

COMPUTER CLUB NEWS

November, 2009

Notes from the Chair

Computer Club (BVCC) Meeting, Nov. 9, 2009, 7:30 p.m.

Given the many facilities and services that the club offers, I plan to focus on occasional reminders of what is available to you as a member, under the heading "Did you know (or remember)":.

Did you know (or remember):

That the Club offers Internet e-mail service?

Using facilities at our remote service provider, we can offer you an e-mail address of yourname@bvres.org. This is in addition to or in place of what you are currently using, such as yourname@roadrunner.com or yourname@brightnet.com.



Why would you choose bvres.org? It will not provide your basic connection—that will still come from Road Runner, Verizon, Brightnet, etc. But it does give you an e-mail capability separate from that provider. This can be desirable if you are considering changing your internet service provider (such as from dial-up to cable) or if you're having trouble with you space allocation from your provider (i.e., mail sent to you frequently bounces because your mailbox is full). Bvres.org is independent of your internet service provider and of your e-mail system. You could use a different internet service provider every month yet retain the same e-mail address—a convenience for you and for those who send you e-mail. The system used

BVCC Officers

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Vice Chair.: Don Netzley
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Secretary: Thurlie Knapp
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provides both webmail (meaning you can consult it online ["in the cloud"] when you're traveling or deliver your mail to your preferred client (BVCC recommends the free and open Thunderbird program). To receive a bvres.org e-mail address or if you have questions about this, contact webmaster@bvres.org (Len Nasman) or one of the other club officers. In most cases, you don't need to change your e-mail address unless you wish to. It is possible to simply have your current e-mail provider forward your e-mail to your new address (as long as you continue as a subscriber in good standing with your current provider).

Receiving over-limit (or over 70%) notices from your Internet Service Provider?

We have learned that a basic Road Runner Account provides 100 MB of e-mail storage but only 20-30 MB for any one account. If this is a problem for you, there are two complementary approaches to use. First, be sure that the e-mail client that you are using (be it a Microsoft Windows e-mail program [such as Outlook Express] or another client such as Thunderbird or Eudora) has used the option to download your e-mail to your own PC (and to not leave it on the server). This will prevent a build-up of old messages at the Internet Service Provider, leading to erosion of your allowed quota. The second approach is to shift your main e-mail account to one of the "cloud" services such as

Yahoo.com (which claims to have no limit on your e-mail storage) or gmail.com (which as of 11/3/09 claims that it offers 7.3 gigabytes [GB] of e-mail storage) or to bvres.org (we're still trying to ascertain what the limit is for this but it is large).

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Kent Mulliner

Under the Hood

Slow Computers

If your computer is running a lot slower than it did when it was new, it is time for some serious house-keeping. Doing disk cleanup and defragging the hard drive may provide some minor speed improvements. Usually when a computer has slowed down, it is the fault of software baggage.

The biggest slow down problems I have seen are due to having more than one anti virus program installed. These programs will fight each other for computer resources and cause it to run like a snail on a cold day.

You can get some speed back by selecting the Add/remove programs option found in the Control Panel. (This was moved to a new place in Windows Vista.) Remove programs that you installed in the past but no longer plan to use.

The best way to make your computer to run like new, is to actually make it new again by reformatting the hard drive and re-installing the operating system and all of your necessary programs. This requires that you are able to find the original install or system restore disks that came with the computer. Before cleaning the hard drive, however, be sure to copy all of your data files to an external drive.



Digital TV Update

Many of you might have noticed workers from Time Warner messing around in Village back yards. What they are up to is finally cleaning up the wiring mess that we have been suffering with for a long time. Some have noticed that the squirrel loop over Wendy has been removed. No fun for squirrels but it looks better now. The Village crews have to remove brush around the bottom of some of the poles before all of the wires are properly dealt with, but TW has cleaned up a lot of connections. If you are getting snowy pictures (or digital drop outs) on some channels, you should contact the office and request that your TV cable wires be checked.

In addition to messing with wires, TW has been messing with the channel numbering of digital stations. First, a quick review. There are a dozen digital channels available on our cable in addition to the 75 channels that have been around forever. There are two ways to get the additional digital channels. One way is to have a digital tuner either in your TV or video recorder. (Any flat screen TV made after the middle of 2007 will have a digital tuner built in.) If you are not sure if your TV has a digital tuner, check the specifications in your TV manual and look to see if it has both an NTSC (analog) and ATSC (digital) tuner. If you have an ATSC tuner, you can get the digital channels along with over 40 music channels.



The second way to receive the digital channels (if you do not have an ATSC tuner). Is to pay an optional fee to Time Warner for a set top box.

If you have been getting the digital channels with an ATSC tuner, you might have noticed some recent changes. For example, on my set I was getting the channel 6 HD feed on channel 79-1. I am now getting it on 6-1. There may be more unannounced changes, so re-tune your TV every once in a while to see what is where.

What has been happening is convergence of TV and computer technology. For many years, the kind of monitor used for computers was not compatible with TV signals. Now with the use of digital technology in both computer and TV displays, most new flat screen TV's can also be used as a computer monitor. This is great fun for those video game players who get a big thrill watching their game on that big 50 inch TV screen.

