



# *The Cursor*

*Monthly Newsletter of the  
Washington Area Computer User Group*



Meeting Location  
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,  
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:  
December 12, 2009



## Presidential Bits

by Paul Howard, President WACUG, [president@wacug.org](mailto:president@wacug.org).

It's **Black Friday** as I write this, and I wonder how many of our members are following the Internet shopping tips provided at the November meeting by Geof Goodrum and Bill Walsh, instead of running with the crowds at the brick and mortar stores today? Geof's tips are on the web site at the Recent Meetings page.

Best laid plans – I was supposed to get up at 5:15 this AM, but managed not to set the alarm. (Might have been psychological, I suppose <grin>!) I jumped in my exercise gear, out the door by 7:30, planning to snag bargains at Office Depot, Home Depot, and Staples, then head for the Reston “Y” for my workout. Well, I made the first two stops, and got the things I wanted – bargain memory for OLLI laptops and for a couple of my PCs – and a bunch of door prizes for future meetings. By this time I figured the shelves at Staples would be bare, of the bargains I hoped to score, and remembered that the “Y” is across the street from Target – not a place I wanted to be near on the busiest shopping day of the year. So I packed it in, and got sweaty on the treadmill at home, while watching last night's recorded “Nightly Business Report” and “This Old House”.

Our meeting will be held on the 2nd Saturday this month, December 12<sup>th</sup>, 12:30 PM – 3:30 PM at OLLI, TA1, 4210 Roberts Rd. in Fairfax. That leaves a dozen days for your on-line (and sore-feet) shopping – so don't miss this meeting!

Chuck Roberts will discuss Home Wireless Networking installation and security with a hands-on, step by step, demonstration of how to do it – showing the live screens of the router and PC networking setups. We suggest checking <http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html> for September's slide show of the background for December's demo.

This meeting will also feature our PC Clinic, in the Social Room annex, offering our members the opportunity to get assistance from user group experts with troubleshooting problems with their systems, as well as installation of new or replacement components. Advising the group of what you'd like help with is essential. Be sure you read the document on the web site

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**Plus Bonus Articles in  
the Download Edition**

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# Lloyd's Web Sites for December, 2009

by Lloyd Johnson, WACUG Member

<http://www.wacug.org/> is the URL for the Washington Area Computer User Group. Visit it for past issues of Web Sites with hyperlinks

## December Sites:

1. Rent ritzy items for a day or month at a time. Exotic and Sports Cars – [www.exoticcarrental.com](http://www.exoticcarrental.com) or [www.breezenet-inc.com](http://www.breezenet-inc.com). For high-end handbags – [www.bagborroworsteal.com](http://www.bagborroworsteal.com). For jewelry ( requires membership) – [www.borrowedbling.com](http://www.borrowedbling.com)
2. Google Finance – <http://finance.google.com/finance>. Google Finance offers a broad range of information about stocks, mutual funds, public and private companies.
3. Replacement Furniture. Check-out Habitat for Humanity Restores – [www.habitat.org/env/restores](http://www.habitat.org/env/restores)
4. Gmail Assistant Good info on GMAIL accounts – [www.gmailassistant.sourceforge.net](http://www.gmailassistant.sourceforge.net)
5. Astronomy Picture of the Day – <http://antwrp.gsfc.nasa.gov/apod/astropix.html>. Discover the cosmos. Each day a different image or photograph of our fascinating universe is featured by this NASA web site, along with a brief explanation written by a professional astronomer.
6. Acronym Finder – [www.acronymfinder.com](http://www.acronymfinder.com). Acronym Finder contains more than 4 million acronyms and abbreviations.
7. Refdesk: Crossword Resources – [www.refdesk.com/crosswrld.html](http://www.refdesk.com/crosswrld.html). Refdesk's Crossword Resources page provides links to over seventy of the most popular crossword sites on the Internet.
8. Update on real estate – [www.zillow.com/](http://www.zillow.com/). "Zillow provides free real estate information. Search homes for sale, home prices, home values, recently sold homes, mortgage rates, and more." Related site: [www.realtor.com/](http://www.realtor.com/).
9. Commuters can request a report if traffic conditions exceed a certain jam factor. You need to sign-up – [www.traffic.com/](http://www.traffic.com/)
10. Find a Yard Sale near you – [www.yardsaletreasuremap.com/](http://www.yardsaletreasuremap.com/)



## NCTCUG

Visit our "sister" user group. The National Capital Technology and Computer User's Group meets the first and fourth Wednesday of the month. They meet in Carlin Hall in Arlington at 5711 South 4<sup>th</sup> Street. Visit their web site for more information, a map and directions:

<http://www.nctcug.org/>

Meetings start at 7:00 PM

**Washington Area User  
Group Partners  
Working Together For  
Our Members**

**NCTCUG**

**WACUG**

**OPCUG**



## GNU/Linux Sig

By Geof Goodrum, WACUG

### Linux for Netbooks: Intel Moblin 2.1 and Ubuntu 9.10 Netbook Remix

If you have a computer with an Intel® Atom™ processor, there are two new Linux-based distribution releases specifically designed to get the most out of it.

