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The Digital

# Viking



**Twin Cities**  
PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

Minneapolis & St. Paul, Minnesota USA • Vol. 33 No. 6 • January 2013

*TC/PC Exists to  
Facilitate and Encourage  
the Cooperative Exchange of  
PC Knowledge and  
Information Across  
All Levels of Experience*

**January 2013**

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## General Meeting

**Tuesday, Jan. 8, 2013**

**7:00 PM**

## Hot Cider Social

**Location: Summit Place  
8505 Flying Cloud Drive  
Eden Prairie, MN 55344**

At our January meeting we will be serving hot cider and snacks. It will be a chance to take time to get to know each other better. Come with some ideas for topics for meetings for the new year. If you received the gift of a techie gadget be sure to bring it for show and tell.

As always, check the website at [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com) for any last minute changes or updates, especially in the instance of inclement weather. 

TC/PC is a  
Member of



**24-Hour Information • [www.tcpc.com](http://www.tcpc.com)**

Application form inside back cover

## TC/PC Business Members

Friendship Village

Metro Sales

**Thank You!**

## The Digital Viking

The Digital Viking is the official monthly publication of the Twin Cities PC User Group, an all-volunteer organization dedicated to users of IBM-compatible computers. Subscriptions are included in membership. We welcome articles and reviews from members. The Digital Viking is a copyrighted publication and reproduction of any material is expressly prohibited without permission. Exception: other User Groups may use material if unaltered and credited.

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## Advertising

<b>Full page (7½ x 9½)</b>	<b>\$100.00</b>
<b>Two-thirds page (7½ x 6)</b>	<b>80.00</b>
<b>Half page (7½ x 4¾)</b>	<b>65.00</b>
<b>One-third page (7½ x 3)</b>	<b>50.00</b>
<b>Quarter page (3½ x 4¾)</b>	<b>40.00</b>
<b>Member Bus. Card (2 x 3½)</b>	<b>10.00</b>

**Multiple insertion discounts available.**

Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month prior to publication. All rates are per issue and for digital or camera-ready ads. Typesetting and other services are extra and must be requested in advance of submission deadlines.

Payment must accompany order unless other arrangements are made in advance. Place make checks payable to: **Twin Cities PC User Group**

## TC/PC Member Benefits

**Product previews  
and demonstrations**

**Special Interest Groups  
Monthly Newsletter**

**Discounts on products  
and services**

**Contests and prizes**

## Business Member Benefits

**All of the above PLUS:**

**FREE ½ page ad on  
payment of each renewal**

**20% discount on all ads  
Placed in the *Digital  
Viking* Newsletter**

**Up to 5 newsletters mailed to  
your site  
(only a nominal cost for each  
additional 5 mailed)**

## TC/PC 2011-2012 Board of Directors

Meets second Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. All members welcome to attend.

Call **Ross Held** (612-386-3172) for meeting details.

<b>President</b> — Jim Grotz	jim.grotz@raymondjames.com
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**Contributors:**

**Jeannine Sloan**

# Who Is Tracking What You Do Online?

by Ira Wilsker, iwilsker(at)sbcglobal.net

WEBSITES:

<https://www.ghostery.com>

<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/betterprivacy/>

<http://www.pewinternet.org/Reports/2012/Teens-and-Privacy.aspx>

[http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP\\_ParentsTeensAndPrivacy.pdf](http://www.pewinternet.org/~media/Files/Reports/2012/PIP_ParentsTeensAndPrivacy.pdf)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracking\\_cookies](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracking_cookies)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web\\_beacons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_beacons)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local\\_shared\\_object](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Local_shared_object)

I frequently hear about internet users who always clean all of their cookies citing fears of privacy issues or identity theft. If I ask some of those users "What is an internet cookie?" I receive a variety of replies indicating a multiplicity of definitions varying from somewhat accurate to wildly inaccurate. There is equal misunderstanding about the functions of cookies, and the degree of risk that they pose to the user. When I ask users who faithfully clean their cookies for various reasons, I sometimes ask if they also delete their LSO or "Local Shared Object" cookies as well, which is typically responded to with a blank stare.

Cookies have been around since the early days of the World Wide Web, first used in beta version of Netscape in 1994, and are by default saved by most browsers. According to Wikipedia, "A cookie, also known as an HTTP cookie, web cookie, or browser cookie, is usually a small piece of data sent from a website and stored in a user's web browser while a user is browsing a website." These are small text files, not to exceed 4kb in size. By themselves, cookies are inert pieces of data that cannot transmit viruses, and cannot infect the computer with malware. Some cookies are beneficial for the user while other cookies may be used to track the users' web surfing habits, a major privacy concern.

