Launceston Computer Group INCORPORATED

NEWSTREAM

The Journal of the Launceston Computer Group Inc
ABN 41 451 764 376

Volume 7 Issue 8
September 2008

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Next Meeting

Wednesday 3rd December 2008

PIZZA NIGHT

7-9 PM

Judy Hall

Photos of European Trip

Newstream Articles

Deadline : 10 Days before Meeting

Editors Contacts:

Address: 8 Cadorna Street Mowbray Heights 7248 Phone 6326 5824

email address editor@lcg.org.au

Correspondence

Address all Correspondence to: Launceston Computer Group Inc PO Box 548 Launceston 7250

Membership

Single $15, Family $20 (Includes Email edition Newstream)

Printed & Posted Newsletter $20 extra

Disclaimer: *The articles in this newsletter may be reprinted as long as credit is given to the original author. Opinions expressed are those of the author & not necessarily the views of the Editor or the Group. Unless otherwise noted material is copyright 2004 for the Launceston Computer Group Inc.*

LCG Committee 2008/9

President: Iris Meek

Vice President: Robert Tierney

Minutes Secretary: Joel Harbottle

Treasurer: Dennis Murray

Asst Treasurers: Karia Wicks and Don Cooper

MAC Librarians: Ivan Turmine and Joel Harbottle

PC Librarian: Julie Hjort

Asst PC Librarian: Judy Hall

Newstream Editor: Ron Baker

Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks

Asst Publicity Officer: - open -

OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney

Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen

Auditor: Ron Baker

VICTOR Liaison: Robert Tierney

General Committee: Glenn Gilpin, Harvey Tavener, Reinhard von Samorzewski, Judy Hall

OPEN Committee 2008/9

Chairperson OPEN: Robert Tierney.

Chair all meetings of OPEN and ensure that they run smoothly

Vice Chairperson OPEN: (to be clarified)

Chair meeting when the Chairperson is unavailable.

Secretary: .

Handles all incoming and outgoing communications Responsible for the documentation and distribution of all meeting minutes

Assistant Secretary: - open -. Help the Secretary where necessary

Treasurer: Dennis Murray.

Responsible for all monies and banking

Assistant Treasurer: Karia Wicks and Don Cooper.

Help the Treasurer where necessary.

Publicity Officer: Karia Wicks.

Responsible for all advertising

OPEN Co-ordinator: Robert Tierney.

Responsible for the smooth running of Centre on a daily basis

Membership Co-ordinator: Karia Wicks.

Keep Membership database up to date.

Beginners Project Co-ordinator: Eleanor Horder.

Tutor Co-ordinator: Jenny Napier.

Keep regular contact with Tutors to bring ideas and concerns to meetings

Newsletter Editors Assistant: Dennis Murray.

Collates and produces the OPEN Newsletter for inclusion in LCG monthly 'Newstream'

Maintenance Co-ordinators: Dennis Murray (PC's) and Joel Harbottle (Mac).

Responsible for the maintenance and repairs to all computer equipment

Co-ordinator of "VICTOR": Robert Tierney.

Webmaster/Content: Tom Olsen.

OPEN Committee: June Hazzlewood, Marny Poole, Iris Meek, Janet Headlam, Don Cooper, Barry Symons, Tom Olsen.

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2008

FROM THE ASSISTANT EDITOR

I won't dwell too much on end-of-year activities or arrangements for the New Year as Rob Tierney's Coordinator's Corner on Page 4 covers those topics comprehensively.

Other than that the biggest news for this month is that the club has recently taken delivery of two new computers that run both the Windows Vista and XP operating systems. Choosing which 'OS' you wish to use is simply a matter of using the keyboard navigation arrows and pressing Enter.

Both have built-in card readers for those people who wish to bring their digital camera 'flash cards' to graphics classes, and 19-inch LCD monitors which provide a wide viewing area.

On the software side we have opted for the MS Office 2007 Pro Academic version that includes Publisher 2007. Unlike other Office 2007 programs Publisher retains the old-style menu system rather than the 'ribbon' that is present in Word, Excel and Power Point.

As is often the case when new computers are commissioned there are few teething problems, including getting the time to install all the in-house programs that are used in OPEN classes. Please bear with us for the next three weeks until we get things organised.

To make way for the new computers we have retired a couple of the older machines and re-positioned others. If you have files on the 'missing' computers please let one of the tutors know and we will retrieve them for you. (***continued***)

TRAPS FOR PLAYERS OF ALL AGES

Although we regularly remind members of the manner in which malware can implant itself on anyone's computers, recently OPEN 4 was the target of one of those programs that purports to be a friend but is in fact an enemy of the computer.

AntiVirus 2009 advises that it has found a host of problems on a computer and pretends to offer a solution, but instead infects the computer with real malware, and in this case hi-jacked Internet Explorer so that users were taken to websites that contained unsavoury material.

The program is very insistent and even if the user clicks the Cancel or Close options AntiVirus 2009 will continue to operate. If you encounter this program on any of the club computers please inform one of the tutors immediately.

Rectifying this problem took around 2 hours and included doing 2 passes with Spybot Search and Destroy, and a full System Restore to remove all the apparent infections that AntiVirus 2009 had implanted.

Dennis Murray

KEYBOARD SHORTCUTS

The **F1 function key** will bring up the Help Screen in many programs.

The **F2 function key** is a quick way to rename a file or folder, or edit the contents of a cell in Excel.

OPEN MONTHLY GENERAL MEETING
DECEMBER 3RD

Members are invited to join us for a pre-meeting lunch at 12:30 pm. Please bring a plate, and as Rob often says, preferably with something on it to eat!

After that our final meeting for 2008 will commence at 1:30 pm. As always members, both old and new, are welcome to attend our monthly meetings.

Please take this opportunity to have an input into the way the club operates into the future.

