

## Rich's Ramblings for March 2011

Looking back over almost 30 years of writing about computers and my trials and tribulations with them, I have come to the conclusion that they are here to stay.

I still stand by the three word slogan that I started using back in the early 1980's.

### **BACKUP! BACKUP! BACKUP!**

Now having a backup of your important data is even more necessary. You can purchase a terabyte hard disk for less than \$100 and filling them up is easier than ever. Don't forget to save additional copies of any important work on other media. You can purchase a portable hard disk that will hold up to a terabyte of data for less than \$80 according to the advertisements in today's paper (March 10, 2011). There should be no reason that anyone should weep over their hard disk all of a sudden making lots of noise and not booting your system. Go for it.

I try to help friends over the phone with their computer problems and many times I feel like a brain surgeon who operates via remote. I ask the questions and they provide the answers. Of course asking the correct questions is at best difficult if your talking to someone who does not understand the right click and left click of the mouse on a icon. Lots of fun sometimes and other times it is aggravating. But, there is a lot of personal satisfaction with helping a friend and it all works out fine.

I (heart) Acronis True Image Home, It is an easy to use disk backup and imaging software that just plain works. My old friend from the early days of PC's Gene Barlow and his better half run a web site called UGR.COM which stands for user group relations. They have been selling Acronis for several years and they offer good prices for User Group members. I think I have bought 10-15 copies for friends. It is so easy to create a system image of your C drive (or any drive) that you can store on an external hard disk and when the bottom drops out of your operating system and about the time you start tearing out your hair, all of a sudden you remember that your system is backed up and you can recover to a few days ago when you created an image of your C drive. It also does incremental backups. Unlike Microsoft's (windows 7 versions), an image created with Acronis can be mounted and looked into and retrieve a single file or directory. For \$29, you get Gene's superb support and a great product. Go to [www.ugr.com](http://www.ugr.com) and see what he has to offer.

Way back in the earlier days of computers there was a operating system call DOS which is short for Disk Operating System. Microsoft started the IBM-PC out with version 1.0 and it was a neat operating system for the masses. Today DOS lives and there are lots of DOS programs out there that still survive, even in Windows 7 you can run some DOS programs if you know how to configure your system. One problem that many have is that some of the older DOS programs don't support printers that are not connected to your LPT (line printer) port. But not to worry, there is a way to make them think that the LaserJet that you have attached to a USB port is really attached to your LPT1: port.

Google is your friend and if you Google

“How do I setup my usb printer to look like it is attached to LPT1?”

<http://geekswithblogs.net/dtotzke/articles/26204.aspx>

is what I found and it works.

Hopefully the link will still work by the time you get to read this.

New Subject:

I have had an apple iPhone for over 2 years and it really is a nice phone, combines my outlook address book, messages and other goodies. I use a program called eWallet which installs on my PC and has an App for the iPhone. I keep my private information in it's data base and it is password protected so that no one buy myself can get in there. I have been so happy with the iPhone that when the iPad first came out, I was a bit disappointed in it's capabilities. Well, Apple has now gone and sucked me in with the iPad II, it is really nice and slick. It syncs with my outlook and eWallet without any problem and is a nice video/picture display panel. I like the cameras and the ease of use. Unlike many iPhone and iPad owners, I don't have many Apps for either. I can't see myself playing games on them but I do like the ability to look up information with ease. I bought the 32gigabyte version for Wi-Fi as I don't need Verizon or AT&T getting any more of my money. Wi-Fi is available in many places and it works just fine. I have a client that bought three of them and they seem quite pleased. All in all, I like the iPad.

New Subject:

Windows 7 and service pack 1. I waited for Microsoft to allow SP1 access from their regular update site before I jumped on it. I had no problems with the install, which is quite large and makes me happy to have FIOS download speeds. Some users have had problems with the update but I had none and suspecting that the users with problems are using programs that interfere with updating the operating system. I always turn off my Anti-Virus program and stop all other running programs when I update my operating system as they can interfere and create problems. Internet Explorer version 9 is also available at Microsoft updates site along with their free Microsoft security essentials, which is a pretty highly rated Anti-Virus program. I use Vipre premium for my home machines as they have an all you can eat version for home use for a good price.

All in all it has been a while since I have written my ramblings but as I get older, I am probably jaded in my view of what is exciting and what is just mundane in the computer software and hardware world. I see where the price of Solid State Drives (SSD)'s are coming down in price and going up in performance. The SSD's are still so much faster than the old spinning disk hard disks that they are well worth it for boot disks in the speed at which your Operating System boots. I see where 80gigabyte drives are getting down to the less than \$100 range. Many of them are sold with

adapters to allow you to install them in place of a standard hard disk space on your computer. Check them out.

Rich Schinnell is an old timer in the PC arena as a founding member of Capital PC User Group. He is retired from Vitro corporation and the USN. He has a few small business clients where he keeps their office systems running and free of viruses. He can be reached at [schinnel@cpcug.org](mailto:schinnel@cpcug.org) or as a last resort by land line via (301) 949-9292.

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