Some of the good or beneficial cookies are used as shopping carts which temporarily store a list of items being purchased online from a particular website; other beneficial cookies are referred to in the trade as "authentication cookies" which indicate to a website the authenticity of a user often including an encrypted username and password when a user clicks "Remember Me" on a website, allowing the user future access without the need to login. In some cases, if an authentication cookie is not properly encrypted, it can be read by a hacker, which will then give the hacker access to the user's web account on that particular website; while this has indeed occurred, it is not considered to be a common threat at present due to the security enhancements built into all modern browsers.

The most controversial type of cookie, one that has attracted the ire of regulators in the U.S. and Europe, is the tracking cookie, called by some a "persistent cookie". Wikipedia describes them as, "... tracking cookies and especially third-party tracking cookies are commonly used as ways to compile long-term records of individuals' browsing histories. ... Advertising companies use third-party cookies to track a user across multiple sites. In particular, an advertising company can track a user across all pages where it has placed advertising images or web bugs. Knowledge of the pages visited by a user allows the advertising company to target advertisements to the user's presumed preferences." Many users actually benefit to some degree by having some tracking cookies on their

computers, as the advertisers who financially support the websites that we visit (and keep them free for us) can better and more efficiently target advertising to the user. A recent study by McCann Truth Central covering internet tracking found that 69% of respondents surveyed indicated that they believe that they get better discounts and promotions; 42% appreciate the targeted advertising that displays items of interest to them; 32% appreciate the convenience and ease of checkout because sellers already have information on them; and 24% like the fact that these targeted advertisements display items of interest that the users were unaware of. According to McCann, "Folks around the globe are more than willing to share their personal information as long as there's something in it for them. The more the benefits, the more information they'll share." Seven out of 10 of the people asked said they were willing to share their personal information when it meant they had access to promotions and discounts.

There are also inherent risks with tracking cookies, in that they may be used to violate the web surfer's privacy, in that third parties often compensate websites for planting their cookies on users' computers. It is the compilation of the websites visited and unknowingly disclosed to third parties that invokes privacy fears, in that your personal profile is being developed and read by others for a variety of legitimate and illicit purposes. With tracking cookies it is easy to determine many of an individual's demographic characteristics including race, gender, income, marital status, political affiliation, sexual orientation, hobbies and interests, religion, and other facets of life that we prefer to keep private.

Some tracking cookies are sneaky in the way that they are placed on the computer by websites that have been visited. These "web bugs" are also called web beacons, tracking bugs, tags, and other somewhat descriptive names. In order to slip through some forms of browser security, the web bugs are actually a tiny GIF file, consisting of a single pixel (the tiny dots that make up the image on your monitor are pixels or "Picture Elements"). The miniscule images are sometimes called a tracking pixel, pixel tag, or a 1×1 gif. Since browsers are designed to display GIF and other common image formats, a web bug or GIF image of a single pixel will be virtually invisible to the user when displayed on a web page. Most users are oblivious to the fact that most browsers, again by default, respond to images displayed by transmitting back to the sender of the web bug information culled from the user's browser, including operating system, IP address, and other information that in some cases could also include the user's name. Since almost all email programs support HTML based email, web bugs are frequently used by spammers to report back to them when the recipient of the spam email opens the spam before deleting it. Now the spammer has a confirmation of the target's email address, as well as the ability to gather additional information from the recipient's computer.

Another type of tracking cookie, the one that most internet users are totally unaware of, is the LSO or "Local Shared Objects" which are not the typical text based cookie, or the common variety of web bug, but instead are cookies written in Adobe Flash, which are undetectable by most users and cookie cleaning utilities. According to Wikipedia, "Local shared objects contain data stored by individual websites. With the default settings, the Flash Player does not seek the user's permission to store local shared objects on the hard disk." While the traditional text based cookie is generally limited to 4kb in size, these LSO or flash cookies can be up to 100kb in size, thus capable of storing much more information about the user and the websites visited. Unlike common cookies, which are all connected to a specific browser, the one which wrote them to the hard drive, LSO cookies are independent of the browser, thus can be shared (read) by any browser on the computer. For example, if I receive an LSO cookie while browsing with Firefox, and later open Internet Explorer, the LSO cookies written by Firefox will also be accessible to Internet Explorer. With Internet Explorer open, websites can read the LSO cookies received earlier by Firefox, allowing targeted advertising, dynamic content, or other forms of targeting just as if I still had Firefox open.

