



HACS.exe

Hendersonville Area Computer Society Newsletter

<http://hacs.org>

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Meetings are held twice a month, January through November. A SIG group meets the second Thursday of each month from 1-3 PM and on the third Monday of the month an educational meeting is held at 6:30 pm with the regular meeting following at 7:30 pm. All meetings are held at the Opportunity House in Hendersonville, NC.

HACS Upcoming General Meeting Topics

September 18, 2006

"The Basics of Digital Video Editing using Windows Movie Maker"

by

Barry Macdonald, HACS member

October 16, 2006

"Digital Imaging"

by

Tom Kaczmarek, Lead Instructor, Digital Media Institute, BRCC

Microsoft News

"Put the Pedal to the Metal: Take the 2007 Microsoft Office System Out for a Spin"

Microsoft Corp, REDMOND, Wash

Microsoft Corp. last June announced a "try it before you buy it" program allowing people to take an online test-drive of the [2007 Microsoft Office system release](http://www.microsoft.com/office/preview/beta/testdrive.aspx) (<http://www.microsoft.com/office/preview/beta/testdrive.aspx>). With more than 2.5 million people already using the 2007 Microsoft Office system Beta 2 since its release last month, it is proving to be the most popular beta version of Office to date. This new online test-drive is designed to help people explore the benefits and enhancements of the 2007 release through their own Web browser without having to download or install Beta 2.

"We're seeing many firsts with this release of Office, including a new user interface, a new set of solutions to enhance your work experience and a record high number of people using Beta 2," said Chris Capossela, corporate vice president of the Information Worker Product Management Group at Microsoft. "The level of interest is a nice validation that we're delivering what our customers want and need, and the online test-drive offers the perfect opportunity for everyone to experience an easier and better way to work."

With the online test-drive, people can experience products directly for themselves to learn how the next release can help them better manage documents, organize their work and collaborate with others. In just minutes, anyone with access to an Internet connection can try out the latest improvements to familiar Microsoft Office applications using sample data to demo editing documents, sending e-mail, and posting to Microsoft Office SharePoint® sites to illustrate real-time collaboration functionality. The system is set up not only with Microsoft Office client applications, but also with server offerings pre-populated with data to allow people to easily experience the new server functionality in Microsoft Office. This is the first online test-drive made available before the launch of a Microsoft Office release, and it features 18 product-specific tutorials with step-by-step instructions covering most Office system client products and servers, including Office SharePoint Server 2007 and Office Project Server 2007.

The most significant advancement people can explore is the new user interface that was redesigned based on extensive customer research to make it easier to find and use the features needed to get results faster. Additionally, with the new graphics engine, better visualization capabilities and improved task management, people can produce more professional content that has greater impact, find and consume information more quickly, and better prioritize their time and tasks.

Software News - Perspective: Rethinking software licensing

By [Serguei Belousov](#) published in CNet August 29, 2006

The increasing use of virtualization has blurred the lines between physical and virtual worlds, creating a new issue for buyers and sellers of computer software: Software licensing as we know it is dying--or already dead.

Consider how software licensing has traditionally worked. If you bought Windows, you had the right to install and run that operating system on one computer. This model made it is easy to estimate how much to charge per instance so that customers could still afford it and vendors could build a solid business.

But what happens when that one "physical" computer is divided up into tens--or perhaps hundreds--of partitions? These "virtual" computers can be created, destroyed and moved around between "real" (physical) computers in seconds. [What happens when applications are running on those virtual partitions?](#) Does it mean that a software vendor's revenues should multiply immediately and proportionally? Things start getting a little weird really fast.

Virtualization software abstracts physical computing resources so they can be used in more efficient ways. That saves on hardware, management and utility costs. The most common understanding of virtualization today actually assumes the ability to run multiple execution environments of some sort on a single piece of hardware.

Why should users have to pay many times more for the same software?

