSes, is like S1 but also shuts down power to the CPU.

S3. This state leaves RAM powered, but not much else. This "suspend-to-RAM" feature is what lets you resume where you left off, since your computer's state is still in memory.

S4. This state powers down RAM, requiring your data to be written to the hard disk if it is to be preserved. It provides only marginal power savings over S3, but is the safest mode for your data if power is cut off entirely. This scheme corresponds to Windows hibernation mode, and is seldom found as a BIOS suspend option.

Get the best from your BIOS

To make sure you're getting the greatest power savings from Windows' suspend feature, follow the steps below. Specifics are not possible for all steps, since setup screens vary from one BIOS to the next.

Step 1. Save all open documents and restart your computer.

Step 2. Follow whatever prompts you see on your screen to enter Setup.

(Continued from page 16)

Usually this involves pressing Delete or a function key.

Step 3. In Setup, locate the page or screen associated with power settings. It may be labelled something like Power or Power Management Setup.

Step 4. When you find the proper screen, highlight the setting related to suspend mode. It may have a label like ACPI Standby State or Suspend Mode.

Step 5. Change this setting to S3. The option may be labelled "S3 only" or "S3/STR" (for Suspend To RAM).

Step 6. Follow the instructions on screen for saving your settings and restarting your computer.

Work it with Windows

Now make sure Windows is using suspend mode when you're not working.

Follow these steps for Windows XP:

Step 1. Open the Power Options control panel.

Step 2. On the Power Schemes tab, click the System Standby drop-down list under **Plugged in.** Select how long your system should be idle before starting suspend mode — for example, **After 30 mins.** Click OK.

Follow these steps for Windows Vista:

Step 1. Open the Power Options control panel.

Step 2. In the task list on the left, click **Change when the computer sleeps.**

Step 3. Click the **Put the computer to sleep** drop-down list under Plugged In. Choose the period of inactivity after which suspend mode should start

— for example, 30 minutes. Click **Save changes.**

Give suspend a nudge

Windows sometimes interprets background tasks (like network activity) incorrectly and remains awake when it should go into suspend mode.

If you have that problem, a simple program called CO2 Saver may help. Once installed, it sits on your desktop and shows how much CO2 you (and other users) have saved by using suspend mode.

To make CO2 Saver encourage Windows' suspend mode, click the Options link at the right end of CO2 Saver. (If you don't see the Options link, click the right-arrow to expand the toolbar.) With the Power Saving tab in front, choose Custom from the drop-down list. Then click the link below. In the Custom Power Saving dialog box, check **Initiate sleep mode if system doesn't sleep automatically.** Click OK twice.

Make it manual

You can also put your system into suspend mode manually any time you want:

In XP, choose Start and then click Turn off Computer. Click the Stand By option.

In Vista, choose Start, click the arrow button in the menu's bottom-right corner, and choose Sleep.

In Vista, sleep mode may be the default, so simply clicking the power button in the Start menu puts the computer to sleep.

Try other low-power moves

In addition to getting the most out of suspend mode, you can take other steps to reduce your power consumption and save money:

Use a power strip. Plug peripherals (like printers, audio systems, monitors) into a power strip or UPS. Then turn it off when you want all of your equipment to turn off.

Lose the brick. Once your laptop or notebook computer is fully charged, unplugging the recharger from the wall will save some electricity. As long as the computer is in suspend mode or some other low- or no-power mode, it won't need to be plugged in again for hours.

Lose the CRT. According to Sask Power LCD monitors use 66% less electricity than the older CRT type. Maybe this is the time to switch to that LCD screen you've been wanting. If you can't afford to change right now, at least get in the habit of turning off the CRT's power switch every time you leave your desk for more than a few minutes.

Check power saving options. See if your printer or external hard drives have power-saving modes. For example, many of Western Digital's external "My Book" hard drives have a GreenPower feature

Use a smart power strip. Some newer power strips use a motion sensor to decide if you're still at your computer. If not, they shut down power to certain sockets (such as ones for peripherals) after a user-designated time has elapsed. Other power strips shut off several sockets, based on whether you've powered down a device plugged into the "control" socket. The Tree Hugger Web site discusses examples of each.

You don't need to wait for new computer designs to make your computing a little more green friendly. By tweaking a few settings and getting into a few good habits, you can make a difference for your pocketbook and the planet.

Attention: Mac News!

Dear All,

It has been a huge year for Macintosh users in 2007. There have been many great new and exciting releases of both Hardware and Software from Apple, a few examples of this is Mac OS X 10.5 (Leopard) and the new iMac. Some of Apple's newly released software has been put through its paces on OPEN's eMac's, this software includes iTunes 7.4, iLife '08 (which includes: iWeb, iPhoto 7, iMovie 7, iDVD 7, & GarageBand), iWork '08 (which includes: Pages '08 [Word equivalent], Keynote '08 [PowerPoint equivalent] and the new Numbers '08 [Excel equivalent]). I have trialled all the included Applications and of course give them a big thumbs up!!