Almost all contemporary browsers offer a "Do Not Track" function (also listed as "DNT") in their privacy settings. In theory, this tells websites not to track this particular user; while some websites honor this request, many do not, making this function somewhat dubious in the browsers, but still appropriate to select. Also in the privacy settings are usually displayed the options available for dealing with traditional cookies; the user can reject all cookies or selectively accept some cookies. While it may already exist, and will likely appear in upcoming browser releases, I have not yet seen a browser privacy option that blocks web bugs and LSO cookies.

Since I value my privacy, and primarily use the latest version of Firefox on all of my PC's, I use a variety of utilities to control the placement of tracking cookies, web bugs, and LSO cookies on my computer. A cute little free program called Ghostery ([www.ghostery.com](http://www.ghostery.com)) can detect the different varieties of web bugs and web beacons as well as the tracking cookies on any website visited, displaying all of them to the user immediately after opening a webpage, thus allowing the user to take control over what is placed on his computer. Ghostery is available (free) for Firefox, Safari, Chrome, Opera, Internet Explorer, and iOS devices (iPhone and iPad versions). I also use a Firefox add-on BetterPrivacy ([addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/betterprivacy](http://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/betterprivacy)) which deletes any LSO or Flash cookies that may have been loaded during a session, automatically deleting them when closing Firefox.

Being aware of the types of privacy issues that may arise from online tracking, and how tracking devices may be used or abused by others, the user can better control who has access to his internet website history, and what they can do with it.  [Go to Page 1](#)

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## Blogs Worth Following

By Sharon Walbran, TC/PC User Group, [SQWalbran\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:SQWalbran@yahoo.com)

Online blogs can be a great source of technical information for the computer user. Blogs offer tips and tricks for new users, how to program articles for the experienced computer user, and product reviews and updates. You can read blog entries as often as you choose by visiting the blog site or you can sign up to be notified via Facebook every time a new post is published. You can also leave comments on blog sites and provide feedback to the blogger. Some blog sites have chat rooms as well.

Here are some tech blogs you can visit to get started:

**ZDNet**, [www.zdnet.com](http://www.zdnet.com), from Ziff-Davis Publishing, has been publishing technical articles since the dawn of personal computers. The team of writers posts new articles and blog entries very frequently. If you want to keep up with the latest products and the current news in technology this is the site to visit. Some recent articles include: "Year in Review: Windows 8, roadmaps, Office Next top the reader charts" and "LG Display bringing Retina Display-like resolution to 7-inch tablets, 12.9-inch laptop screen." Other well-established publishers include **Wired**, [www.wired.com](http://www.wired.com), and **CNET**, [www.cnet.com](http://www.cnet.com).

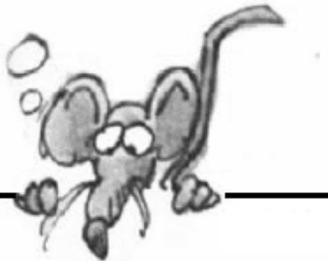
**How to Geek**, [www.howtogeek.com](http://www.howtogeek.com), offers step-by-step instructions for using your computer hardware and software. The explanations are well-written and easy to follow. Recent articles include: "How to Use the Advanced Start up Options to Fix Your Windows 8 Computer" and "How to Access Windows Remote Desktop Over the Internet."

**Digital Inspiration**, [www.labnol.org](http://www.labnol.org), written by Amit Agarwal from India, covers computer tips and tricks. Recent articles include: "Send a Free Fax to Anywhere in the World [using Windows]" and "Keep Your Google Contacts Up-To-Date with a Google Script."

**Mashable**, [www.mashable.com](http://www.mashable.com), covers a broader range of topics not just tech topics. Recent articles include: "What to do with your Android" and "This is How Your DSLR Camera Actually Works."

**Make Use Of**, [www.makeuseof.com](http://www.makeuseof.com), provides tips and hacks. Recent articles include: "How to Break the DRM on Kindle eBooks so You Can Enjoy Them Anywhere" and "Windows Phone 8 vs. Windows Phone 7.8, What's the Difference and Should You Upgrade?"