LAUNCESTON COMPUTER GROUP MEETING & PIZZA EVENING

WEDS. DECEMBER 3RD
7:00 to 9:00 PM

This will be our traditional break-up event with a short meeting, a presentation and supper.

This month's 'guest' will be our own :

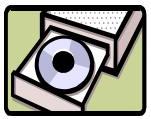
JUDY HALL who will present a display of many of the photographs she took during her overseas trip in 2007.
All members of LCG and OPEN are welcome to attend this evening.

Reminder Annual Subscriptions are due on December 1st.
Individual $15, Couples $20

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2008

Launceston Computer Group

1st Dcember2008



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: opencomputing@bigpond.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 antivirus programs such as AVG can now be as large as 45 Megabytes and would take hours to download for someone who only had a dial-up

Internet connection.

There are also quite a few video tutorials and ASCCA teaching material on our server and these can be quite helpful in explaining how certain programs and utilities work.

PLEASE NOTE THAT IN 2008 ALL OF JUDY'S MORNING CLASSES WILL START AT 10 AM AND NOT 9 AM AS IN PREVIOUS YEARS

FAMILY HISTORY ON-LINE

December 3— 10 am to 12 noon

December 17 — 1 pm to 3pm

Judy Hall and the team will guide you through the processes required to research your ancestry.

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.**

ANIMATED E-MAILS

December 17

10 am to 12 noon

With Christmas not far away you can learn how to send greetings to family or friends in the form of an Animated E-mail. **Animated E-Mail Magic** has been a favourite program at OPEN for many years and this is your opportunity to see how it works.

VENUE TELEPHONE NUMBER

Don't forget that the club telephone is available during class hours.

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

Members and tutors can be contacted at the clubrooms **during class hours** by telephoning the number shown above.

Monday to Friday 10am – 3pm

GRAPHICS

Please check the registration sheets at the club to find out if there are places available.

The dates for the next classes are :

Basic Graphics December 10

10 am to 12 noon

LEVEL 2 & 3 GRAPHICS

With Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8

Wednesday December 10 pm to 3.30 pm

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.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 28 will be divided into TWO Family History sessions, but will also be a GRAPHICS 'REGISTRATION DAY' when members can sign up for the 2009 Graphics classes.

OPEN Session Times

At Studioworks, 1 Pipeworks Rd, L'ton

Standard Sessions $5.00

[Some special tutorial materials may incur additional charges]

Monday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	**Basics and Beyond**
Tuesday	10 am –12	O-Learn &
	1 pm – 3 pm	**Mac [all day]**
	7 pm—9 pm	Basics (Night Class)
Wednesday		Special sessions or Meetings
		As for mornings
Thursday	10 am –12	General & Beginners
	1 pm – 3 pm	General &
Friday	10 am –12	General &
1st Friday of each month	1 pm – 3 pm	**Embroidery Group**

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2008

SPECIAL WEDNESDAY SESSIONS

Please register on the sheets – numbers may be limited

Date	Time	Topic	Details
December 3	10 am—12 noon	Family History	Use OPEN's array of resources to trace your family's origins.
	12:30 onwards	**OPEN Monthly meeting**	**OPEN Monthly Meeting from 1.00 pm onward**
	7.00 to 9.00 pm	**LCG Meeting and**	**Judy Hall will display photographs of her 2007 overseas trip, followed by pizza supper.**
December 10	10 am—12 noon	Basic Graphics	Judy, Eleanor and Karia continue the course on all aspects of graphics manipulation.
	1 pm—3.30 pm	**Level 2 and 3 Graphics**	**Advanced graphics techniques using the Paint Shop Pro 7 and 8 programs.**
December 17	10 am—12 noon	Animated E-Mail Magic	Learn how to create and sent animated greetings to family and friends this Christmas
	1 pm—3.30 pm	**Family History**	**Judy Hall will assist you in tracing your**
December 19		No classes Meet for Christmas Lunch	Function at the Centennial Hotel is fully-booked
January 28	10 am to 12 noon & 1 pm to 3 pm	Family History	Graphics Registration Day Enrolments for 2009 Graphics classes.
February 4	10am to 12 noon 1 pm onwards	Questions & Answers	**THE NEXT NEWSLETTER WILL BE DUE AT THE END OF JANUARY 2009.**

OPEN NEWSLETTER – DECEMBER 2008

COORDINATOR'S CORNER

Hello everyone and Season Greetings to you and your family,

On behalf of OPEN I would like to thank all the students and volunteers for another great year.

Thanks to all the members who were able at attend our recent 7th Birthday Party. I t was great to see so many people having a fun time and catching up with each other.

Dates of note to this point:

December 3rd our final monthly members meeting for 2008— **12.30 lunch** please bring a plate with something on it, at 1.30 we will have our meeting.

There will be no Friday class on December 19th, the day we have our Christmas lunch at the Centennial Hotel at 12 noon.

Unfortunately this function is now fully booked so unless you have already put your name on the sheet you will probably miss out on attending.

I will advise if there are any cancellations.

Last year we trialled "summer school" where some of the tutors and staff who had nothing much on over the Christmas break came in during January and did their own thing with no official classes.

We will be having this again next year starting on Monday, January 5th 2009 .We will let people know closer to closing date whether there will be full or half days during January**.**

There will be no Wednesday classes during January, until Judy's Family History Day on the 28th.

Memberships are now due: $15.00 single, $20.00 double

Nomination forms are now out for the 2009 elections for office bearers. There is a list up the front with details of office bearers of 2008. If you would like to nominate someone for a position you need to get their permission, have someone to second their nomination and get them to sign the nomination form and have them place it in the nomination box that will be up the front.

Our first monthly meeting back will be Wednesday Feb 4th at 1pm which will be our **ANNUALGENERAL MEETING.**

Till next year merry Christmas and a safe and prosperous 2009

Rob Tierney

VICTOR PHONE NUMBER 0408 174 235

Contact the Coordinator Rob Tierney for assistance with computer problems at home

(Bookings are subject to availability of tutors.)

