

WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Computer Group Jan-Feb 2011

Common Computer Myths

In no particular order, what follows is a discussion of some of the most common computer beliefs.

You must wait 15 seconds before rebooting your computer - This question has to do with the health of the plates of the hard drive. Since the plates are spinning at speeds of up to 10,000 rpm, and need to come to a stop before rebooting, it's definitely good that you wait just a little while before restarting the machine. Five seconds should be adequate; 15 seconds might be overkill, but wouldn't hurt and provide peace of mind.

Mac computers are immune to viruses - This is a common belief, especially among Mac users. However, Macs are not relatively safe because Macs are immune from attack. Rather, it has much more to do with market share--there simply aren't anywhere near as many Macs out there as there are Windows machines. Mac has lots of easily exploitable bugs and fewer countermeasures, but the market share is low, making it a less likely target. This market share dynamic *does*, in fact, mean that Macs are less likely to get hit, so in that sense, they are safer.

However, although Microsoft's products have had a considerable share of vulnerabilities, the Mac Safari Web browser also has a lousy reputation in the security community--it almost seems like child's play to locate an exploitable condition in Safari. It is a problem that Apple really needs to address.

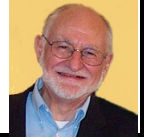
Turning a computer on and off regularly is bad for it - Not true. In fact, it's specifically recommended that you do power your machine off on a daily basis, for example at the end of each work day. As well, it's recommended that if you're going to be away from your computer for small periods of time, you let it go to sleep while you're gone.

You can put a keyboard you've spilled coffee on in the dishwasher - Believe it or not, it's true.

Continued on page 2

Another Teaser

Joe Spampinato



This challenge is one that someone else solved for me. It involved a problem one of our pastors had sending email through my church's internet account.

The symptoms were weird. The pastor has both an IBook, and a Verizon Android Smartphone. He had access to the internet on the IBook through the church's wireless network, and on the Droid through both the network and Verizon's cellular network. He could also access email on his IBook through Gmail and Verizon accounts. He could receive and send email without any problem through all of these mechanisms, with one exception: the ones SENT through the church's account, both via the IBook and the Droid Smartphone failed, consistently.



Once again, we tried everything we could think of to fix the problem, including changing the IBook and Droid email output ports to 587, without success. An extensive search of the internet for similar problems came up empty.

A phone call to a key, knowledgeable person solved the problem in a mere 15 seconds.

See page 5 for the resolution.

Computer Myths, continued

Yes, you can put a keyboard you've spilled coffee on in the dishwasher. However, it ONLY applies to wired keyboards; nothing with a battery, or wireless components in it will keep operating after being run through your dishwasher. Make sure you don't use soap or warm or hot water.

You have to run your battery all the way down before you charge it - It depends on whether the battery is Nickel-based (Nickel-Cadmium [Ni-Cd] or Nickel-Metal Hydride [Ni-MH]), or Lithium-ion (Li-ion). For the Nickel batteries, the best possible thing you can do is, in fact, to run it down to zero before re-charging, each and every time. Plugging an AC adapter in while it's half-charged, causes components in the battery to start to settle, and reduce its ability to re-charge, weakening the battery a lot quicker. However, for the Li-ion batteries, the opposite is true. It is better to recharge often and avoid frequent full discharges. NOTE: Most camera and all laptop batteries are Li-on.

Anything stored digitally will last longer than that on analog media - Not necessarily true. According to the Associated Press, many important digital recordings are "at risk of being lost much faster than older ones on tape, and many are already gone." The problem is that digital files run the risk of being corrupted, and some physical forms of digital media, such as CD-R discs, can begin breaking down in as little as three years.

And the same seems to be true of online recordings. What is required is active preservation, rather than simply placing files on a shelf. They must be constantly maintained and backed up as technology changes.

Your ISP is tracking everything you do - This may not be something most people are thinking about, but for those constantly worried about digital privacy, it is a signature concern. If true, everyone would be subject to tracking because we almost all have to get online through an Internet service provider. It would seem, therefore, that your ISP has the power to scan and save every piece of data that flows through its system.

However, ISPs in the United States don't routinely save the Web surfing histories and e-mail conversa-

Computer Myths, continued.

tions of their users. Fortunately for us, the ISPs actually don't have the money or the desire to archive every bit of information that comes its way. It would be too expensive and the public outcry from privacy rights and civil liberties organizations would be deafening.

