

**December, 2010**

# **Bristol Village Computer Club**

If you are reading this on your computer display, remember that **Acrobat Reader** has a **zoom** feature for enlarging text and graphics.

**Next Computer Club (BVCC)  
Meeting, December 13, 2010, 7:30  
PM**

## **December, 2010 Program**

George Hartwell and friends will demonstrate the Kindle electronic book reader (or as Amazon promotes it *wireless reading device*) and describe their experiences with this handy technology. Other e-readers likely will be available for examination by attendees. [Program will be on 99.]

## **Notes from Kent**

### **Personal Medical Records – Pt. 2**

When promised last month, this article intended to examine Google Health (<http://www.google.com/health/>) and Microsoft HealthVault (<http://www.healthvault.com/personal/index.aspx>) in some detail. Reading a cautionary report, however, prompts a revision of that intention. Written by “e-patient Dave” (<http://e-patients.net/archives/2009/04/imagine-if-someone-had-been-managing-your-data-and-then-you-looked.html>), his personal experience demands a reconsideration of personal electronic medical records, especially when trying to convert existing electronic records.



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Despite earlier doubts, e-patient Dave decided that he should enter his information into Google Health and [Microsoft] Health Vault, through a program offered by his hospital. He hoped that this would facilitate computer screening to afford early detection of any health issues. His record was entered by electronically sending it from his hospital records into Google Health. He no sooner did so than he received a warning, “Requires immediate attention!” The system alerted him that one of his medications should not be taken by people with low potassium. But he'd had low potassium some years earlier not at present.

Looking further in the record in Google Health, he discovered that it listed every disease or condition that he had ever had with no indication of the dates. The records reported all of these as if they were current and not something that he'd taken care of years before. It also listed several conditions, such as aortic aneurysm and anxiety, that he didn't have. He was able to determine that Google Health was actually using billing codes, not doctors' diagnoses, as if they were diagnoses. For example, in a cancer screening the billing code would indicate the cancer but in fact the tests under the code ruled out the disease.



Based on his experience and subsequent explorations, e-patient Dave offers two major caveats with regard to sharing medical records electronically. The first is that a patient (and presumably physicians) should manually enter his/her record (rather than transmitting an existing electronic record) and be able to review it for accuracy. Equally, or more importantly, there should be provision to correct errors. Instead of rigorous procedures to insure (and/or correct) data accuracy, he found a report in *Fast Company* from Geisinger Health System, which runs three hospitals in central Pennsylvania, indicating that patient X's record from an ordinary procedure was seen, in two weeks after his release by 113 people (all with good reason), and all of whom was "empowered to screw up" the records <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/129/the-cure.html?page=0%2C1>.

E-patient Dave cautions that the old computer adage, GIGO (garbage in, garbage out), is especially applicable to health records, meaning that a patient needs to carefully monitor what is in his/her health records, whether paper or electronic. As a contrasting note, a chapter on the use of electronic records in France in *The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care* by T.R. Reid (New York : Penguin Press, 2009) documents how electronic records can improve information flow and medical service while decreasing costs.



### How Fast?

"My computer isn't fast enough" is a common complaint but offers little information about what is meant. As reported in the November issue (p. 4), insufficient RAM [Random Access Memory] is a frequent cause of slowness, especially as newer updates to Windows XP increase memory needs.

But the quality of Internet connectivity can also be a significant factor, at least for Internet-based activities like e-mail and web searching/browsing. As dramatic proof, compare a broadband connection (such as a cable modem) or DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) to a "dial-up" connection.

And it is informative that the difference is ascribable to bandwidth because it is not really "speed" of which we are speaking but how much information (represented by ones and zeros) is conveyed in a given amount of time. To get beyond the subjective complaint that one's computer is not fast enough, there are objective measures available.

The classic for this is [www.speedtest.net](http://www.speedtest.net). It provides tests for ping (a computer message of "are you up and ready for business?" and acknowledgment), downloads, and uploads from sites around the world, with site selection left to you. The nearest local site is a K-12 schools site (SCOCA-South Central Ohio Computer Association) in Piketon. A Sunday (11/28) test of my Road Runner connections offered the following (for a site within 50 miles and and one 1500 miles away):



	<u>Ping</u>	<u>Upload</u>	<u>Download</u>
Piketon	52 ms	.47 mps	24.6 mps
Orem, UT	168ms	.25 mps	5.98mps

It should be noted that "speed" can vary considerably; therefore, a speed test should be compared to previous tests from the same machine to determine a pattern.