Moblin™ is an open source Linux Foundation project started by Intel to provide an optimized environment for netbooks, nettops, and Mobile Internet Devices (MIDs) that use the Atom processor. The project released Moblin 2.1 on November 4<sup>th</sup>. Moblin 2.1 features enhanced browser functionality and plug-in support, user interface enhancements, support for 3G data connections, Bluetooth device management, input method support for localized languages, integrated application installer for the Moblin Garage, performance and stability improvements, and additional overall help and documentation. The user interface resizes to make the best use of the available screen resolution. The release notes for Moblin 2.1 are online at <http://moblin.org/community/blogs/imad/2009/moblin-v2.1-project-release-netbooks-and-nettops-its-here>.

Canonical Ltd. released Ubuntu Netbook Remix (UNR) with the Ubuntu 9.10 release on October 28<sup>th</sup>. UNR 9.10 combines optimizations for the Intel Atom from the Moblin project with the Ubuntu distribution, and can fit entirely within 4 GB of storage. Featured applications include Firefox 3 web browser, OpenOffice.org office suite, Evolution e-mail client/groupware, Pidgin instant messaging, F-Spot photo viewer, FBReader e-book reader, and Rhythmbox media player. The user interface is designed to make accessing favorite applications easy, even with small screen sizes. Canonical provides more information at <http://www.canonical.com/projects/ubuntu/unr>.

Of the two netbook distributions, UNR provides the most traditional interface and applications, while Moblin is perhaps better suited for online applications and social networking. Both are freely downloadable and installable from USB flash media.

### Linux Help at WAC PC Clinic

I'll help you install, configure, and troubleshoot Linux-based Operating Systems and applications during the WAC PC Clinic on December 12. However, you must request help in advance by e-mailing [pcclinic@wacug.org](mailto:pcclinic@wacug.org) or leaving a voice message on the WAC AnswerLine (703-370-7649). Upon request, I will bring copies of free GNU/Linux Distributions to install on-site.

### GNU/Linux Distribution Releases

GNU/Linux distributions are complete GNU/Linux operating system and application software collections. Many are freely downloadable or can be ordered on CDs or DVD at low cost. [Distrowatch.com](http://Distrowatch.com) lists the following distribution release announcements for the period November 5 - 26, 2009.



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Distribution
<a href="#">Bluewhite64 Linux 13.0 "LiveDVD"</a>
<a href="#">DEFT Linux 5</a>
<a href="#">Elastix 1.6.0</a>
<a href="#">Fedora 12</a>
<a href="#">iMagic OS 2010</a>
<a href="#">KNOPPIX 6.2</a>
<a href="#">Momonga Linux 6.1</a>
<a href="#">NuTyX 2009.1</a>
<a href="#">openSUSE 11.2</a>
<a href="#">openSUSE 11.2 "Edu Li-f-e"</a>
<a href="#">Parted Magic 4.6</a>
<a href="#">Scientific Linux 5.4</a>
<a href="#">Scientific Linux 5.4 "Live CD/DVD"</a>
<a href="#">sidux 2009-03</a>
<a href="#">SimplyMEPIS 8.0.12</a>
<a href="#">SystemRescueCd 1.3.2</a>
<a href="#">Tiny Core Linux 2.5</a>
<a href="#">Ultimate Edition 2.4</a>
<a href="#">VectorLinux 6.0 "KDE-Classic"</a>
<a href="#">Webconverger 5.7</a>
<a href="#">Zenwalk Linux 6.2 "Core"</a>
<a href="#">ZevenOS 2.0</a>

### Linux Software of the Month

The software described below is downloadable at the links provided or may be requested on CD, or copied onto a USB flash drive at the WAC meeting. In addition, 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 download versions of commercial distributions do not include official technical support nor printed documentation.

Discs are available only by pre-order. Contact Geof Goodrum by e-mail ([linux@wacug.org](mailto:linux@wacug.org)) at least 48 hours before meeting day to order or for more information. 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.

### December 2009

**BrisKola** – v1.0. <http://www.briskola.net/>. Free GNU General Public License Fedora and Ubuntu executables and source code by The BrisKola Team. BrisKola is a clone of the Italian card game Briscola. This is a classic Italian game, surely one of the most popular, thanks to the simplicity of the rules and the modest skills required to players.

**GTK Themes** – <http://www.webhostingsearch.com/>

[articles/top-18-linux-gtk-themes.php](http://www.webhostingsearch.com/articles/top-18-linux-gtk-themes.php). A collection of highly rated desktop themes to give your desktop menus and graphics a modern look, including themes to make your Linux desktop look like Microsoft® Windows Vista™ and Apple® MacOS-X Tiger®. Requires the GTK engine, included with most major distributions.

**MySQL** – v5.4.3. <http://www.mysql.com/>. Free GNU General Public License source code by MySQL AB and the MySQL community. MySQL is a widely used and fast SQL database server. It is a client/server implementation that consists of a server daemon (mysqld) and many different client programs/libraries. MySQL 5.4 is based on MySQL 5.1 but includes several high-impact changes to address scalability and performance issues in MySQL Server. These changes exploit advances in hardware and CPU design and enable better utilization of existing hardware. MySQL 5.4 currently has Beta status.

