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The Digital Viking



Twin Cities

PC USER GROUP

NEWSLETTER

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

June 2025

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General Meeting
Tuesday, June 10, 2025

7:00 PM

**TC/PC Annual Meeting
And Elections**

Via Zoom Only

June is the time for our annual meeting and financial report and the election of board members and officers of TC/PC. It is important that you attend the meeting to vote and to give your input on the future direction of our organization and suggest ideas for future presentations. 🖥️

Saturday SIG meetings are on vacation for the summer. They will return in September. Mark your calendars!

Note: All TC/PC Meetings and SIG Groups will be virtual until further notice. Visit tcpc.com for info.

Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.

TC/PC is a
Member of



24-Hour Information • www.tcpc.com
Application form inside back cover

The Digital Viking

The Digital Viking is the official monthly publication of the Twin Cities PC User Group, a 501(c)(3) organization and 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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Full page (7½ x 9½)	\$100.00
Two-thirds page (7½ x 6)	80.00
Half page (7½ x 4¾)	65.00
One-third page (7½ x 3)	50.00
Quarter page (3½ x 4¾)	40.00
Member Bus. Card (2 x 3½)	10.00

Multiple insertion discounts available.

Contact Sharon Walbran at: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1st 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 2024-2025 Board of Directors

Meets once or twice per year. All members welcome to attend.

Visit www.tpc.com for meeting details.

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TC/PC Member Benefits

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and demonstrations

Special Interest Groups
Monthly Newsletter

Discounts on products
and services

Contests and prizes

Business Member Benefits

All of the above PLUS:

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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)

Newsletter Staff

Editor Sharon Walbran

Tom's Tech-Notes

Windows 12 - Coming Soon? Already Here?

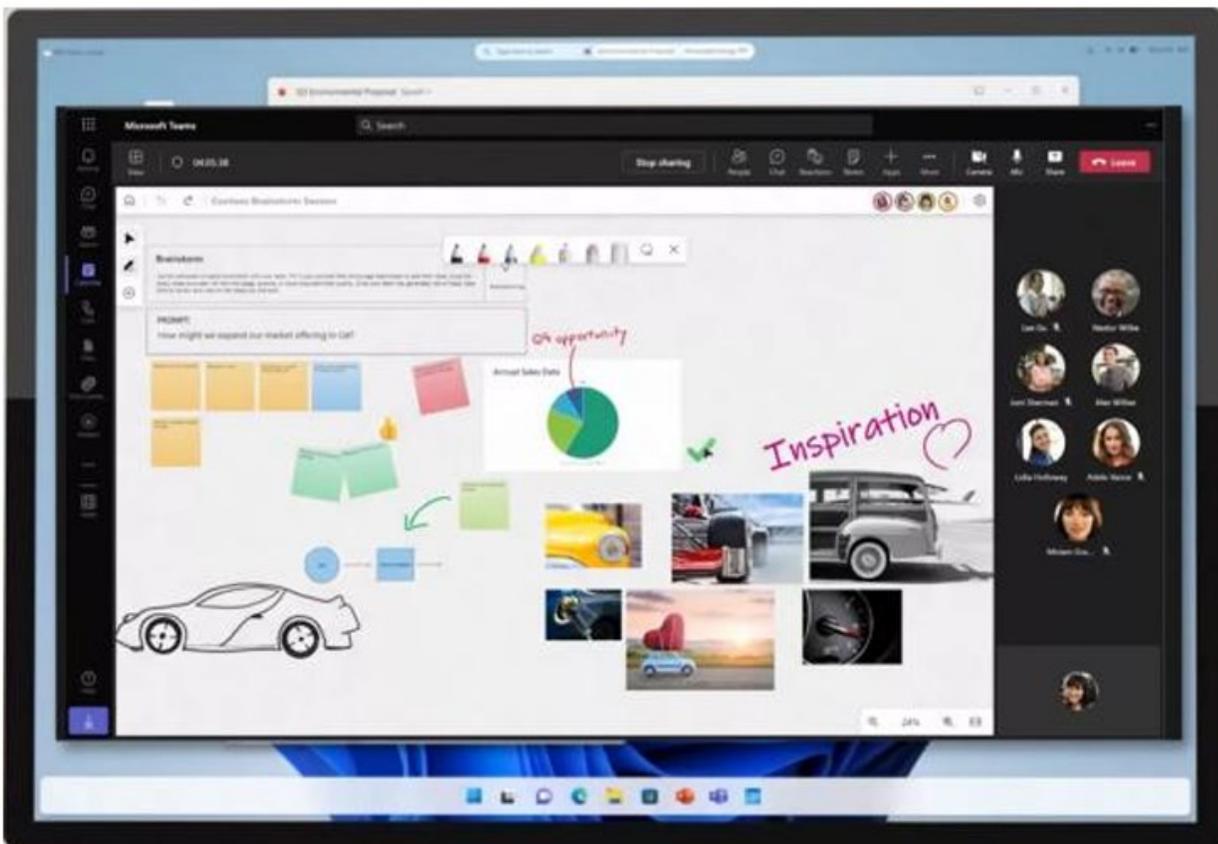
By Tom Burt, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

