



The Cursor

*Monthly Newsletter of the
Washington Area Computer User Group*



Meeting Location
OLLI, 4210 Roberts Road,
Fairfax, VA



Next Meeting:
January 16, 2010



Presidential Bits

by Paul Howard, President WACUG, president@wacug.org.

Happy New Year! Hope you've made firm resolutions to attend every 2010 WAC meeting as we start the second decade of the 21st century! Also, there are always ways to help the group by volunteering, especially in writing for the Cursor, and presenting at our meetings.

At our December meeting, a check was presented to a representative of "The Friends of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at George Mason University" in recognition of the many members from OLLI who've joined WAC over the last three years, and the partnership between WAC and OLLI's PC user group, OPCUG. Our joint meetings over the course of 2009 have been very successful, resulting in triple the attendance at our Saturday meetings of many recent years.

Also announced was a joint-purchase equipment partnership, between WACUG, NCTCUG, and OLLI. The groups have cooperated on the acquisition of an audio microphone mixer, telephone audio tap, and connecting cables. These will allow us to pursue various approaches to webinar / remote meeting / collaboration / distance learning technologies – yup, it's hard to define. The goal is enable presentations by vendors from remote locations; to share meetings between groups; and allow members who can't get to physical meetings to attend electronically via internet connections.

In December, our PC Clinic aided several folks with a variety of computer issues. Our next clinics will be held in June and December of 2010. Chuck Roberts offered a presentation on setting up and securing a home wifi network, with slides and illustrations available at the "recent meetings" page of the web site: <<http://www.wacug.org/recmtgs.html>> Neal Grotenstein's "user vs. admin" presentation will also be posted there.

January Meeting - Favorite Web Pages Can Be a Post-Holiday Present

Since the Web has billions or gazillions — nobody really knows how many — of individual pages, it's nearly impossible to find the "best" Web site for a given purpose. But Google searches often find gems because they rank pages by popularity: pages to which many sites link are deemed better than "orphan" pages not linked. Another way to find useful/interesting/fun pages

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Lloyd's Web Sites for January, 2010

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

1. USA.gov: Contact Your Elected Officials and share your thoughts on current events and government policy – www.usa.gov/Contact/Elected.shtml
2. Cold remedies: What works, what doesn't, what can't hurt. A look at some common cold remedies and what's known about them." A Mayo Clinic site: www.mayoclinic.com/health/cold-remedies/ID00036
3. State information resource links to state homepage, symbols, flags, maps, constitutions, representatives, songs, birds, flowers, trees and much more – www.50states.com
4. An update of older URL – www.howstuffworks.com 
5. "Your source for reliable health information from the Federal government. Offering quick guides to healthy living, personalized health advice, and tips and tools to help you and those you care about stay healthy." – www.healthfinder.gov
6. Determine your Carbon Footprint. A request for funds to reduce your carbon footprint shows up – www.carbonfund.org
7. 100 Milestone Documents that Shaped America – www.ourdocuments.gov/content.php?flash=true&page=milestone – This site provides a listing of 100 milestone documents, compiled by the National Archives and Records Administration. (United States history from 1776 to 1965).
8. MonkeySee: Free Instructional Videos. Thousands of professional-quality how-to videos by accomplished experts on every conceivable topic. See how the experts do it – www.monkeysee.com
9. Pew Research Center: The Daily Number. "The Daily Number is a statistic, updated every weekday that highlights an important finding or trend. The Daily Number is typically drawn from surveys, research or analysis done by one of the Pew Research Center projects. Each day's entry includes links to additional information on the subject as well as to an archive of past Daily Numbers" – <http://pewresearch.org/databank/dailynumber>
10. Search for short or long-term Volunteer activities– www.1-800-volunteer.org



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 4th 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

Wiley Publishing User Group Discount on Linux Books

[Wiley Publishing](#) extends a holiday discount on the following Linux books to WAC User Group members. This offer is valid from December 15th, 2009 until January 31st, 2010 at [wiley.com](#) (US only) for 40% off of mentioned titles. Please use promo code **LIN10**.

ISBN	Title
9780470467015	Linux For Dummies, 9th Edition
9780470345207	Ubuntu Linux : Your visual blueprint to using the Linux operating system
9780470485057	Linux Bible 2010 Edition : Boot Up to Ubuntu, Fedora, KNOPPIX, Debian, openSUSE, and 13 Other Distributions
9780470584583	Professional Ubuntu Mobile Development
9780470294208	Ubuntu 8.10 Linux Bible
9780470395080	Ubuntu Linux Secrets
9780470467893	Ubuntu Linux Toolbox: 1000+ Commands for Ubuntu and Debian Power Users
9780470481653	CentOS Bible
9780470554043	Linux For Dummies, 9th Edition (ebook)
9780470497975	Ubuntu Linux: Your visual blueprint to using the Linux operating system (ebook)
9780470602423	Linux Bible 2010 Edition : Boot Up to Ubuntu, Fedora, KNOPPIX, Debian, openSUSE, and 13 Other Distributions (ebook)
9780470502747	Ubuntu 8.10 Linux Bible (ebook)
9780470497869	Ubuntu Linux Secrets (ebook)
9780470538333	CentOS Bible (ebook)