Anything you delete from your hard drive is gone forever - The truth is, when you delete data, its icon may be gone, but that information is still intact on the hard drive. The only thing the computer does is give the operating system the OK to write over that area. If you want to pass on an old computer to someone else, there are three options for eliminating your data: 1) using a file-shredding program; 2) reformatting your hard drive; or 3) mechanically destroying the hard drive.

File shredders that can overwrite specific folders or files 7 to 35 times with data-destroying patterns are readily available on line. They are my method of choice, since they allow retention of programs that might be of value to a second user of your old computer. Reformatting can be done using the Windows or Mac operating system CD, but this wipes everything, including the operating system, off the drive. However, if you are really paranoid about your data, you're going to want to thoroughly destroy the hard drive. Take the old drive out of the case, and drill 10 to 12 holes through the drive--and not in a straight line--scattering the holes and making sure they go straight through.

Adapted from a CNet.com article by Daniel Terdiman





White Horse Village Wi-Fi Hotspots

How Gregg

The term Wi-Fi has been in use since 1999. It suggests Wireless Fidelity, resembling the long-established audio-equipment classification term high fidelity or Hi-Fi. However, the term Wi-Fi was never supposed to mean anything at all. Wi-Fi is used by over 700 million people. There are over 750,000 hotspots (places with Wi-Fi Internet connectivity) around the world, and about 800 million new Wi-Fi devices every year. Many of our WHV residents have personal Wi-Fi networks in their units, using modems provided by Comcast or Verizon, or using wireless routers purchased independently. These modems may or may not have antennas, as shown.



Wireless modems/routers with & without antennas

A Wi-Fi-enabled device such as a computer, video game console, Smartphone or internet tablet (e.g., iPad, iPod, Android device) can connect to the internet when within range of a wireless network.

Currently, the WHV Clubhouse, Farmhouse, and Wellness Center provide Wi-Fi hotspot capability for both general resident and guest use. The Personal Care and Skilled Nursing Facilities also have Wi-Fi. The possibility of future extension of Wi-Fi capability to the entire campus is being discussed.

Passwords are necessary to access these public WHV hotspots. To obtain a password, fill out a wireless access form for the Clubhouse, Farmhouse, or both. Forms are located on the table outside of the bank in the Clubhouse. Give the completed form to the receptionist, Betsy Miller, or, after hours, the Security officer at the Front Desk, and he or she will provide you with connection information.

Wi-Fi networks have limited range. A typical wireless router with a stock antenna might have a range of 32 m (120 ft) indoors and 95 m (300 ft) outdoors. Signal strength varies from location to location

Is AOL Scamming People?

The decline and fall of AOL is one of the great stories of the digital age. At its peak, AOL was a subscription service and Internet gateway for more than 35 million Americans. Then the Web took off, cable and phone companies started delivering broadband services, and AOL got left with the ruins off its ill-considered marriage to Time Warner. Today, AOL has just 4 million subscribers. But here is the kicker—those people are still paying.

AOL.com, of course, is free. It used to be a pay service, but has been free for years. You can access the AOL.com, read all of its content, and check your aol.com e-mail without paying a dime. If you already pay for an account, however, AOL will continue to bill you. And evidently, that makes AOL a LOT of money.

However, a large number of AOL subscribers are already paying Verizon or Comcast for broadband internet access. That inevitably comes with both full access to the Web, an e-mail address, and even the opportunity to register for an AOL.com account. So there is no need to pay for an AOL subscription. And yet people still do, perhaps because they don't realize they don't have to.

Ken Auletta of the NY Times estimates that these subscriber revenues generate 80% of AOL's profit. In the third quarter of last year these unsuspecting subscribers, unaware that they don't have to pay anymore, generated about \$244 million for AOL!

Many people signed onto the service years ago, like its user interface, and still have an AOL.com e-mail address. However, they are probably not aware that they can keep that convenience, and still not pay the extra monthly fee to AOL.

Instructions for cancelling the AOL payment can easily be found by Googling "Cancel AOL account".

Adapted from a PCMag.com article by Dan Costa

Notable Quotes

Democracy must be something more than two wolves and a sheep voting on what to have for dinner.

James Bovard

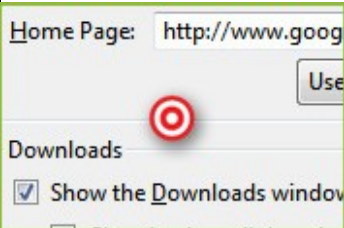
Some PC Mysteries — Solved!