Because bandwidth is mostly what you are paying for (Time Warner [TW] prices over the past year have ranged from \$19.95 to \$39.95 depending on width). For example, one TW mid-range offering quotes 512 kps (kilobytes per second) upload and "up to" 7 mps (megabytes per second). Its "Turbo

with PowerBoost” claims 768 kps and “up to” 15 mps.

With speed at a premium (and claims of speed a competitive advantage) but largely publicly unmonitored, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) has a tentative program to provide a public listing of speed (and presumably a basis for evaluating claims of speed). In what is identified as a “beta” test, the FCC offers tests using two different methodologies (but does not identify the location of either site's server). To try the test, <http://www.broadband.gov/qualitytest/> will ask you for minimal address information to provide the FCC with a mapping of regional disparities in broadband service. The following are the results of tests on 11/29, identified by the protocol in the test:

	Ping	Upload	Download
Mlab	.43ms	12.81mps	497kps
Ookla	.32ms	26.09mps	483kps

While some national standards for measuring speed/bandwidth would be desirable, at this point the FCC site is only serves to alert the FCC that there are disparities. And as evident in the data provided here, there are substantial discrepancies among tests as well.

*Kent Mulliner*

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## Web sites to try

*by Len*

Have you received email warnings about getting phone charges if you call numbers in the 809 area code? Here is a web page that provides background info about this issue.

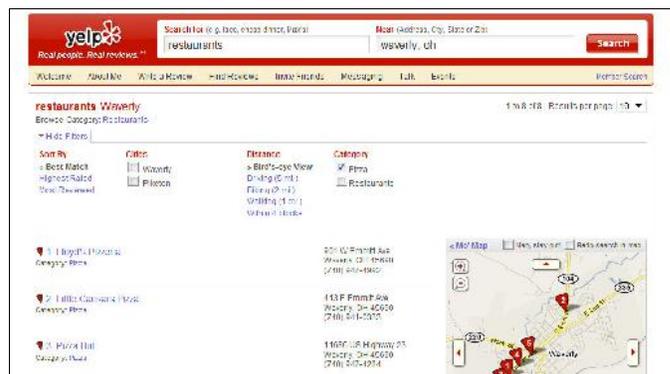
<http://www.snopes.com/fraud/telephone/809.asp>

## Find Places

Here is a web site that can answer questions like... “Where can I find a restaurant with a view near Maysville, KY”

[www.yelp.com](http://www.yelp.com)

You can look for more than places to eat on Yelp. People submit reviews of places and these can help you choose. Since these are personal opinions, they have to be taken with a grain of salt.



You can also register and get the power to add your own reviews or comments about places you have visited.

## Using Flash Drives

*by Len*

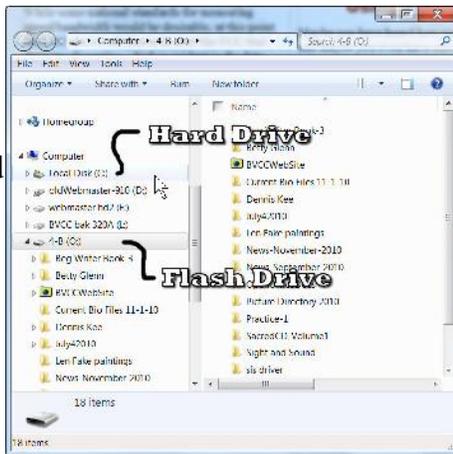
Maybe you have heard how useful flash drives are, and maybe you even have one, but you are not sure what to do with it. Here are some tips.

When you insert a flash drive in most computers, an auto play window will open. The option you will want in most cases is **Open Folder to view files**.

When you select the Open folder option, **Windows Explorer** will open.



Here you can copy folders and/or files from the flash drive to the hard drive. [use **Ctrl+C** to copy and **Ctrl+V** to paste] You can also use *Windows Explorer* to create new folders. (In XP, select File, New, Folder.)



## Microsoft Security Essentials and Flash Drives

If you are using flash drives but are not using the free *Microsoft Security Essentials* program, here is a reason to have it installed.

Flash drives are notorious for picking up viruses and passing them along. When you insert a flash drive into a computer that has *Microsoft Security Essentials* installed, it immediately checks the contents of the drive for a virus. This can avoid a nasty virus experience.