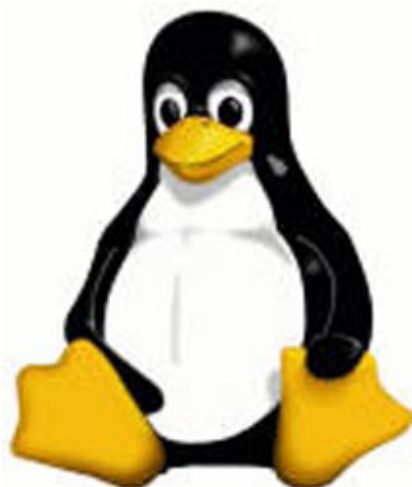
Wiley also sends an animated holiday greeting at http://www.wiley.com/college/test/xmascard/xmas_eCard_english/ (Adobe Flash Player required).

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 lists the following distribution release announcements for the period November 26 – December 23, 2009.

Distribution
Absolute Linux 13.0.5
Calculate Linux 10.0
CDlinux 0.9.5
ClearOS 5.1



See *Linux* page 4

Debris Linux 2.0
Greenie Linux 6K
kademar Linux 4.9.1
Linux Mangaka Chu
Linux Mint 8
Macpup Foxy 3.0
Musix GNU/Linux 2.0
Parsix GNU/Linux 3.0r1
Parted Magic 4.7
Pentoo 2009.0
Sabayon Linux 5.1
Salix OS 13.0.2
StressLinux 0.4.136
Tiny Core Linux 2.7
Ulteo Open Virtual Desktop 2.0
Ultimate Edition 2.5
Untangle Gateway 7.1
VortexBox 1.0
Webconverger 5.8

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) 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.

January 2010

jGnash – v2.3.2. http://sourceforge.net/apps/mediawiki/jgnash/index.php?title=Main_Page. Free GNU General Public License v3 Java source code and executable by CCavanaugh. jGnash is a free (no strings attached!) personal finance manager with many of the same features as commercially-available software. It was created in order to make tracking your personal finances easy, but also provides the

functionality required by advanced users. jGnash is cross-platform and will run on any operating system that has a working Java 1.6.0 Runtime Environment and a display resolution of 800x600 or greater. Features include:

- Double-Entry Based Transactions
- Account Reconciliation
- Report Generation in PDF Format
- Fast Auto-Completion of Form Fields
- Schedule Recurring Payment Reminders
- Support for Multiple Currencies
- Track Investment Accounts and Transactions
- Online Updates of Stock Prices and Currency Exchange Rates
- Customizable User Interface
- Scriptable through BeanShell and JavaScript
- Advanced Server/Client Networking Architecture
- OFX Import
- QIF Import

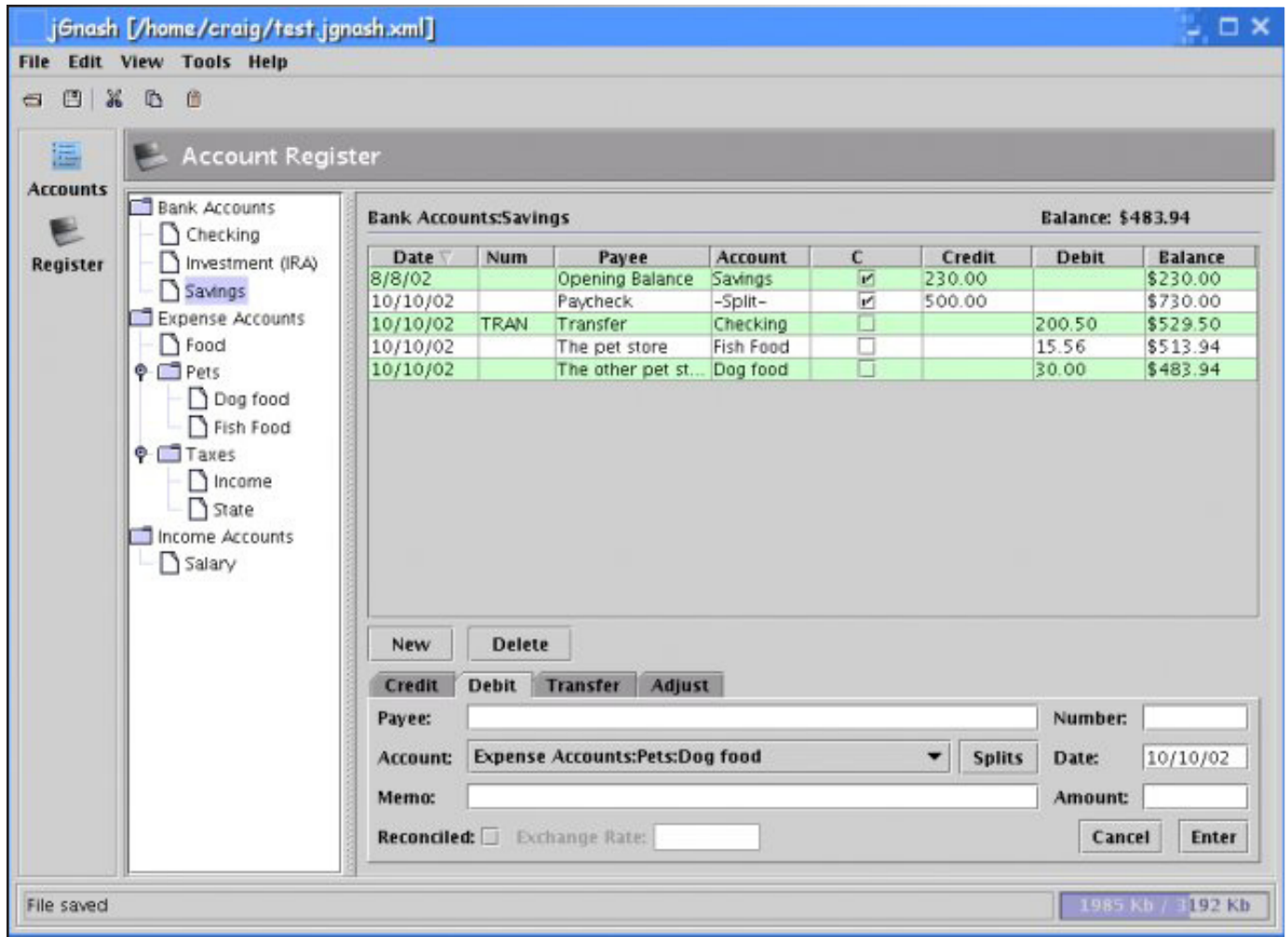
KMetronome – v0.9.2. <http://kmetronome.sourceforge.net/>. Free GNU General Public License C++ source code by Pedro Lopez-Cabanillas. KMetronome is a MIDI metronome with KDE interface, based on the ALSA sequencer. The intended audience is musicians and music students. Like solid, real metronomes, it is a tool to keep the rhythm while playing musical instruments. It uses MIDI for sound generation instead of digital audio, allowing low CPU usage, and very accurate timing thanks to the ALSA sequencer.

