

# Bristol Village Computer Club Newsletter January 2013

If you are reading this on your computer display, remember that **Acrobat Reader** has a *zoom* feature (under "View" in your top tool bar) for enlarging or reducing text and graphics.

**Next Computer Club (BVCC) Meeting**

**Live Webinar "Computer Hardware Overview" presented by Jere Minich of Florida**

**January 14, 2013 7:30Pm Glenn Center Multipurpose Room (will NOT be on BVTV)**

### New Quick Index

If you are reading this in [Acrobat Reader](#), you can now jump directly to articles in this newsletter. Just *left click* on the **Contents** listing.

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## Notes from Kent

### Coping With Chaos

Evident in the announcement of the next meeting (above), the renovations of the Glenn Center auditorium are about to begin. But the Computer Club will continue, albeit without televised programs. The January and February meetings will be in the

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Multipurpose Room, which means that you will have to attend in person to profit from the program. And we do have two excellent programs, live Webinars featuring Jere Minich from Florida. The January program will offer a tour of your computer and the hardware components that make it a computer. The February meeting will focus on maintenance for your computer.

To introduce our speaker, Jere joined the Navy in 1960 and served as computer operator for Submarine Weapon Systems, Missiles, and torpedoes. After retirement, he continued to work for the Navy for 17 years as a "Computer Systems Analyst" at the Naval Weapons Center, in Dahlgren, VA. After retiring again, he moved to Florida and worked in a computer shop in The Villages, FL. In 2001, he began teaching computers to neighbors and in 2009 started teaching computers to members of the Lake Sumter Computer Society, using facilities at Lake Sumter State College.



**Jere Minich**

## Malware Alerts

Back in November (2012), we warned you of a malware (virus, Trojan horse, etc.) vulnerability in all versions of **Microsoft Internet Explorer (IE)**. That was supposedly patched but on December 29<sup>th</sup>, Microsoft issued a new warning for Internet Explorer Versions 6 through 8. This new vulnerability allows a remote bad guy to take control of your computer and to host adverse programs. In one case the respected **Council on Foreign Relations (CFR)** web site was found to be hosting the code. Microsoft advises users with operating systems newer than XP switch to IE 9 or 10. Of course, switching to **Mozilla Firefox** will also spare you from attacks through IE. Cautions note that your browser cannot be infected unless it visits an infected site, but if you can't trust the CFR it's hard to know what would be a safe site to visit.

A December 26<sup>th</sup> news report indicates that our old friends, the purveyors of ransomware, have a new trick. They now claim the ability to erase your hard disk and have raised their demands for payments to \$300. **Symantec** reports that they have found no ability to wipe disks in the malicious software (malware) investigated. Some users have reported demands for payment from the FBI because child pornography was found on the computer. Locally, Village residents have reported receiving phone calls claiming that their computer is infected and that they should send payment immediately. Our advice remains the same. **Hang up on any such demands. And to not respond to online demands to remove malware.** It is worth noting that Symantec has a free tool, **Norton Power Eraser**, which claims to seek out and destroy ransomware and fake antivirus software at <http://security.symantec.com/nbrt/npe.aspx?icid=1033>.

*By Kent*

## Windows 8

*By Len*

Windows 8 has been installed on one of the computer room computers. It is available for BVCC members to try or for tutoring.

After exploring Windows 8 for several days, my conclusion is that it is OK for touch-screen tablet users, it is probably acceptable for new computer users who only want to surf the Internet and do email (as long as they have someone to set it up for them), but is unacceptable for desktop users who have a minimum of experience with other versions of Windows. If you have a little experience with Windows and are buying a new desktop computer, my advice is to insist on one with Windows 7.

To install Windows 8 in the BVCC computer room, I took advantage of a Microsoft \$39.99 offer to download the program. (This price offer will end sometime in January 2013.) The computer selected had Windows XP installed. The Windows 8 installation preserved the document files, but not the installed application programs.

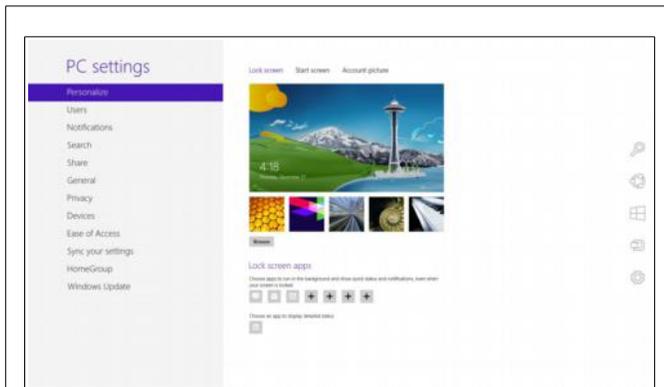
The installation was fairly easy, but very time consuming, more than 3 hours. The messages during install are cryptic, and there are long periods when it is not clear (unless you monitor the hard drive activity light) if the computer has locked up.