Customers deserve more clarity about the licensing issues surrounding operating system virtualization. This should be a straightforward matter unless software vendors decide to suddenly charge per each virtualized environment. If that occurs, they'll essentially be charging extra for the same bits and bytes of software they have already charged for.

There are murmurings in the industry that some large software vendors are going to change the rules on their customers and start charging based on virtual assets rather than physical assets. Such a virtual licensing model would be anticustomer, anticompetitive and anti-innovation and should be rejected outright by users.

Why should users have to pay many times more for the same software? Virtualization does not make physical servers more powerful or make applications run faster. In the case of the [operating-system virtualization approach](#), it does not even run additional copies of the operating system, and the same copy of application software can be used inside multiple partitions. Operating-system virtualization simply provides complete isolation between groups of users, files, applications and processes and makes them behave as if they are running on separate operating systems and their applications.

In fact, virtualization actually benefits software suppliers because it allows for new usage scenarios and could increase their license revenue--while at the same time decreasing cost per user for their customers.

On the other hand, if software suppliers try to license each virtual server, customers might resist and seek alternatives, such as [Linux and other open-source options](#) that cost less and more flexibly address virtualization-based licensing.

Where do we go from here? Information technology buyers need to know that the rules they buy into now will not be changed arbitrarily by their software suppliers, especially without clearly understanding the implications of this changing paradigm. One way to address this is for software vendors to charge only for the useful, measurable "units" that are relevant to the software. That coincidentally might also solve the big challenge of tracking the number of actual licenses in a virtualized world.

Another way is to create completely new usage-based licensing models, where customers can flexibly select the best model for their unique environment. (This is common for database software products, for example.) Either way, vendors should not attempt to immediately multiply software fees from their customers and should consider the long-term implications of any changes. The good news is that change does not happen overnight, so software vendors will not be dramatically and immediately affected, even if they stick with the simple physical pricing policies.

But check your license agreement and negotiate hard with your vendor so your price can't be increased when your usage increases. Remember that vendors with the habit of changing their prices to their benefit will continue doing so in the future. Do you really want to depend on that?

Computer Hardware - Changes afoot for computer, DVD users

By Mike Himowitz

May you live in interesting times.

According to American folklore, it's an ancient Chinese curse, although it's more likely the product of an English science fiction writer.

Whatever the source, the meaning is clear - times of change are fraught with peril. And I can't remember a period when there was more change afoot in personal technology than there is now.

Consider:

Intel, the world's biggest producer of microprocessors, is rolling out a new generation of chips for personal computers.

Microsoft, whose Windows software runs all but a fraction of the world's PCs, is preparing a new release of the operating system called Vista - though it can't get the job done until January, at best.

In another corner of the Gates castle, the gnomes of Microsoft Office are preparing a new release called Office 2007, which won't work anything like Office 2003, Office 2000, Office 97 or Office 95. Sounds like fun to me.

Outside the PC world, the TV industry is hurtling into a switch from analog to digital broadcasting. If you watch TV over the air and your set doesn't have a digital tuner, you'll have to buy a converter or junk the set on Jan. 1, 2009, when broadcasters cut the cable to their old towers and switch to strictly digital transmissions. Or, you can subscribe to cable.

Finally, after a few happy years of near-universal DVD acceptance, the electronics industry has embarked on a full-scale war over the format for a new generation of high-definition DVDs. They're supposed to match the quality of the HDTV sets we're all buying.

Remember the VHS vs. Betamax fight over videocassette recorders? That may be nothing compared to the battle between Sony's Blu-ray and Toshiba's HD-DVD.

Some of this craziness comes as a relief. Frankly, for the last few years I was getting bored writing about computers. How many times can you say, "Buy any machine you want - they'll all do the job"?

Actually, for most of us that's still the case. But Intel, Microsoft and the others who create the guts of today's personal computers desperately want you to try new things to justify their spiffy new hardware and software.