Pushover – v0.0.2. <http://pushover.sourceforge.net/>. Free GNU General Public License C++ source code by Andreas Röver and Volker Grabsch. Pushover is an Open Source conversion of a puzzle game originally published by Ocean in 1992. In this game you control an ant that can walk along platforms that are connected with ladders. On those platforms are dominoes that need to fall according to some rules. There is help in the game and introductory levels that show how the dominos work.

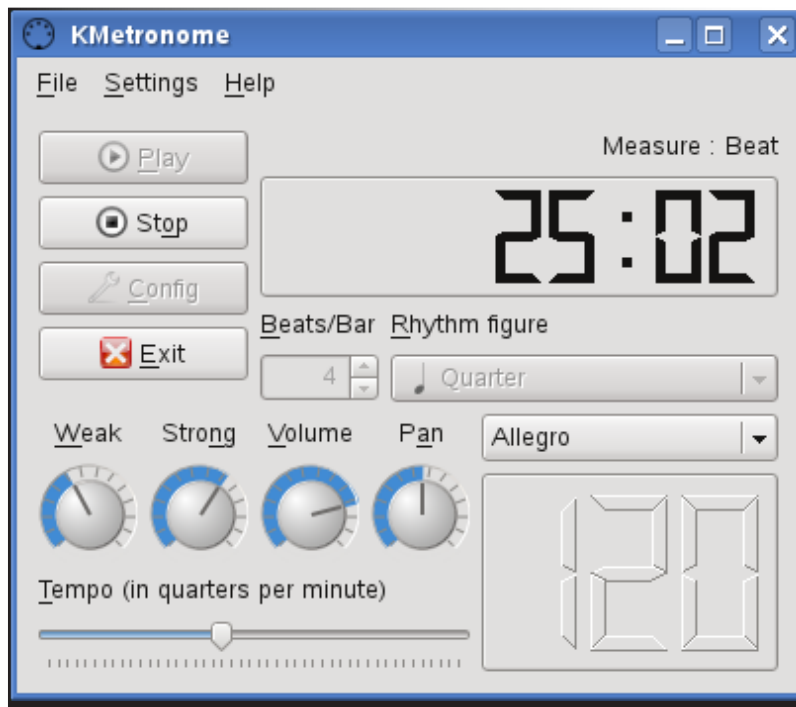
Kernel Source – <http://www.kernel.org/>. 2.6 kernel source code for all platforms (stable 2.6.32).