**SOFA Statistics** – v0.8.12. <http://www.sofastatistics.com/home.php>. Free GNU Affero General Public License 3 Python source code by Dr Grant Paton-Simpson et al. SOFA is a statistics, analysis, and reporting program with an emphasis on ease of use, learning as you go, and beautiful output. SOFA can connect directly to your database and lets you display results in an attractive format ready to share or put in a spreadsheet. SOFA will help you learn as you go, whether you are a student, business analyst, or researcher. SOFA requires the following software:

- python - this is the language SOFA is written in
- numpy - this provides numerical processing
- pysqlite - this lets SOFA connect to SQLite databases
- pywin32 - this lets SOFA connect to MS Access and Excel
- wxPython - this provides the interface for SOFA
- comtypes - needed for internal web display
- MySQL-python - lets python connect to MySQL databases

**Kernel Source** – <http://www.kernel.org/>. 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms (stable 2.6.31).

### Graphics

Moblin 2.1

<http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/myzone.png>

See *Linux* next page



Linux from page 4

[http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/moblin\\_application\\_installer.png](http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/moblin_application_installer.png)

[http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/media\\_panel.png](http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/media_panel.png)

UNR

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/UNR?action=AttachFile&do=get&target=unr-favorites.png>

BrisKola

[http://happypenguin.org/images/bkScreenshot\\_03.png](http://happypenguin.org/images/bkScreenshot_03.png)

GTK Themes

<http://www.webhostingsearch.com/content-images/Aero-Clone.jpg>

<http://www.webhostingsearch.com/content-images/OSX-Tiger.jpg>

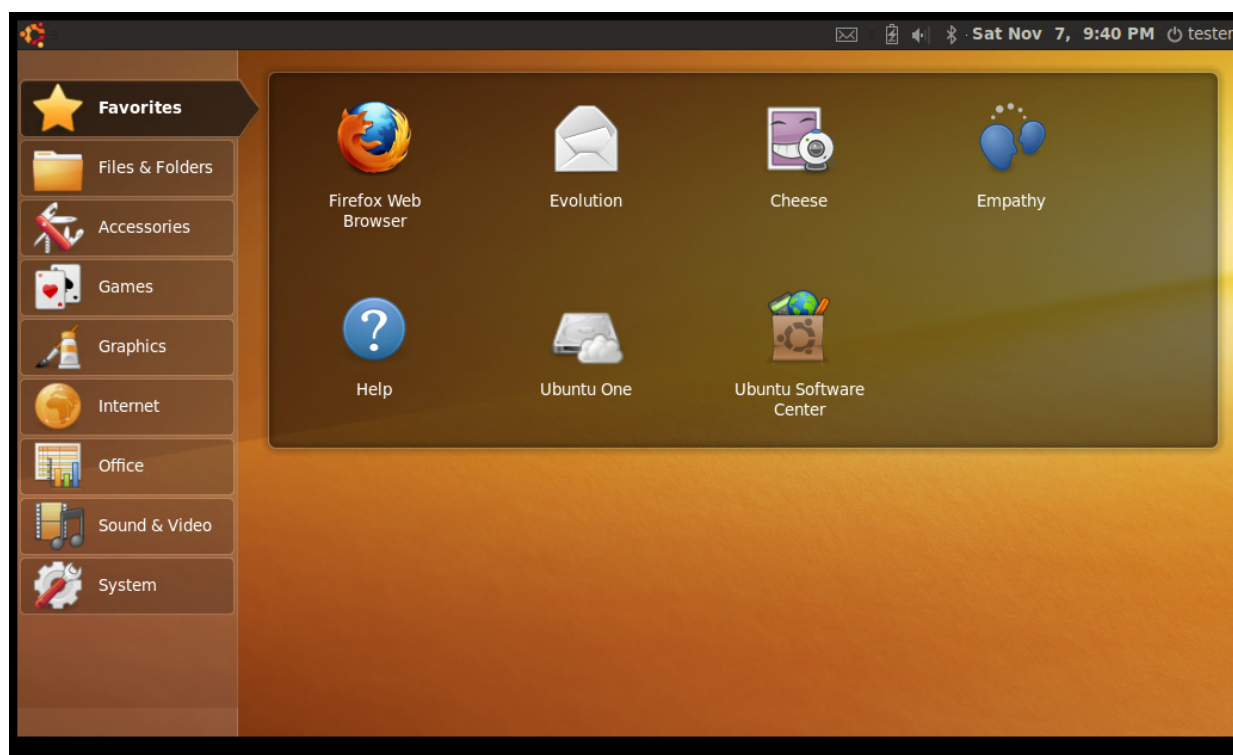
<http://www.webhostingsearch.com/content-images/Raptor.jpg>



Screenshots continue  
through page 7 & 10

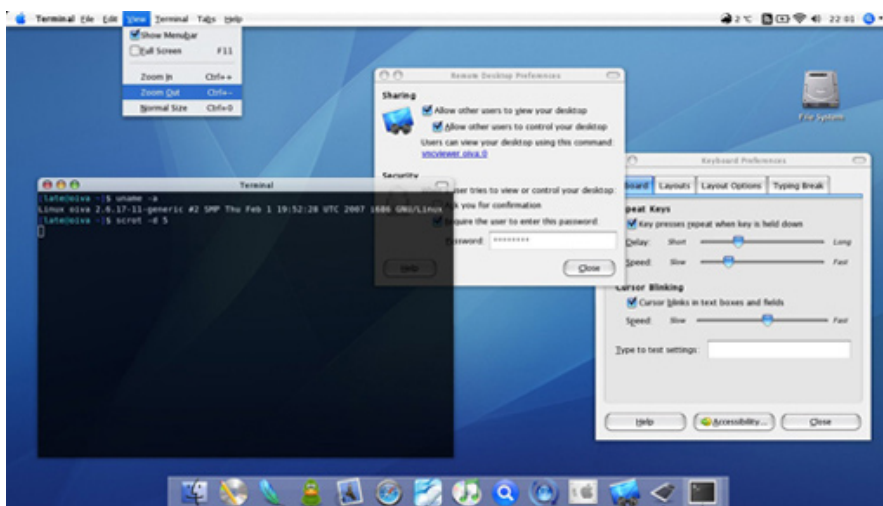
Moblin 2.1  
“MyZone”

