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Cyber Chat

"A computer user group newsletter"

Volume 8 Issue 6

DeFuniak Springs, FL 32435

June 2006

General Meeting

June 17

Okaloosa-Walton College

Chautauqua Center

Room 201

(computer lab—bldg 2)

DeFuniak Springs, FL



Special

Interest Groups

Genealogy

May 2 — 10:00 AM

Room 211

New startup genealogy group
for beginners and experienced

Gay Russ—SIG Leader

Save the Internet

By Bob Hewitt, Editor, The Journal of the Sun City Center Computer Club, FL.....Former 21-year editor for United Press International

rsh1916@juno.com

Current legislation in both houses of congress threatens to change the internet as we know it.

The House Commerce Committee approved the COPE bill 42-12 (*Communications Opportunity, Promotion and Enhancement Act*) after voting down an amendment by Democrat Ed Markey of Massachusetts to guarantee net neutrality-- the principle that net users should be able to access any web content they want, post their own content, and use any applications they chose without restrictions or limitations imposed by their internet service providers. The Communications Opportunity, Promotion and Enhancements Act now awaits action on the house floor where it faces little opposition.

Subsequently, Markey filed a bill of his own H. R. 5273 known as the Network Neutrality Act which would open

broadband networks and innovation, foster electronic commerce and safeguard consumer access to online content and services. That bill has been referred to the House Commerce Committee which had defeated his amendment to the COPE bill.



Senator Ted Stevens of Alaska, Chair of the Senate Commerce Committee, has introduced a massive, 135-page bill called the Communications, Consumer Choice and Broadband Deployment Act of 2006.

The COPE act, about to be considered by the full house, would limit FCC authority to prevent abuses of market power by the few broadband ISP's in control of the "last mile." The Stevens bill goes even further. It would eliminate it altogether.

The House strips the FCC of any power to create net neutrality rules, limiting it to enforcing its Broadband Policy Statement by case-by-case complaints. The Stevens Bill removes the ability of the FCC to even adjudicate complaints about violations of the four principles.

(See Internet—page 5)

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**July and August meetings
are suspended. C U in Sept.**

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The principle of equal access/equal opportunity for everyone is practiced.

The primary purpose is to assist our members and others to become more proficient in the use of a computer for their personal enjoyment. We serve through promotion of computer literacy and education by being actively involved in the community.

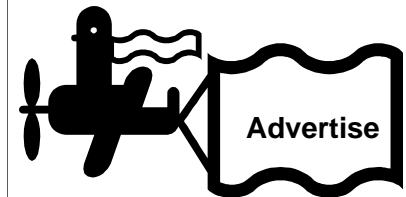
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Publishing information: Articles submitted for publication should be in Microsoft Word or regular ASCII text and unformatted. Photos with article are encouraged.

Presenters/Writers: Members are encouraged to volunteer and present a program on software or hardware. Vendors will provide presentations-in-a-box, and publishers will provide books for review. Whatever is presented becomes the property of the presenter. Make your interest known and share. You will be surprised at what all is available to demonstrate.

Cyber Chat: This newsletter is prepared using Microsoft Publisher 2003, a homebrew 3.2 MHz PC, Canon ip4000 printer and Canoscan 8400f.

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Boot n' Reboot

by J. B. Hillard—President



Summer has finally arrived with temperatures above 90 degrees on some days. Soon we will have the afternoon thunder and lightning storms. So now is a good time to make sure you have a good surge protector or UPS and not just a power

strip that provides no protection at all. Both Gulf Power and Chelco have lightning arrestors that can be installed on the home and they have proven effective except maybe for a direct hit.

Summer brings travel and vacation thoughts to mind. In spite of higher gas prices people will be traveling as usual. Maybe shorter trips will be in order, but travel is still in our blood. I hope everyone enjoys the summer and will be ready to go full steam when the month meetings resume in September. The meeting are suspended for July and August.

On October 7 we will have a very rare opportunity to experience a major vendor presentation in Niceville. Arrangements are being made for a small bus to transport members and guests to the OWC campus where the event will be held. Why Niceville? Five user groups are within a 30 mile radius of Niceville. This is the logical location to take advantage of bringing nearby computer users together.

The event will be presented by Smart Computing Magazine, a major vendor and supporter of computer user groups throughout the country.

Happy computing, J. B.

Our Community

Community Service Program "People Helping People"



Recently Habitat for Humanity received two computers from the CCC. Pictured is one installed by Bob King in a Habitat home in DeFuniak Springs.

For the past several months the workload has happily slowed down for volunteers Sam Sloan, Bob King, and Ed Klepser. Speaking of Ed, he has been a real asset to the refurbishing operation. His services are being provided through a special program at Okaloosa-Walton College.

The computer sale brought in \$1979.25 and a \$40.00 donation. The April balance for community service is \$3526.27. Ideas on how to put this money to work are most welcomed, so think about it!

We have been blessed for many years with local business, government, and other community support. Mr. and Mrs. Harold Carpenter of DeFuniak Wholesale provided free equipment storage for about five years until they business closed a few months ago. The ever important support of volunteers have kept the program going. All these entities working together have placed hundreds of computers with students, homebound residents, and other non-profit organizations.

