The Cursor

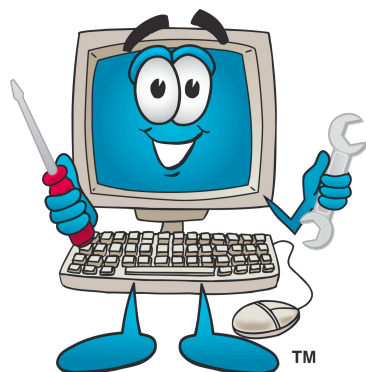## Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer User Group

Meeting Location:
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road
Fairfax, VA

apcug

Next Meeting:
June 18, 2011

PC Problem?
Bring it to the PC Clinic!
June 18

Table of Contents

Only in the Download Edition

Presidential Bits
by Geof Goodrum
President, Washington Area Computer User Group

In May, Paul Howard and Bill Walsh demonstrated the Skype videoconferencing and PC screen sharing system with help from Mel Mikosinki, Roger Fujii and others. Paul showed how the free Skype software (http://www.skype.com/) on a PC allowed several people to make video phone calls and have a meeting over the Internet and local network with tiled live video feeds from each. Several tips, though: invest in a good quality headset (headphone/microphone) to make video or phone calls; mute your microphone when you walk away from your computer or don't need to talk. Likewise, don't forget that you are on "candid camera," so mind your appearance and anything behind that you that might not want visible. And if you are doing a Skype demo with two systems in the same room with a speaker system like we were, definitely use headphones or mute your mikes – our apologies to those who experienced the thrill of audio feedback when Mel joined the Skype video call with Paul across the room!

The Skype demo was particularly timely, given Microsoft's May 10th announcement that it entered a deal to acquire Skype for an estimated $8.5 billion, the biggest deal in the company's history. The question remains on what Microsoft plans to do with Skype, and the future of Skype support for non-Microsoft platforms. Skype already announced it would not renew its licensing agreement with Digium, the company behind the Open Source Asterisk telephony system (see http://www.linuxfordevices.com/c/a/News/Skype-dumps-Asterisk/).

During the main presentation, Gabe Goldberg provided a detailed look at the variety of add-ons and customization options for both the Mozilla Firefox web browser and the Mozilla Thunderbird e-mail client. Gabe previewed some of his favorite add-ons (available through the program menu or directly from the web sites for Firefox and Thunderbird. Just note that enabling too many add-ons can slow down your application; you can disable add-ons without uninstalling them. Gabe also showed how to use the Advanced Configuration option to tweak Firefox's
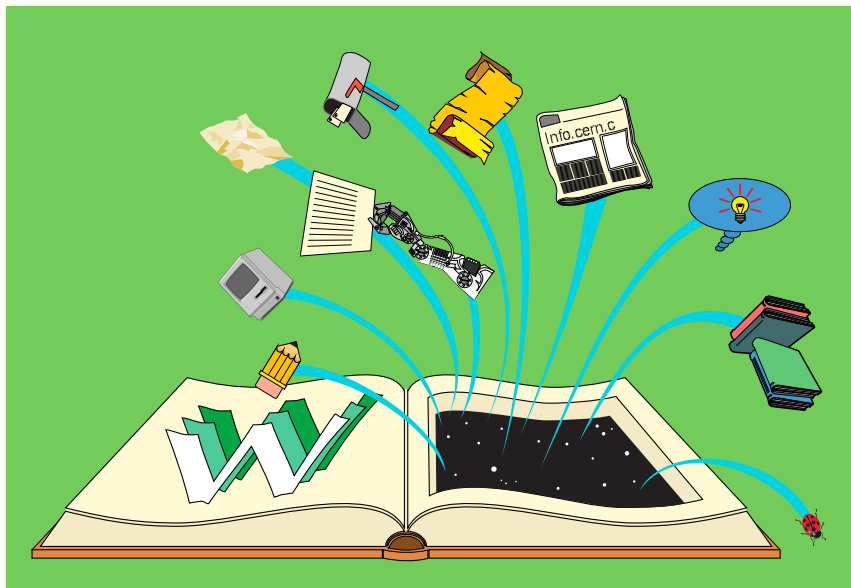
Lloyd's Web Sites for June 2011

by Lloyd Johnson
Columnist, Washington Area Computer User Group

Visit www.wacug.org for past issues of Web Sites with hyperlinks.

1. Family Health History — http://familyhistory.hhs.gov/. From the US Office of the Surgeon General.

2. Bring back File, Edit, View, Insert and Format to Word and Excel 2007 and 2010 — www.find.pcworld.com/70218

3. Find duplicate files — www.easyduplicatefinder.com

4. The Museum of Hoaxes — www.museumofhoaxes.com

5. There has been a lot of media about Wikipedia — www.wikipedia.org. Check it out.

6. Want to know how much that cute hill secretary you saw on TV is making? — www.legistorm.com

7. RiskyRoads.org — http://riskyroads.org/. Find out if you live or work near a Fatal Accident Hot Spot. The Risky Roads map shows which roads and highways have the most traffic fatalities.

8. Social Security Benefit Calculator — www.ssa.gov/planners/benefitcalculators.htm. Use any of the calculators on this Social Security site to estimate your potential benefit amounts using different retirement dates and levels of future earnings. The calculators will show your retirement benefits as well as disability and survivor benefit amounts if you should become disabled or die.

9. Scores of original comedy series — www.superdeluxe.com

10. Family fun: Brain teasers, riddles, etc — www.funology.com

behavior. There was a question about the popular e-mail client Eudora using Thunderbird as its core engine, which we could not answer. As it turns out, Qualcomm's Eudora commercial version was retired and replaced by an Open Source version built upon the Thunderbird codebase. For more information and download, see https://wiki.mozilla.org/Eudora_OSE.

Our guest presenter for the June 18th WAC meeting will be Stan Schretter, who will demonstrate features of the Apple Macintosh and compare these available on Microsoft's Windows Operating System. See Stan's write-up and bio below.

Also on June 18th, WAC will co-host the semi-annual PC Clinic with OPCUG. If you need hands-on help with personal computer hardware or software, or installation of a new Operating System (including licensed Windows and GNU/Linux distributions), please e-mail your support request before June 17th to pc_clinic(at)wacug.org or leave a voice message on the WAC AnswerLine, 703-370-7649. For complete participation guidelines, see our web page at http://www.wacug.org/clinic.html.
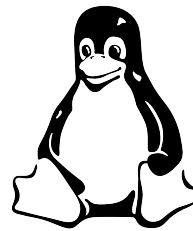
See you there!

An Enthusiastic User's View of the iMac

by Stan Schretter

I am not an salesperson for Apple, but just a very pleased user and will discuss and demo that in some detail. I will focus on a few of the things that I believe are unique (as compared to Windows) to the Apple suite of integrated equipment (iMac, Macbooks, iPhone — I do not have an iPad). These include, but are not limited to, the quite inexpensive 27 inch iMac with its very high resolution display, the video conference tool - Face Time - whose unique algorithms works over almost any network (as opposed to Skype's video), the built in features of the Mac OS including but not limited to the very easy to use Time Machine backup (just plug in a USB drive and off you go!), etc, etc.