## Ubuntu Netbook Remix (UNR)

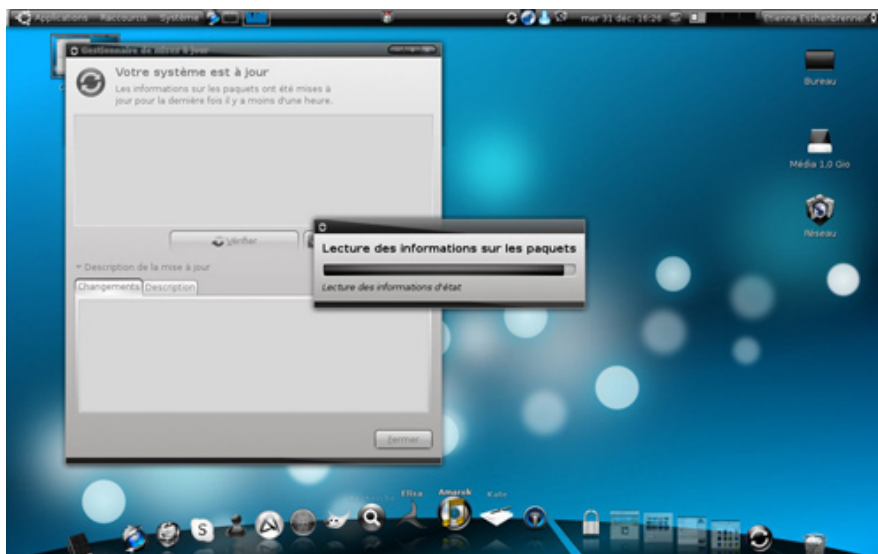




GTK Themes  
“Aero-Clone”



GTK Themes  
“OSX-Tiger”



GTK Themes  
“Raptor”

Screenshots continue next page & page 10

regarding the clinic, at: <http://www.wacug.org/clinic.html>

Postponed from last month because of time constraints, Neal Grotenstein will present: Be safer on the 'Net with a User Account Instead of an Admin Account. Most people just use an Admin account for their computer. Convenient but risky. An Admin account permits all Windows capabilities to be used. This includes s/w installs, be they legit, Spam or worse. Since a User account won't allow much s/w installation, a User account is a reasonable way to prevent undesirable software from being installed. There are very few drawbacks to using a User account. One example is that an Admin account is needed to change the system clock setting, which is rarely performed. This discussion will cover what this approach offers and does not offer.



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**Editor's Note:** Space requirements limited the size of the Linux article graphics. Hyper links are provided below for the graphic images used.

**Moblin 2.1:**

<http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/myzone.png/>

[http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/moblin\\_application\\_installer.png/](http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/moblin_application_installer.png/)

[http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/media\\_panel.png](http://moblin.org/sites/all/files/u4/media_panel.png)

**UNR**

<https://wiki.ubuntu.com/UNR?action=AttachFile&do=get&target=unr-favorites.png>

**BrisKola**

[http://happypenguin.org/images/bkScreenshot\\_03.png](http://happypenguin.org/images/bkScreenshot_03.png)

**GTK Themes**

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<http://www.webhostingsearch.com/content-images/OSX-Tiger.jpg>

<http://www.webhostingsearch.com/content-images/Raptor.jpg>

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## Annual Election in January

WACUG's Board of Directors election will be held at the January 16th Annual Meeting. The Board shall consist of four members, each individually elected by a majority vote of corporation members attending the Annual Meeting of the corporation and not more than 10 others as may be elected from time to time by majority vote of the Board. The four board members elected by vote of the corporation members shall be the President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary.

Candidates for election: Anyone wishing to run must advise Nominating Committee Chairperson, Mel Mikosinski <[melvin22003\(at\)aol.com](mailto:melvin22003(at)aol.com)> no later than 12/December 2009. Mel and Jim Bruegeman will be our election commissioners. Ballots will be emailed to members, with instructions for their return. Members wishing to be considered for the 10 indirectly elected board positions should contact Mel.

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# Use Caution When *Upgrading* to Windows 7

By Ira Wilsker

## WEBSITES:

<http://social.answers.microsoft.com/Forums/en-US/category/windows7>

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/get/upgrade-advisor.aspx>

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/compatibility/windows-7/en-us/default.aspx>

A few weeks ago I wrote a column about how to determine if your computer could be satisfactorily upgraded to Windows 7. I mentioned Microsoft's Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor, and Windows 7 Compatibility Center, which should be run prior to any installation in order to determine hardware and software compatibility with Windows 7. I ran both of those utilities on my three month old Vista Home Premium 64 machine, and found that my hardware was compatible with Windows 7, and that some of my software needed to be updated, which I did. Rerunning both Microsoft utilities after making the recommended changes indicated that my computer hardware and software should run on Windows 7, and that no listed incompatibilities remained. With peace of mind that I should have no problems upgrading to Windows 7, I eagerly awaited the free upgrade discs that I had ordered under Microsoft's and my manufacturer's "Free Upgrade to Windows 7" offer for eligible computers.