Where did my downloaded files go? Why can't I find them?

Your browser chooses where downloads go, but you can control the process. The location is dependent on your Web browser. Internet Explorer (version 8, anyway) is kind enough to ask where you want to save every file before downloading it. Firefox and Google Chrome, however, make the choice for you by default, which leaves a lot of users scratching their heads after a download is complete.

It's easy to make either of those browsers a little more cooperative, though.

Step by Step: Firefox



Step 1. In Firefox, click *Tools, Options*, and then select the *General* tab. Note the Downloads section, where you have the option of choosing where all downloads should go

by default. (Some people prefer the Desktop over the default Downloads folder.)

Step 2. Enable *Always ask me where to save files*, and then click *OK*. Now, every time you download a file, Firefox lets you choose where to save it.

Step by Step: Google Chrome

Step 1. In Chrome, click the little wrench at top right, then *Options*, then the *Under the Hood* tab.

Step 2. Scroll down to Downloads and check the box marked *Ask where to save each file before downloading*. (As with Firefox, you can change the default folder if you wish.)

One other clue to consider: If you don't pay attention to the names of the files you're downloading, you may not know how to find the right item, even if you succeed in navigating to the right folder. The solution: sort all of the files by date, from newest to oldest. The top file is your most recent download.

My printer won't print, and Windows won't allow me to cancel or delete print jobs. Why not?

Usually this is the result of a communication problem between the PC and printer. You know what happens: You send a document to the printer but nothing happens, so you open the Print Queue. There's the print job, all right, along with some kind of cryptic error message. So you try to cancel or delete the job--and, again, nothing happens. Even rebooting the PC does not fix the problem.



This problem is an historical Windows problem, and even Windows 7 hasn't fully resolved the issue. It's usually the result of a communication problem between the computer and the printer, and the culprit could be anything from a corrupted driver to a faulty USB cable to a wonky network setting (if you're using a network-connected printer).

Fortunately, you can send stuck print jobs packing. Download (from PCWorld.com) and run the free Stalled Printer Repair app, which serves the singular function of purging stuck print jobs from the queue. Purging them means those documents will never reach your printer--but after you resolve the issue, you can just send them again.

Why does every digital camera--even the one on my Smartphone--insist on storing photographs in a folder called DCIM?

Why not just call the folder 'Photos', or skip it altogether and save photos directly to the root directory? It's all about standards. Years ago, DCIM (for Digital Camera Images) became the default directory structure for digital cameras.

Having such a standard is very useful. Mostly it exists to keep everything organized. When you put a memory card into a camera, the camera immediately looks for a 'DCIM' folder. If it doesn't find such a folder, it creates one.

Some desktop image-editing programs look specifically for 'DCIM' folders on any media inserted into the PC. That saves time in scanning said media for images--and it prevents the software from importing images that your camera didn't capture.

In my digital images folders there's a file called Thumbs.db. What is it, and can I safely delete it?

Thumbs.db is a Windows XP system file that contains the thumbnail cache for the folder. It facilitates rapid display of your photos; do not delete it.

Adapted from a PC World article by Rick Broida; more in the next issue

THERE'S LOT OF GOOD INFO ON OUR WEBSITE!

Go to the WHV Residents Homepage at:

www.whitehorsevillage.net

Click on the **WHV Computer Group** icon

For

Past Newsletter issues, Tutorials and Information
and Communications Tools

And

Click on the **WHV TV Channel 14** icon

For

The Channel 14 Program Guide and
Online Programs

It's going to take me a little longer
to answer my e-mails now....



Stephen Wright Quotes

"A clear conscience is usually the sign of a
bad memory"

"Everyone has a photographic memory; some
just don't have film"

"Experience is something you don't get until
just after you need it"

"Borrow money from pessimists -- they don't
expect it back"

"When everything is coming your way, you're
in the wrong lane"

"I intend to live forever.... so far, so good"

Answer to Teaser on Page 1

Like in our last Teaser, the problem was related to Verizon's blocking of outgoing email Port 25 to discourage spammers. According to Verizon, changing the port from 25 to 587 is supposed to resolve the issue; but it obviously was not the answer for this case. In the end, my pastor's problem lay with the church's domain registrar.