These represent just a fraction of the blogs available. There's one out there that will suit your needs. 



# NIBBLERS

By Jeannine Sloan

## Webmail Attachments Made Easy

In some Web browsers, both Yahoo Mail and Google's Gmail allow you to drag files from your computer's desktop right into the message window to upload them as file attachments. Yahoo has additional information on attachment management and Google has an illustrated example for Gmail.

## Web Site Recommendation

Hundred Zeros is a frequently updated catalog of best-sellers that are free on Amazon. The authors have created an easy-to-use interface for browsing books. You can also download and read Kindle eBooks on your computer, mobile phone, tablet, or the browser. <http://hundredzeros.com/>

## Add Shortcuts to Web Sites on Tablet Home Screen

In the Safari toolbar tap the Share menu icon which looks like an arrow bursting out of a rectangle. On the menu that appears, tap the "Add to Home Screen"

In the Android Browser find the bookmark that you'd like to add to your home screen and press down on it until a new menu appears. Tap the "Add shortcut to Home" option.

From NY Times Gadgetwise blog

## Figuring Out a Wireless Password in Windows 7

With the permission of the network owner you can connect to a friend's network with Windows 7 even if they cannot remember the network key.

Go to the Network and Sharing Center in the Windows Control Panel.

Click on "Manage Wireless Networks."

Scroll to the network whose key you wish to know and right click to access the "Properties" menu.

Click on the Security tab.

Click on "Show Characters" underneath the input box for the password.

From PCMech ezine

## History

In 1983 IBM introduced Personal Computer XT which offered something no other consumer computer had ever offered before: an internal hard drive. One 10MB drive, massive and pricey for its day, came standard with every IBM PC XT. That's not all the \$5,000 MSRP got you though, the machine also shipped with 128KB of RAM and a 360KB 5-inch floppy drive as well as a monochromatic CRT monitor and one of IBM's beloved Model M mechanical keyboards.

## Past Issues of NIBBLER

Missing an issue of the NIBBLER? They are reprinted in the TCPC newsletter "The Digital Viking". Many past issues of the Viking can be found at <http://tcpc.com/newsletters>

## How to Power Cycle Your Gadgets to Fix Freezes and Other Problems

Have you ever had a smartphone, laptop, tablet, or any other electronic gadget become unresponsive? The surefire way to recover from the freeze – assuming it's not a hardware problem – is by power-cycling the gadget. <http://www.howtogeek.com/131148/>

## POP

POP (Post Office Protocol) supports simple download-and-delete requirements for access to remote mailboxes. Although most POP clients (Outlook, Outlook Express) have an option to leave mail on server after download, e-mail clients using POP generally connect, retrieve all messages, store them on the user's PC as new messages, delete them from the server, and then disconnect. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post\\_Office\\_Protocol#See\\_also](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Post_Office_Protocol#See_also)

## Clean Touch Screen

Keep a touch screen free of smudges and fingerprints is by using a microfiber cloth. These and are gentle, yet effective in keeping your work and viewing surface clean and clear.

## Google Earth used by Archeologist

Google earth was used to discover the fossil of an ancient hominid. Read the story in the book "The Skull in the Rock" from NGS (National Geographic Society). Check it out if you are interested in archeology. Don't be put off by the fact that it's a children's book.

## Turn OFF Wi-Fi to Conserve Battery

On tablets and smart phones searching for Wi-Fi shortens battery life in a really big way. If you're going to be reading an ebook, listening to music or watching a movie on internal storage, there's no reason to have Wi-Fi humming along stealing precious battery juice. Find the setting to turn it OFF.

## Quick Parts

Add a field to a Word 2010 document that will change the output each time the document is printed. Go to the Insert tab, Text group, Quick Parts item and click on "Field". Click each drop down arrow to see lists of the information that can be automated. Detailed instructions here: <http://tinyurl.com/a7bxh7p>

## Turn Paint Chips into a Dry Erase Calendar

You need 35 chips, a 12" x 16" frame, and a dry erase marker to create your own version.  
From Lifehacker

## Convert Print Books to Digital

1DollarScan is a service that will take your books (hardback and paperback), magazines, and other business documents and convert them for you at very reasonable prices. The result is a PDF file. A review of their services is here: <http://www.wired.com/geekdad/2012/12/stacks-with-1dollarscan/>

## Guide to Types of Household Batteries

I love comparison charts and this one is worth bookmarking. <http://michaelbluejay.com/batteries/>

## Basic Wildcard Search in Word

Search using the ? character in Word

Summon the Find and Replace dialog box.