They want you to dabble in video editing, high-end gaming and "extreme" multitasking. That last term means simultaneously watching a broadcast of Desperate Housewives over the Internet while you edit a video of your trip to Disney World, shop on the Web and engage in 14 simultaneous instant messaging sessions.

How many of you do that now? I don't see many hands out there. So let's deal with the developments that are most likely to affect you the next time you shop for a PC.

The breaking news is from Intel, with the first all-new line of processors since the Pentium 4. These are just finding their way into PCs like the Systemax Venture model I've been testing for the past week or so. So far, the Systemax seems to do everything a little faster than any computer I've used. And by every measure (including the hardware freaks who post test results on the Internet) Intel's new Core 2 Duo chips for desktop computers and its Centrino Duo chips for laptops are considerably faster than their predecessors. They would be the Pentium 4 and Pentium M/Centrino, respectively.

Just as important from Intel's standpoint, the company can assert bragging rights over the competition from Advanced Micro Devices - for a few months, at least. The competition between these firms is one reason computers have become incredibly fast and amazingly cheap.

Core 2 Duo chips run cooler and use less power than their predecessors - great news for laptop users who crave the power of desktop machines but want a battery that will let them work on a plane from coast to coast.

To achieve this operating efficiency, Intel has adopted a so-called dual core architecture. Instead of continually trying to get a single processor to run faster, Intel and other chip makers have designed CPUs that use two slower processor cores. Together, they can perform more instructions per clock cycle than older chips.

You'll see these new processors on retailers' shelves soon, probably in high-end machines designed for gamers, video producers and visual artists. Eventually, they'll take over the mass market, pushing the Pentium 4 into the lower-end machines that now use Intel's Celeron processor.

If you fall in love with an new Core 2 Duo computer, and you're willing to pay for it, there's no reason not to buy it now. But wait a few months and you'll find more of them in lower-priced machines, as well as fire sales on still-great machines that use the older Pentium-based chips.

That brings us to the second major change in computing - Microsoft Windows Vista. The long, long, long delayed update won't make the Christmas season - it may not even make the month of January. So anyone who buys a computer during the holiday season will get all the lame-duck security flaws of Windows XP, plus the prospect of a do-it-yourself upgrade to Vista - a venture with so much potential for disaster that the toughest veterans of the PC wars shudder at the thought.

With five versions of Vista for consumers and businesses, at different price points, this may also be the most confusing product introduction in Microsoft's history.

There are two consumer versions, one of which has a fancy, 3-D graphical interface. Just how much horsepower the upscale Vista will need isn't clear. But Intel spokesman Ralph Bond says any computer with a 1-gigahertz processor, a gigabyte of memory and a video card that can match Intel's recent built-in graphics hardware can probably make do. Lesser machines will probably be able to run Vista's basic edition - if anybody bothers upgrading.

Still not enough sturm and drang? Consider that Microsoft also plans a major update to its flagship Office suite - the one with Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access and so on.

For a decade, the basic Office interface - the way its menus and commands are organized - has been the same. That means a few hundred million people have learned how to use this outstanding product and, even if they don't actually like it, have come to terms with it.

So Microsoft decided that we're all too comfortable and has completely redesigned the Office 2007 interface. It's a bit like redesigning a car with the steering wheel in the center, the brake on one side and the gas pedal on the other.

As a home user, all of this is daunting enough. But I know what I would do if I were running an information technology shop facing a major operating system upgrade, a total rewrite of my clients' main productivity software and lots of new hardware. I'd move my operation to the basement. No way to kill yourself jumping out a window there.

What should you do? No reason to do anything right now. In fact, for the next couple of weeks, I'm going to do absolutely nothing - technologically speaking. See you when I get back.

Hints of the Month - Smart Computing Tips & Fun Facts

"Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit <http://www.smartcomputing.com/groups> to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!"