DISKS BY THE DOZEN??

On Page 1 I mentioned some of the details regarding our new computers, OPEN 10 and 13.

One of the features, the inbuilt card-reader, has the capacity to cause a little confusion because each of the 4 slots that will accept digital cards are designated by the computer as a **Removable Disk.**

The table below shows the 'alphabet' of drive letters that will be seen in the Windows Explorer (or My Computer) display.

A:	Floppy disk-drive
B:	*(Not Used)*
C:	Vista System
D:	XP System
E:	DVD Burner
F:	Removable Disk
G:	Removable Disk
H:	Removable Disk
I:	Removable Disk
J:	Vista Data
K:	XP Data
U:	The OPEN U:drive

So that members using card readers know which of the Removable Disks they are plugged in to, I encourage you to personalise your digital cards just the way many members have named their flash-drives.

Once you have determined which of the Removable Disks contains your card you can right-click, and select the Rename option and type a name e.g. Dennis_SD.

After that your card will always be shown in the list of drives with your own name.

Dennis Murray

NOMINATION FORM

OPEN COMPUTING

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICE-BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

AGM February 4 2009

We .....(Proposer's Signature)

and.....(Seconder's Signature)

hereby nominate

.....

(Candidate's name in block letters)

for the position of

.....

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I ACCEPT THIS NOMINATION and if elected give my consent to act as a committee member.

/ /2008 .....

(Candidates Signature)

This form is to be returned to: OPEN Computing by noon Feb 4 2009

NOMINATION FORM

LCG COMPUTING

ANNUAL ELECTION OF OFFICE-BEARERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS.

AGM February 4 2009

We .....(Proposer's Signature)

and.....(Seconder's Signature)

hereby nominate

.....

(Candidate's name in block letters)

for the position of

.....

~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~~

I ACCEPT THIS NOMINATION and if elected give my consent to act as a committee member.

/ /2008 .....

(Candidates Signature)

This form is to be returned to: LCG. OPEN Computing by 6.30pm Feb 4 2009

Newbie Club Tutorials

Tutorial ... "How To Filter Email With Outlook Express"

Even if you use email filter software or a service, isn't it strange how so much junk still gets through?

Here's how to filter it even more if you use Outlook Express or Outlook.

This shows how to set up filters using selected words which appear in unwanted emails on a regular basis. You can use the same system for selecting words in the Body and more.

Open a blank email in Outlook Express.

Click the Tools menu, point to Message Rules and click on Mail.

Click on the NEW button.

Find the 'Where the Subject line contains specific words' line and 'Select the Conditions for your rule section'. Put a checkmark in its checkbox.

In the 'Select the Actions for your rule' section, find the 'Move it to the specified folder' entry and put a checkmark in its checkbox.

In the 'Rule Description' section, click on the blue/underlined 'contains specific words' entry.

In the 'Type Specific Words' dialog box, type in a keyword or phrase. Then click the Add button.

Continue to add keywords and phrases until you're done. Then click OK.

You'll be able to come up with your own list from your existing crappy stuff you receive.

Click on the blue/underlined 'specified entry'.

In the 'Move' dialog box, click on the Bulk Mail folder and then click OK.

In the 'Name of the Rule' section, replace the current name with a choice name of your own. Click OK.

Click OK in the 'Message Rules' dialog box.

Done.

You MUST spell the words EXACTLY as they appear in the emails you receive. Various ploys are used to beat the filters, such as misspellings, spaces between words, period marks where they shouldn't be etc.Tutorial ... **"How To Use Your Mouse In Internet Explorer"**

This is what happens when you RIGHT CLICK your mouse on a web page opened in Explorer ...

When your cursor is over a link and you RIGHT click, a small flyout menu opens. Then if you LEFT CLICK on ...

Open: Opens the page Open in New Window: Opens the link in a new copy of IE 6 Save Target As: Saves the link as a file onto your hard drive.

Print Target: Prints the link Copy Shortcut: Copies the URL of the web page to the Clipboard for pasting into a text editor or word processing program.

Add to Favourites: Adds the selected page to your Favorites menu When your Cursor is over an Image and you RIGHT CLICK on it ...

Save Picture As: Saves the image to your disk drive of your choice - preferably to your hard drive rather than a floppy disk.

E-mail Picture: Opens your default email program and attaches the image to your email message.

(Continued on page 18)

How to maintain XP after Microsoft ends support
By Stuart J Johnson “Windows Secrets” 13/11/2008

Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer said recently that it's OK with him if you want to stick with Windows XP until Windows 7 is available late next year.

XP lovers may still be able to buy a new PC with that operating system installed for another year or so, but unfortunately, Microsoft plans to end most free support for the OS within months.

On that date — Apr. 14, 2009 — millions of PC users, some of whom bought their systems less than a year earlier, will be left in the lurch. These users will have to pay Microsoft for Windows XP support, although downloading critical security patches is expected to remain free of charge.

The end of support is planned despite the fact that consumers can still buy a new PC that runs XP rather than Vista, which was released nearly two years ago. It's ironic that no less a personage than Microsoft chief Ballmer tells users that staying with XP until Windows 7 ships late next year is a viable option.

What's a poor Windows XP user to do?

Third-party vendors pledge XP compatibility

Ballmer has said repeatedly over the past 10 to 15 years that the stiffest competition a new version of Windows confronts in the marketplace is the previous version of Windows. If the previous version is "good enough," then a lot of people won't buy the upgrade. XP just may prove Ballmer right.

According to a study by Gartner, there will be more than 1 billion computers in use worldwide by the end of 2008. The vast majority of them run Windows XP.