Here is an example opening screen (Lock Screen) for Windows 8. You have to click the mouse button to reveal the password Logon screen.



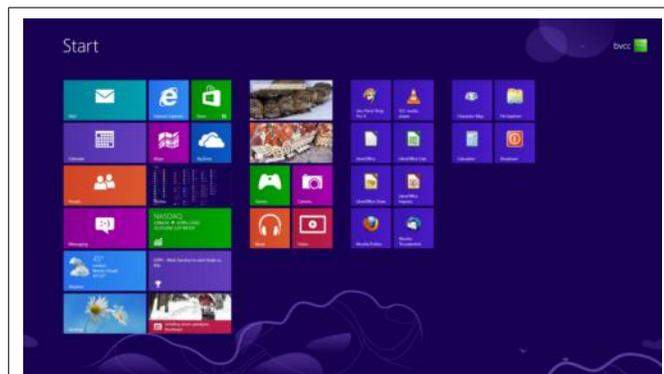
Windows 8 Lock Screen

If you don't like the Seattle area drawing on the Lock screen, you can change it.



PC Settings, Personalize Display

Once you get past the log on screen you will see the new **Start** display. The following illustration shows the start screen on Comp511a in the BVCC Computer Room.



Start screen on BVCC computer

This computer was upgraded to Windows 8 Pro from Windows XP by installing the \$39.99 download from Microsoft.

If you buy a new computer with Windows 8 already installed, the start screen will have **Tiles** for all of the bloatware **Apps** that come from the computer manufacture.

One complaint about Windows 8 on desktop computers is that it is designed to work on smaller low resolution portable devices like smart phones and touch pads. The result is that display screens are low resolution and take the whole screen, unlike

Windows 7 running on a high resolution monitor where users like to have several applications visible at the same time in different windows.

Another complaint is that **Apps** like a DVD player are not included and Microsoft would like you to visit their '**App Store**' to purchase various things, some of which were included with earlier versions of Windows. This leaves the user to either spend more money or surf the Internet for free alternatives.

Many, but not all, older programs will work with Windows 8. LibreOffice works fine, and my 10 year old mechanical CAD program works, but not my 10 year old Architectural CAD program. The point is that you cannot assume that your older programs will still work with Windows 8. Installing programs (or **Apps** as Microsoft now likes to call them) seems to take a lot longer with Windows 8 then with earlier Windows versions.

A lot of pundits writing in the magazines seem to think that Windows 8 is faster than earlier versions. This has not been my experience. Operations like adding a new user take a lot longer than with Windows 7. However, if Windows 8 is used on a tablet or laptop, it will start faster because the device is never completely turned off when the off button is pushed.

### Beyond the Start Window

The Start window contains a screen full of tiles that behave similar to the Desktop shortcuts from previous Windows versions. There is a secondary screen that has shortcut icons for most programs and functions. This is displayed by right clicking on an empty area of the Start screen and then clicking on **All Apps**.



The All Apps screen

For those users who prefer a more traditional interface (most experienced Windows users I suspect) there is a Desktop screen option. The Desktop appears by clicking on a tile on the Start screen.



Windows 8 Desktop

The Windows 8 Desktop is similar to earlier versions. However, there is no Start option on the Taskbar. There are also some other significant differences from earlier versions, but the user can add shortcuts and Taskbar icons and make the interface look more familiar.

