

# WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

## Computer Group Newsletter

Nov-Dec 2011

# Seasons Greetings to All WHV Computer Users!



### **Electronics NOT to Buy This Holiday Season**

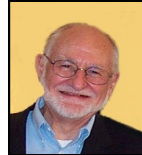
Slate Magazine originally posted this article just before Black Friday, with their recommendations to avoid seeming bargains of electronic items that will soon be obsoleted by newer and better technology or other reasons. We are repeating their advice because it really is applicable to purchases during and after the current holiday season.

**Do not buy a 3-D television.** Manufacturers have been pushing 3-D TVs because it's a cash stream. The industry offered up 3-D as the next HD—a feature for which customers might pay a premium. But that hasn't happened; sales of 3-D sets were initially lackluster, and even though they've been rising slightly in the last few months, most people who buy 3-D TVs aren't using them to watch 3-D programming.

Why not? Because to watch 3-D, you've got to wear special glasses. They're uncomfortable; if you already wear glasses, you can't do anything else while you're wearing them, and they'll eventually give you a headache. In addition, Hollywood's 3-D machine is crashing. And if 3-D films are no longer much of a box-office draw, how much longer will studios keep making them? Wal-Mart sold a \$900 42-inch Vizio 3-D TV for \$598 on Black Friday, while those old warhorses of in-home entertainment, 2-D televisions, could be snapped up for \$100 or even \$200 less.

**Do not buy a cheap tablet computer that isn't called Kindle or Nook.** In the wake of Apple's iPad, dozens of tech companies rushed to create tablet computers of their own. They all failed. Their corpses littered Black Friday circulars—Best Buy sold an Acer tablet for \$189, Kmart an Archos tablet for \$219.99, and Staples offered the BlackBerry PlayBook for as low as \$199.

*Continued on page 3*



### **An Arcane Teaser**

*Joe Spampinato*

This issue's teaser tells about an esoteric problem that baffled me, and which I eventually solved, but only by chance.

I am the manager, updater and user of our Mainliner Barbershop Chorus's customer database, an Excel file of some 4400 names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of our Barbershop fans and show attendees. It is my responsibility to send out broadcast email messages to these fans, informing and reminding them of our annual Barbershop shows. I use an online service called Vertical Response for this.

What is required is for me to filter the entire Excel customer database for only those people for whom I have email addresses, and save that list in a separate file in a format called Comma Separated Values (CSV). Of the entire list, only about 950 fans have shared their email addresses. I then upload the CSV file with those 950 names and emails to our chorus's Vertical Response account, compose the message I want to send, and, after paying the required cost via credit card, have Vertical Response send out the email message to the list.

I have done this for both our Spring and Holiday shows multiple times without any problems. However, this year's Holiday show broadcast was an exception. Every time I tried to upload the CSV file, the system locked up and would not complete the upload! Since I was doing this on a weekend, help was not available from Vertical Design till Monday. In the meantime, I noticed something about my filtered Excel and CSV files that clued me to a rapid correction and solution.

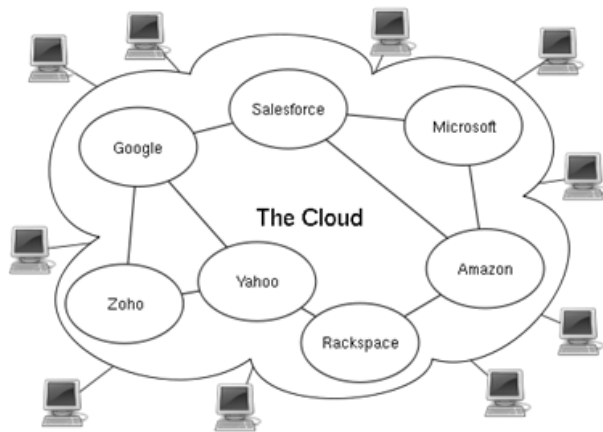
*See page 4*



## How's Corner by How Gregg

### What is The Cloud?

This term is tossed around quite a bit lately and, more often than not, it's a buzz word being used out of context by people who are unclear of the concept. In simplest terms, cloud computing simply refers to resources and applications that are available on the Internet from just about any Internet connected device.



For example, webmail is an aspect of cloud computing. If you use Web mail services like Gmail, Yahoo, Hotmail and so forth, your e-mail is considered "in the cloud" because you can access it from any device with Internet access. In the broader sense, cloud computing is used to describe any and all applications and services hosted and run on servers connected to the Internet – servers and applications that you and I do not have to maintain or support. In the internet technology world, cloud computing allows companies to provide services they may not otherwise be able to afford if they deployed their own systems. And not only is this often more economical for users or companies in many cases, it also means that the amount of computing power needed will be greatly reduced.