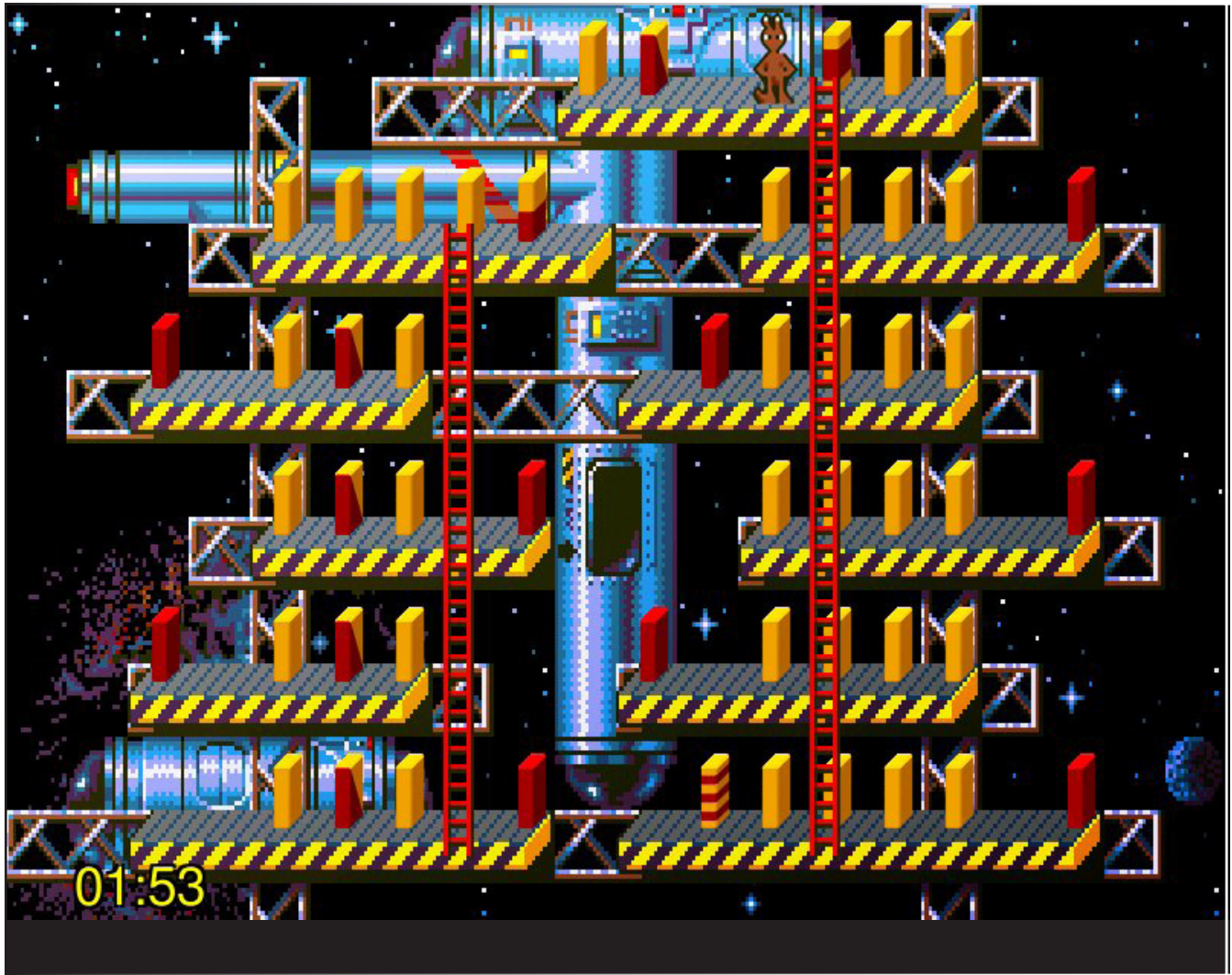
Screenshots next page



jGnash



KMetronome



Pushover

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.

If your membership is not current, please attend this meeting, pay your dues and vote with us. If your membership is current you received a ballot by email. Please complete it and return per the instructions.

is to share favorites with others. This presentation highlights Web sites one experienced Web traveler visits often. Bring your top Web sites to share with the audience too! Gabe Goldberg will be making this presentation of his current favorites.

Also on tap for January will be WAC's intrepid trade show reporters. Once again, Geof Goodrum and Bob Rott will regale us with the latest technology offerings from the 2010 Consumer Electronics Show, held annually in Las Vegas, just after opening of the New Year. Come and hear about all the latest gizmos and gadgets, giant TVs, and electronic bells and whistles.



Adding an NAS Drive to Your Network (Part 2 of 2)

By Ron Hirsch, Contributing Editor, Boca Raton
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Last month I chronicled my experiences in choosing an NAS drive unit for my home network, and reviewed the features of the unit I chose, and assembling things, prior to the actual install of the unit. This month I'll go into the details of installing and configuring the unit on a home network.

The manual for the D-Link DNS-323 is probably the most comprehensive manual I've seen in a long time. It has complete instructions for installing and using the unit. There are lots of color images, and very clear info on each step of the installation process. You do not have to be a computer expert to install this device. If you follow each step carefully, the install process should proceed very smoothly.

The manual is a PDF file on the CD which comes with the unit. I personally always print out the manuals for all my important hardware and software. Things have certainly improved in recent years, and most manufacturers have taken steps to insure that users can properly install their hardware.

This article is about the NAS device that I used. Depending upon which NAS unit you purchase, the actual steps will of course differ. But the essence of doing the install is essentially the same for any similar device.

Activities Along the Way

Here is a list of the various tasks that will be per-

formed during the instruction process for the DNS-323.