Bio: Stan has been active with personal computers for over 40 years, starting out with single board computers with 1K of memory and graduating to the first commercial version of the IBM PC (no hard drive and only 256K of memory). Stan has developed free amateur radio related software apps for the PC that are used still used by thousands of hams worldwide. Stan currently operates both Windows and Linux servers in support of ham radio activities, and has several other Windows machines. But over the past few years all of his personal computing has migrated to Apple machines, except for one lonely Windows computer used by his wife Judy.

Linux News
by Geof Goodrum
linux@wacug.org
Washington Area Computer User Group

Statement about Oracle's move to donate OpenOffice.org assets to the Apache Foundation

Filed under: Community — Florian Effenberger @ 15:15
The Document Foundation blog

The Internet, June 1st, 2011 – The Document Foundation constitutes a global team of hundreds of developers working together to improve the LibreOffice product for the benefit of all users. We are governed by an open, and meritocratic community headed by a diverse interim Steering Committee, and a vendor neutral Engineering Steering Committee overseeing development.

Today we welcome Oracle's donation of code that has previously been proprietary to the Apache Software Foundation, it is great to see key user features released in a form that can be included into LibreOffice.

The Document Foundation would welcome the reuniting of the OpenOffice.org and LibreOffice projects into a single community of equals in the

wake of the departure of Oracle. The step Oracle has taken today was no doubt taken in good faith, but does not appear to directly achieve this goal. The Apache community, which we respect enormously, has very different expectations and norms – licensing, membership and more – to the existing OpenOffice.org and LibreOffice projects. We regret the missed opportunity but are committed to working with all active community members to devise the best possible future for LibreOffice and OpenOffice.org.

On the bright side, one benefit of this arrangement is the potential for future-proof licensing. The Apache License is compatible with both the LGPLv3+ and MPL licenses, allowing TDF future flexibility to move the entire codebase, to MPLv2 or future LGPL license versions. The Document Foundation believes that commercially-friendly, copy-left licensing provides the best path to constructive participation in, and growth of the project.

Thus, the event is neutral for The Document Foundation, which – as always – remains open to every company, individual or foundation that wishes to participate in co-development. There has never been a better time to get involved and advance the state of the art in free software office suites.

TDF is therefore willing to start talking with Apache Software Foundation, following the email from ASF President Jim Jagielski, who is anticipating frequent contacts between the Apache Software Foundation and The Document Foundation over the next few months. We all want to offer corporate and individual users worldwide the best free office suite for enterprise and personal productivity.

Finally, TDF continue executing on our time-based release plan for LibreOffice 3.4.0, due out this week, while continuing work on our bug fix release train, with 3.4.1 due in a months time, as well as ongoing feature development for our 3.5 release.

About The Document Foundation

The Document Foundation has the mission of facilitating the evolution of the OOo Community into an open, meritocratic and democratic organization. An independent Foundation is a better reflection of the values of our contributors, users and supporters, and will enable a more inclusive, effective, efficient and transparent community. TDF will protect past investments by building on the achievements of the first decade, will encourage wide participation within the community, and will co-ordinate activity across the community.

Media Contacts for TDF

Florian Effenberger (Germany)
Mobile: +49 151 14424108 – E-mail: floeff@documentfoundation.org
Olivier Hallot (Brazil)
Mobile: +55 21 88228812 – E-mail: olivier.hallot@documentfoundation.org
Charles H. Schulz (France)
Mobile: +33 6 98655424 – E-mail: charles.schulz@documentfoundation.org
Italo Vignoli (Italy)
Mobile: +39 348 5653829 – E-mail: italo.vignoli@documentfoundation.org

GNU/Linux Distribution Releases

GNU/Linux distributions are bundled collections of software including a set of applications and an operating system built on the Linux kernel. Some distributions include general applications such as office suites, music players, and web browsers, while others may have specific purposes such as computer system recovery, network firewall, media center, or gaming. Individuals, community projects, or businesses create distributions. While some distributions are commercial and include fee-based technical support, other distributions are freely downloadable or can be ordered on CDs or DVD at low cost.

WAC can provide CD-R and DVD±R media for any downloadable GNU/Linux operating system distribution (e.g. Fedora, Mandriva, Ubuntu, Debian, Knoppix). Please note that free download distributions do not include official technical support nor printed documentation. Single CD-R discs are available with a $3 donation; GNU/Linux distributions on multiple CD-Rs or single DVD±R are available with a $6 donation. Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact Geof Goodrum by e-mail (linux@wacug.org) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information.

The following list summarizes distribution release announcements from Distrowatch.com for the period April 28 – June 3, 2011.

Absolute Linux 13.2.2
Alpine Linux 2.2.0
antiX M11
BackTrack 5
Bodhi Linux 1.1.0
Chakra GNU/Linux 2011.04
Clonezilla Live 1.2.8-42
Edubuntu 11.04
Fedora 15
GParted Live 0.8.1-3
Grml 2011.05
KANOTIX 2011-05
Kororaa Linux 14
Kubuntu 11.04
Legacy OS 2
Linux Caixa Mágica 16
Linux Mint 11
linuX-gamers Live 0.9.7
Lubuntu 11.04
Mageia 1
MeeGo 1.2
Mythbuntu 11.04
Netrunner 3.1
NuTyX Pakxe
Oracle Linux 6.1
Parted Magic 6.1
Pinguy OS 11.04
Puppy Linux 5.1.2 "Wary"
Red Hat Enterprise Linux 6.1
Sabily 11.04
SalineOS 1.4, 1.0 "Personal Server"
Salix OS 13.37 "Xfce"
SimplyMEPIS 11.0
Slackware Linux 13.37
Super OS 11.04
Superb Mini Server 1.6.0
Tiny Core Linux 3.6
Trisquel GNU/Linux 4.5.1
Ubuntu 11.04
Ubuntu Rescue Remix 11.04
Ubuntu Studio 11.04
VortexBox 1.9
Xubuntu 11.04
Zenwalk Linux 7.0 "GNOME"
Zenwalk Linux 7.0 "Live"
ZevenOS 1.9.9 "Neptune"

Linux Software of the Month: June 2011

The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

PlayaPlaya – v1.6.
https://projects.kintassa.com/projects/playaplaya.
Free Python License executable script by Lee Braiden. PlayaPlaya is a "fire-and-forget" audiobook player. Logout, and it'll save your place. Launch it again, and it'll resume. Launch it with different playlists, and it'll track each one separately. This version supports XSPF, PLS, M3U, and ASX playlists. All GStreamer audio types are supported.. Features include:

- Focused on audiobooks

- Tracks the last playback position, and resumes when restarted

- Playlist-centric, where each playlist represents a book

- Remembers positions on a per-playlist basis; open a playlist, and it'll resume where it left off

- Start it without specifying a playlist, and it'll resume with the last playlist, at the last position

- Doesn't try to manage your audio files

- Doesn't try to manage your devices

- GStreamer-based audio playback

Stella – v3.4. http://stella.sourceforge.net/. Free GNU General Public License source code and Debian and RPM executable packages by Bradford W. Mott, Stephen Anthony, et al. The Atari Video Computer System (VCS), introduced in 1977, was the most popular home video game system of the early 1980's. Stella is a multi-platform Atari VCS emulator that allows Atari VCS games to be played on your PC.