In fact, according to an analysis by Web analytics firm Net Applications, some 68 percent of the client computers in use around the world use XP. The OS's closest challenger — Vista — represents just over 19 percent of the worldwide PC market. If these stats are accurate, there are nearly 700 million copies of XP on the planet.

While Vista has been picking up steam in recent months, it has a long way to go to catch up with its older, more mature sibling. Even if Microsoft redoubles its efforts to market Vista, it's unlikely the newer version could pass XP in installed numbers by late 2009, which is when Microsoft officials hint that Windows 7 will be available.

Anyone who uses XP — whether on a new machine or an early-2000s model — has to wonder whether new hardware and software will continue to support the old OS.

The answer is a qualified "yes."

XP's huge installed base helps to ensure that hardware and software companies are continuing to support their existing XP users while also making sure their new products will work with the OS. Every one of several third-party hardware and software firms I checked with claims its new products will be compatible with both Vista and XP.

For now, anyway, losing the support of third-party vendors is far from the biggest threat facing anyone who sticks with XP. The bigger problem is Microsoft's impending free-support cutoff date for the OS.

XP's support has been extended once before

Microsoft's policy is to support each version of its operating system for 10 years. For the first five years, users get "mainstream" support, which combines free help and fee-based services. This is in addition to the standard patches and hotfixes that Microsoft periodically releases.

(Continued on page 10)

(Continued from page 9)

The second five-year period constitutes "extended" support. During this time, users must pay for support, aside from critical patches that continue to be offered by the company for free.

XP will reach the end of mainstream support on Apr. 14, 2009, despite the fact that Service Pack 3 for XP was released just last spring. (XP first shipped in late 2001, so the end of its mainstream support is coming more than two years later than is typical — a testament to XP's popularity.)

After April 2009, XP moves into the extended-support period, which is expected to last through Apr. 8, 2014.

Under extended support, if you encounter problems installing a security patch or other critical fix, tech support will help you free of charge. Any other help from Microsoft tech support, however, will be on a pay-per-incident basis. Microsoft currently charges $59 per incident for help with operating-system problems.

If you bought a new PC with XP preinstalled, it's important to note that you must contact your PC maker for all support. Microsoft has assembled a list of phone numbers and support sites for major PC vendors.

Even though Microsoft has cut off retail sales of XP, the company will continue to allow PC vendors to sell XP Professional on new systems at least through the end of January 2009.

Today, that's usually done by opting for the vendor's "downgrade" license, which lets the buyer choose between Vista and XP Pro.

For example, Dell Computer says it will sell systems with XP as a downgrade option through 2009 and possibly longer.

There are plenty of XP resources out there

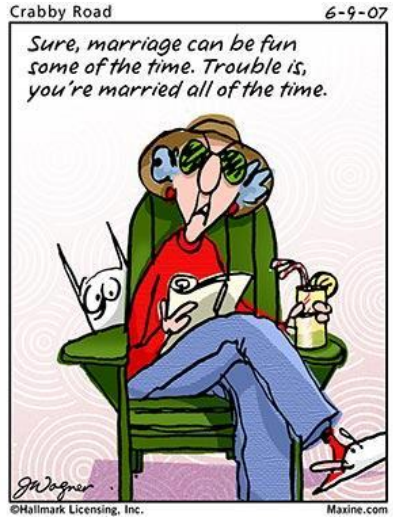
Of course, you aren't stuck with Microsoft when it comes to your XP support options. If you're looking for an XP device driver, and you're not having much luck with the vendors' sites, try browsing through the posts at various PC community forums.

Forums are great places to post questions and (hopefully) receive answers from other users who have experienced the same problems and found solutions. Microsoft's XP newsgroups are a good place to start.

Other useful XP support sites include the TechArena BoardReader and AllExperts

You'll find all types of XP support from the members of PC user groups, many of which offer live, in-person meetings where participants exchange tips and solutions. Listings for Microsoft user groups are available at the Microsoft Mindshare site.

These are by no means all the support options available to XP users, but they provide a starting point to help you keep XP alive and well until something better comes along — whether another flavour of Windows or something completely different.



More Newbie Club Tutorials

Tutorial ... "About PDF Documents"

Ever clicked a link to download a PDF ebook or document and ....

Surprise surprise, it opens in your browser.

Or even worse, you get a blank screen?

The blank screen means the PDF document is taking a while to load in your browser.

To download PDF files onto your computer you must ...

RIGHT CLICK the link A screen appears.

Choose 'Save target as.

Then select the folder where you want to save it to.

I personally LEFT click some PDF links and read it first in my browser, then if it's worth saving to my hard drive I then ...

Go to TOP toolbar Click FILE Choose 'Save as' Then select a place on my hard drive to save it to, such as my Documents

Tutorial ... "Virus? It Will Never Happen To Me!"

With all the email viruses that are spread on a daily basis, there's got to be some way to protect yourself. Some kind of filtering mechanism that strains these things out of the ether ... and keeps them at bay.

But of course there's not really such a device. So what do you use? A good anti-virus program? A lot of people don't use anything at all. Until they're suddenly and rudely awakened to the fact that THEY'VE been spreading a virus, and by then, it's too late!

One of the best no-cost virus killers can be downloaded from <http://www.freegrisoft.com> Viruses are spread primarily by file attachment. They ride in on the wings of messages and invite you to click them.

There's a powerful psychological force called curiosity that may cause you to do what you know you shouldn't.

Then there are worms, trojans, and other critters you should be aware of.

Learn more here ==> <http://newbieclub.com/viralhome.php> Nobody will force you to take care of your computer. Nobody will pass a law stating you have to install an anti-virus gizmo on your computer. But just wait till you catch one! (I hope that doesn't happen.)

Finally, there's no substitute for a fire wall if your computer is connected by cable modem or DSL. Learn more about the fire wall, and why you should think seriously about having one installed. The article is short and easy to read. Read it here==> <http://newbieclub.com/firewall.php> Better safe than *very* sorry!