Access the drive bays by sliding the faceplate up until it unlatches from the device.

Once the faceplate is unlatched, pull it off the device, exposing the drive bays.

Insert a 3.5" SATA hard drive into each available drive bay. Make sure to align the drive connectors to the endpoints in the DNS-323. Gently push the drive in until it connects.

Reattach the faceplate to the front of the device.

Connect an Ethernet cable into the available Ethernet port. This cable should connect the DNS-323 to your local network.

Finally, connect the power adapter to the power receptacle.

Front Panel Buttons

Power Button: Press once to power on the DNS-323. Press and hold the button until it begins to blink to power down the DNS-323.

Drive LEDs: These LEDs will be solid BLUE when drives are connected but inactive. The LEDs will blink when the drives are being accessed, formatted or synchronized. They will illuminate AMBER if a drive has failed.

Activity LED: The Activity LED will be solid BLUE when there is an Ethernet connection. It will blink to indicate LAN traffic.

Setting Up the Unit

When first powered on, during the initial boot sequence, the DNS-323 will wait to be assigned an IP

See *NAS Drive* next page

address via DHCP. If it does not receive a DHCP assigned IP address, by default it will have a self-assigned IP address of 192.168.0.32. It is recommended to use the included D-Link Easy Search Utility when accessing and configuring the DNS-323 for the first time. If you want to change this IP address before logging in or are unable to connect to the DNS-323 IP address, you can use the Easy Search Utility provided on the product CD to locate the device on your network and make any needed changes.

To run the Easy Search Utility, insert the DNS-323 CD into your CD-ROM drive. Once this has started running, the image on page nine will appear. Then follow the steps as they are presented.

Along the way, all the necessary steps will take place to format and set up the unit. The formatting is a special format which is Windows compatible, but is neither NTFS or FAT32. Any information on the drive(s) you install in the unit will be wiped clean when the formatting is done.

Once again, the manual has detailed info on each step in the process, to assist users in making choices, when choices must be made.

How to Use the Unit After Setting it Up

Once the setup process is completed, the unit is ready to use. It will show in the drive listing for any machine which is connected to your network. The drive letters which were assigned will show along with all the usual drive letters for your machine. You can move, copy, & delete files just as you would for any drive.

For maximum utility, the NAS drive should be left on at all times, to insure that any computer on the network can access it. It does have a power saving feature that will put it to sleep after several minutes (5 minutes is the default), and it will use very little power in that mode. Once it has gone to sleep, it will take about 5 seconds for it to come back on, and spin up to full speed.

If you copy all/most of your important files onto the NAS drive, this will serve as a backup for these files. And they will be instantly available to all your other machines on your network. This can be very time saving when you want to access things like pictures et al.

If you find this material useful, you may want to download this article in PDF format, from our web site <http://www.brcs.org/hirsch.php>. This allows readers to keep the material either as a PDF file, and/or print it out, and place it in a loose-leaf notebook for future reference. Remember, the PDF version offers full color, wherever color elements might be involved, and often images which could not be used in Boca Bits.

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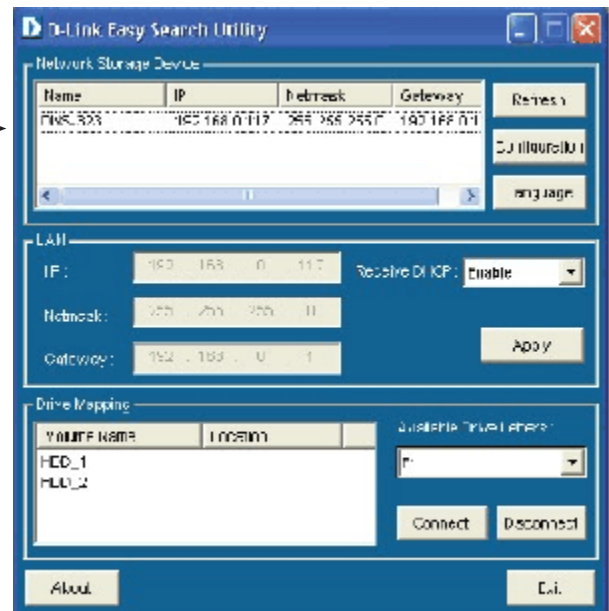


Images continue next page

Click *Easy Search Utility*



Highlight an available DNS-323 unit and click *Configuration* to access the web-based utility



Windows 7 Upgrade – My Experience

By Sandy Berger, CompuKiss
www.compukiss.com
[sandy \(at\) compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)

Those of you who follow me know that I really like Windows 7 and have no qualms about recommending it. This is not a program that you have to wait to purchase until the problems have cleared. I have been successfully using it for months and have just installed it on my everyday computer.

So if you are ready to buy a new computer, go right ahead and buy one with Window 7. However, if you are going to upgrade an older computer, there are a few things you should know.

First, I don't recommend upgrading an older computer running Windows XP. Although Windows 7 may

run on your old XP computer, XP is more capable for computers with limited memory and outdated graphics. Also, if you upgrade from XP to 7, you have to do a clean install. (More on that later.)