If necessary, click the More button to display the Search Options area.

Select the Use Wildcards option.

In the Find What box, type text containing the question mark (?) wildcard.

For example, if you type ?up, then Word searches for three-letter words in your document that start with any old letter but must end with “up,” such as cup and pup.

Search using the \* character in Word 2007

Summon the Find and Replace dialog box.

If necessary, click the More button to display the Search Options area.

Select the Use Wildcards option.

In the Find What box, type text containing the asterisk (\*) wildcard.

The asterisk finds a group of characters. For example, if you type w\*s, then Word locates any word starting with w and ending with s, such as words and welcomes.

From Dummies ezine

## Definitions

**Power Cycling:** Cutting the power to a device, then restoring the power.

**UPS:** UPS stands for “Uninterruptible Power Supply.”

## Quick Tips

You can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page.

You can tap the Space bar to scroll down on a Web page one screenful. Add the Shift key to scroll back up.

When you’re filling in the boxes on a Web page (like City, State, Zip), you can press the Tab key to jump from box to box, rather than clicking. Add the Shift key to jump through the boxes backwards.

Forcing the cameras flash to go off prevents silhouetted, too-dark faces when you’re outdoors.

## Convert an Old Nook Tablet to Android

An unused Nook can be converted to an Android tablet using free, downloadable conversion software or you can get a SD card from: [n2acards.com](http://n2acards.com). Some people would say that N2A is a scam (since they are basically just offering, for a price, a bootable CyanogenMod SD card) but they make the process easier for the less tech-savvy people. <http://n2acards.com/>

## Windows 8

Microsoft’s new OS is out. On new equipment it comes with a touch screen, which means that the controls are gesture based. This site presents a printable chart of gestures and what they do: <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows-8/touch-swipe-tap-beyond>

## Windows 8 Without a Touch Screen

Windows 8 installed on an older machine that does not have a touchscreen is easy to use, too. Simply control the pointer with a mouse and it does the same things as a gesture does on a touchscreen. Whether or not a touchscreen is available it will be easier if you know a few keyboard shortcuts. The ones you already know will probably work so try them first. There are some new ones that are unique to Windows 8. Here are a few new ones will get you started:

**Win + R and type in “recent“ and hit Enter. There you can see your recent activities.**

**Win + Q Access the Apps Search screen**

**Win + F Access the Files Search screen**

**Win + X Access the Windows Tools Menu**

## Windows 8

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**Win + Q Access the Apps Search screen**

**Win + F Access the Files Search screen**

**Win + X Access the Windows Tools Menu**

**The Windows Tools Menu** incorporates accelerator keys. Notice each entry in the list has one underlined key that is the accelerator key. Simply tap that key on the keyboard to open the option. That is enough to get going but if you want more shortcuts download the following sheet.

## 100 Windows 8 Keyboard Shortcuts

TechRepublic's Greg Shultz has compiled a set of 100 Windows 8 keyboard shortcuts that will help you more quickly and efficiently navigate Windows 8 and its new Metro User Interface.

Some of the keyboard shortcuts found in the free to download PDF are familiar to users of Windows 7, but there are also many shortcuts that are particular to Windows 8.

<http://www.windows8update.com/2012/04/10/techrepublic-offering-pdf-with-100-windows-keyboard-shortcuts/>

*Happy New Years to Jeannine. Looking forward to another year of Nibblers.*

[Go to Page 1](#)



# Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

w Work phone h Home phone c Cell phone  
\* Meets at an alternate location

Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200 Willson Road, Edina, MN

Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.

For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.

Get SIG announcements!

Link from [www.tpc.com](http://www.tpc.com)

## Board of Directors\*

All members are welcome! Call for location.

**Selected Saturday mornings**

Ross Held RHeld83745@aol.com

## Community Outreach\*

To request services or volunteer to help  
Contact:

Ross Held RHeld83745@aol.com

## Linux on Saturday

This is for the Linux newbie and those trying  
to come over from Microsoft to a different  
operating system.

**Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon**

Jack Ungerleider 612/418-3494 c  
jack@jacku.com

## Picture Perfect

Explore how to use your digital camera  
and learn how to use a variety of software  
for editing, organizing, and sharing images  
and video.