Tutorial ... "How To Test Your Monitor"

I'm amazed at how many monitors I see being used by Newbies that are either difficult to read coz the icons and fonts are too small. Or they are too large. Or the colours are garish and hard on the eyes. I can spot a new PC user when I see someone wearing sun glasses:-)

Check your settings ...

Click on Start My Computer.

Control Panel Display Settings.

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11)

Your Screen setting should be on 1024x768 or maybe 800x600 unless you use your PC for graphics creation or other commercial use.

There are many other settings you can use, but for 'normal' people like you and me, any settings higher or lower than those above are not recommended. Mess about a bit by sliding the settings pointer across and click OK. You'll be prompted for confirmation, and your computer will blink for a second or so.

Now view a Website with your new setting and see if it's more comfortable. If not try another setting.

Don't worry, it's very easy to restore your original settings just by repeating the process.

I personally use 1024 X 768, but you may feel differently

Tutorial ... "How To Optimize Your Monitor"

How do you know that your monitor is set correctly?

If you've never changed it's settings since it came out of the box, then perhaps you should see what it CAN look like.

I've seen some absolutely awful colours and distorted pictures on monitors that were badly adjusted.

You'll find the setting buttons on the front of your monitor.

Every make is different, so I can't give precise directions. Look at your manufacturer's handbook for instructions.

Adjust the contrast and brightness to 100% maximum. This reduces eye strain by making everything crisp and bright.

Black should be black and not gray for instance. Then adjust back to suit your own preferences.

If you monitor allows it, tweak the picture for horizontal and vertical settings so that it's perfectly central and fills the screen.

Then throw away those sunglasses:-)

Tutorial ... "How To Adjust Your Sound and Audio Devices"

No sound? OK let's investigate...

This may seem basic but it happened to me once.

Try plugging your speakers into a different jack point on the back of your PC. I had a PC that had been wired up wrong, and the jack point that the speakers were supposed to plug in to were incorrectly wired up. Plugging them into the other available point worked a treat.

OK lets test ...

In Windows XP ...

Start Sound and Audio devices Use the various links available to check and adjust your Audio device and speakers. Make sure that MUTE is not ticked.

Click OK when finished.

In Windows 98 ...

Down at the bottom right of your Desktop in the task bar is a little speaker icon - near where the clock sits.

Click it to open it up.

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

Crank the volume up to maximum. If it has a slider use that, or use the 'Page Up' key on your keyboard.

Now back to your desktop and click Start Settings Control Panel Double click the 'Sounds' icon.

This opens up the Sounds Properties window.

Click the 'Down' arrow until you see a sound with a speaker icon beside it.

Click on it.

In the centre right of the 'Sounds Properties' dialogue is an arrow pointing right.

That's the 'Play' button.

Click it and you should hear a sound from your speakers.

If not, then double check your connections and power/battery supply to your speakers.

If they're still not working you may have a hardware problem that needs sorting by your PC supplier.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

Due to recent budget cuts and the rising cost of electricity, gas and the expenses of everyday living the light at the end of the tunnel has been turned off.

We apologize for any inconvenience

Don't be a victim of Sinowal, the super-Trojan

By Woody Leonhard "Windows Secrets"

The sneaky "drive-by download" known as Sinowal has been, uh, credited with stealing more than 500,000 bank-account passwords, credit-card numbers, and other sensitive financial information.

This exploit has foiled antivirus software manufacturers time and again over the years, and it provides us in real time a look at the future of Windows infections.

Imagine a very clever keylogger sitting on your system, watching unobtrusively as you type, kicking in and recording your keystrokes only when you visit one of 2,700 sensitive sites. The list is controlled by the malware's creators and includes many of the world's most popular banking and investment services.

That's Sinowal, a super-Trojan that uses a technique called HTML injection to put ersatz information on your browser's screen. The bad info prompts you to type an account number and/or a password. Of course, Sinowal gathers all the information and sends it back home — over a fancy, secure, encrypted connection, no less.

Washington Post journalist Brian Krebs wrote the definitive overview of Sinowal's criminal tendencies in his Oct. 31, 2008, column titled "Virtual Heist Nets 500,000+ Bank, Credit Accounts" — a headline that's hard to ignore. Krebs cites a detailed analysis One Sinowal Trojan + One Gang = Hundreds of Thousands of Compromised Accounts."

Sinowal has been around for many years. (Most virus researchers nowadays refer to Sinowal as "Mebroot," but Sinowal is the name you'll see most often in the press. Parts of the old Sinowal went into making Mebroot. It isn't clear whether the same programmers who originally came up with Sinowal are also now working on Mebroot. Mebroot's the current

(Continued on page 14)

villain.)

Microsoft's Robert Hensing and Scott Molenkamp blogged about the current incarnation of Sinowal/Mebroot back in January. RSA has collected data swiped by Sinowal/Mebroot infections dating to 2006. EEye Digital Security demonstrated its "BootRoot" project — which contains several elements similar to Sinowal/Mebroot — at the Black Hat conference in July 2005.

That's a long, long lifespan for a Trojan. It's important for you to know how to protect yourself.

A serious infection most antivirus apps miss I haven't even told you the scariest part yet.

Sinowal/Mebroot works by infecting Windows XP's Master Boot Record (MBR) — it takes over the tiny program that's used to boot Windows. MBR infections have existed since the dawn of DOS. (You'd think that Microsoft would've figured out a way to protect the MBR by now — but you'd be wrong.)

Vista SP1 blocks the simplest MBR access, but the initial sectors are still programmatically accessible, according to a highly technical post <http://WindowsSecrets.com/links/mrobi86js2jdd/8804e2h/?url=www2.gmer.net%2Fmbr%2F> by GMER, the antirootkit software manufacturer.