Webmatic – v3.0.8. http://www.valarsoft.com/. Free GNU General Public License executable PHP5 script by Valarsoft. Webmatic is a system for dynamically

```
Select an item from the list ...                              1685 items found
RealSports Tennis (1983) (Atari).bin
RealSports Volleyball (1982) (Atari) (PAL).bin
RealSports Volleyball (1982) (Atari).bin
Red Vs. Blue (1981) (Atari) (Prototype).bin
Rescue Terra I (1982) (VentureVision).bin
Resgate Espacial (CCE).bin
Revenge of the Beefste... (20th Century Fox).bin
Reversi (32 in 1) (1988) (Atari) (PAL).bin
Riddle of the Sphinx (1982) (Imagic) (PAL).bin
Riddle of the Sphinx (1982) (Imagic).bin
River Patrol (1984) (Tigervision).bin
River Raid (1982) (Activision) (PAL).bin
River Raid (1982) (Activision).bin
River Raid (1982) (Unknown) (Hack).bin
River Raid (1983) (CCE) [a].bin
River Raid (1983) (CCE).bin
River Raid (1983) (Digitel).bin
River Raid (1984) (Galaga Games) (PAL).bin
River Raid (1984) (Galaga Games).bin
River Raid (1984) (Supergame).bin
River Raid (208 in 1) ...n) (PAL) (Hack) [a].bin
River Raid (208 in 1) (Unknown) (PAL) (Hack).bin
River Raid (Digivision).bin
River Raid (Genus).bin
River Raid (Jone Yuan) (Hack).bin

Name: River Raid (1982) (Activision)
Manufacturer: Activision, Carol Shaw
Model: AX-020, AX-020-04
Rarity:
Note:
Controllers: JOYSTICK (left), JOYSTICK (right)

Dir: ~/src/stella/ROM_HUNTER_v5/
    Select          Go Up          Options          Quit
```
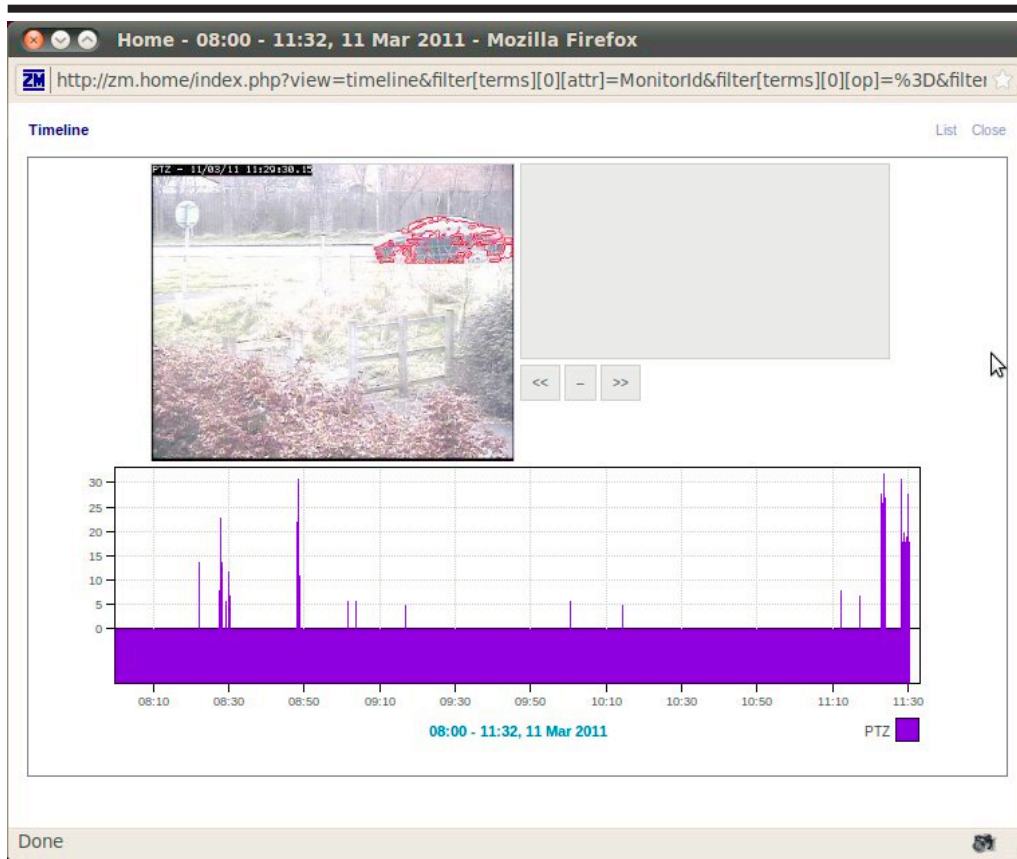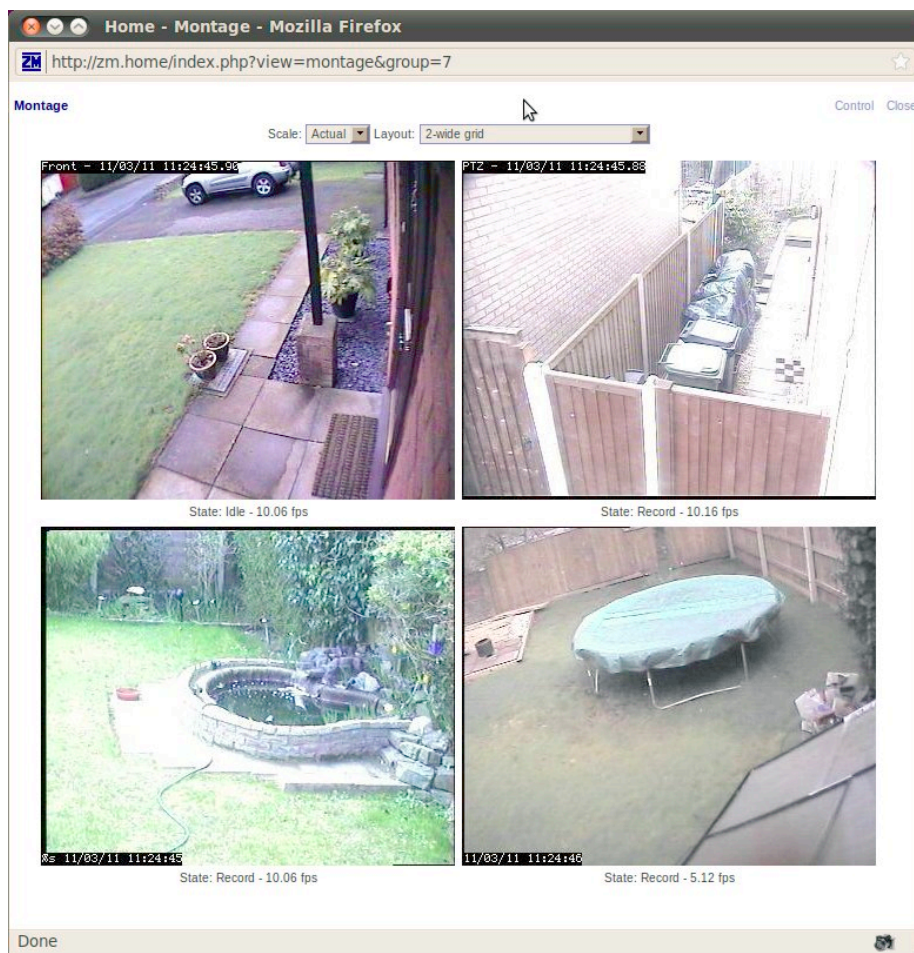
Stella ROM Launcher