March 2025 Gigabyte Gazette

<https://www.scscclb>

Over the past year in the technical media, there have been vague rumors of an upcoming Windows 12 release. Much of that was just vague speculation with not much actionable substance. However, one of our members recently emailed me, wanting my thoughts on whether she should buy a new Windows 11 PC now, or wait for Windows 12 PC to be released.

I decided I should check Google for the latest news on Windows 12. I was surprised to find articles and videos suggesting Windows 12 has solidified into real proposition. Here's a link from PC magazine, followed by a screen shot and some commentary: <https://www.pcmag.com/articles/what-to-expect-in-windows-12-leaks-rumors-and-more>.



Potential Windows 12 desktop layout at Ignite 2023 (Credit: Microsoft/PCMag)

The (perhaps intentionally blurry) image features a floating search bar at the top, a floating taskbar, system icons in the top right corner, and a weather button in the top left corner.

Here are a few more links:

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/2575344/windows-12-wasnt-mentioned-at-ces-2025-thatsa-good-thing.html>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Lg2zCa2wlw>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8J8hkY9828g>

However, careful review showed most of the Windows 12 commentary was written in early 2024 and the videos are all speculative mockups. There's little official from Microsoft. The video mockups are also seemingly based on images in a slide deck presented at the Microsoft Ignite 2023 conference. Given it's only about 8 months to the putative release date, it seems unlikely (but not impossible) that there will be a Windows 12 release in late 2025.

What did happen is that the fall 2024 release of Windows 11 24H2 included much of the feature content that the technical media had anticipated would be in "Windows 12". This included major revisions to the internal layers of Windows for more modularity, better performance, better security and support for "on-PC" AI. This part of the release was codenamed: "Germanium".

The release of Windows 11 24H2 also saw the large PC makers release a new generation of "AI PCs". These came with more memory, larger solid-state drives, higher-end graphics cards or chips and new "AI" CPU chips from Intel and AMD that included high performance neural processing units (NPUs). All this was to support the rollout of Microsoft's Copilot AI technology in both Windows and MS Office.

So, at its core, Windows 11 24H2, essentially was the anticipated Windows 12, released 3 years after the original Windows 11. What was not included were some of the expected changes in the user experience (UX) layers of the OS (the desktop, taskbar and start menu, the window manager and the File Explorer). Microsoft often seems to have "Apple Envy" and tends to adopt some of Apple's UX into Windows. It's possible that Microsoft could release something called Windows 12 in fall 2025 that would incorporate a revamped UX and perhaps more integration of the Copilot UI. There's some talk of Copilot evolving to have "agent" capabilities.

However, for now Microsoft is quite silent about Windows 12. One big issue Microsoft has is that, as of January 2025, only about 1/3 of the base of Windows PCs is running Windows 11. Close to 2/3 of Windows PCs are still running Windows 10. Those Windows 10 PCs are scheduled to become "unsupported" (no further security fixes) as Windows 10 reaches its "End of Life" date of October 14, 2025.

But many Windows 10 users don't like Windows 11 and don't want to upgrade. Also, the hardware (CPU and Trusted Platform Module) of many Windows 10 PCs is not officially supported on Windows 11; those users will have to go buy new hardware. This is reminiscent of Windows 7 users avoiding Windows 8 in droves until Windows 10 was finally released. Possibly a Windows 12 release, if its new UX were compelling, would stimulate more users to switch from Windows 10.

Final Thoughts

Major Windows upgrade cycles are comparatively seismic events in the PC universe. The PC makers have to rebrand their products, update documentation and decide what to do with unsold inventory that has the "old" version of Windows installed. There's a vast industry of educators, writers and consultants who now have to learn the new OS and update all their products for the

new OS. Businesses that use Windows have to adjust their plans and in-house training. The retail PC channels, both brick and mortar and online, have to retool their marketing, advertising, sales and customer support teams. All this will entail large costs and lots of effort.

If Windows 12 is to come out late in 2025, much of that effort has to get going very soon. And so far, there's no overt sign of it. It looks like Microsoft, for 2025, is more focused on getting its Copilot AI technology widely adopted, especially by their business customers. The Copilot technology is expected to create a new revenue stream for Microsoft through purchase of AI "tokens". I suspect Windows 12 can wait until the fall of 2026.