## Tech Text Tips Clean Up Web Text for Printing

There may be times when you want to print material from a web page, but it has a lot of unwanted junk and all you want is plain text. A trick to get rid of everything but the wanted text is to do the following:

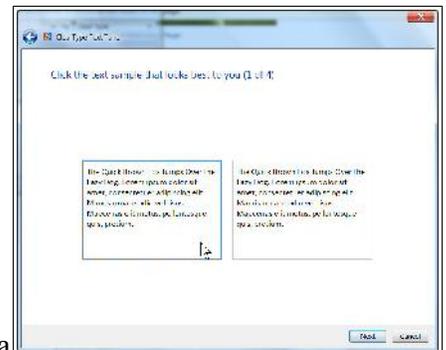
- Highlight the desired text
- Copy it to the clipboard [using **Ctrl+C**]
- Open Word Pad or Open Office Writer
- Paste the text [using **Ctrl+V**]
- Format as necessary
- Print the text document

## Clear Type Text for Windows 7

Text displayed on an LCD monitor sometimes has a fuzzy appearance. Here is a Windows 7 trick to clear it up a bit.

- Select Start, Control Panel and enter clear type in the search box.
- Click on the Adjust Clear Type Text option.

This will open a series of windows similar to your visit to the eye doctor... “Do you like this one, or this one.



This procedure should make text a bit easier to read.

## Big Text

Most word processing programs allow for changing the font size. However, there may be times when you would like letters bigger than the maximum font size on the pop down list. Here is a trick.

- Open your word processing program.
- Type the desired text.
- Select (highlight) the text.
- Click the cursor in the text **FORMAT TOOL BAR** and edit the number shown to the desired font size.
- Press the **Enter** key to tell the system you are finished editing the font size.



## Backup email addresses

Most email programs have a way to export your address books to a file. This is useful for either a backup copy or for when you want to move addresses to a different email program.



Some email programs can export to specific email file formats. For example, Outlook Express, Thunderbird, or Yahoo. Most provide a CSV [comma-separated values] option. CSV files can be opened or imported by most spreadsheet programs like Open Office Calc or Excel.

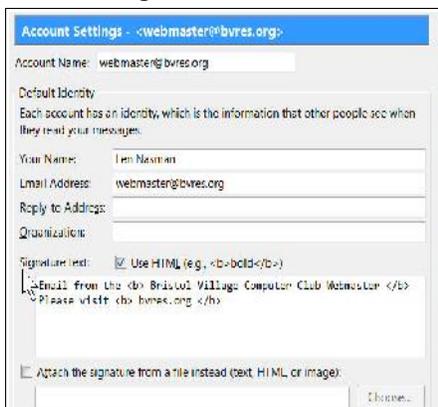
In any case, export your address files to a known location on your hard drive, and then make a copy on an external hard drive or location where you store backup files. This can save the grief of having to enter all of those strange email addresses by hand.

## Fred Notes

Fred has become a fan of the Thunderbird email program and has discovered how to add a simple signature to his email. Here is the trick.



- Select **Tools, Account Settings**.
- In the Signature text area enter your desired text.
- If you know how, you can format text using HTML codes.
- You can also insert graphic image files as signatures.



*Fred Schuster*

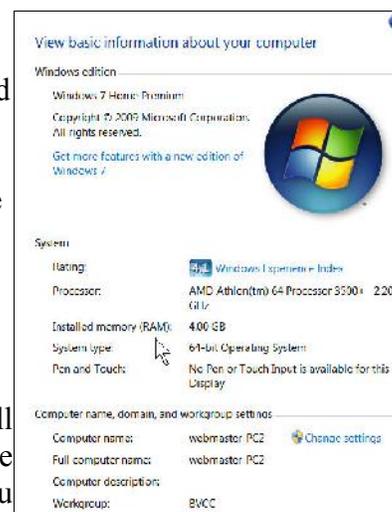
## Check Your Memory

Once again there is evidence that recent Windows updates are demanding more RAM memory. We have had several computers come into the shop that were running so slow that they were practically unusable. Adding RAM solved the problem. Here is a quick way to check your RAM.

- Hold the Windows Key down and press the Pause/Break key. This will open a window that shows your system specifications.



If your system has 512MB of RAM or less, you need to add more. The good news is that memory prices have come down. The current price for a 512MB memory card is now around \$20 for many computer models. Not all memory modules are created equal, so you will need to know the exact type of memory your system needs before ordering.



At this point, it appears that going from 512MB to 1GB of RAM returns most Windows XP computers to like new operating speeds. Windows XP and Windows 7 32 bit versions can use a maximum of 3.5GB. Windows 7 64 bit systems have a maximum RAM of between 8 and 192GB depending on the version.