creating a Web site directly on-line. The webmatic control panel makes it possible to manage the entire contents of a Web site without knowing any kind of programming language or HTML language. With Webmatic you can create and manage a newsletter, create and manage a FAQ section, create a page with the horoscope, create and manage a search engine, create a page for user registration, differentiate the access levels for each user, manage up to 9 advertising banners easily, create a multi-language Web site with a panel for quickly changing the language, and change the site's graphical theme, detailed statistics for your Web site. You can also create your own ecommerce website with products catalog.

ZoneMinder – v1.24.4. http://www.zoneminder.com/. Free GNU General Public License source code, LiveCD, and executable packages (older release) for Fedora, Debian and Ubuntu by Triornis Ltd. ZoneMinder is a suite of applications intended for use in video camera security applications, including theft prevention and child or family member monitoring. It supports capture, analysis, recording, and monitoring of video data coming from one or more video or network cameras attached to a Linux system. It also features a user-friendly Web interface, which allows viewing, archival, review, and deletion of images and movies captured by the cameras. The image analysis system is highly configurable, permitting retention of specific events, while eliminating false positives. ZoneMinder supports both directly connected and network cameras and is built around the definition of a set of individual 'zones' of varying sensitivity and functionality for each camera. This allows the elimination of regions which should be ignored or the definition of areas which will alarm if various thresholds are exceeded in conjunction with other zones. All management, control, and other functions are supported through the Web interface.

Kernel Source - v2.6.39. http://www.kernel.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

Left:
ZoneMinder Timeline
demonstrating
Activity Detection

Right:
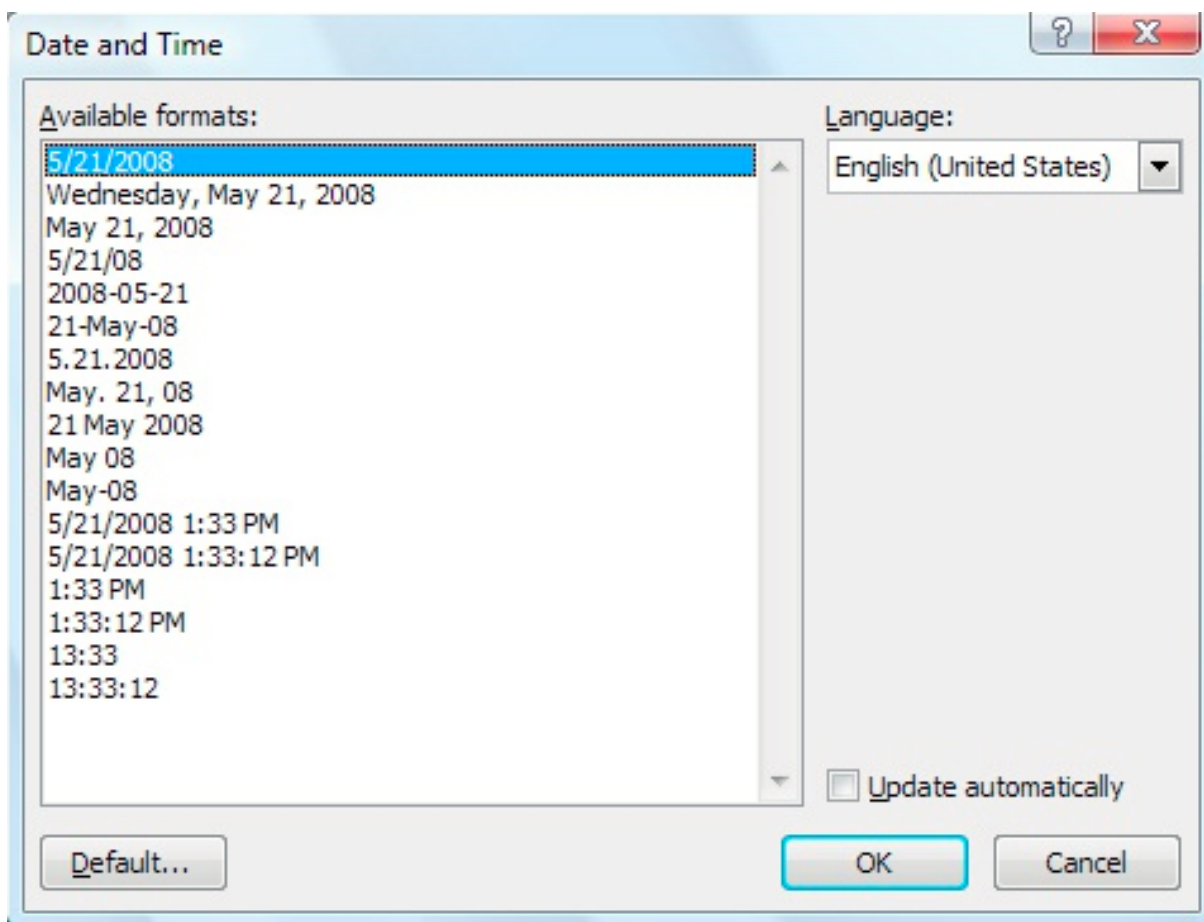**ZoneMinder Montage of**
video feeds

Word Tips: Inserting the Date and Time

Undoubtedly, the time will arise when you need to insert the current date or time in your document. This may be in the introduction of a letter or in a header or footer. Word allows you to quickly insert the date or time in several different formats. This information is inserted as a field which can be updated manually or is updated automatically when you print the document.