The key to Sinowal/Mebroot's "success" is that it's so sneaky and is able to accomplish its dirty work in many different ways. How sneaky? Consider this: Sinowal/Mebroot doesn't run straight out to your MBR and overwrite it. Instead, the Trojan waits for 8 minutes before it even begins to analyze your computer and change the Registry. Digging into the MBR doesn't start until 10 minutes after that.

Sinowal/Mebroot erases all of its tracks and then reboots the PC using the adulterated MBR and new Registry settings 42 minutes into the process.

Peter Kleissner, Software Engineer at Vienna Computer Products, has posted a detailed analysis of the infection method and the intricate interrupt-hooking steps, including the timing and the machine code for the obfuscated parts.

Once Sinowal/Mebroot is in your system, the Trojan runs stealthily, loading itself in true rootkit fashion before Windows starts. The worm flies under the radar by running inside the kernel, the lowest level of Windows, where it sets up its own network communication system, whose external data transmissions use 128-bit encryption. The people who run Sinowal/Mebroot have registered thousands of .com, .net, and .biz domains for use in the scheme.

Wait, there's more: Sinowal/Mebroot cloaks itself entirely and uses no executable files that you can see. The changes it makes to the Registry are very hard to find. Also, there's no driver module in the module list, and no Sinowal/Mebroot-related svchost.exe or rundll32.exe processes appear in the Task Manager's Processes list.

Once Sinowal/Mebroot has established its own internal communication software, the Trojan can download and run software fed to it by its creators. Likewise, the downloaded programs can run undetected at the kernel level.

Sinowal/Mebroot isn't so much a Trojan as a parasitic operating system that runs inside Windows.

Windows XP users are particularly vulnerable So, what can you do to thwart this menace? Your firewall won't help: Sinowal/Mebroot bypasses Windows' normal communication routines, so it works outside your computer's firewall.

Your antivirus program may help, for a while. Time and time again,

(Continued on page 15)

however, Sinowal/Mebroot's creators have modified the program well enough to escape detection. AV vendors scramble to catch the latest versions, but with one or two new Sinowal/Mebroot iterations being released every month, the vendors are trying to hit a very fleet — and intelligent — target.

Peter Kleissner told me, "I think Sinowal has been so successful because it's always changing ... it is adjusting to new conditions instantly. We see Sinowal changing its infection methods and exploits all the time."

Similarly, you can't rely on rootkit scanners for protection. Even the best rootkit scanners miss some versions of Sinowal/Mebroot. (See Scott Spanbauer's review of free rootkit removers in May 22's Best Software column and Mark Edwards' review of rootkit-remover effectiveness in his May 22

Truth be told, there is no single way to reliably protect yourself from Sinowal/Mebroot, short of disconnecting your computer from the Internet and not opening any files. But there are some historical patterns to the exploit that you can learn from.

First of all, most of the Sinowal/Mebroot infections I've heard about got into the afflicted PCs via well-known and already-patched security holes in Adobe Reader, Flash Player, or Apple QuickTime. These are not the only Sinowal/Mebroot infection vectors by a long shot, but they seem to be preferred by the Trojan's creators. You can minimize your risk of infection by keeping all of your third-party programs updated to the latest versions.

Windows Secrets associate editor Scott Dunn explained how to use the free Secunia Software Inspector service to test your third-party apps, and how to schedule a monthly check-up for your system, in his Sept. 6, 2007 column.

In addition, according to Peter Kleissner, Sinowal/Mebroot — at least in its current incarnation — doesn't infect Vista systems. Windows XP remains its primary target, because Vista's boot method is different and its User Account Control regime gets in the worm's way.

Don't look to your bank for Sinowal safeguards So, you'd figure the banks and financial institutions being targeted by Sinowal/Mebroot would be up in arms, right? Half a million compromised accounts for sale by an unknown, sophisticated, and capable team that's still harvesting accounts should send a shiver up any banker's spine.

I asked Rob Rosenberger about it, and he laughed. Rosenberger's one of the original virus experts and was also one of the first people to work on network security at a large brokerage firm.

"I'll be labelled a heretic for saying this, but ... from a banking perspective, frauds like this have never qualified as a major threat. A banker looks at his P&L sheets and writes off this kind of fraud as simply a cost of doing business. Such fraud may amount to billions of dollars each year, but the cost is spread across all sectors of the banking industry all over the world.

"Banks have dealt with this kind of fraud for many, many decades," Rosenberger continued. "Forget the Internet — this kind of fraud existed back in the days of credit-card machines with carbon paper forms. The technology of fraud gets better each year, but this type of fraud remains consistent. From a banking perspective, the cost to obey government regulations dwarfs the cost of any individual case of fraud."

If the bankers aren't going to take up the fight against Sinowal/Mebroot, who will? The antivirus software companies have a long tradition of crying wolf, and their credibility has suffered as a result.

In this particular case, the major AV packages have failed to detect Sinowal/Mebroot over and over again. It's hard to imagine one of the AV companies drumming up enough user interest — or enough business — to fund a mano-a-mano fight against the threat. Besides, the AV companies are chasing the cows after they've left the barn, so to speak.

The folks who make malware these days constantly tweak their products,

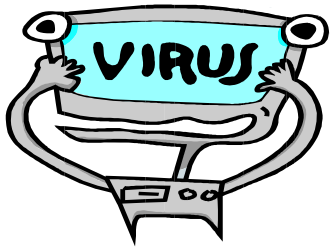
often using VirusTotal or a proprietary set of scanners to make sure their programs pass muster. A day or an hour later — before the AV companies can update their signatures — the bad guys unleash a new version. AV companies know that and are moving to behavioral monitoring and other techniques to try to catch malware before it can do any harm.

The only company that seems to be in a position to fix the Master Boot Record problem is Microsoft. But it's hard to imagine MS management devoting the time and resources necessary to fix major security holes in a seven-year-old product, particularly when XP's successors (I use the term lightly) don't appear to have the same flaw.