A few days after Microsoft's much promoted rollout of Windows 7, my upgrade discs arrived in the mail. The envelope actually contained two DVDs, one the manufacturer's "Upgrade Advisor", the other Microsoft's "Windows 7 Home Premium Upgrade" complete with hologram and product key. Also in the envelope was a poster sized, multi-lingual, instruction sheet with detailed upgrade instructions. Knowing from past experience on my older computers (XP to Vista), it may take several hours to complete the upgrade I waited until the weekend when I might have the time to dedicate to the upgrade.

One of my most frequently used computing expressions is "Backup! Backup!, and Backup!". Prior to installing Windows 7, I made a set of Vista recovery DVDs, and a redundant backup of all of my critical data files. I can not understate the critical im-

portance of this backup process, and that it is absolutely imperative to have a good current backup. If you have the software and media to make an image backup, which is a digital image of your entire hard drive that can be restored in the event of catastrophic failure, do it. This could be very useful, as it can restore the operating system, data, and all programs if necessary. The fact that I do have good backups may be my savior. I was heartened by the fact that the computer magazines and blogs were heavy with stories of successful upgrades and the high level of preliminary satisfaction that users had with their new Windows 7 upgrades.

After ensuring that I had good backups, I then proceeded to follow the upgrade instructions provided with my discs, and first ran the manufacturer's "Upgrade Advisor". It also ran the Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor (no problems found), and installed some updated Windows 7 drivers for the factory hardware. When completed, I was instructed to insert the Windows 7 Upgrade DVD.

The Windows 7 Upgrade DVD ran for a while and detected some factory installed software, mostly games and a few obsolete Microsoft utilities, that I was instructed to uninstall. The computer then rebooted back to my Vista Home Premium 64, and the list of items to uninstall appeared in a file on my desktop. I used my Revo Uninstaller, and uninstalled those items being sure to do a complete uninstall including any fragments and leftover registry entries.

I then restarted the computer and re-ran the Windows 7 Upgrade setup, as directed. The computer ran for several hours, as I occasionally monitored its progress. There were no difficulties or anomalies so far, and as things were now running smoothly, I felt assured that I would shortly have the new Windows 7 Home Premium 64 installed on my computer. After running for nearly six hours, and completing an indicated 72% of the upgrade process, a window popped up which said that the install could not continue as my hard drive was full. That struck me as very odd, and a sense of disbelief came over me, as I knew that I had well over 500 gigs of available hard drive space prior to the upgrade! I was instructed by the upgrade software to restart my computer, and that my Vista would then be restored. Other than the annoyance of wasting six hours of my life on a failed upgrade, along with a

See *Caution Upgrading* next page



modicum of disgust, I removed the Windows 7 DVD from the drive, and rebooted the computer. This is when things went *terribly* wrong.

During the reboot process, I was greeted with a black window with white print that offered two options; repair Windows 7, or restore my Vista. I selected the restore option, and the computer booted into Windows 7 (not Vista), and as it was loading a popup appeared that said, “The computer restarted unexpectedly or encountered an unexpected error”, and instructed me to reboot. I rebooted, selected the restore function, and the same popup error appeared. I rebooted again, but this time selected the “Repair Windows 7” option, and the system loaded identically as before. I selected a variety of the Windows 7 repair options, ran them, rebooted, and the same error appeared. I put the Windows 7 Upgrade DVD in the drive, and ran the setup again, only to be greeted with the same error at the same place in the process. I tried over a dozen permutations of rebooting and selecting options, including a variety of repair options off of the Windows 7 repair menu, but always had the same error when rebooting. This became an infinite loop. Despite Microsoft’s claims that Vista would be restored if the upgrade failed, the system would not restore my Vista, and the Windows 7 failed to install. Now I was left with a useless computer that would not load anything. I did finally boot off of a Linux CD, and saw that my files all appeared to be intact. With some difficulty, I was able to then boot off of my Spinrite CD, and did a thorough hard drive check; my hard drive was intact and undamaged.

Next, with growing frustration approaching anger, I went online with my trusty old XP computer (the same one that I am using to type this). I went to the Microsoft Windows 7 support forums, and found that I was far from alone. The Windows 7 forum “Install, Upgrade, Activate” had over 6,000 threads, and almost 25,000 messages. One forum, “Windows 7 - Upgrade Unsuccessful -Reboot Loop” had a post from Michael, a Microsoft support engineer. It says, “Hello,

For those who have attempted to perform an upgrade to Windows 7 and encounter a reboot loop, Microsoft is aware of this issue and is currently being investigated.” It then provided a link to another forum, but at

least I had some assurance that Microsoft was aware of the problem with the “Microsoft is aware of this issue” statement. That forum then linked to another forum, with the same title “Windows 7 - Upgrade Unsuccessful -Reboot Loop”. That forum, which Microsoft “locked” (closed to new posts) has dozens of posts similar to mine, where users are complaining about the infinite loop reboot problem, and the failure to restore Vista. It appears that there may be two distinct and different issues involving the loop problem. Several dozen of the posts all indicated that their computer locked up at 62% of the install process, and many of them had purchased the student upgrade to Windows 7, and downloaded the upgrade. For these unhappy users, Microsoft has offered an updated download file for them to use to reinstall Windows 7. Many other users, me included, had an authentic Microsoft Upgrade DVD which we used for the install, and all of us encountered the same problem. Microsoft posted a few suggestions on possible fixes, but from the user responses, these have not been successful. It was immaterial if the user was updating a desktop computer like mine, or a laptop, the failure was the same. Some of the users were so frustrated that they chose to do a full install, rather than an upgrade, which did indeed work, but it wiped out all of their programs and data files which would have been preserved had the upgrade install worked as promised. It is of little solace to me and thousands of other users with crippled computers that the vast majority of those performing upgrades completed them successfully. I guess that we were just the unlucky few.