To insert the date or time into your document, follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the date or time inserted.

2. Display the Insert tab of the ribbon.

3. Click Date & Time in the Text group. Word displays the Date and Time dialog box.

4. Select a format for the date or time.

5. Select the check box at the bottom of the dialog box if you want the selected date or time to always reflect whatever is current. If you choose this, it means that Word inserts the date or time as a field so that it always represents the current date or time.

6. Click on OK. The date or time, as specified, is inserted in your document.

Copyright © 2011 by Sharon Parq Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Thousands of free Microsoft Word tips can be found online at http://word.tips.net.

The Date and Time dialog box

Excel Tips: Inserting Tomorrow's Date

You may want to insert tomorrow's date into a cell in your worksheet. This is easily done by simply creating a formula that includes the function for today's date, as in the following:

```
=TODAY() + 1
```

This formula first determines today's date and then adds 1 to it, resulting in tomorrow's date. You can then use Excel's formatting features to display the resulting date in any manner desired.

Besides displaying tomorrow's date, you can modify the formula to display a date at any time in the future. Simply change the formula so the desired number of days are being added to today's date. For instance, if you wanted to determine a date two weeks in the future, you could use the following:

```
=TODAY() + 14
```

Copyright © 2011 by Sharon Parq Associates, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Thousands of free Microsoft Excel tips can be found online at http://excel.tips.net.

Book Review: Power Friending – Demystifying Social Media to Grow Your Business

by Gregory West
Member of Sarnia Computer Users' Group (scug.ca) and Member of Port Huron, MI Computer Group (bwcomp.org)
E-mail: prospector16 (at) gmail.com
Blog: gregorywest.wordpress.com

Author: Amber Mac (Amber MacArthur)
Publisher: Penguin Group (USA) Inc. 2010
ISBN-13: 978-1-59184-328-3
Pages: 245
USA: $24.95 / CDA: $31.00
www.ambermac.com

I bought this book as an aid in my research into the world of social media, knowing that Amber MacArthur would have it all explained in plain English, covering all the bases. I was right, she did, and then some.

As an avid listener to Amber Mac and Leo Laporte via the Twit.tv network, with the show: Net at Night, I learned how deep Amber's involvement is with technology and more so, social media. Her insights into this subject are extensive and I knew this book would reveal a guide that would set me on my exploration of social media.

Anyone, whether you own a business, operate a nonprofit group, or simply want to promote you own media for fun, this book is a guide, and Amber sets out to help you "build up your social media strategy, one Internet friend at a time."

The book consists of nine enlightening chapters starting with a "brief" history on the evolving social media which helps put thing into perspective and sets the groundwork for this book. Amber continues on in this journey telling how real people and companies struggle though mistakes, lies, and failures as well as many success stories. From the failures we quickly learn what not to do in creating our own social media awareness. The success stories are many and they help to give us not only ideas but courage to continue through the social media wilderness learning a little bit more with each step Amber takes us.

Amber demonstrates three rules at the onset: "A IS FOR AUTHENTICITY" - "B IS FOR BRAVERY" - C IS FOR CONSISTENCY." Each rule is explained with examples of how people / companies both failed and prospered by either following or disregarding these rules.

In chapter four: "CARPENTRY AT ITS BEST," we are given the necessary social media tools to work with such as blogs, videos, wikis and more. Each tool is explained how and why it works and what it can do for you. Following each tool is a real life example how it works for others. I found this chapter most interesting and helpful. Chapter five is one of my favourites in which Amber discusses "The Strategy." Time management, spreading your word, responding and bringing the message home are a few topics covered. Here Amber shares her "Ten Best Practices...." A must read.

Amber points out success stories and failures too, all with examples so we don't make the same errors. One thing I really am a glad about is the Notes in the

back of the book. Here are Amber's gems that refer to a topic on a certain page in the book with a website source that will take you deeper into the world of social media marketing.

I must give this book is easily a ten plus in not only content and information but Amber's personal stories that keeps the material moving.

✐

The Seventh Son of Windows Desktop Gadgets

by Lee Reynolds
Contributing Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL
April 2011 issue, Boca Bits
www.brcs.org
leetutor (at) exploringwindows.com

Introduction

Windows Vista introduced a new feature called the Sidebar, which was a narrow section of your Desktop where you could have small applications running called Gadgets. These Gadgets could be moved out of the Sidebar and anchored somewhere else on your Desktop, if you wished, but still the Sidebar application had to be running.

In Windows 7, there is no longer any Sidebar, but Desktop Gadgets are still present, and you set them up in a new Control Panel applet of the same name. (In Windows Vista, the Sidebar was on by default, whereas in Windows 7 there is no Sidebar and any Gadgets you want must be configured in Control Panel.)

Windows 7 Gadgets

The Gadgets present in Windows 7 are the same as those provided by Vista, with an additional one that is connected to Windows Media Center. These Gadgets are mini-applications designed to use web technology so as to provide real-time access to information of one type or another available through the internet. The built-in Gadgets are these:

- Calendar application that shows the month, day, year, and day of week. If you click it, you will see the entire month

- Clock that can be configured to show one of 8 different clock faces and any time zone

- CPU meter that shows two analog style dials measuring current memory usage and CPU utilization Currency converter

- Headline Feed of RSS feeds that you are subscribed to via Internet Explorer

- Media Center gadget that shows a revolving set of links to various parts of Windows Media Center

- Weather gadget that can be configured for any location in the world

- Stocks gadget for tracking stocks

- Picture Puzzle where you slide tiles around against a timer

- Slide Show gadget for showing the photos you configure for it

Other Gadgets

There are many other Gadgets that can be downloaded from the Internet and installed, if you so desire.

Windows 7 Gadget Options

If you click on the Show Desktop area of the Taskbar in Windows 7 (a narrow rectangular area on the extreme right end), then you will see the Desktop with its Gadgets (if any.) In Windows Vista, when you clicked on the Show Desktop icon of the Quick Launch Bar, the Gadgets were not visible.

Gadgets can be shown on your Desktop in Windows 7 even if you are not on line with an internet connection, but they will in this case feature a time stamp which shows how out of date the associated data is. Some of the Gadgets, e.g., the Calendar, can be toggled between various sizes. Some of them have Touch capabilities for those users who have a touch screen attached to their PC.

The Cursor

The 2011 WACUG Board of Directors and Volunteers

President, Linux Support, Newsletter Editor:........... Geof Goodrum, 703-370-7649, director1(at)wacug.org
Vice President, Internet Services, Coordinator:........... Paul Howard, 703-860-9246, director2(at)wacug.org
Secretary, Meeting Setup:.. Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, director14(at)wacug.org
Treasurer:...Bob Rott, director11(at)wacug.org
Director, Membership Chair:....................................Mel Mikosinski, 703-978-9158, director4(at)wacug.org
Director, Registered Agent:.. Jorn Dakin, 703-534-8691, director9(at)wacug.org
Director, APCUG Liaison:..Gabe Goldberg, director10(at)wacug.org
Director, Windows Support:................................... Jim Brueggeman, 703-450-1384, director8(at)wacug.org
Director, Vendor Liaison:...Neal Grotenstein, director12(at)wacug.org
Director:...Lorrin Garson, director3(at)wacug.org
Internet Columnist, Newsletter Editor:..Lloyd Johnson, netcolumn(at)wacug.org

The Cursor is the official publication of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WACUG), a Virginia membership corporation. WACUG is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are encouraged and are tax deductible.