This is short-sighted, however. It's only a matter of time before Sinowal/Mebroot — or an even-more-dangerous offshoot — finds a way to do its damage on Vista systems as well.

If Microsoft decides to take on Sinowal/Mebroot, the company is up against a formidable opponent that draws on many talented programmers. John Hawes at Virus Bulletin says "I recently heard someone estimate that a team of 10 top programmers would need four full months of work to put together the basic setup."

As Peter Kleissner puts it, "I personally think most people behind the [Sinowal] code do not know what they have done. I would bet that more than half of the code was written by students around the world."

Kleissner's in a good position to judge. He's a student himself, 18 years old. I'm glad he's on our 

side

How to Give a Cat A Pill

1. Pick up cat and cradle it in the crook of your left Arm as if holding a baby. Position right forefinger And thumb on either side of cat's mouth and gently Apply pressure to cheeks while holding pill in right Hand. As cat opens mouth, pop pill into mouth.
   Allow cat to close mouth and swallow.

2. Retrieve pill from floor and cat from behind sofa.
   Cradle cat in left arm and repeat process.

3 Retrieve cat from bedroom, and throw soggy pill away.

4 Take new pill from foil wrap, cradle cat in left arm, Holding rear paws tightly with left hand. Force jaws Open and push pill to back of mouth with right forefinger.
   Hold mouth shut for a count of ten.

5. Retrieve pill from goldfish bowl and cat from top of Wardrobe. Call spouse from garden..

6 Kneel on floor with cat wedged firmly between knees, Hold front and rear paws. Ignore low growls emitted By cat. Get spouse to hold head firmly with one hand While forcing wooden ruler into mouth. Drop pill down Ruler and rub cat's throat vigorously.

7.. Retrieve cat from curtain rail, get another pill From foil wrap. Make note to buy new ruler and Repair curtains. Carefully sweep shattered Figurines and vases from hearth and set to one Side for gluing later.

8. Wrap cat in large towel and get spouse to lie On cat with head just visible from below armpit.
   Put pill in end of drinking straw, force mouth open With pencil and blow down drinking straw.

9. Check label to make sure pill not harmful to Humans, drink 1 beer to

take taste away. Apply Band-Aid to spouse's forearm and remove blood From carpet with cold water and soap.

10 Retrieve cat from neighbour's shed. Get another Pill. Open another beer.. Place cat in cupboard, And close door onto neck, to leave head showing.
Force mouth open with dessert spoon. Flick pill Down throat with elastic band.

11 11. Fetch screwdriver from garage and put cupboard Door back on hinges. Drink beer. Fetch bottle of Scotch. Pour shot, drink. Apply cold compress to Cheek and check records for date of last tetanus shot.
Apply whiskey compress to cheek to disinfect. Toss back Another shot. Throw Tee shirt away and fetch new One from bedroom.

12. Call fire department to retrieve the damn cat from Across the road. Apologize to neighbour who crashed Into fence while swerving to avoid cat. Take last pill From foil wrap.

13. Tie the front paws to rear paws with Garden twine and bind tightly to leg of dining table, Find heavy-duty pruning gloves from shed. Push pill Into mouth followed by large piece of filet steak. Be Rough about it. Hold head vertically and pour 2 pints Of water down throat to wash pill down.

14. Consume remainder of scotch. Get spouse to Drive you to the emergency room, sit quietly while Doctor stitches fingers and forearm and removes pill Remnants from right eye. Call furniture shop on way Home to order new table.

15. Arrange for RSPCA to collect mutant cat from hell And call local pet shop to see if they have any Hamsters.

How To Give A Dog A Pill

1. Wrap it in bacon.

2. Toss it in the air.

(Continued from page 8)

Print Picture: Prints the image on your default printer.

Set as Background: Uses the image as your desktop wallpaper.

Set as Desktop Item: Sets the image as an Active Desktop item.

Copy: Copies the image to the Clipboard for pasting into a graphics editing program.

Add to Favorites: Adds the selected images to your Favorites REMEMBER, all text and images are Copyright!

Tutorial ... "Computer Freezing In Standby Mode?"

Using standby mode, is supposed to save energy when your PC is unattended, and help your Monitor last longer. In other words it switches over to using a screen saver if left unattended for a while.

However, this facility can cause problems, because sometimes when you try to bring back your 'normal' screen you find your PC is frozen. No mouse, no alt/ctrl/delete function ...

Zilch!

Then you have to switch off your computer (even that doesn't work sometimes), reboot and run scan disk, just to get back to where you were before you took time off for that cup of coffee.

If this has happened to you, the answer is to disable the standby mode. Here's how ...

RIGHT Click on a blank area of your desktop.

LEFT Click on Properties Screen saver Settings (or Power)

Check everything in there to 'Never'.

Click OK and OK again.

Job done.

Now you can have a cup of coffee with peace of mind:-)

Take a Break ... "The English Language?"

There is no egg in eggplant, nor ham in hamburger; neither apple or pine in pineapple. And while no one knows what is in a hotdog, you can be pretty sure it isn't canine.

English muffins were not invented in England nor French fries in France.

Sweetmeats are candies, while sweetbreads, which aren't sweet, are meat.

We take English for granted. But if we explore its paradoxes, we find that quicksand can work slowly, boxing rings are square, and guinea pig is neither from Guinea nor is it a pig.

And why is it that writers write, but fingers don't fing, grocers don't groce, and hammers don't ham?

If the plural of tooth is teeth, why isn't the plural of booth, beeth? One goose, 2 geese. So one moose, two meese?

Is cheese the plural of choose? One mouse, 2 mice. One louse, 2 lice. One house, 2 hice?

If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?

If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?

Why do people recite at a play, and play at a recital?