**Second Tuesday 6:00—7:00 PM**

Every other month

Right before the general meeting

Sharon Walbran SQWalbran@yahoo.com

## Microsoft Access

All levels. Presentations by expert develop-  
ers within the group and by MS reps.

**Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon**

Steve Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492  
steve@kuhlmeysystems.com

## Microsoft Office

Addresses the use, integration, and nuanc-  
es of the Microsoft Office applications.

**Combined with Systems on Saturday**

**Third Saturday of the Month**

Steve Kuhlmeier 952/934-8492  
steve@kuhlmeysystems.com

## Web Page Design

Discussion and demonstration of HTML,  
web publishing software and page design.

**Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM**

Every other month

Right before the general meeting.

Jack Ungerleider 612/418-3494 c  
jack@jacku.com

## Microsoft Word for PC & Mac

Any level user can be proficient and efficient  
in basics and advanced features of Word..

**Combined with Systems on**

**Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon**

Tom Ostertag 612/951-5520 w  
651/488-9979 h

Curt Trout 651/484-4569 h  
ctrout@troutreach.com

## Systems on Saturday

For all levels of computer challenges and any  
type of computer-related question. Incl. Q&A  
**Meets 2nd & 3rd Saturdays 9:00 AM-Noon**

Curt Trout 651/484-4569 h  
ctrout@troutreach.com

### Directions to Summit Place for General Meetings:

Proceed to Eden Prairie Center Flying Cloud Drive . [Flying Cloud Drive runs along  
the West side of the Eden Prairie Center.] Once you have driven past Eden Prairie  
Center (on the left) along Flying Cloud Drive you will come to a stop light at Prairie  
Center Drive. The next intersection with a stop light and left turn lane is Fountain  
Place. Turn left at Fountain Place and go straight into the parking lot. Turn left again  
to the first covered entry way of Summit Place. There is plenty of parking in the  
large parking lot in front of the first Summit Place covered entry way. When you  
enter the door at the first covered entry way, ask to be directed to the Performance  
Room for the TC/PC meeting. For a map of more detailed directions and *info on*  
**Web SIG and Board meeting**, check the TC/PC website.

Directions to **Edina Executive Plaza**  
for **Systems on Saturday, Access,**  
**Word and Picture Perfect SIGs:** Take  
Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon  
exit. [If you have come from the north,  
cross back over Highway 100 to the  
east side.] Take the first right and go  
past Perkins [The golf course will be on  
your left.] and continue on the east  
frontage road (Willson Road) to the  
next building—5200 . There is ample  
parking in the building's lot.  
Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

## Help yourself by helping others!

## Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

Contact TC/PC at [www.tpc.com](http://www.tpc.com)

Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. \*Meets at Edina Executive Plaza.

# January

# February

sun	mon	tue	wed	thu	fri	sat
		1 A HAPPY NEW YEAR	2	3	4	5
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# Making Your Computer Easier to Use

Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida, May 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

In these days when almost everyone is using a computer, there are many features of operating systems and software that can help users with physical limitations. Microsoft has enhanced its features in this area, both in Windows 7 and recent versions of Microsoft Office. This article gives an overview of these features and links to some helpful sites for people interested in making the tools work for them. In Windows 7, the accessibility tools are found in the Ease of Access Center (Start – Control Panel – Ease of Access Center). These tools are designed to help people who have problems with vision, hearing, and dexterity.

## Low Vision and Blindness

For the person who finds the computer display hard to read, changing a few settings in the Ease of Access Center can make life easier. You can select a High Contrast theme which shows either white text on a black background or all bold black text on a white background for all text, including toolbars and ribbons. This feature is especially useful for users with conditions like macular degeneration. The Magnifier tool enlarges the portion of the screen where the mouse pointer is located, a lifesaver when trying to read small text in a document or on a webpage. Like other tools, it can be pinned to the taskbar for easy access. Other settings let you remove unnecessary background images or animations, make the flashing cursor thicker and more visible when typing, and sharpen the appearance of window borders to make them easier to see.

A person who is blind can work with a Windows computer through a combination of the Narrator and Voice Recognition tools using speakers and a microphone. Narrator reads text aloud as it appears on the screen and describes things like error messages. The Voice Recognition tool, introduced in Word 2010, translates the user's speech into text on the screen. It does need initial setup, involving training the tool to understand the user's vocal patterns. Another tool, Audio Description, gives oral narration of the action in videos.