It is not just the Vista Home Premium users that have encountered this problem, but users of other editions as well. In the Microsoft forums “Vista x64 Ultimate to Windows 7 Ultimate upgrade failing” an IT professional who was upgrading several computers encountered a similar problem with the Ultimate upgrade.

Several of the computer magazines and independent support forums have had readers complain with the identical issues, and inquiries to Microsoft have resulted in a “we are aware of the problem and we are working to find a solution”. Some of the independent support boards also have members trying to find a solution, but so far none have been found that can either restore our computers to the way they were prior to the upgrade (Vista), or allow the Windows 7 upgrade

*Caution Upgrading* continues next page

to complete.

The one saving grace is that I do have a Vista backup so I can be up and running again on my newer computer, but according to the Microsoft forums, many users did not create a backup prior to installing the Windows 7 Upgrade. Unless Microsoft comes up with a fix, these users will likely lose all of their programs and files, and unsatisfactory outcome. Once again, this demonstrates that it is absolutely imperative to have and maintain a contemporary backup of all critical data files, and preferably an image backup which can restore the computer to an earlier state complete with all programs and files.

Most users who have installed the upgrade editions of Windows 7 to compatible computers had great success, but for the few, maybe thousands, of us who had a catastrophic failure during the upgrade process, we are not happy campers. Can I recommend the Windows 7 Upgrade to users with compatible computers? Generally yes, as the benefits of Windows 7 appear to outweigh the foibles of Vista, but I will only make that recommendation with one proviso; be absolutely certain to have a good backup before attempting the upgrade. I am thankful that I have a good backup. If someone wants to do a clean install, meaning that they are installing Windows 7 to an empty or reformatted hard drive that is fine, as there have been very few problems with a clean install reported in the forums.

I will continue to monitor the Microsoft support forums hoping for a satisfactory resolution of this problem. In the meantime, remember, "Backup! Backup!, Backup!"



Final screen shot from page 7

## BrisKola



**The 2009 WAC Board of Directors, SIG Leaders and other Volunteers**

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**Secretary:**..... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh(at)cox.net  
**Treasurer:**..... Bob Rott, blbob1b(at)cox.net  
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**Member at Large:**..... Lorrin R. Garson, garson9929(at)yahoo.com  
**Member at Large:**..... Neal Grotenstein, 240-938-6381, mc4359(at)yahoo.com

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**Internet Columnist:**..... Lloyd Johnson, lloydhj(at)aol.com  
**Vendor Contact:** ..... Chuck Roberts, 703-876-9787, chrobe(at)verizon.net  
**Web Site Team:** ..... Paul Howard and Chuck Roberts  
**Meeting Setup/APCUG Liaison:** ..... Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, bill.walsh(at)cox.net

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

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**Send membership inquiries and address changes to: [membership@wacug.org](mailto:membership@wacug.org)**  
**Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: [cursor@wacug.org](mailto:cursor@wacug.org)**

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**WAC Membership/Renewal Application**

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Dues are collected on an Annual basis and includes:  
downloadable links for WAC's monthly newsletter,  
*The Cursor*, in PDF format

Individual/Corporate/Family Dues: \$25.00  
\$5 annual surcharge for delivery of the Cursor by  
1st Class 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**

Make checks payable to WAC. Please do not send  
cash by mail. *Thank you for joining WAC!*

Complete if you name and address do not appear  
on the reverse side. Include E-mail Address

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (     )     -     \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

*Membership Survey:* Help us to help you by completing this survey.  
List the computer systems you own / use (in order of preference)

Operating System(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Modem(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Printer(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Other Hardware: \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite Software: \_\_\_\_\_

Connection: (circle one)   Dial-up   or   Broadband

**Circle Your Interests:**   Photo Printing   Investing   Games

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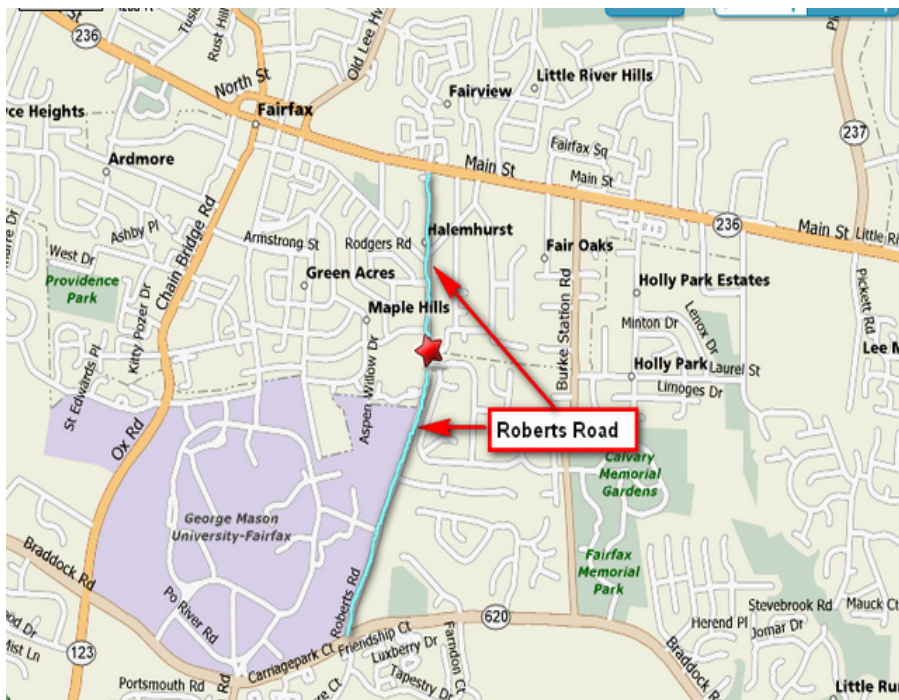
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# Adding an NAS Drive To Your Network (Part 1 of 2)