All material is Copyright © 2011 by the Washington Area Computer User Group unless otherwise specified. Products or brand names mentioned may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The contents of articles herein are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent the Washington Area Computer User Group, the Board of Directors, or its members.

The Cursor provides news, commentary and product information to members of the Washington Area Computer User Group.

E-mail membership inquiries and address changes to membership(at)wacug.org
E-mail article submission and reprint requests to cursor(at)wacug.org

WAC Membership Application / Renewal

Dues are collected on an Annual basis and include download access to WAC's monthly newsletter, *The Cursor*, in PDF format.

Annual Dues: $25.00
Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send cash by mail.

Remit payment in person at the WAC Membership table on meeting day, or by mail to:

Washington Area Computer User Group
30 Fendall Ave
Alexandria VA 22304-6300

Thank you for joining WAC!

Name:

E-mail:

Phone No.:

Street:

City:

State: Zip Code:

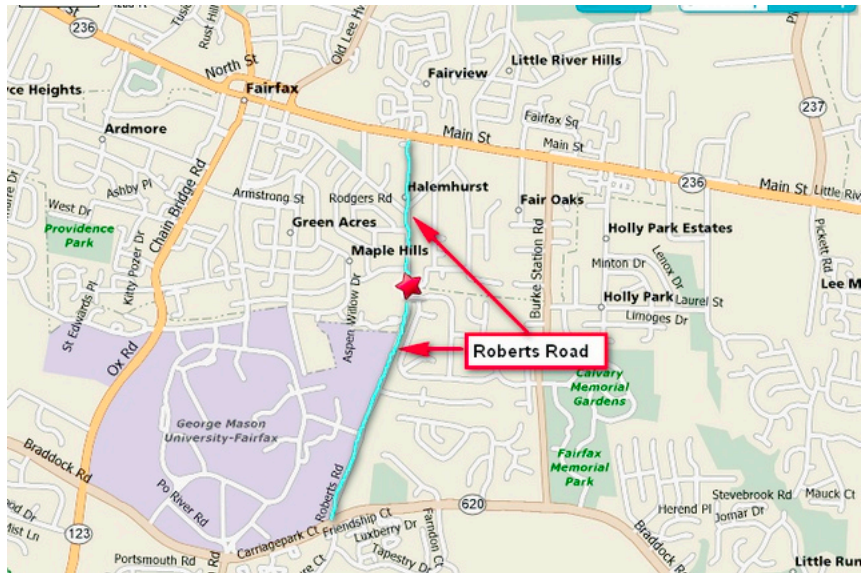| Windows	MacOS	Linux/Unix
Word Processing	Spreadsheet	Database
Photography	Video	Graphics
Genealogy	Finance	Music
Programming	Publishing	Hardware
Other:		

Next WAC Meetings: <u>Jun 18</u> · Jul 16 · Aug 20 · Sep 17 · Oct 15
Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or visit our web site at
http://www.wacug.org/

<u>Meeting Location</u>
Osher Lifelong Learning
Institute (OLLI)
4210 Roberts Road
Fairfax, VA 22032

FREE ADMISSION
BRING A FRIEND!

Service Desks open at
12:30 PM

Meeting starts at
1:00 PM

Washington Area Computer User Group
30 Fendall Avenue
Alexandria VA 22304-6300
ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

FIRST CLASS MAIL

Stamp

Label

Speed Up Your PC by Cleaning Your Startup

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-startup-manager.htm
http://codestuff.tripod.com/products_starter.html
http://www.winpatrol.com
http://www.winpatrol.com/wpsetup.exe
http://www.soluto.com
http://www.piriform.com/ccleaner
http://www.iobit.com/advancedsystemcareper.html
http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb963902.aspx (Autoruns)

We all love that new PC, especially how quickly it boots, loads programs, and runs applications. Inevitably, we start to install new programs, and notice that the row of icons on the toolbar adjacent to the clock starts to get longer, while the computer performance is degraded. Gradually our boot time increases, applications seem to slow down even more, and we get lockups, the "Not Responding" statement from the software, the infamous "Blue Screen of Death," and other irritations that may make us feel like chunking the computer out the window. While there may be many causes of the above maladies, one of the most common causes of slow booting, degraded performance, and non-responsive applications is that the user has too many items loaded when the computer boots.

Many of the applications that we install add themselves to the startup so they load whenever the computer boots, and may (but not always) add an icon to the toolbar by the clock. Every time we boot the computer, the programs in our startup load, and usually consume processing power (cycles), take up memory space, and slightly degrade our performance; the degradation is cumulative, the more programs loaded at boot, the more the degradation of performance.   Some of these programs add themselves to the startup so they will load faster when needed, but are not really necessary in the startup, while security programs and some utilities are necessary at startup.   By not allowing unnecessary programs to load at boot the boot process will be more rapid, free up memory, take

some of the load of the CPU chip (the computer's brains) which will improve performance, and reduce the chance of having programs conflict with each other.

Since the early days of Windows, Microsoft has provided a method to manage some of the startup process, but does not make the management process very easy.   By going to Start - Run - typing "msconfig" (no quotes) in the box, and running it will open the "System Configuration" utility; clicking on the "Startup" tab will show which programs are scheduled to load at boot. Any program that is checked will load at boot; simply unchecking a box will prevent that program from automatically loading at the next and subsequent boots, unless re-checked. Just be sure to click the "Apply" and "OK" radio buttons, which will save the changes. If a window pops up at the next boot (common in Windows XP) which tells the user that the system configuration has been run, simply tell the window not to show again, and it will be gone from future boots. While this method works well, and requires no additional software as it is integral with Windows, it only provides the program name, publisher, and some other basic information. If the user recognizes that a program is necessary, such as his security software, leave the box checked; if the user recognizes that a program loaded at boot is not always used, such as schedulers, updaters, media programs, and chat programs, the user may uncheck the program. When unchecked, the program can still be used by manually clicking on the desktop program icon, which will load and run it. Just remember that the user can always check an unchecked box to start loading the program at future boots.