Even if you are upgrading to Window 7 from Vista, there are a few things that you should know. My recent upgrade experience may help.

Last week I got an advance copy of Windows 7 and decided to upgrade my Vista computer.

There are two possible ways to upgrade: An in-place upgrade or a clean install. A clean install is preferable, but it means that all your data and your programs are wiped out. This is good because it puts your computer into a like-new status. However, a clean install requires a lot of work. It entails backing up everything, reinstalling all of the programs, transferring the data

See *Windows 7 Upgrade* page 10

from a backup back to the computer after the upgrade, and readjusting any programs that you had previously customized. After listing the number of programs that I had installed on my computer, I decided that after a clean install it would probably take me at least 2 days to get my computer back to where it was. With time at a premium, I opted for an in-place upgrade. I had already installed all of the updates and service packs, so my computer was ready to be upgraded.

The first thing that I did, (and that everyone should do before upgrading), was to back up my data. I chose to use a program called True image by Acronis to make a complete backup of everything on my computer. I put the backup on a portable hard drive. It was 350GB, so I expected this upgrade to take a long time.

Then I surfed over to the Microsoft website to check out their compatibility upgrade advisor for Windows 7. I installed this Microsoft program on my computer and ran it. It told me that my Belkin wireless network needed a new driver for Windows 7 and that my Logitech webcam might not work properly with Window 7. I surfed over to both manufacturers' websites and found that they had no specific drivers listed for Windows 7. Since I already had the most current Vista drivers, I decided to just go ahead with the upgrade.

I put the Windows 7 disk in the computer and clicked on "Install". I made a few choices, like choosing between an in-place and a clean install. To my surprise, the install program told me that I had quite a few incompatibility problems. In addition to the two devices that I had been warned about, it listed a printer that I had previously uninstalled and several games that also had been previously removed. However, it also listed iTunes as incompatible. I use iTunes everyday to sync my iPhone, so this could have been a deal-killer. Yet, I knew that I had the latest version of iTunes, so I just crossed my fingers and clicked "Next" to go on.

After that, the installation was easy. The computer pretty much did all the work, including rebooting several times. While a clean install can be accomplished in about ½ hour, my in-place install over

350 GB of programs and data on a pretty speedy computer took 3 hours.

Once the update was complete, I found myself at the Windows 7 desktop. There was a new desktop background and the taskbar had much larger icons (something that I like about windows 7), but other than that, all of my icons were there and my desktop looked pretty normal.

To my surprise, the Belkin wireless card that I had been warned about worked seamlessly. The Logitech Quick Cam, however, gave me an error. On a hunch, I reinstalled the webcam driver. Although this was the same driver that I had been using with Vista, Windows 7 now seemed to like it. It also functioned perfectly. Oh, and the iTunes program that I had been warned about, also worked perfectly except that I had to reauthorize the computer, which was a simple process.

I am not sure if Microsoft was a little too harsh in their assessments of incompatibilities or if I was just lucky. Since I did my upgrade before the actual launch of the Windows 7 product, Microsoft's Windows 7 Capability Center was not yet available. As you read this, however, it should be open. Just type "Windows 7 Compatibility Center" in the search box at the Microsoft website and you should be able to check the compatibility of most software and hardware.

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

Send membership inquiries and address changes to: membership@wacug.org
Send article submission and reprint requests to the Editor: cursor@wacug.org

WAC Membership/Renewal Application

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

Washington Area Computer User Group
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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

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State: _____ Zip: _____

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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

Digital Photography Internet Access Education Music

Graphics/Animation Genealogy Video Finance

Programming Language(s) _____

Hardware Upgrades/Repair List others below

Next WAC Meetings: • Jan 16 • Feb 20 • Mar 20 • Apr 17 • May 22

Call (703) 370-7649 for the latest meeting information or Visit our Web Site at:

<http://www.wacug.org>

All Meetings are held at the
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute 4210 Roberts Road,
Fairfax, VA. Call our help
line or visit our web site if
you need additional infor-
mation.

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January 7, 2010

Windows 7: The Definitive Guide

The Essential Resource for Professionals and Power Users

By William R. Stanek

Reviewed by Elsie Smith, Editor, PC Community,
CA
PCC News, November 2009
www.pcc.org
[lcms \(at\) pacbell.net](mailto:lcms(at)pacbell.net)

This is the kind of how-to book that anyone—regardless of skill level—can read from cover to cover and walk away with a wealth of knowledge about the subject at hand.

This book provides everything you need to manage and maintain Windows 7. You'll learn all of the features and enhancements in complete detail, along with specifics for configuring the operating system to put you in full control. Bestselling author and Windows expert William Stanek doesn't just show you the steps you need to follow, he also tells you how features work, why they work, and how you can customize them to meet your needs. You'll also learn why you may want to use certain features of the operating system and when to use other features to resolve any problems you are having. Learn how to squeeze every bit of power out of Windows 7 to take full advantage of its features and programs.