Written by Ron Hirsch, Member & Contributing  
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A few months back, I presented two articles in Boca Bits on setting up a wireless home network. And, I reviewed the big advantages of using the Cisco program “Network Magic” to configure and manage your network settings, and elements.

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With your network, you can share files, printers, et al quite simply. But, to share files from a given computer, for example, the computer having those files must be up and running. And if you want to share a printer on the network, the computer where that printer is installed, and of course, the printer, must be up and running.

There is a quick and easy way around this, and that is to use an NAS (network attached storage) device. This is essentially a hard drive, within an enclosure, which has a “mini” operating system included, which takes the place of a computer, and provides the user with a simple way to then connect the hard drive(s) to the network, and provide access to the contents thereon. Access to everything on the NAS device is available at all times.

And, many of these NAS devices also provide a USB port for use with printers and other accessories. Putting a hub on this port will allow the use of whatever USB devices that one wants to put on the network. For devices which require an installation, such as a printer, or scanner, the computer wanting to use that device must have had the install procedure run, just as one would do when that device is connected directly there.

## OVERVIEW OF NAS DEVICES

There are several varieties of NAS devices out there. The three main flavors are:

1. Small self contained units which include one or two hard drives, ready to go

2. Medium size units with no hard drives included. The user gets his own hard drives and installs them into the unit.
3. Large (and expensive) units, not really designed for home users, and also priced too high for home use.

## MAXIMUM FILE SIZE

When I started looking into NAS units, there was one area where I was confused, since no units that I could locate could handle hard drives with the NTFS formatting capability. I wanted this to be able to store images created by True Image, for my system backups. These image files are usually 20-30 GB, but the limit in FAT32 and EXT2/EXT3 is 4 GB (minus 1 byte). So to store a 20 GB file from True Image, it breaks it up into 4 GB chunks.

Apparently, to use NTFS, which is a Microsoft format in Windows versions from Windows NT, XP, and onward, there are fees which one must pay to Microsoft. And few manufacturers, if any, want to pay this fee, so they settle on either FAT32 (the older Windows file system), or EXT2/EXT3, which is a Linux file system. These choices are fully compatible with Microsoft Windows — all versions.

I finally decided to accept this formatting system, and decided that I would not use the NAS drive to store True Image backups. The read and write speeds, working on a home network NAS drive, are very much slower than working to an internal SATA drive in my machine, and also much slower than working to a USB drive connected to a computer. So I would just use the NAS unit to have all my data and files on the network, and instantly available to any computer on my network.

## WHICH NAS UNIT TO GET

I did a lot of searching, reading user reviews, and checking prices. I hadn’t realized that there were so many choices out there. I considered price, quality, ease of use, and many customer reviews on a variety of sites. I finally decided on the D-Link DNS-323.

This unit has an all aluminum case, holds 2 SATA drives, has in internal fan, seemed to be a well manufactured. And, the price for the unit from Amazon was \$158, with a \$30 mail-in rebate. I also ordered two 1 TB drives to go with the unit. The total price of \$338 for everything is a very competitive total price,

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to get 2 terabytes of storage onto the network

This unit also has a USB 2.0 port on it, as shown below. So users can attach whatever USB devices they want to be available on the network

## PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

There was very little to assemble when everything arrived. The case and its front cover are very nicely manufactured, and show excellent quality. The front cover of the unit slips off very easily - actually too easily. Then the drives are merely slid into the case where their connectors engage the mating connectors inside the back of the case. Then the cover is put back on, and the assembly part is all done. Below are two pix of the front and back of the case. To remove the drives, slip off the front of the case, and use the "drive eject" levers on the rear of the case.



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## Genealogy Online— Using the internet's Tools to "Dig Up" Your Family Tree

By Terri Neary, a member of the ICON PCUG, Inc.,  
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Everyone has their own ideas about how computers and the internet can help them the most. For me, it is my genealogy project. I am trying to find out who my family were, what they did, where they lived, and even how they lived. I would like to confirm or disprove several family stories and be able to give the generations after me a sense of where they came from. Trying to do this without a computer and the internet would be the equivalent of using a horse and buggy in the 21st century. But searching for your family history can be an expensive project. There are many ways to cut down the cost.