Thanks to all those who have made the Community Service Program so successful.

Announcement

Smart Computing Magazine
www.smartcomputing.com

Oct. 7, 2006

Okaloosa-Walton College

Niceville Main Campus

Details to be announced

Affiliated with



Announcement

Monthly meetings for July and August are suspended.

Next meeting September 16

Room 201

OWC Chautauqua Center

Gerry Says

**By Gerry Gerstenberg, 1st Vice President,
Broward Personal Computer Association,
Inc., Florida**

www.bpca.org ...[tutor101\(at \)earthlink.net](mailto:tutor101@earthlink.net)

Here are some suggestions to get your computer back up to speed.

Viruses

Check your system for viruses and Trojans, make sure that your antivirus definitions are up to date. Viruses, worms, and Trojan Horses can all create serious system slowdowns.

If you're already running anti-virus software, make sure the virus definitions are up-to-date. I use AVG from <http://www.Grisoft.com>. It is free as is Avast at <http://www.Avast.com>. *Only* run one Virus Checker at a time.

Spyware/Malware

Second, check your system for spyware and malware.

This can be done by using a spyware detector like Ad-Aware found at <http://www.Lavasoft.com> and/or Spybot Search and Destroy, found at <http://spybot.com/en/index.html>.

Keep them up to date.

I also use Microsoft Antispyware. It can be downloaded from <http://www.Microsoft.com>.

Improve Online Security

Install and configure a firewall.

Turn off unnecessary networking software.

Download and install Windows updates on a regular basis.

Secure your Web browser by using such options as setting its "security zones."

Remove System Clutter

Delete any unneeded icons from the Windows desktop and Start menu tree.

Each one requires a little time to process when the system is booting up, and each one eats a little bit of

system memory. It seems like every bit of software you install these days wants to claim its space on your desktop, whether you need the program or not. Right click on Start then Properties then the Start Menu Tab.

Clean out fonts.

Fonts are wonderful things. But unused or useless fonts are a drag on system performance. Windows loads all your fonts at bootup, just to keep them handy in case an application needs them. But the more fonts you have, the more resources Windows consumes in keeping track of them. You probably have dozens of fonts you won't ever need. Periodically go into Windows Fonts folder – Start then run and type in (C:\Windows\Fonts) and remove any unused Fonts. Select each font (hold down SHIFT or CTRL while clicking to select contiguous or noncontiguous groups, respectively) and choose Delete from the File menu. Double-click a font to view a sample.

(See Gerry—page 6)

Benefits of Membership

- Volunteer opportunities
- Monthly newsletter –Cyber Chat
- Free computer training
- Free help from other members
- Free software
- Social events
- Free computer classes
- New friends

Recycle old ink cartridges

Turn in your old ink cartridge and help protect the environment while earning money for the club

Internet—from page 1

The four principles of broadband policy are:

Consumers should be able to:

- 1-Access all legal content,
- 2-Use all legal applications and services of their choice
- 3-Attach any device to the network that won't harm the network,
- 4-Enjoy competition.

The Miami Herald says companies such as Verizon and Comcast have already announced plans to create a two-tiered Internet, where some websites and services would travel up the 'fast lane'—for a fee, of course---and the rest of the web would be relegated to the "slow lane"

"Universality is essential to the web," says its inventor, Tim Berners-Lee. "It loses its power if there are certain types of things to which you can't link."

Currently internet providers do not voluntarily censor the web as it enters your home. This levels the playing field between the tiniest blog and the most popular website.

It is up to us—computer people---to keep it that way. It is a vital matter to us but has not been getting any media attention. One way to get around that is to let our Senators in Washington know where we stand. I have done so and hope we can generate a wellspring of attention by generating a torrent of emails telling of our desire for continued Internet Neutrality. You can find you Senator's email address at

www.webslingerz.com/jhoffman/congress-email.html

The Senate Commerce Committee is scheduled to consider the bill June 8.

Members of the committee:

Ted Stevens - Alaska

John McCain - Arizona

Conrad Burns - Montana

Trent Lott - Mississippi

Kay Bailey Hutchison - Texas

Olympia Snowe - Maine

Gordon Smith - Oregon

John Ensign - Nevada

George Allen - Virginia

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Barbara Boxer - California

Bill Nelson - Florida

Maria Cantwell - Washington

Frank Lautenberg - New Jersey

E. Benjamin Nelson - Nebraska

Mark Pryor - Arkansas

David Vitter – Louisiana

Gerry—from page 6

More importantly, though, a full disk hinders the OS' ability to move files around temporarily and to manage virtual memory. First, empty the Recycle bin. You can easily lose hundreds of megabytes to files just sitting around waiting to be fully deleted. Then, run Microsoft's Disk Cleanup utility. From the Start menu, you will need to go to Programs, Accessories, and System Tools. Open Disk Cleanup, select the drive, and click OK. The utility will analyze the system and offer suggestions. Check each box and click OK. Next, uninstall unused applications. From Windows' Control Panel, select Add/ Remove Programs. Remove any programs you don't use, especially applications preinstalled by the manufacturer. Finally, archive infrequently used data to removable storage.

