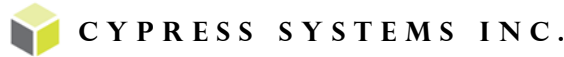


Databyte Brief

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 3

News About Emerging Technologies

OCTOBER 2009



Free Wi-Fi: It Can Cost You!

Written by Matthew Cochrane

With identity theft on the rise and the prevalence of viruses and other malware infecting computers every day some users are concerned about their exposure while connected to public Wi-Fi connections. There are several factors that can impact your security while connected to a public network, VS. your home or office. Here are some things you need to be aware of when using a free Wi-Fi connection.

1: Most wireless networks are unsecure.

Unless the network you are connecting to requires you to type in a password to connect, then the data you are transmitting is just as secure as a verbal conversation in the same environment. Wireless networks require security in the form of WEP or WPA encryption in order to be safe from sniffing. Most networks offered at coffee houses and hotels are insecure, as the hassles of supporting these system typically outweigh the benefits. That being said, use of encrypted connections such as remote web workplace to remotely access your computer at work are typically safe as these technologies secure your data automatically. Also, web sites that use SSL protection (look for a lock symbol on your web browser window) can also be trusted since these are also encrypting your personal information to keep it from prying eyes.

2: Shared data is often unsecured

Older operating systems such as Windows XP will not differentiate between your own home or business network and the network down at Bill's Coffee Shack. If you have folders or data shared on your laptop so you can access it from other computers, that data is likely being made public to other computers on the public network. To safeguard yourself from this threat, consider upgrading to a newer operating system such as Windows 7 or Windows Vista, which will prompt you when you connect to a wireless network to identify it. If you indicate that you are connected to a "Public" network, sharing of folders and printers will be automatically disabled to ensure your privacy. If you do have an older XP computer, you can also run one of the many comprehensive antivirus suites that include a personal firewall which will protect you when outside of your home. Be aware that this method is not nearly as seamless so you may encounter problems sharing data at home as well if not configured properly.

Continued on Page 2

Inside this issue:

Continued: Free Wi-Fi: It Can Cost You! 2

Hard Drive Defragmenter Programs: The Quick Facts 2

Taking Out The Trash 2

Visual Search: A New Way of Surfing The Web 3

The New, Safer Microsoft: Introducing Microsoft Security Essentials 3

Hardware Specials 4



Windows 7 Launch: What You Need To Know!

Written by Matthew Cochrane

Yes, it's here. As of October 22nd, you can purchase your own Windows 7 PC that will provide all of the advantages mentioned in our last newsletter, including better performance, better security, and better program compatibility. There may still be a few questions out there, so I'll try to address those concerns.

"Can I upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7?"

No, unfortunately, going from Windows XP to Windows 7 will require a manual migration of user data, and you will be forced to reinstall your applications. Windows Vista users will be able to do an in-place upgrade, that would be best to simply run overnight to allow for the upgrade to complete, and for automatic updates to bring the machine to it's fully protected state.

"I just purchased a computer this year, do I have to pay for an upgrade?"

If you purchased your PC after Just 26th 2009, then you are likely eligible for a free upgrade to Windows 7. This offer is fulfilled through your computer manufacturer, and is only valid for computers purchased with a Windows Vista Home Premium, Business, or Ultimate license (any computer purchased with XP Pre-installed after June 26th should also be covered). For more details, go to

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/buy/offers/upgrade.aspx>

"Is my software compatible with Windows 7?"

Obviously we cannot cover every program that is compatible with Windows 7, but most applications that work fine in Windows Vista will have no problem running under Windows 7, and the same generally goes for programs that run on Windows XP as well. Feel free to contact a Microsoft Certified technician at Cypress Systems Inc. for further details, or to arrange for compatibility testing.



Free Wi-Fi: It Can Cost You!