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Now one of the easiest websites to search is [www.Ancestry.com/](http://www.Ancestry.com/). However, this can be a pricy option unless

you know of a library with a subscription to it. Personally I travel to the Bethpage Library to use theirs. The databases available on this site range from the basic Social Security Death Index, which gives you the option of writing to the appropriate department to get a photocopy of the original application, to the Federal Censuses, to Passenger Lists coming from multiple locations to multiple ports in the United States and over a thousand different databases in the United States alone. Each of these databases can give you information regarding your immediate line of family members as well as their siblings. Every little tidbit can help you to find more out and help to confirm or deny family stories. By searching their World War I Draft Registration Cards, I discovered that my grandfather, who died before I got to know him, was born in Hungary on the 24th of January in 1896. In addition, I learned that he was considered ineligible for the draft, not because he was an alien residing in NJ, but because he was missing the first joint of his third finger on his right hand. This small piece of information appears to help back up the stories I have heard of him losing this finger while a butcher at his brother's shop, though it does not confirm it.

Another site that can be expensive to use is [www.heritagequestonline.com/](http://www.heritagequestonline.com/). However many libraries are paying for access to this site so it can be easily employed if you can locate which library near you that has access. Farmingdale allows you to log on from your home computer so it makes it even easier to use. Through this site you can search though the censuses, the Periodical Source Index for genealogical publications and many thousands of books for information on your missing relatives.

One of my favorite sites is one that actually connects you to multiple sites, some free and others not. It is run by Stephen P. Morse in San Francisco. His site, [www.stevemorse.org/](http://www.stevemorse.org/), is designed for ease of use. The home page lists multiple databases including records from Ellis Island, Castle Garden in NY, Passenger records from New Orleans, Philadelphia, and San Francisco, as well as census records from the US, Canada, and Britain, in addition to Vital records and other assorted information that make it easier to locate that elusive relative. Steve Morse has designed his own search engines for each of the sites he lists that are easier to use than then the search engines on the actual sites. Using his Ellis Island search engine, I was able to find

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an aunt that came to the US in November of 1922. I had been unable to find my grandfather coming into the country, even though I was sure he was born in Europe, but with the information from the passenger lists, I determined that his first name must have been altered. When using most of the Morse site's search engines, you can limit the information you give them to search; for example you can put an "E" in for all spellings of what we spell as Elizabeth. My aunt's name was listed as Erszebet and it indicated she was going to live with her brother Malzas – a bad spelling of Mathias. With this information I will be able to track down additional information on his entry into the country.

Another site that is very good for searching vital records is run by the Church of Latter Day Saints, [www.familysearch.org/](http://www.familysearch.org/). They are updating their site to include records from Ohio court records to Florida state enumerations. I actually find that I have the most luck using the computers available at a Family History Center, such as the one in Plainview. Using their records, you can obtain copies of actual birth certificates for relatives without having to pay the high fees that the actual source would charge you. They will charge you for copies, but it is usually much less than you than you would pay otherwise. In addition, there are members who will actually help you to determine where the records are held. The one thing I will mention is that the members will not try to convert you to their religion. They are only there to help you with your research.

A site that is maintained locally with many records is [www.italianguen.org/](http://www.italianguen.org/). They include databases for naturalizations and vital records for New York City as well as Nassau and Suffolk counties. These records are constantly being updated and are not limited to only those of Italian descent. They include on their site a form for obtaining actual copies of the records from the NYC Archives. I have found a great grandparent's death certificate number on this site and by using the Family History center obtained a copy of the actual certificate. It lists the cause of death as influenza on June 2, 1918 which appears to confirm another story that he had died in the flu epidemic of 1917 (which actually lasted several years).

Then as much as people think that going to cemeteries is for visiting immediate relatives graves, there is a great deal of information available if you can locate

where your ancestors are buried. One of the easiest sites for this is [www.findagrave.com/](http://www.findagrave.com/). You can search this list by surnames, birth and/or death dates as well as location of the cemetery. You can also browse cemeteries for people who might be relatives of yours.

If you find one relative, it can be advantageous to actually visit the grave. Headstones often list multiple people, some of whom you may not recognize, and frequently families purchase graves near to each other. You might find an aunt or uncle just by looking at the next headstone. It used to be the custom that you would take rubbings (with charcoal) in order to keep the record of what the headstone indicates, but with digital cameras you can get better images of the headstone of interest as well as those neighboring yours for much less work. If you don't find your family on Find a grave you should try [www.interment.net/](http://www.interment.net/). Even though this site has fewer records than the other, it has multiple special collections you can search covering flooded cemeteries, California mission graveyards and Veteran's cemeteries.

Finally a site that most of us use on a daily basis, [www.google.com/](http://www.google.com/), is a haven for a large amount of information. I recently began using this site to search out information about my relatives. While I have not yet been successful, the NEWS section of Google links you to articles in multiple newspapers around the world. By entering a name you can find articles from the very current to archives pre-dating 1910. The articles come from major newspapers as well as some smaller ones and can give you an idea of what was occurring at the time of your ancestor's life. Comparing what you find or know about your family with what was going on in the world at the time can give you a real sense of what their lives were like. Google News can help you to locate information about the "black" sheep of your family by possibly showing you the newspaper articles indicating what helped to make them the "black" sheep.

By researching your family, you can find out your history. You may be able to solve some family mysteries and prove your family stories. You can locate information about the possible murderer or embezzler as well as the great aunts and uncles who died in World War I. Since life is changing so quickly in this era of computers it helps us keep some things in perspective as you realize your great-grandfather came into the

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country with only \$10.00 in his pocket and no job waiting for him. Or that the census record indicates that the apartment your parents were born in had a rent of \$24.00 per month. Not all the information you want is available online but the search for what is, makes it fun.