Remove temporary files.

Disk Cleanup doesn't get rid of everything. Free up even more space by manually searching for and deleting temporary files. Most applications use temporary files to store session-specific information, backup active files, and (in theory) delete them when you close the program.

(See Gerry—page 8)

Gerry—from page 4**Do a disk cleanup.**

This will remove some of the junk that is cluttering up the temporary file folder. Click on Start then All Programs then Accessories then System tools and finally Disk Cleanup. Follow the instructions. This process will take a few minutes.

Uninstall any software you will never use.

Examples are the AOL and other ISP installations preloaded at the factory and any other preinstalled software. Access the Control Panel, select Add/Remove Programs (Add/Remove Programs in Win98 and WinMe), and systematically remove anything that isn't absolutely necessary. You need to decide what is necessary to you. Reboot after each uninstall for the best results.

Run MSCONFIG

Go to Start then Run. Type in msconfig and click on the startup tab. Then uncheck any program you do not want to start when the computer starts. These programs take time to run when the system starts up, and they take up precious system memory. This will keep the icons from appearing in the Windows Navigation Tray on the right side of the task bar.

Defragment the hard drive.

A full hard drive isn't your only potential problem. Even with plenty of free space on a drive, the file system can become so fragmented that Windows can't efficiently access and store data. The OS stores information on a hard drive in sectors. When there aren't enough contiguous sectors available, Windows stores parts of files in different places on the disk and then keeps track of them all in a file allocation table. Removing files and applications further scatters sectors on the disk. Thus, over time, fragmentation occurs as more and more files are split up and stored in more and more places. And, because the system has to search more places to find files and work harder to put them together, fragmentation is a major drag on system performance. Run Windows Disk Defragmenter tool to rearrange files in the most optimal way.

You may have to reboot and defrag several times to get the hard drive defragmented and the files compacted completely. From the Start menu, open Programs, Accessories, and then System Tools.

Open the Disk Defragmenter utility. In WinXP, let

the utility analyze each drive to assess its level of fragmentation and determine whether it's worth defragging.

Do you have any running processes that don't need to be running?

Check this by doing Ctrl, Alt, Delete, choose Process tab, make sure that everything that is running is necessary. You can also try this to see what is preloading: Start > Run, type in "msconfig" (without the quotes) Click the Boot.ini tab and then select the /SOS switch. Now instead of seeing that black and white progress bar you will now see in real time what files are being loaded. This can give you a clue where it is hanging up.

Keep it simple.

WinXP's default set of animations and transitions is pleasing to the eye. But it doesn't do your PC any favors, especially if your hardware is a couple years old. All that sliding, fading, and shadowing takes a toll on memory and processing power. But WinXP animations aren't an all-or-nothing proposition. You can customize which effects to use or let Windows handle the decisions. Access your System Properties from the Control Panel (or by right-clicking My Computer and selecting Properties). Select Advanced then select Settings under Performance. Select Adjust for best performance. All entries will be unchecked. You can then selectively check any animations and transitions that you would like to keep. Click apply and OK.

Windows' Disk Cleanup utility will help you free up hard drive space, giving Windows and other applications more room to work.

Navigate to the Advanced tab and select the Settings button in the Performance category. Prioritize performance, appearance, or let Windows choose a middle route. Alternately, choose the Custom option and enable or disable specific visual effects by checking or unchecking their respective entries.

File System.

Organize and maintain your files to keep your PC running smoothly. Here are some tips for the specific areas.

Make room.

A full hard drive will bog down your system on all fronts. For one, as the drive fills up, Windows has to search more and more data to fulfill each request.

(See Gerry—page 5)



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(Gerry—from page 4)

But sometimes, for a variety of reasons, temporary files aren't deleted. So they sit, taking up valuable disk space, and not doing anything remotely useful. Open Windows' Search tool (called Find in Win98) from the Start menu. Find all files beginning with a tilde (~) (search for "~*.*) and all files with a .TMP file extension (search for "*.tmp"). Remove any that aren't immediately associated with an open file or application.

Perform regular maintenance.

Don't make Disk Cleanup, temporary file removal, Disk Defragmenter, and antivirus scanning one-time activities. Without proper maintenance, system speed will continue to degrade needlessly. Schedule these activities using built-in tools (as with most antivirus programs) or using Windows' Task Scheduler. From the Start menu, navigate to Programs, Accessories, and System Tools. Open Scheduled Tasks. Double-click Add Scheduled Task to launch the Scheduled Task Wizard. Choose an application you want to run (Disk Cleaner, for example), set the schedule, and enter the login information of a user with permissions to run the program.

A Little Goes A Long WayThe secret to optimal PC performance is recognizing that every little improvement helps. By implementing a variety of techniques, including those we just described, you'll slowly but surely see system performance improve and maintain itself at a peak level.

**Next Meeting—June 17, 2006
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