- **Enable Windows Update In WinXP**– To configure Windows Update on Windows XP systems (both Home and Professional editions), right-click My Computer (sometimes on your Start menu), select Properties, and choose the Automatic Updates tab. Select the Keep My Computer Up To Date checkbox (if applicable) and then choose one of three settings below, such as the one that lets Windows Update automatically download updates. (Updates also may require you to restart your computer.)

- **Alphabetize Your IE Favorites Folders & Links** – If you're running Windows 98SE/Me/2000/XP and Internet Explorer 5 or up, your solution is simple. Open the Favorites menu (in the top Menu bar) and right-click any item located underneath the Organize Favorites line. Then, choose Sort By Name. Keep in mind this will alphabetize the items you see in the Favorites menu, not items within folders in the Favorites menu. To alphabetize the contents of a folder in Favorites, open the folder, right-click an item, and choose Sort By Name from the pop-up menu. Common mistake: DO NOT try these right-click steps in the Favorites shortcut window at the left side of your browser. These steps will only work within the drop-down menu that appears when you click "Favorites" in the top menu bar. When you add an item to your Favorites menu, you'll need to select Sort By Name again to get that item in alphabetical order.
- **Using System Restore** – Unless you've disabled System Restore (which we don't recommend) or Windows has disabled it due to a lack of hard drive space (System Restore needs a full 200MB of free space to keep running properly), WinXP is quietly gathering restore information and automatically creating a restore point every day that the computer is running. Restore points are created during idle time when there is no mouse or keyboard activity. Your system is also triggered to create a restore point when installing most software, upon performing a system restore, when installing Microsoft's AutoUpdate software, and before recovering a backup set. Restore points are marked on a calendar and easily accessed through the System Restore tool. Troubleshooting tip: If System Restore isn't operating, the problem is probably the lack of space available on your hard drive. System Restore requires a full 200MB of free space for minimum data storage. Once you've freed up space on your hard drive, System Restore will automatically re-enable itself.
- ***Smart Computing Articles****
As a member of the *Smart Computing* User Group Program, you are welcome to reprint these articles in your user group's newsletter. If you choose to do so, please include the following disclaimer with the reprint: "Reprinted with permission from *Smart Computing*. Visit <http://www.smartcomputing.com/groups> to learn what *Smart Computing* can do for you and your user group!"
- **Scrubbing A Hard Drive:** Your computer holds so much information and cleaning up that information is a little more difficult than you may think. Read this article to find out how to really scrub your hard drive. <http://www.smartcomputing.com/support/links.asp?id=856>
- **Technology On The Go:** As our society becomes more and more mobile technology goes there too learn about the products that make travel a little easier. <http://www.smartcomputing.com/support/links.asp?id=858>

Feature of the Month - How Blogs Work by Marshall Blain in "HowStuffWorks"

Blogs appear on the news pretty often these days. For example, a reporter is tipped to a story by a blog, or a blog reports another angle on a story. Blogs show up in magazines a lot, too.

But there is a good chance you have never seen a blog (also known as a **weblog**) or experienced the **Blogsphere**. What are blogs? There are now millions of them -- where did they all come from?

In this article, you will have a chance to enter the world of blogging. You will even learn how to create your own blog and publish it to the world.

What is a Blog?

One of the things that is so amazing about blogs is their simplicity.

Think about a "normal Web site." It usually has a home page, with links to lots of sub-pages that have more detail. [HowStuffWorks](#) is like this, with thousands of information pages all organized under a home page. A small business site follows the same format -- it might have a home page and five or 10 sub-pages. Most traditional Web sites follow this format. If the site is small, it is sort of like an online brochure. If it is large, it is like an electronic encyclopedia.

A typical Web site has a home page that links to sub-pages within the site. CNN.com, pictured above, is typical of this genre. The CNN site contains thousands of articles all organized into big categories. The categories and all the latest stories are accessed from the home page.