During OPEN sessions if you have ever seen any movies created by Ivan using iMovie, it is worth a look as his creativity and hard work he has put into them is just simply amazing. It looks like a film made in Hollywood, this is because film makers in America use iMovie and iDVD to create those blockbuster films. Great effort Ivan, keep it up! I greatly encourage everyone to have a go at using a Mac's graphic software, it is easy to use and gives you a great looking project, you'll never see tools like this on Windows.

As of February 2008, If you open the Safari Internet browser on an OPEN Mac you should see a link by the name "OPEN Mac's" on the Favourites bar at the top of the screen. This links you to a local website with the latest Macintosh news, security and application updates, so it's worth a look.

Until next time. Cheers

Joel Harbottle

One connector is attached to the motherboard and the other two are attached to the hard drives or optical drives.

The floppy drive cables are thinner than the cables for the hard drives or the optical drives and also have a twist in them.

---------- Floppy Drive Cables These cables are standard for any type of motherboard, but there are two different types of cables for hard drives depending on whether your motherboard has ATA or SATA controllers.

The traditional ATA (or EIDE) cables can connect two drives and are limited to 18 inches in length.

SATA cables, on the other hand, have just one connector and can be as long as 40 inches.

Both ATA and SATA connectors are keyed so it's impossible to connect them the wrong way

Tutorial ....

"Weird Fonts In Your HTML Emails?"

The only fonts that will display correctly on your email recipient's html email page are those which THEY already have on THEIR computer.

In other words if you use a beautiful fancy font called 'Sheer Elegance', and your reader does not have that installed on their* computer, they'll see something completely different.

Maybe even a complete mess.

Sometimes we get an email with a beautiful colored background and maybe a butterfly image in the corner.

The sender probably used a real fancy font that was not on MY PC so my computer uses the closest font it can find which it thinks will do the trick.

And it's a disaster!

So Fonts that are usually installed on new PCs with Windows are a fairly safe choice for you to use.

The same applies when you create a Web page.

Times New Roman is usually the default browser setting.

Georgia and Courier New are two other serif fonts (with those little tops and tails to the letters).

Sans-serif fonts (without the tops and tails) usually include Arial, Verdana, Trebuchet, and Comic Sans.

Impact!

is a very heavy sans-serif type suitable for headlines.

This was modified from an original article written for The Newbie Club by Dianne Reuby who is the co-author of 'First Website Builder' at http://newbieclub.com/builder

From Newbie Club Insider Issue 343 November 16th 2007

My computer

My computer has a secret life

When I am off in bed

I expect it to be sleeping

But it's wide awake instead.

That's how I often find it

When unexpectedly

I catch it out by walking by

At two or even three.

No darkened room, screen blazing

Mouse and Maxtor lights on too

I know there's housekeeping but surely

There can't be so much to do.

In the day the computer works quickly

Those tasks can't all be mine

I keep wondering what it's up to

When it's talking on the line.

Sometimes I suspect

It is in on a plot

I'd like to know if

It is for me or not

With all those lights blinking

Who knows what they're thinking

And what information they've got.

What is it doing in the dead of the night?

I thought the screen saver was working all right

Where's its allegiance if put on the spot?

There is this basic question

Of reliability

Can I trust my own computer? Is it working just for me?

I'm getting rather worried

I've begun to scheme a bit

Do you think a new computer

Would keep an eye on it?

© Lois Grosse

October 2007

Hospital Politics

When a panel of doctors was asked to vote on adding a new wing to their hospital, the Allergists voted to scratch it and the Dermatologists advised no rash moves.

The Gastroenterologists had a gut feeling about it, but the Neurologists thought the administration had a lot of nerve, and the Obstetricians stated they were all labouring under a misconception.

The Ophthalmologists considered the idea short-sighted; the Pathologists yelled, "Over my dead body", while the Paediatricians said, "Grow up!"

The Psychiatrists thought the whole idea was madness, the surgeons decided to wash their hands of the whole thing and the Radiologists could see right through it!

The physicians thought it was a bitter pill to swallow; and the Plastic Surgeons said, "This puts a whole new face on the matter."

The Podiatrists thought it was a step forward, but the Urologists felt the scheme wouldn't hold water.

The anaesthesiologists thought the whole idea was a gas and the Cardiologists didn't have the heart to say no, so.......

In the end, the Proctologists left the decision up to some asshole in administration.