Windows 7 released

You have probably heard that Windows Vista has been replaced by Windows 7. We will do a Windows 7 demo at the December 14th BVCC meeting. In the meantime, if you are thinking of making the change be forewarned that it requires completely scrubbing your hard drive and re-installing all of your programs and data files. Also, if you are thinking of updating your current computer, first check to make sure that your hardware will handle Windows 7. It requires a lot of memory and fairly recent hardware. In many cases it will be easier to bite the bullet and get a new computer that has Windows 7 already loaded.



If your current computer is doing what you want it to do, why change? In any event, unless there is one or more programs that you want to run, and they are only available for Windows 7, you probably do not need to spend time and money on a new operating system.

Don't replace that printer until...

Printer problems seem to drive BVCC members crazy. Here are some do's and don't's.

- ✓ **Don't** re-install the printer software before you check to make sure that the cat did not bump the wires and cause a loose connection.

- ✓ **Do** run a test print before you blame the email program that fails to obey a print command.

Okay, you are not a computer technician and it might seem logical that if you cannot print an email the company that provides your email service might provide tech support for the problem. However, they will not be able to fix email printing problems. They might be able to help if your email is no longer getting into your computer, but printing is not their problem.

To do a test print, open the **Control Panel** and double click on **Printers** to open the printers dialog box. **Right-click** on the printer in question and select **Properties**. Select the **Print Test Page** button. If this does not work, don't bother blaming the program that you are trying to print from. The problem is elsewhere.

When you right-click on the printer in the dialog box, check the other options on the pop up context menu. Make sure that the printer is not off line or paused.

- ✓ If you have a multi-function printer, **do** try to make a copy. If this works, the printer is OK. The problem is between the printer and the computer. If this does not work, forget messing with the computer. The problem is in the printer itself. (If you have a single function printer, check the manual to see if it can do a self-test without the computer.)
- ✓ **Do** check to see if you ink cartridges are OK.

Ink cartridges like to be used often (and manufactures like you to spend big bucks replacing them). Even if you have not printed very many pages from a cartridge, lack of use can allow the ink to dry up and clog the jets. (Sometimes a dried out cartridge can be restarted by wiping the ink jet foil with a damp tissue.)

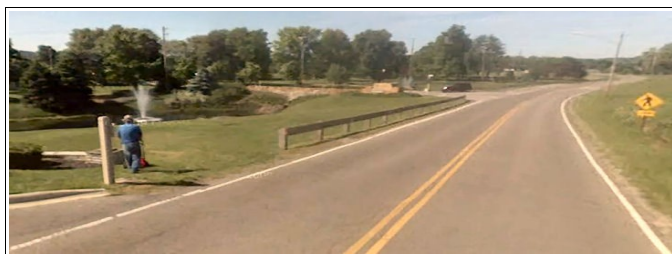


One good thing about laser printers is that the toner is always dry. So, they tend to be a better option for infrequent printer use.

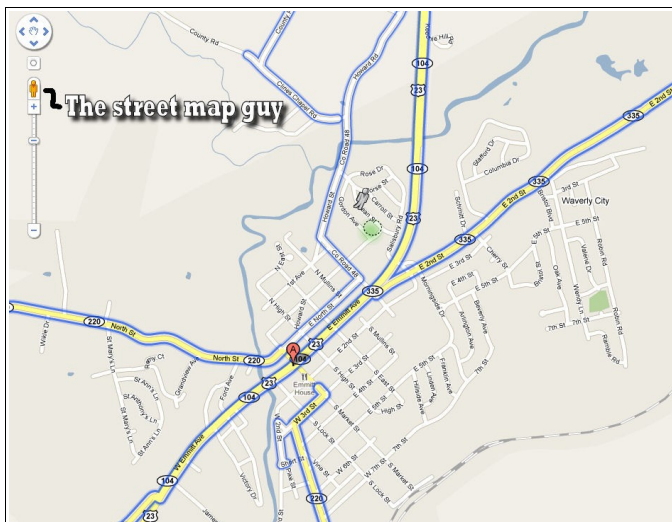
For some reason the printer manufactures have decided to follow the old razor blade marketing plan... give away razors and sell blades. Printers are currently very inexpensive to buy... until you start buying replacement cartridges. Careful shoppers will search the Internet for printer reviews that include cost per page estimates.

Google Maps Approaches Bristol Village

Will you get caught and put on the Internet?



If you have not explored Google Maps lately, you might have missed the fact that the map car has gotten closer to Bristol Village. In an earlier newsletter article the Google Street Map project was described. In the meantime, a lot more streets have been added to the 360 degree view image collection.



Go to <http://maps.google.com> and zoom in on Waverly. Next, drag the street map guy around the map. Whenever the streets turn blue, there are pictures. Drop the street map guy (officially known as **Pegman**) on a location and then click and drag the mouse cursor to see the local view.

There are now pictures available for route 335. The big question is... "Will the Google map car ever drive through our Village?"



Want to know more? Try here:

<http://maps.google.com/help/maps/streetview/behind-the-scenes.html>