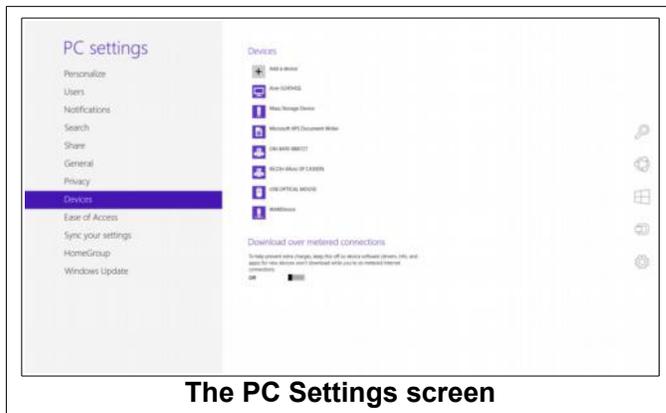
Because the Windows 8 Start screen was designed for tablets and phones with touch screens, and people who are used to touching and wiping their fingers on the screen to make things happen, desktop computer mouse users have to learn new ways to get around. For example, moving the mouse into the extreme corners of the Start display pops open various menus and options. When the mouse pointer is jammed into the lower right corner of the

Start display, it will open the sidebar options seen in the following illustration.



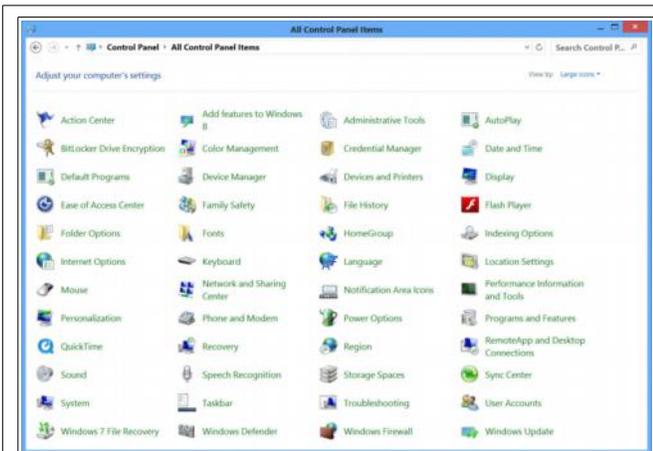
Start screen sidebar

The options include access to various computer settings. Selecting these opens windows that take over the entire screen. Some traditional Desktop users object to this since they are used to having multiple windows open for different functions. The full screen approach is apparently designed for low resolution touch screen tablet computer users.



The PC Settings screen

Experienced Windows users will probably opt for selecting the Control Panel shortcut found on the *All Apps* screen. This provides access to computer settings in a more familiar manner.



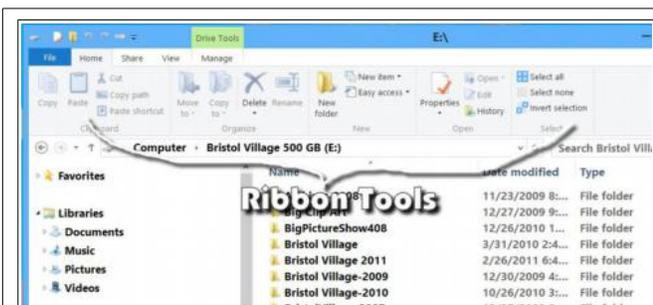
Control Panel window

### File Explorer

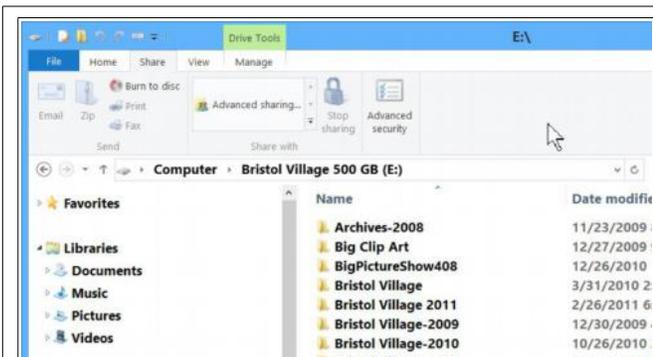
Microsoft has decided to rename *Windows Explorer* to *File Explorer* in Windows 8. The new name is probably more descriptive. I have long been a believer that the secret to taking control of your computer is to learn how to use Windows Explorer, now named File Explorer.

The standard drop-down menus in earlier versions of Windows have been replaced by what is called the *Ribbon* Toolbars. The Ribbon approach has been used in software (such as Microsoft Office) in earlier versions of Windows.

Here are some examples of Ribbon tools.