A blog is much simpler:

- A blog is normally a **single page** of entries. There may be archives of older entries, but the "main page" of a blog is all anyone really cares about.
- A blog is organized in **reverse-chronological order**, from most recent entry to least recent.
- A blog is normally **public** -- the whole world can see it.
- The entries in a blog usually come from a **single author**.
- The entries in a blog are usually **stream-of-consciousness**. There is no particular order to them. For example, if I see a good link, I can throw it in my blog. The tools that most bloggers use make it incredibly easy to add entries to a blog any time they feel like it.

A typical blog has a main page and nothing else. On the main page, there is a set of entries. Each entry is a little text blurb that may contain embedded links out to other sites, news stories, etc. When the author adds a new entry, it goes at the top, pushing all the older entries down. This blog also has a right sidebar that contains additional permanent links to other sites and stories. The author might update the sidebar weekly or monthly.

Basically, a blog is a lot like an **online journal** or **diary**. The author can talk about anything and everything. Many blogs are full of interesting links that the author has found. Blogs often contain stories or little snippets of information that are interesting to the author.

Even though blogs can be completely free-form, many blogs have a focus. For example, if a blogger is interested in technology, the blogger might go to the Consumer Electronics Show and post entries of the things he/she sees there. If a blogger is interested in a certain disease, he/she might post every news article and every piece of research he/she finds on the disease. If a blogger is interested in economic issues, he/she might post links to articles that discuss the economy and then offer commentary on them.

There are people who use their blogs simply as a scrapbook -- a form of online memory. Whenever the author finds a link or a snippet of information that he/she wants to remember, it gets posted in the blog. Even if no one else ever looks at it, it is still useful to the author because the blog is a searchable electronic medium that the author can access with a Web browser anywhere in the world.

In other words, a blog can be anything the author wants it to be. The thing that all blogs have in common is the reverse-chronological ordering of entries.

The Blogosphere

One thing about blogs that is so fascinating is the **interlinking**. There are millions of people keeping active blogs, and bloggers often tend to look at other people's blogs. When they see something they like in their favorite blogs, bloggers will often link to and comment on it.

All of this tight interlinking has created a phenomenon known as the **Blogosphere**. The Blogosphere consists of all the cross-linked blogs. Once you arrive at one blog in the Blogosphere, it will often have links that connect you to many of the other sites in the Blogosphere. You can bounce around in the Blogosphere for years if you like that sort of thing.

Many blog readers enter the Blogosphere and find one (or a few) bloggers they really like. For example, you might have a blog you use to keep up to date on the latest technology, and another to keep up to date on the latest news. The blogger is acting a lot like a DJ on a [radio](#) show, choosing stories, links and/or snippets just like the DJ chooses songs. People who like what the blogger focuses on each day come back and read that blogger every day or so. Celebrities have also gotten into the act, creating blogs as a way to interact with their fans.

Best Blogs

If you would like to get a taste of blogging and look at some of the best blogs out there, the easiest way is to find a "best of the blogs" list and surf around to a few real blogs. Here are several "best of" lists to get you started:

- [Forbes.com: Blogs That Matter](#)
- [Guardian Unlimited: The Weblog Guide](#)
- [Globe of Blogs](#)
- [Webby Awards: Best Blog & Nominees](#)

HACS News -

Welcome to the Hendersonville Computing Societies new Newsletter – **HACS.exe**

Volume “0” will be published this year as an open Newsletter on our web site for all to view. Starting next year the headings of the articles will be open for all but the full newsletter will be available only to members. We welcome all members to contribute to the newsletter and we are looking for an editorial group to publish it.

Your challenge for this initial newsletter is to decipher the binary string on the heading of the newsletter!! First one to send the “decoded” string to the temporary editor – jerry@liedl.org will win our lottery - their 2007 dues paid. Date of e-mail will determine the winner.

HACS Officers/Executive Committee

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Vice-president – Jack Sokol - jsokol@bigfoot.com

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