When asked about the user level, Stanek replied: "This book doesn't focus on a specific user level. This isn't a lightweight beginner book or a book written exclusively for developers or administrators. Regardless of whether you are a beginning, power user, or seasoned professional, many of the concepts in this book will be valuable to you. And you'll be able to apply them to your computer regardless of which edition of Windows 7 you are using."

- * Set up, customize, and tune Windows 7—Optimize its appearance and performance, install software - what has changed and what you need to know, customize your hardware, and install printers, scanners, and faxes
- * Manage your files and data—Search your computer more efficiently, secure your data, share and collaborate, and get the most out of optional programs such as Windows Live Mail

- * Master your digital media—Create media libraries, manage digital pictures and videos, make DVDs, and create movies
- * Get connected and start networking—Set up a home or small-office network, conquer Internet Explorer, and master on-the-go networking
- * Protect your computer—Keep your family safe while on the Internet, navigate the computer security maze, and configure Windows 7's protection features
- * Manage and support Windows 7 systems—Configure user accounts, disks and drives, troubleshoot and handle routine maintenance, and resolve advanced support and recovery issues
- * Learn advanced tips & techniques—Manage the Windows boot environment, explore Group Policy, and much more

Product Information

Windows 7: The Definitive Guide

The Essential Resource for Professionals and Power Users

By William R. Stanek

O'Reilly Media, Inc.

<http://www.oreilly.com>

800-998-9938

List Price: O'Reilly Media: \$59.99

UG Price \$39.00 at: <http://www.oreilly.com/store/>

Free Online Edition: To try our Safari and the online edition of Windows 7: The Definitive Guide for 45 days, go to <http://www.oreilly.com/go/safarienabled> and enter the coupon code shown on the last page of your book. To see the complete Safari Library visit: <http://safari.oreilly.com>

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Ubuntu 64-bit Operating System

By [Brian K. Lewis, PhD, Regular Columnist, Sarasota PCUG, Florida](#)
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As I mentioned in my previous Monitor (August 2009) article, I was interested in installing a 64-bit operating system (OS) on my laptop. Since I have a relatively new system that is 64-bit capable, it seemed to be time to try it out. I had downloaded the .iso file for the latest version of Ubuntu, version 9.04 or “Jaunty Jackalope”. This is the latest regular release. Another one is due in Canonical’s six month release cycle about the time this article is published. The next long-term release is due in the spring of 2010. For more information on the Ubuntu release cycle see <http://www.ubuntu.com/products/ubuntu/release-cycle>.

I used the Brasero Disk Burner software that was provided with Ubuntu version 8.10 to burn the .iso file to disk. Burning the .iso file produced a bootable “Live” CD that could be used for the installation. I already had two operating systems on my computer and I wanted to add the 64-bit OS as the third rather than remove one. The hard drive had Vista in one 160 GB partition and the 32-bit Ubuntu in another 160 MB partition. I thought I would be able to divide that latter partition to use half for the 32-bit and half for the 64-bit version of Ubuntu. At least that was the plan.

I booted the computer using the installation CD. With a Live CD, the first menu allows you to run Ubuntu directly from the CD, install Ubuntu, do a check on the CD or boot from the hard drive instead. To do a few checks of the compatibility of the

64-bit system with my hardware, I ran Ubuntu from the CD. Everything seemed to work properly, except for the printer. That I had expected as the Brother printer I use requires drivers to be downloaded from the Brother web site. At this point everything was looking good, so I clicked on the Install Icon on the desktop.

After a short delay as the software loaded, I was greeted with the opening screen to select the language. English was highlighted, so I just clicked on “Continue”. The next screen was to select the keyboard and US was highlighted. Again, just click on “Continue”. Next came the screen for the time zone. Since I was doing this in the Central Time Zone, I clicked in that area and Chicago came up as the location. Next click on “Continue” again.

Now I got down to the real business of the installation. The software loaded the drive partitioner. The current partitions were identified as Windows Vista, Ubuntu 8.10 and the Linux swap partition. There were two different bars showing the current partitions in different colors. My choices here were (1) use the entire drive for Ubuntu 9.04; (2) install 9.04 side by side with the current OS’s; or (3) do a custom partition. On selecting the second option and clicking on the Ubuntu partition, there was a slider that I could use to alter the size of the current Ubuntu partition on the second bar. So I used that to reduce the 8.1 partition and the software then added the 9.04 partition to the graphic. Once I was satisfied with the size of the new partition, I again clicked on “Continue”. After a few seconds an error message popped up telling me that the process had failed. Oh well, back to the beginning. After trying the process twice, I canceled the installation and restarted the computer with Ubuntu 8.10.

I suspected the partitioning problem was caused by one of two possibilities. One that the partition I was working with was 32 bit and I wanted to install a 64 bit OS which didn’t fit the disk formatting. Or two, all the partitions were on the boot drive and so were locked. I needed to try a different tactic. Next, I downloaded an .iso file for the graphic version of Gparted. This is a free partitioning program that works with many different file systems. It can also resize and move partitions without loss of data. Since I had already backed up my Ubuntu 8.10 to an ex-

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ternal hard drive, I felt it was safe to use Gparted to create an empty partition on the drive. After booting from this CD, Gparted identified all the partitions in use on the drive. I highlighted the Ubuntu 8.10 partition and clicked on Move/Resize. After entering the new size for the partition, I clicked on Apply. It took about 10 minutes to complete the process. This left an unallocated partition of about 75 GB. Next I exited Gparted, removed the CD, replaced it with the Ubuntu install CD and restarted the system.