As to buying decisions, it's highly likely that any quality Windows 11 PC purchased today will be upgradable to Windows 12 when it's released. So, if you're ready to upgrade from Windows 10 by buying a new PC, and you see a good deal, especially on one of the "AI PCs", you might as well go for it. With the prospect of higher tariffs on imported PC components (chips, memory, disk drives), which mostly come from foreign sources, the prices of new PCs may actually go up over the next year or two.



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Through The Lens

A guide to digital photography for computer enthusiasts. After the click of your camera, you're only half done!

How to Punch Up Your Photos

by Lynda Buske

Ottawa PC Users Group

<https://www.opcug.ca>

If you regularly take photos with your cell phone, you may do very little editing (other than cropping) since cell phones, in the process of creating the jpgs, often add vibrancy, sharpness, saturation, etc. But it may end up looking a bit unnatural and can be tricky to dial back such effects in post processing.

However, if you are shooting with a more traditional camera such as a DSLR or mirrorless, you may find the opposite happens. Both the Canon and Nikon I shoot with regularly tend to process photos with a minimum of contrast. This can cause the photos to look kind of dull and muted when I first take them out of the camera and onto my PC.

I have heard folk say, "My cell phone takes better photos than my camera". With a few exceptions (like low light situations) it can just be that you like the decisions the cell phone is making on your behalf. It doesn't bother me that my camera tends to do fewer adjustments when creating the jpg as it means I am able to adjust without overdoing it (or I can shoot RAW for full control). For instance, I rarely add saturation to an image but instead, use contrast to punch up my photos. That way I don't get the lurid colours that don't usually occur in nature. Besides, I always have more pixels to play with than with my cell phone and that is a big help when making fine adjustments or cropping in on a bird or animal.

So how does contrast work? Below is an image out of camera, with added contrast versus added saturation.



Colours seem dull out of camera



Colours appear unnatural with saturation



Enhanced but natural with added contrast

Adding contrast increases the differences between the brighter and darker areas of your photo. It will add more pure black and pure white to your image so rather than a range of soft mid-tones (or grey in a monochrome image), your pixels are more evenly distributed and your image appears sharper. You can see this in the accompanying histograms (shown in bottom right-hand corner of all these pictures) which show the distribution of pixels with the left side being pure black and the right side being pure white.

Sometimes the contrast is a bit too much of a blunt instrument since it may end up creating too much pure black in order to get any pure white (see “Contrast” photo below and histogram weighted to the left side). In these cases, use the White and Black sliders. In the free Photoscape X these can be found under Colour then More. In Lightroom there are clearly marked under the Develop tab. Pull the white and black sliders individually to get what you want. Watch the histogram to make sure you have pixels touching both the left and right side of the graph. Be careful that there are no large areas of pure white if you are going to print the image as it may affect how it appears on glossy paper.



Dull colours right out of camera



Contrast added too much black



Using black/white slider bars gave more control

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Will a Memory Optimizer Speed Up Your Computer?

By Bob Rankin

<https://askbobrankin.com>

An AskBob reader says "My computer is getting bogged down lately, especially when I have more than one program open. And the other day I got a 'low memory' warning. I've been looking into memory optimizers for Windows, but there are widely varying views as to how effective they really are. What is your opinion?" Read on for my take on memory boosters and memory optimizers, and why a shortage of available RAM memory might be a GOOD thing...

Are Memory Optimizers Useful?

I just did a Google search for "Windows memory optimizer" and got over 15 million hits. So-called "memory optimizers" have been around for years, dating back to the Neolithic DOS Era. These programs are also called memory boosters, memory cleaners, and other names. They claim to make your computer run faster with fewer crashes by "optimizing" your system's RAM memory. But do they really do anything useful? Let's take a look at these claims...

Memory optimizers claim to "free up unused RAM," making it available for the programs and data that you are actively using. You can verify that a memory optimizer actually makes more RAM available. The optimizer itself will show you in its graphical user interface, or you can look at Task Manager's Performance tab to see how much memory is available before and after running an optimizer.

More free RAM is a good thing, isn't it? Well, actually, it isn't, when it's recovered by a memory optimizer. Optimizers recover RAM by forcing Windows' memory manager to push some contents of RAM out to the page file on your hard drive.

Basically, an optimizer tells Windows that it needs lots of RAM. Windows swaps the contents of its system cache to the page file and gives the freed RAM to the greedy optimizer. Then the optimizer releases the RAM and tells you there is more RAM available than there was before it ran. It's not a lie, but...