## Limited Dexterity

A number of tools are designed to assist the person with limited finger dexterity. Turning on the Mouse Keys lets you move the pointer on the screen using the arrow keys instead of the mouse. Sticky Keys let you press keystroke combinations, such as Ctrl+Alt+Del, one key at a time. Toggle Keys play an alert sound when you press the Caps Lock, Num Lock or Scroll Lock keys, saving you from unanticipated results like a sentence in all caps. Filter Keys can be set to ignore unintentional keystrokes, such as several in rapid succession or holding down a key for an unusually long time.

The Voice Recognition tool, besides assisting blind users, is also useful either for those with limited dexterity or inadequate typing skills. The on-screen keyboard lets the hunt-and-peck typist click letters on a keyboard displayed on the screen. For those who have trouble maneuvering a mouse, one solution is to develop the habit of using keyboard shortcuts in place of mouse clicks. Searching the Internet will provide lists of standard keystroke shortcuts; you can also create your own. Windows. Ease of Access Center also has features that can help. One option lets you hover the mouse pointer over a window to open it, rather than clicking. Other settings for the mouse use can be found in the Control Panel - Mouse. Here you can change the speed of the mouse click and create a trail of pointer images behind the moving pointer to keep it in view. You can also change the shape and size of pointer icons.

## Hearing Loss

Although computers are more visual than auditory, users with hearing loss need a few tools to assist them. In the Ease of Access Center, you can change alerts in many programs from sound to a text alert or a flash on the screen. Another setting displays text captions for spoken dialogue in multi media programs.

## Accessibility Features in MS Office 2010

Microsoft Word, Excel, and PowerPoint 2010 have new features to help make documents, spreadsheets, and presentations more accessible to those with limitations. One is the Accessibility Checker. This tool diagnoses a file for any areas that might make it difficult to view or use. The author of the file can review the list and make any changes he feels are needed. Another new tool is Mini Translator, which translates a word or phrase from another language into English when the mouse points to it. Clicking the Play button lets you hear the word or phrase pronounced. Another feature new to Office 2010 is the ability to add text descriptions to shapes and images for those who can't view them. Enlarging text in Word 2010 is easy with the zoom slider in the right bottom corner and a new full screen Reading View option which enlarges and sharpens document text. PowerPoint 2010 has added the capability to add closed captions to audio and video and embed them in a slide presentation.

Windows is compatible with many third party assistive software programs and devices. MS Office 2003 –2010 users can turn documents into Talking Books by downloading the “Save As Daisy” add-in. Go to <http://sourceforge.net> and search for and download/install “Save As DAISY for Office (your version).” Then install a DAISY-compatible digital talking book reader, such as the free AMIS reader. [www.DAISY.org/amis/download](http://www.DAISY.org/amis/download). Versions are available for Office 2007/2010 and for Office 2003 with the Office 2007 compatibility pack installed. Other requirements are listed at the sourceforge.net website.

The number of options to increase accessibility to a computer can be overwhelming. This overview will make you aware of some of them, but only you can decide which ones you want to try. You can complete a short questionnaire in the Ease of Access Center to help with your decision. A few of these tools have a learning curve that can be greatly reduced by watching the video tutorials (some close-captioned) and reading support documents located at [www.microsoft.com/enable/products/office](http://www.microsoft.com/enable/products/office). Most can also be accessed directly from links in the Ease of Access Center. Fortunately, the support and setup tutorials for most of these tools are numerous and well done. More information can be found by searching [www.microsoft.com/accessibility](http://www.microsoft.com/accessibility).  [Go to Page 1](#)

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## Get creative with Text Boxes

**Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida, September 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, [www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org), ndemarte (at) Verizon.net**

When you use Microsoft Office, you create and edit text all the time. Word, of course, is dominated by text; Excel and PowerPoint both use text in many of their functions. All recent versions of Office also include a tool called a “text box” for special uses of text. Let’s find out what it is and how to use it.

A text box is a specialized shape in which you can enter text. It functions outside the regular margin constraints of a document and can be moved or resized as needed. A text box is useful for adding a caption to a photo or annotating a diagram or chart. If you want to emphasize an important statement in a document, you can use a text box to repeat the statement in a “pull quote” and locate it in an unexpected spot, such as along a margin (known as a Sidebar) or across columns in the

document. Its flexibility makes a text box useful in many situations.