There are several free utilities that can ease the process of managing the startup process, and many of the combination system repair utilities available, both free and commercial, almost always include a startup manager.   One of my favorite choices for free software information and ratings is Gizmo's Freeware, which has the latest reviews and ratings of the top performing startup managers at www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-startup-manager.htm.   Gizmo uses a community rating system where a large number of users test the

various products, and rate them; these rating have proven to be reliable. Gizmo has recommended three free startup managers; Microsoft's Autoruns, Starter, and WinPatrol. Autoruns is one of the Microsoft "Sysinternals" which has a lot of functionality and power, shows everything that can startup including parts of Windows itself, but is not the most user friendly. Starter (codestuff.tripod.com/products_starter.html) is an excellent free standing program that is very comprehensive, but more intuitive and user friendly than Autoruns. My favorite of the three recommended by Gizmo is WinPatrol (winpatrol.com). which has a free version, and a more comprehensive paid Professional version. WinPatrol can provide a lot more information about each program in the startup by double clicking on the program title, which will open a page on the WinPatrol website that gives detailed information about the program. Based on the information presented, the user can decide whether or not to leave the item in the system startup.

There are several other utilities that I use periodically to clean my startup. One is the free version of Advanced System Care Free from IOBit (www.iobit.com/advancedsystemcareper.html). One of the administrative tools under the Utilities heading is a startup manager, which is simple to use, but does not provide a lot of information about the programs which are loaded at boot.

One extremely popular program, CCleaner, which is best known as a hard drive file cleaner, but has a decent startup manager, is available for free download from www.piriform.com/ccleaner. To use the startup manager click on Tools - Startup, and all of the items will appear. By clicking on an item and then one of the radio buttons (Enable, Disable, Delete), the startup process can be easily controlled. If an item has been previously disabled (stopped from loading at boot), it can be easily restored if desired by clicking on the "Enable" button.

One of the most sophisticated, but easy to use startup managers is Soluto from www.soluto.com. This program is unlike any other startup manager because it uses a "genome" or database of startup information compiled by its large number of users. Soluto performs a "boot analysis" each time the computer boots, and displays each item loaded into one of three categories: No brainer (remove from boot); Potentially Removable; and Cannot be Removed. By clicking on each item under the first two categories, the actual boot time will be displayed (which may vary with each boot), as well as the boot recommendations of other users. Clicking on the "Advanced" link under each opened item will provide comprehensive information about that item, allowing for the user to make a more informed decision about whether or not to have the item load at boot, load after boot when the computer is idle, or not load at all. It is an easy process for the user to comment and include his recommendations in the genome database. Soluto may be one of the most unique but effective startup managers available.

By controlling what programs load at boot, disabling any that are not really necessary, the user may find his computer boots much faster, runs faster, has fewer crashes, and better overall performance. There is no good reason not to periodically clean the boot startup sequence and have a faster computer.

[*Ed. See screenshots on following page.*]

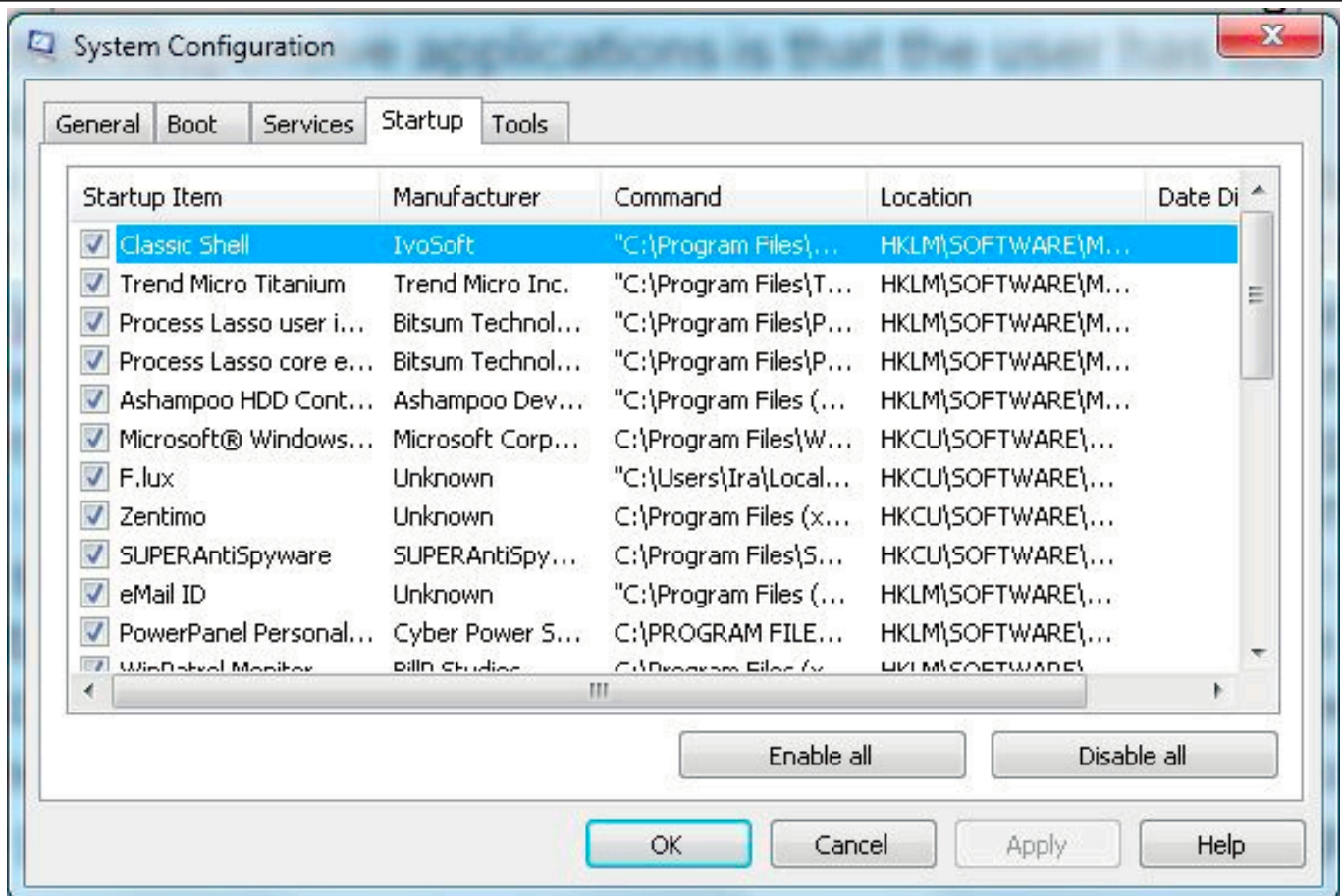## Synchronize Your Bookmarks Between Computers

by Sandy Berger
Compu-KISS, www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) comukiss.com