Now the contents of the system cache are in the page file. When you need that content, Windows must read it back into RAM from the hard drive. That takes much longer than reading it from RAM. The result can be a significant performance hit. Suppose you are working on a Word document. You switch to your Web browser for a moment to look up something on the Web. The Word program and its data are stored in the fast system cache memory temporarily. Switching back to Word is quick because everything you need is already in RAM... unless a memory optimizer has run while you were browsing.

Defrag Your RAM With Snake Oil

Memory optimizers make other claims, like the ability to "defragment" RAM. Defragmenting hard disk space improves performance by minimizing read/write head movement. But no moving parts are used to read or write in RAM, so defragmentation does not matter at all. Optimizers also claim to shut down unused DLLs that are "stealing" RAM. But DLLs are usually shut down by Windows when the programs that use them are terminated. If a DLL remains in RAM, it is in the cache because Windows anticipates that another program will need it soon. Memory optimizers sometimes terminate background processes or services, which may later restart anyway. It's true that some poorly written programs may not free up all the RAM memory they were using when they terminate, but your operating system occasionally runs a "garbage collection" routine

that finds this memory and marks it as available.

If your computer bogs down when multiple programs are open, or you're seeing the "low virtual memory" warning, you probably need to add some physical RAM memory to your computer to make it run better. See my related article [Add Memory to Speed Up Your Computer](#) for help with those topics.

In my opinion, memory optimizers don't do anything useful. In fact, they usually make your system run slower! Modern operating systems have sophisticated memory management systems, and operate on the "Unused RAM is wasted RAM" principle. In their attempt to free up RAM, these memory optimizers can interfere with the operating system's memory management processes, potentially leading to system instability and performance issues.

And since memory optimizers aren't magic, they must consume system resources (CPU and memory) to constantly run in the background. So you may see a verifiable boost in available RAM, but with increased system overhead that's slowing down your computer. If I may mix my metaphors, adding the baby to the bath water doesn't improve the water.

I'll also add that some sketchy memory optimizers come bundled with unwanted or malicious software, posing privacy or security risks.

You'll find people on the Web that swear by certain memory optimizer programs. Feel free to try them if you like, but make sure the "reviewer" isn't the owner or an employee of the software vendor, and check the reputation of the program in other places, especially if it's not a freebie. In the context of third-party memory optimizers, it can actually be a bad thing to have lots of free RAM memory. RAM can speed up the loading of programs, web pages, and data that's likely to be needed again soon. It's much faster to load a cached item from RAM than reading it from a hard drive.

So if your computer reports that RAM is full, or nearly so, it's probably an indication that your operating system is doing a good job of keeping frequently needed items available for quick access. If, however, your RAM is maxed out, and you notice significant lag when loading programs or switching from one to another, you need more physical RAM, not an optimizer.

Here's my bottom line... in most cases, memory optimizers do nothing useful and can actually interfere with Windows' memory management. If there was some super secret to freeing up more RAM in Windows, it would long ago have been built into the operating system. My advice: there is no reason to use a memory optimizer. Just let Windows manage memory for you, and install additional RAM if you really need it.



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Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. *Virtual Meetings during Covid pandemic.

June

July

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10 7pm General Mtg Annual Meeting And Elections 6pm Tech Topics	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

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You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits is reading this monthly publication at www.tcpc.com.

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for software drawings. The small membership fee also includes access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.
(If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)



<p>Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:</p> <p>Full name _____</p> <p>Company name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Home <input type="radio"/> Business <input type="radio"/> Change address: <input type="radio"/> Perm. <input type="radio"/> Temp. 'til _____</p> <p>Home phone _____ Work phone _____</p> <p>Online address(es) _____</p> <p>Where did you hear about TC/PC? _____</p> <p><input type="radio"/> I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed. <input type="radio"/> I DO NOT want to receive any mailings</p>		<p style="text-align: right;">6/25</p> <p>I'm signing up for:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Individual/Family Membership (\$9) <input type="radio"/> Business Membership (\$100)</p> <p>If an existing member your # _____</p> <p>Make checks payable to: Twin Cities PC User Group 341 County Rd C2 W Roseville, MN 55113</p> <p>Or sign up on our website: http://www.tcpc.com</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Check # _____ <input type="radio"/> Bill me</p> <p><input type="radio"/> New member <input type="radio"/> Renewal <input type="radio"/> Prior member</p> <p>I'm interested in:</p> <p><input type="radio"/> Training classes <input type="radio"/> Volunteering <input type="radio"/> Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.</p> <p>List here:</p>
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June 10, 2025

**7:00 pm
General Meeting**

**TC/PC Annual Meeting
&
Elections**

Via Zoom Only



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