After getting back to the partitioning section of the install, it offered me an additional choice to install Ubuntu 9.04 in the largest unallocated partition. That was exactly what I wanted. Selecting that and clicking on Continue allowed the installation to go forward. In about 25 minutes the installation was complete. After the computer was rebooted, I logged into Vista just to be certain it was working. Then I exited and booted into Ubuntu 9.04.

My first impressions of this 64-bit version of Ubuntu are very positive. It loads from the boot menu in about 10-15 seconds. This is noticeably faster than the earlier 32-bit version. It also makes Vista look like a snail. Turning off the computer results in complete shutdown in less than 10 seconds. Try to get Vista to do that!

Ubuntu comes with most of the software that I use on a regular basis: OpenOffice 3.0, Firefox 3.0, Gimp (Photoshop equivalent), XSane (scanning software), Brasero Disc Burner, and Tomboy notes. There are four other packages that I downloaded using the Add/Remove function on the Applications menu. These are: Jpilot (Contact manager), Gramps (genealogy), GnuCash (finances) and Firestarter (a firewall). All of these applications are maintained by the Ubuntu developer community and are free under the GNU license. The download and install process took about 30 minutes, primarily due to the slowness of my Internet connection at that time.

Once all my software was installed, I copied the data files from the old 32-bit partition to the new 64-bit partition and I was off and running. All the data was immediately accessible and it was apparent I had lost nothing in the transition to 64-bit. I am also very pleased with the responsiveness of all the 64-bit applications. I can't say that there is a tremendous in-

crease in speed, but the time required to load applications does seem to be reduced. OpenOffice for one, opens in about half the time that was required in the 32-bit system. The opening logo appears with little or no delay after clicking on the shortcut icon on the desktop. That alone is a real improvement.

The last item I needed to install was the multifunction printer. As I mentioned earlier it is a Brother MFC machine and the printer/scanner drivers are not provided by Ubuntu. Brother has a web site devoted to the Linux drivers for its products. They also provide installation information for both 32-bit and 64-bit systems. To get the printer drivers to work with my 64-bit system I had to download and install a specific library file. That was available through the Synaptic Package Manager under the System menu. All I needed to do was select the file and click on Apply. The Package Manager downloaded and installed the file. Then I used the command line function in a terminal window to install the printer drivers and the scanner drivers. This was simplified by the fact that Brother had the complete command in their installation instructions. It was very simple to copy it into the command line in the terminal window. Testing both the printer and the scanner indicated that the overall process was successful.

All of the software applications that came with Ubuntu 9.04 were 64-bit as it does not work with 32-bit software. Also, I didn't need to specify what I need for any of the applications I downloaded, with the exception of the Brother scanner software. Both the Add/Remove software function and the Synaptic Package Manager select only the 64-bit applications from the various repositories. When it comes to using a 64-bit Windows OS, it won't be this easy. Although 64-bit Windows can also run some 32-bit applications, this doesn't apply to all software. So in going 64-bit with Windows will require replacement with 64-bit applications. This is especially true of anti-virus software, firewalls and any other utilities that work directly with the hard drive. This means that more time, and money, will be involved in going from 32-bit to 64-bit Windows.

I have been using this new Ubuntu installation for just about a month. Everything I have tried has worked without complaint. I have used both the broadband wireless connection as well as the WiFi in a couple of

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hotspots. Both have worked without the need for any additional setup. The wireless connection menu comes up with a single click on the wireless icon on the top of the desktop page. Then one click connects the broadband. Once I turn on the WiFi the same menu shows me any available WiFi connections. It also indicates whether or not a password is required for access. My broadband connection has shown download speeds ranging from 1 Kb/S to 3100 Kb/S (kilobits per second). That of course was in different locations. The speed really depends on how close I am to a cell phone tower. Both wireless operations are quite simple and provide me with alternate means of getting to the Internet.

One thing I had not anticipated was the size of the update that needed to be installed after I had my system up and running. I knew there would be some updates since this version had been released several months earlier. The Update Manager notified me that there was a total of 132 megabytes of files that needed to be downloaded and installed. These were various updates including some security updates. There was also an update to the Ubuntu kernel. This is the heart of the OS. So I clicked on OK and waited for the download and installation to be completed. This was one of the few times that I had to reboot the system after an installation. Unlike Microsoft, Ubuntu notifies you of new updates as they are available and the update rarely requires rebooting of the system.

After using this 64-bit version of Ubuntu, I wonder why I bothered to keep the 32-bit version. Now it just seems to be taking up space on my hard drive. There is no doubt in my mind that this 64-bit Ubuntu is a keeper. I hope I can say the same when I receive and install Windows 7.

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Editor's Note: The current release of Ubuntu is now v9.10. This review was of the previous version. For the latest information with links to the latest version, visit <http://www.ubuntu.com/>