This is especially significant as more and more of our computing needs are being served by smaller and smaller devices like smart phones and tablets. In the end, "The Cloud" is simply the Internet. And as time marches on, more of what we do and how we do it will happen in "The Cloud".

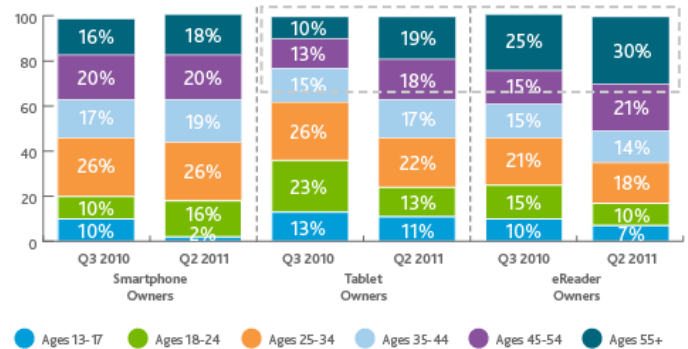
## More Seniors and Women using eReaders and Tablets

In the U.S., as recently as last Summer, tablet and eReader owners tended to be male and on the younger side. But according to Nielsen's latest quarterly survey of mobile connected device owners, this is no longer the case.

Back in the 3rd Quarter of 2010, for example, 62 percent of tablet owners were under the age of 34 and only 10 percent were over the age of 55. By the second quarter of 2011, only 46 percent of tablet owners were under the age of 34 and the percentage of those over 55 had increased to 19 percent.

### Demographics of Tablet and eReader Owners are Changing

Age Distribution of Connected Device Owners



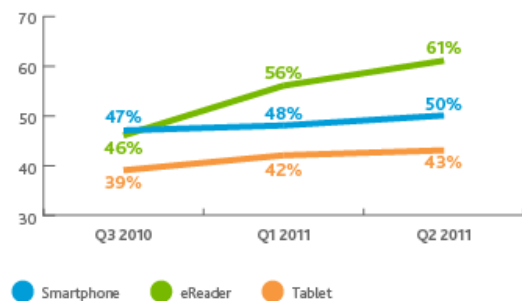
Source: Nielsen



Looking at the data by gender underlines key changes in the eReader category. Sixty-one percent of all eReader owners are now female, compared to a mere 46 percent in Q3 2010. (Smartphone owners are now evenly split between male and female and tablets remain primarily male.)

### Women Are Adopting Connected Devices, Especially eReaders

Percent of Owners Who Are Female



Source: Nielsen



Thanks to Nielsen.com

## **Electronics NOT to Buy This Holiday Season, cont.**

**Cheap Tablet Computers, con.**—These steep discounts might have been a good offer a few months ago, given that Apple isn't going to offer any major price breaks on the iPad (it starts at \$499). But both Amazon and Barnes and Noble are now selling cheap tablets of their own, and their devices are more attractive than the also-rans you found on Black Friday. If you absolutely must have a cheap tablet this year, there's no better one on the market than Amazon's \$199 Kindle Fire. That's because the Fire isn't going to be discontinued tomorrow—Amazon will keep offering lots of content and software upgrades for the device. This is also true of the Nook Tablet, although at \$250 plus tax, it's not nearly as good a deal as the Fire.

**Do not buy a Blu-ray player that doesn't include Internet access.** In 2008, the players were selling for about \$200, which was too much for a risky technology. Blu-ray had to compete with regular DVDs and with streaming video services like Netflix and Hulu, and it wasn't clear that it would make it.

Blu-ray has survived, but it hasn't thrived. Sales of players and discs are increasing, while sales of DVDs have been declining. Overall, though, the sales of physical discs—regular and Blu-ray formats—are on the wane, while digital sales and rentals are shooting through the roof. This confirms what everyone in the entertainment industry believes: In the long run, discs are dead.

Currently you can buy Blu-ray players very cheaply: There are several models for around \$75, and a few for \$50 or less. Buy one if you must play discs. But if you do, make sure to future-proof your purchase. Many Blu-ray players include Wi-Fi, which allows them to access streaming content from Netflix, Hulu, and YouTube.. Even if you don't watch a lot of streaming video now, it makes sense to spend \$20 or \$30 more to get access to Internet content, since that's how we'll all be watching in a few years.

## **Bought a New Computer?**

Dispose of your old one responsibly by recycling it. Twice a year, WHV brings old computer equipment to County collections. Contact Joe Cooper at 610 675-2042 for details.