Ribbon Home Tools

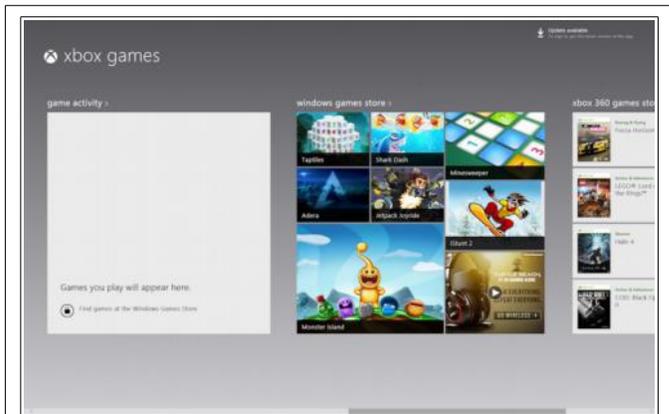


Ribbon Share Tools

The Ribbon Tools approach seems to provide quicker access to some tools than the traditional Menubar, but it could have been incorporated into Windows 7 without the uncomfortable touch panel approach of Windows 8.

### Games

Microsoft has decided to remove some of the free games from earlier Windows versions and to require people to visit the Apps Store to purchase games.



Games Apps Store

There are some free games available, but it takes a bit of searching and work to find and download them. Solitaire addicts may be disappointed to discover the old Solitaire and Free Cell games have been expanded to fit on touch screens. This means that they take over the entire display.



Free Cell in Windows 8

The larger size makes them somewhat slower to play using a mouse. It also means that you cannot have your email program and web browser sharing the screen with your game. Bother! ☹

After installing the solitaire collection on my home computer, I tried to install it on the BVCC Windows 8 computer. More frustrations... First of all, finding the free Microsoft solitaire collection on the Apps Store was a challenge. Next was the problem of installing it. You have to establish a Microsoft account (with an email address and password) to install even the free stuff. Since our BVCC computers have multiple users, and since the normal users do not have administrator privileges, I had to switch to an administrator account. The system reports that the native administrator cannot use the Apps Store.

Finally, I managed to install the solitaire collection. However, when I tried to open a card game, I got trash on the display! Curse you Windows 8! ☹

### BVCC Windows 8 after thoughts

Downloading and installing the \$39.99 version of Windows 8 Pro on a Windows XP computer was time consuming but not too difficult. The process took several hours. Although the original application programs had to be reinstalled, the document and picture files and folders were preserved. One problem occurred when we decided to replace the older Dell monitor that was used during the installation with a new LCD monitor.

When the new monitor was installed, Windows 8 did not detect it. Finally I resorted to removing the Dell monitor device and restarting the computer. The new monitor was recognized, however Windows 8 would not accept any resolution bigger than 1024, in spite of the fact that the monitor can do 1920. The solution was to research what graphics display chip was on the motherboard, and then locate and install the drivers. The graphics chip manufacture did not have a driver newer than Windows Vista, but fortunately that driver worked and solved the problem. I doubt that very many average users would have been able to deal with this issue.

It also seems that Windows 8 favors connecting to Home networks rather than business type local networks like we have in the Computer Room. Although Windows 8 found our network printers with no trouble, there are still issues with internal network connections between local computers.

After a number of days struggling with Windows 8, I have concluded that the attempts by Microsoft to create an operating system that works for both portable touch screen devices and desktop computers have been less than successful. Experienced desktop Windows users will find the new touch-screen favoring user interface frustrating. Business owners will have to spend a lot of time and money re-training their staff to use Windows 8.

My advice is that unless you are buying a touch screen device, avoid Windows 8 and stick with Windows 7 for any computer purchase or upgrade.



Internet Explorer Tools

## Web Browsers Compared

By Len

Opinions about web browsers vary from one expert user to another. Each one has dedicated followers.

Once you get to a particular web page, the page will look pretty much the same on all browsers. The three most popular browsers in the PC world are Microsoft Internet Explorer, Mozilla Firefox, and Google Chrome. Each browser has different tools and menu options available, so this can account for different appearances. Here is how the BVCC Home page looks on each.



**Internet Explorer**



**Mozilla Firefox**



**Google Chrome**

The web page designer may or may not take care to make sure the page works the same with all browsers. For example, I have found that some airline ticketing and reservation pages do not work properly with all browsers. In general, once you are viewing a page, the browser is not a big factor.

## Calling Cards

Remember that business sized calling cards are available from BVCC. They can either be personalized, or generic Bristol Village promotional. They

cost \$0.50 per sheet of 10. Order forms are available in the computer room.

## Bristol Village DVDs

Although copies of Bristol Village Enrichment Hour and Vespers programs are made in the computer room, copies must be ordered through the Nook. The price is \$10 per DVD (plus tax).