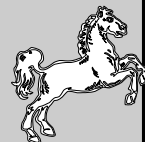
What is a domain registrar? Although our church's internet supplier is Verizon, its internet communications first go through a 3rd party company, its domain registrar. This entity provides an individualistic domain name and address for people wanting to contact the church. Thus, instead of the church and staff having addresses like *churchstaff@verizon.net*, they can be reached at *churchstaff@churchname.org*. The setup is analogous to the corporate internet service here at White Horse Village. Although our actual internet provider is Comcast, our signals go through a 3rd party company, Network Solutions, which provides the corporate and computer group domain names *whitehorsevillage.org* and *whitehorsevillage.net*.

Many domain registrars can monitor (or allow) outgoing email messages over either of 2 different, settable ports. The 15-second phone call to our domain host manager informed us that our church's domain used Ports 25 and 26 for its choices. Since Verizon was blocking anything going out on Port 25, my pastor's IBook and Droid ports had to be set to Port 26 to send messages. Once he made those changes, the problem was solved. With the benefit of hindsight, we should have checked the two Ethernet LAN-connected church computers, which had no email sending problems. They were set to email output Port 26, and I have been told that they have always been set that way.

A good question is: "Why was 26 chosen as the secondary email output port, rather than 587, as Verizon and the internet have advised the world?" According to an informed source familiar with our church network, 26 is one of the more common settings for alternative ports, something most of us non-professional computer users was not likely to know. I surely know it now.

The lesson in all this is that when working a problem involving internet or mail connectivity, it is necessary to investigate and consult every element of the communication chain. In this case, contacting Verizon would have been as futile as our attempts to fix the computers on our own turned out to be. If an intermediate element like a domain registrar is involved, be sure to seek their advice.

PLEASE NOTE: If you do not wish to receive this Newsletter, or if you know others who would like to receive it, please tell me at joenpat40@comcast.net or leave a message at 484 422-8195. The latest and preceding newsletters are available on our website. If someone you know at WHV has difficulty in accessing this online version, please let me know so that we can provide assistance.



WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

Computer Group

MONTHLY MEETINGS All are welcome!

Tue Feb 22nd: Q & A — Pete Thompson discussing Mac issues; plus How & Joe talk about Windows Explorer & file/folder housekeeping

Tue Mar 22nd: Helen Subbio — downloading e-books and money market data

Tue Apr 26th: Jim Mobile—How to find your files

**ALL MEETINGS TO BE HELD IN THE
WHV AUDITORIUM AT 10:30 am**

Note: If there is some particular computer subject you would like us to cover at our monthly meetings, please let us know and we will try to accommodate it. Notify How Gregg at howgregg@verizon.net or Joe Spampinato at joenpat40@comcast.net.

Our HELP! Committee needs Help

One of our objectives has always been to have our members spread around the campus so that all computer users have a nearby helper. You can see from the listing of HELP! Committee members below that while most of the Villas are well represented **we are seriously short of helpers in Gardens, Kelso, Ascot and Belmont.** The more helpers we have the less of a burden for each of us.

Please contact Joe Spampinato at
484-422-8195

NEWSLETTER EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor Emeritus: Euan Hooper

Editor Pro-Tem & HELP! Committee:

Joe Spampinato

HELP! Activities: Arlene Flick

Publicity & Meetings: Marty Shane

Distribution: Joe Spampinato

Please send material for the newsletter to:
joenpat40@comcast.net

and visit our Website at:

www.whitehorsevillage.net/



HELP ACTIVITIES Arlene Flick

Recent HELP activities included:

AVG ANTIVIRUS INSTALLED FOR— Sylvia McKee, Betsy Fry, June Smith, Bernice DiQuinzio, Bud Carroll, Evie Bryan, and Lily Young

SYLVIA MCKEE—connected new laptop to wireless network, copied desktop Outlook files to new laptop

CHAS STORM—fixed DSL connectivity problem

BETSY FRY— installed memory upgrade

EILEEN FRASCA— resolved printing problem

NANCY OTTINGER—set up new DSL account and laptop for wireless

JIM NANNOS—resolved equipment power issue

JOY HARTSHORN—resolved email problem

PETE THOMPSON—resolved printer problem

The HELP! Committee, Chair Joe Spampinato

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	Pete Thompson (MAC)	V197 Damascus	2167	pthomps1@swarthmore.edu
	Gardens	Martin Myers	G127 Garden	1809
Marsh Nelsen		S110 Saratoga	610-361-8607	saratoga110@comcast.net
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