Ship by truck or car and send cargo by ship? Have noses that run and feet

(Continued from page 18)

that smell? Park on driveways and drive on parkways?

How can a slim chance and a fat chance be the same, while a wise man and a wise guy are opposites?

How can the weather be hot as heck one day and cold as heck another? When a house burns up, it burns down. You fill in a form by filling it out and an alarm clock goes off by going on. You get in and out of a car, yet you get on and off a bus. When the stars are out, they are visible, but when the lights are out, they are invisible.

And why, when I wind up my watch, I start it, but when I wind up this essay, I end it?

English is a silly language ... it doesn't know if it is coming or going!!!

Antivirus tools try to remove Sinowal/Mebroot

By Woody Leonhard

wrote last Thursday about ways to protect your PC from infection by Sinowal/Mebroot, a devilishly effective rootkit that can evade antivirus programs.

This week, I'll concentrate on the best available techniques to try to remove the offender, if you're one of the unfortunates who've already been hit.

My Top Story Dont-be-a-victim-of-Sinowal-the-super-Trojan> Nov. 20 focused on prevention, because it can be hard as heck to get rid of Sinowal/Mebroot once your PC's got it. (Sinowal is the name of an older variant and Mebroot is its newer form, so I'll simply call the threat Mebroot in the remainder of this article.)

Mebroot infects a PC's Master Boot Record (MBR), the first sector on a hard drive, where it's invisible to ordinary antivirus agents. As I stated last week, your best defense against infection is to use, on a regular basis, a software scanner such as Secunia's free Personal Software Inspector (get it from Secunia's download page Ideally, you should run a PSI scan right after you install Microsoft's Patch Tuesday updates for Windows. The PSI scan tests your third-party applications, so you can patch them with the latest fixes. Unpatched media-player apps — Adobe Reader, Flash Player, Apple QuickTime, and the like — are particularly vulnerable to Mebroot and other threats, so it's vital to keep your players up-to-date.

Most Windows Secrets readers are probably not infected with Mebroot. Sophisticated PC users are less likely than novices to visit "celebrity video" sites and leave their PCs' third-party applications unpatched for months or years at a time.

But, as careful as you are, it's possible that your PC became infected when you visited some seemingly legitimate site with a less-than-fully-updated browser or while you were running an application with an unpatched security hole.

Washington Post blogger Brian Krebs wrote last month that a new sample of Sinowal/Mebroot was submitted to VirusTotal, an antivirus testing firm, on Oct. 21. Only 10 out of 35 antivirus programs (28.6%) correctly identified the sample or flagged it as suspicious, Krebs says.

If your PC is infected, Mebroot removal tools developed by a few security vendors may be able to help you. The bad news is that even the best tool can't be 100% effective against a threat that's evolving as quickly as this li'l terror.

- **Use F-Secure's utility to clean out rootkits Security firm F-Secure is at**

the forefront of the industry's response to Mebroot. F-Secure researcher Kimmo Kasslin gave a presentation to a packed conference hall at the Virus Bulletin conference in October, during which he explained the Mebroot menace in these terms:

- Mebroot is the most advanced and stealthiest malware seen so far.
- When an infected machine is started, Mebroot loads first and survives through the Windows boot.

Mebroot uses a very complex installation mechanism, trying to bypass security products and to make automatic analysis harder.

As a payload, Mebroot attacks over 100 European online banks, trying to steal money as users do their online banking on infected machines.

For a complete outline of Kasslin's points and a downloadable PDF version of his conference presentation, see the F-Secure blog page

The company claims that its BlackLight rootkit scanner detects and removes Mebroot. F-Secure also says Mebroot required the development of entirely new detection techniques.

Mebroot's programmers are smart and fast. How smart? When the authors of the rootkit detector GMER discovered how to recognize a particular behavior in Mebroot, the bad guys replaced some code in a driver initializer that threw GMER off the track. (For more information, see Trend Micro's blog entry on this subject.) Detecting and preventing Mebroot is a cat-and-mouse game, and the black cats are winning.

BlackLight is built into F-Secure's commercial products, such as F-Secure Internet Security 2008. A free, standalone BlackLight download is also available. (The utility requires administrator privileges to run.)

For information on the products and a link to the download, see F-Secure's page.

To get the best detection odds, you can test your PC with multiple antirootkit programs, many of which are free. For a complete review of several top offerings, see Scott Spanbauer's May 22 Best Software column -Top-free-tools-for-rooting-out-rootkit-spies

Unfortunately, I don't know of any software maker that claims it can reliably detect — much less remove — every possible variant of Mebroot.

Your only real remedy may be a clean start Right now, I believe one of my Windows XP machines is infected with Mebroot, but I can't tell for sure. I've quarantined the system by disconnecting it from my network, and I'm in the process of copying a small handful of vital data files off the PC and onto a USB drive.

Once I've copied the files, I'll reformat the machine's hard drive, reinstall Windows and my apps, and then carefully copy the data back — being very sure to hold down the Shift key every time I insert the USB drive. The Shift key circumvents Windows' AutoPlay behavior, thereby making any malware that might have sneaked onto the thumb drive less likely to run automatically.

Finally, I'll install and religiously use Secunia's Personal Software Inspector every month. Then I'll rub my lucky rabbit's foot (lot of good it did the rabbit), knock on wood, cross my fingers (does wonders for my typing), and hope that Mebroot doesn't bite me again.

My long-range plan is to upgrade the video cards on all of my Windows XP machines so they can limp along with their OS upgraded to Vista. At present, the User Account Control (UAC) function of the latest update of Vista does at least warn against Mebroot's initial attempt to activate. For other, more-technical reasons why Vista is not yet at risk from Mebroot, see the "Affected Systems" section of software engineer Peter Kleissner's analysis

Of course, by the time I've done a clean install, the Mebroot gang may well have found a way to make even Vista as vulnerable as XP is now.

Helluva situation, isn't it?