Continued from page 1

3: Reliability is never guaranteed

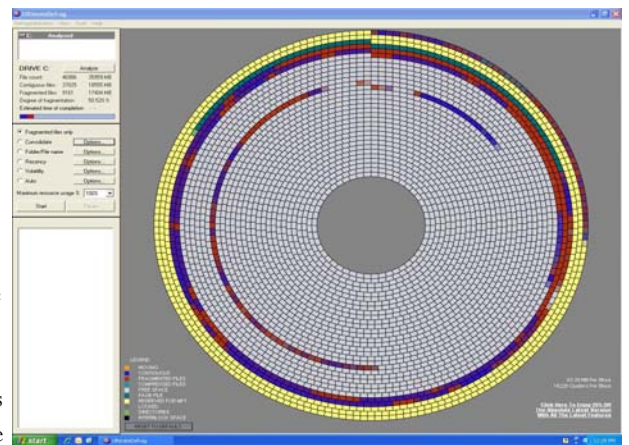
While some companies do use specialized technology to provide customers with a reliable and fast wireless connection, this technology is expensive and uncommon at small businesses. As such, the presentation you're trying to email to your boss to meet a deadline may not be delivered if another user is downloading music and videos off a file sharing site. If you need a reliable connection while travelling, consider a WWAN or Mobile Broadband connection offered by your cellular provider. Connections from providers such as Verizon, Sprint, or ATT can provide a connection that may be slower than some free Wi-Fi but since the connection is not shared you won't be held back by another user. Sprint even offers mobile broadband that will get you 3G wireless connectivity in most areas where you have a cellular signal and 4G connectivity in major metropolitan areas. 4G speeds are faster than some home internet connections with downloads at up to 12Mbps averaging at 2-4Mbps.

So the next time you're on the road be sure to keep your security and privacy in mind. If you have further questions, or want to check if your computer will support an upgrade to Windows 7, feel free to contact the experts at Cypress Systems Inc.

Hard Drive Defragmenter Programs: The

Written by Patrick Cook

One of the most common yet overlooked utilities for improving the performance of your computer is the defragmenter for your computer's hard drive. Wikipedia explains drive fragmentation as "when the operating system cannot or will not allocate enough contiguous space to store a complete file as a single unit, but instead puts parts of it in gaps between other files". Over time, drive fragmentation decreases the performance of your computer, leading to it running "slow". There are numerous defragmentation programs available, both free and paid versions. The difference between the two is the method that is used to rearrange and organize the files on your hard drive for faster access and better performance. Moving files that are accessed more often for quicker availability, re-organizing the directory structure, and moving files to locations on the drive that have enough space for the file in one piece are all accomplished by the different programs, just the way the organization is done is different. Most defragmentation programs are memory-intensive, utilizing all of your system's resources. With some paid programs, only available resources are used, allowing you to still use your computer while the defragmenter is running.



For Mac owners, the Mac's OS X has built-in safeguards to prevent file fragmentation from occurring from the start. Using file location, automatic defragmentation of files in more than 8 fragments, and processes that move heavily accessed files for optimum performance, the Mac automatically does the job that older Windows PC's require a defragmenting program for.

It should be noted that Windows Vista and Windows 7 include a defragmenter that is scheduled to run automatically on a weekly basis.

In the end, regardless of whether you use a free or paid defragmenting program, the most important thing is to defragment your drive on a regular basis to keep your computer performing at it's best.

Taking Out The Trash

Written by Ken Roesler



I had a conversation with a client recently that centered on her garage. She was saying how her garage seems to never be big enough for all of the stuff that she needs to put in it, but that there was lot of junk that she really should get rid of because it never gets used. Even though storage devices are reaching 1 and 2 terabytes, data management is still a crucial part of business strategy and data lifecycle management. Imagine that 10 percent of your client database is composed of non-return, single purchase customers from 10 years ago. This means that your business is carrying around 10 percent more data than necessary, backing up 10 percent more data, which takes 10 percent more time. Daily and weekly maintenance, pruning non-relevant data, and creating an archive procedure for outdated information is crucial for maintaining healthy databases, servers, and networks. These procedures will in turn lower support costs for you and your business, and save money for more core business related expenses, making you more competitive in the marketplace.

Visual Search: A New Way Of Surfing The Web

Written by Mason Vonnahme

Suppose you are in the market for a new digital camera. You just recently saw a friend with a credit card thin model at a function last week and you've decided it's the camera for you. But was it a Canon, Nikon? A brand you've never heard of?