## **Electronics NOT to Buy This Holiday Season, cont.**

**Do not buy a netbook.** These small, cheap, underpowered machines were panned in 2009, and have since been rendered all but extinct. (The iPad probably had something to do with it, but negative reviews probably helped.) However, a few netbooks are still hanging on; this year you can pick one up for as little as \$80.

Don't bother. Odds are you'll quickly grow to hate your cheap netbook, which won't have enough power to run any programs very well. Although it's more portable than a laptop, its cramped keyboard and generally cheap build will make it a pain to use. Plus, if all you're looking for is a device to watch movies, send emails, and browse the Web, get a Kindle Fire. That device may be flawed, but it's a joy compared with just about any netbook you can find.

*Adapted from a November 28 Slate article by  
Farhad Manjoo*



## **Notable Quotes**

***The Dalai Lama, when asked what surprised him most about humanity, answered, "Man. Because he sacrifices his health in order to make money. Then he sacrifices money to recuperate his health. And then he is so anxious about the future that he does not enjoy the present; the result being that he does not live in the present or the future; he lives as if he is never going to die, and then dies having never really lived."***

## VISIT OUR COMPUTER GROUP-WEBSITE!

Go to the WHV Residents Homepage at:

**[www.whitehorsevillage.net](http://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

### Paraprosdokian Sentences

A paraprosdokian (from Greek meaning "beyond" and meaning "expectation") is a figure of speech in which the latter part is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to reframe or reinterpret the first part. Two examples:

- *Do not argue with an idiot. He will drag you down to his level and beat you with experience*
- *To steal ideas from one person is plagiarism. To steal from many is research*

*More, next issue*



## Answer to Teaser on Page 1

I got my first clue to the solution of my problem when I noted the sizes of the Excel email file, and the CSV file that I created from it. The original Excel file was about 74 kilobytes (kB), while the CSV was over 14 megabytes (mB)! While I thought this a bit strange, I rationalized it as being some weird function of Excel's file conversion mechanism.

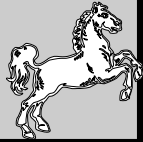
However, when the CSV upload to Vertical Response continued to lock up, even after the weekend had passed, I began to suspect that something was wrong with the Excel file that created it. It was then I noticed that, although my Excel file had only 2 columns with headers—Name and Email address, the complete header row of cells had been formatted with borders. Thus, the completely formatted header row made the file to appear to have 16,384 columns, even though only 2 columns contained data. This effectively increased the size of the converted CSV file from one with 2 columns by 941 rows (equaling 1,882 cells), to one with 16,384 columns by 941 rows (equaling 15,417,344 cells!) Thus, it appears that the CSV conversion accounted for all the cells in the Excel column/row matrix, even though only 0.0122% of the cells actually contained data.

This was proven when I removed the header border formatting from the Excel file and re-did the CSV conversion. The 74 kB file now converted to a 33 kB CSV file. Needless to say, this file uploaded to Vertical Response flawlessly, and I was able to accomplish my message broadcast.

If there is a lesson to be taken from this case, it is that when you are having a problem, make sure that you investigate any aspect that doesn't make sense—like the ballooning of a 76 kB file to 14 mB.

### FOR XP USERS: NOTA BENE

Windows XP, Microsoft's decade-old PC operating system, is scheduled to reach its "end of support" status on April 8, 2014. After that date, Microsoft says it will no longer issue security or other software updates for Windows XP, and will not provide online technical assistance for the system.



# WHITE HORSE VILLAGE

## Computer Group

### MONTHLY MEETINGS All are welcome!



December - NO MEETING

Tue Jan 24: Jim Mobile on Using Email

Tue Feb 28: How and Joe Q & A

Tue Mar 27: Brandon Miniman with a Tablet Update

Tue Apr 24: Jim Mobile on Doing Word Processing

**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@msn.com](mailto:howgregg@msn.com) or Joe Spampinato at [joenpat40@comcast.net](mailto:joenpat40@comcast.net).

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**HELP! Activities:** Arlene Flick

**Publicity & Meetings:** Marty Shane

**Distribution:** Joe Spampinato

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and visit our Website at:

[www.whitehorsevillage.net/](http://www.whitehorsevillage.net/)



## HELP ACTIVITIES

### Recent HELP activities included:

INSTALLED/UPDATED AVG FOR — Ann Brewster, Eunice Holmes and Sylvia McKee

RESOLVED PRINTER ISSUES FOR — Eileen Frasca and Nancy Ottinger

SOLVED EMAIL PROBLEMS FOR — Sylvia McKee, Gene Martenson, and Georgette Salidas

UPGRADED COMPUTER MEMORY (RAM) FOR - Eunice Holmes

SET UP WIRELESS PROTECTION FOR— Pat Cerritelli

## The HELP! Committee, Chair Joe Spampinato

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