Text boxes have most of the same properties as shapes. In Word 2007 and 2010, when you click the Insert tab, then Text Box, you open the Text Box gallery of 36 preformatted text boxes, as well as the “Draw text box” option. If one of the preset boxes meets your needs, click to insert it into the document. Older versions of Word lack this gallery, but you can still draw a text box, which is most often my choice. Click “Draw text box” at the bottom of the gallery. Then click anywhere in your document where you want the text box to appear and drag diagonally down the page to the right to create the text box. At first the box covers a portion of the normal text. This is because the default text wrapping setting is “in front of text.” If you don’t want the text box to hide the document text, select the text box so “handles” appear around the box. At this point, the Text Box Tools Format tab appears on the ribbon. Click Format, and then Text Wrapping in the Arrange group. Change the setting to Tight, which will position the text box within the existing text and also allow you to move the text box. Do this by clicking an edge so a crossed arrows icon appears and dragging it to a new location. You can also resize the box by dragging an edge or corner. To enter text in the box, replace the informational text with your own.

Once a text box is created and located in the document, it can be formatted in many ways. To format the text, select it, and a small version of the Font group on the Home tab will appear. Use these tools to change the font style, size, color, and other attributes. (You can also click the Home tab and use the full set of options in the Font group.) To format the text box itself, select it and use the tools on the Text Box Tools Format tab. For example, you can fill the box with a color, remove or change the border styles, make the text read vertically, or add special 3-D effects.

In Office 2007 and 2010, text boxes are not limited to a rectangular shape. You can add text to any of the items in the shapes gallery. Click Insert – Shapes and click a shape. Click in your document and draw the shape in the same way you drew the text box. Change the text wrapping to Tight as you did above, then right click inside the shape and choose “Add Text.” The large number of shape choices gives you many options for text boxes. Another approach is to begin with a classic text box, even after it is filled with text. Select it, which opens the Text Box Tools Format tab. Click Format and select “Change shape,” which opens the shapes gallery. Click a new shape, and the text box transforms into that shape with all its contents intact. Another interesting possibility is inserting a photo or piece of clip art into a text box. With the text box or shape selected, click the Insert tab – Picture. Click the photo you want, then Insert. The photo appears in the text box, resized to fit. The same steps work to insert clip art, charts or tables within text boxes.

Text boxes can be rotated for a dramatic effect. In Office 2010, select the text box, and click and drag the little green rotator circle above the box to rotate it left or right. In Word 2007, for an unknown reason, classic text boxes cannot be rotated, even though shapes can. One way to work around this problem is to create a text box, cut it using the Cut command on the Home tab, and then paste it as a “Picture (Windows Metafile)” using the Paste Special command option under the Paste icon.

Occasionally, you might create a text box in Word that you’d like to reuse at a later time. You can save it by selecting the text inside the box and then clicking Insert and the arrow under the Text Box icon. Choose “Save Selection to Text Box Gallery.”

Besides Word, text boxes appear in Excel and PowerPoint 2007/10. Neither program contains a text box gallery, but each has the “Draw a Text Box” tool, which gives you all the functions that Word does, including rotation. You can also start with a shape and include text by right clicking and using the “Edit Text” command.

Have a little fun. Create a few text boxes in your next document, spreadsheet or presentation. 

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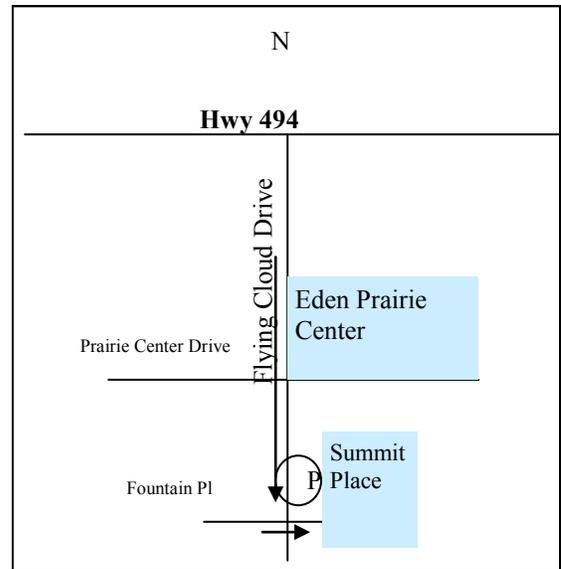
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