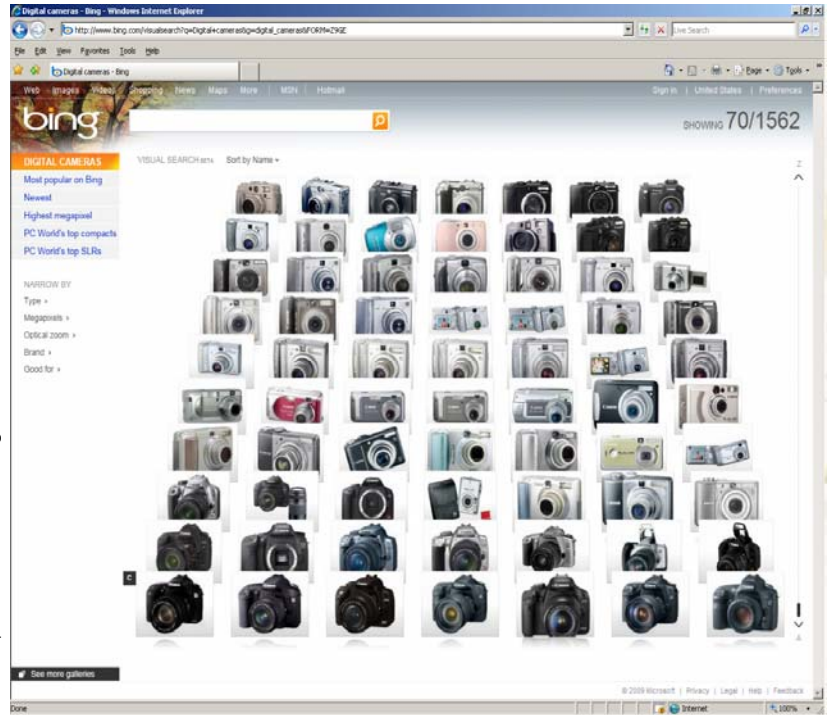
If you are like most people, you would hop on the internet to solve this problem. However, when you search for "thin digital cameras" in Google, a rather daunting list of blue links display and you can't find anything that resembles the camera you want – at least not quickly.

These problems are the driving force behind Bing's new "visual search" function (www.bing.com/visualsearch) which allows users to flip through image catalogues instead of Web pages, when they know what the product looks like but do not have a name brand associated with it. Upon introduction the visual search function will initially focus on travel, leisure, shopping, and health, but it will be expanded with more categories if it proves popular to users. Using our digital camera example from earlier, we see the image catalogue results for all digital cameras.

Many tech observers believe that Bing's visual search function gives it a new leg up on Google in terms of functionality. Nova Spivack, a search expert, said the most important thing about Bing's visual search is that users can sort images into categories. By creating different kinds of searches and making them sortable, Bing is catering to high-end Internet users -- which, soon, will be everyone, he said. "I think Bing has realized that everybody is becoming a search geek." (<http://www.cnn.com/2009/TECH/09/16/visual.web.bing.google/index.html>, 2009)

Stefan Weitz, director of Bing stated that there are currently 50 galleries of images in the new Bing visual search bin, but more will be added soon. Eventually, the idea will be integrated into the main search site. Right now users have to go to a separate page to utilize the visual search. (www.bing.com/visualsearch)

This is just one example of how the search engine market, once dominated by simple square search bars and the never ending list of blue links, is diversifying. People who were always content with a one-search-fits all idea are finding themselves wanting more. David Coursey, a blogger at Pcworld.com said, "I think Bing is onto something," he said. "And if they can figure out how to extend Bing's visual search, it could be very helpful for people who know what something looks like but don't know what to call it."



The New, Safer Microsoft: Introducing Microsoft Security Essentials

Written by Matthew Cochrane



Windows has been seen as being less secure than Apple's OSX for years, referencing the large amounts of spyware, viruses, and other problems that occur on Windows PC's. While this can largely be attributed to OSX's low market penetration giving hackers no reason to attack OSX computers, the reality still remains that Windows computers are more likely to be infected with malware. Microsoft has continued to focus on increasing the security of its products, and along with the incremental security improvements in Windows Vista and Windows 7, Microsoft has finally acknowledged the lack of good, free antivirus protection for home and small business users.

Microsoft Security Essentials is a new antivirus service that is free to anyone with a valid Windows license, and using Windows XP, Vista, or Windows 7. Our own in-house testing of the software has shown us how fast and easy this new software is. Scans take place when your computer is idle, preventing your computer from slowing down while you're actively working. Updates take place without user intervention, so checking your status is as simple as looking down at your task tray. If the icon is green you're good to go! Testing has indicated that Security Essentials is as good or better than other free offerings, although its detection ability to new and unclassified malware is slightly lacking when compared to the latest products from vendors such as Symantec. What this means is that Microsoft is providing an anti-virus product that is good enough for casual and home use, and better than nothing when used in the workplace. As such Microsoft has accomplished a great deal with this new software by providing a simple free antivirus product that will keep the internet safer for everyone.



CYPRESS SYSTEMS INC.

161 Country Estates Circle Ste. 1A
PO Box 19429
Reno, NV 89511

Phone: 775-284-0392

Support Phone: 775-284-4888

Fax: 775-284-0489

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