In today's world, more and more of us are accessing the Internet from several different devices. We may use a computer at work, a tablet PC at home, and a smart phone or a laptop computer when we are on the go. When we bookmark a website at the home, we might like to bring up that bookmarked webpage when we are at the office or when we visit a relative. If we are using the default settings of an Internet browser, we cannot do this. However there is a way to synchronize bookmarks between devices.
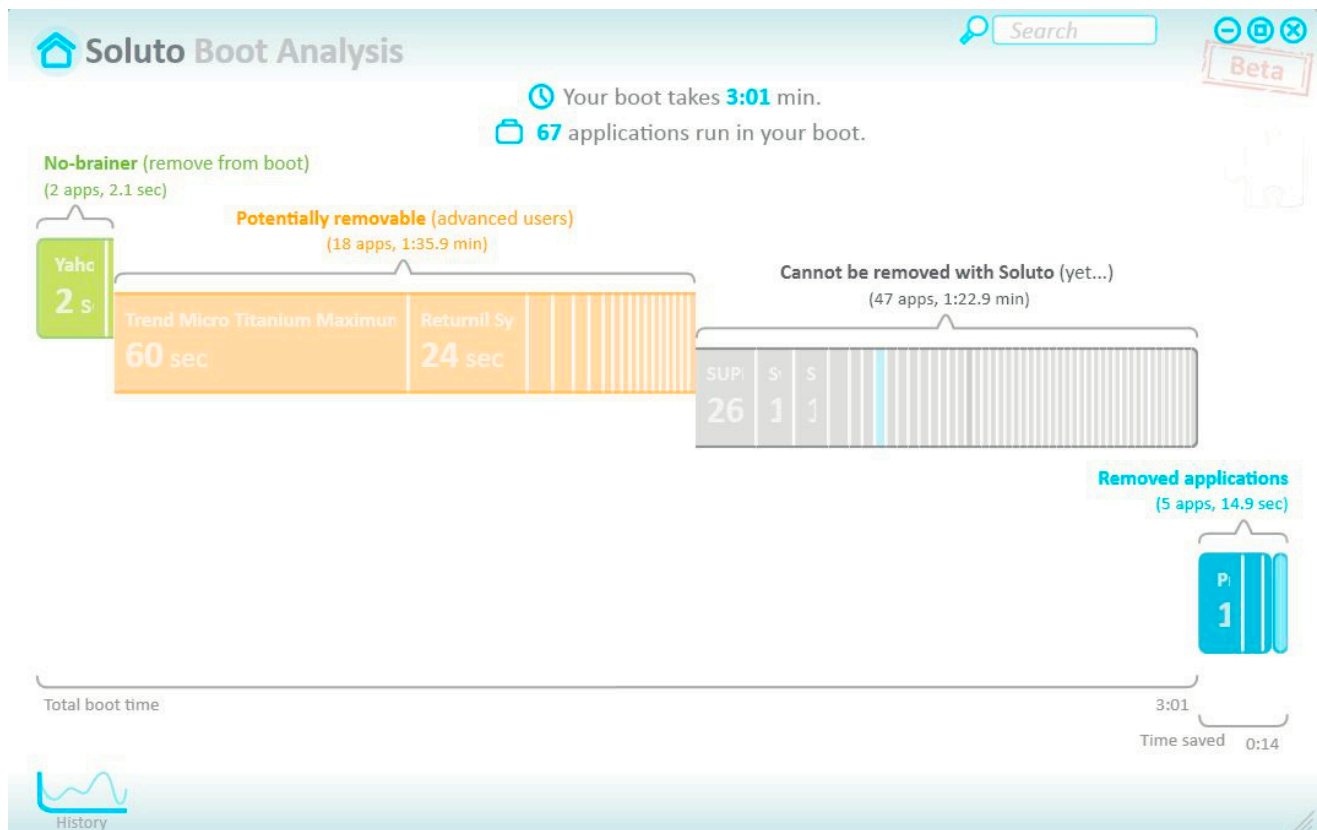
Just about every web browser today offers some way to synchronize bookmarks either through an add-in, a

Above: Windows 7 System Configuration Utility   **Below: Soluto Boot Analysis**

toolbar or a setting. Most of these solutions, however, only work if you use the same web browser on each device. For instance, if you use a Firefox add-in called Sync, you can only access your bookmarks from a device that has Firefox installed. So if you use Firefox at home, but Firefox doesn't work on your mobile device or your mother doesn't happen to have Firefox installed on her computer, you can't easily access your bookmarks while at those places. There are several stand-alone programs that solve this problem by allowing you to synchronize bookmarks between browsers, but I have a better answer.

The best and easiest solution for synchronizing bookmarks and favorites is a free service from Google called Google Bookmarks. I have used Google Bookmarks for several years. This service keeps a copy of all your bookmarks securely in the cloud, so you can access them from any Internet-connected computer or tablet and most smart phones.

To use Google Bookmarks, you simply surf over to www.google.com/bookmarks. If you already have a Google account from using Gmail, Google Calendar or another Google service, you can just sign in and add Bookmarks to your account. If you don't have a Google account, you can sign up for the free Google account and activate Google Bookmarks right from this page.

When you add the Google Bookmarks to your Google Account you will be asked if you want to copy your current bookmarks or favorites from your web browser. You will want to do this, unless your bookmarks or favorites have become so unruly that you would like to start with a clean slate.

Once you have the Google Bookmarks set up, the easiest ways to access your new bookmarks is to install the Google Toolbar, which is a free download available at www.google.com/toolbar. You should install this toolbar on the computer that you use most often in the web browser that you usually use. For instance, if you use Internet Explore on your home computer, installing the Google Toolbar there will give you quick access to your Google Bookmarks as well as some additional features.

If you are using another computer that has the Google Toolbar installed, you can simply log into your Google account to access your bookmarks on that computer. On computers and mobile devices that don't have the Google Toolbar, you can log into your Google account and access your bookmarks at www.google.com/bookmarks. Google also has a small icon that you can drag to the links bar of any browser to access your Google bookmarks. It is available on the same page. Just click "Add Bookmark" at your Google Bookmarks page and you will see a blue box marked "Google Bookmark" that can be added to your web browser toolbar.

The only difficult part about this whole process is remembering to use the Google toolbar or icon to create your bookmarks rather than using your browser bookmark icon. Once you get in the habit of doing that, you are good to go.

Using the Google Bookmarks offers two additional perks. First, their bookmark page is extremely well organized. If you have ever tried to delete, rename, or rearrange your bookmarks or favorites in Internet Explorer, Firefox, or any other web browser, you know that this can be a trying task. Google Bookmarks, however, makes it easy. Just surf over to the Google Bookmarks page. As long as you are logged in to Google, you will see all of your bookmarks and find that it is easy to work with them.

The second perk is that Google has recently introduces a feature called "Lists" to their bookmarks. This feature lets you create a list of websites that revolve around one topic. It is a great way to research a topic, plan a trip, or organize an event. You can share your lists with selected people if you need to collaborate on any project. Google will also give you suggestions that pertain to the items in your list and sometimes these are very useful. So if you decide to try Google Bookmarks, you may also want to try the list feature.

If you use multiple devices, Google Bookmarks will keep your bookmarks in sync. Although this may only be a small step in keeping your world organized, being in sync can give you a very good feeling.