



www.ntpcug.org

North Texas PC News

2ND SATURDAY
Microsoft Las Colinas
7000 Highway 161
Irving, Texas

3RD SATURDAY
King of Glory Lutheran Church
6411 Lyndon B. Johnson Freeway
Dallas, Texas

We Need Your Input

July 2011
VOLUME 31 • NUMBER 7

At our July Board meeting, there was extensive discussion regarding formatting of the newsletter. The Board was split between those wanting single-column format vs. those wanting two-column layout.

It was noted that one's preference may well hinge on how one reads the newsletter, with those reading on-screen preferring single column and those reading from the printed page preferring the two-column layout.

We are anxious to reach a conclusion which satisfies the majority of our members, but thus far, we have little formalized input from the members. It should be recognized that our current resources do not permit us to publish the entire newsletter in two different formats. Maybe someday we'll have that capability, but not yet.

So please give us your preference by sending an email along any of the following lines:

- I read the newsletter on-screen and prefer the single column format;
- I read the newsletter on-screen and prefer the two-column format;
- I read the newsletter in printed copy and prefer the single column format;
- I read the newsletter in printed copy and prefer the two-column format;
- I have no preference regarding format;
- I don't read the newsletter so I don't care; **or**
- Newsletter? What newsletter?

Send your email to **president@ntpcug.org** as soon as possible so we can informatively reach a conclusion.

I and your Board look forward to seeing your input.

Chuck Fiedler, President

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Prez Sez

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Before I begin this month's *Prez Sez*, please note that, until funding arrangements are made to resume our developer SIGs at the Microsoft facility, **all** SIGs will meet together at KOG on the third Saturday of each month.

So, on with the topic at hand.

With the scheduling of our June meetings being moved to the fourth Saturday, attendance was less than normal. I suspect it was the change in schedule which adversely affected attendance, although I had anticipated that the joint attendance of second and third Saturday groups would have resulted in an increase in attendance.

Again, I will remind you that the Board is anxious to receive your suggestions on how to increase membership and attendance. Should you have ideas on these subjects, please direct them to bod@ntpcug.org

Suggestions for programs or speakers should be addressed to programs@ntpcug.org. These suggestions will be taken by our Program Director, Howard Harkness to build them into real presentations.

Last month, I led the Info Desk efforts and was ably carried through it by the many volunteers who spend an hour or more doing the necessary check-in tasks. Remember, volunteering to serve your fellow members is not only rewarding in itself, but it gives you a chance to get a free recognition dinner as well as major software at truly bargain prices – three significant benefits for a small investment of time in serving NTPCUG and/or the Texas Center for the Visually Challenged (TCVC).

If you're a member who doesn't regularly attend monthly meetings, you're missing out on a wealth of good information presented in our SIGs and special presentations. You're also missing the chance to participate in the twice-yearly raffles and the drawings held at the business meeting most every month. Our special thanks to **Chris Morgan** who obtains the majority of drawing goodies from Microsoft.

Finally, if you don't attend, you're missing out on the chance to ask questions about problems you may be having, and to add the benefit of your experience to the discussions.

Remember, we are the place to "Share what you know, learn what you don't."

Evening news is where they begin with 'Good Evening,' and then proceed to tell you why it isn't.

Behind every successful man is his woman. Behind the fall of a successful man is usually another woman.

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) ...

Sessions with presentations, discussion, and exchanges of information

2nd Saturday

Please Note: For July 2011, the “2nd Saturday” SIGs will meet at KOG on July 16th with the “3rd Saturday” SIGs. We are still negotiating some issues at Microsoft, and details are not yet finalized.

.NET Developers – 9:00 am

Tuc Goodwin
tgoodwin@ntpcug.org



Ongoing Series – Learning C# 2010

This month, our topic will be Understanding Query Expression, by Tuc Goodwin.

The book we are using is Teach Yourself Visual C# 2010 in 24 hours by Scott Dorman, ISBN: 0672331012, SAMS Publishing.

Here is what we are doing the next five months:

David Stark 8/13/2011
Using Files and Streams

SharePoint – 11:30 am

Ram Yadav
ram_yadav@hotmail.com



No topic or presenter has been announced for this month.

3rd Saturday Special Presentation

9:30 - 11:00 AM

HP Storage... A solution for every need

HP has recently made a number of acquisitions within the Storage area to address the needs of customers from the desktop to the Cloud. This session will offer an overview of Storage Offerings which can fill these needs. Session will cover XP, 3PAR, EVA, Left Hand and MSA storage arrays along with X9000 scalable file storage solution.

3rd Saturday

All meetings at King of Glory Lutheran Church, 6411 LBJ Fwy in Dallas (between Preston & Hillcrest, north side of LBJ).

Alphabetically

Building Web Sites — 8:00 am



Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org

presented by Alan Lummus



In June, we set up an online presence by registering a domain, acquiring a hosting account, and installing a WordPress template on our new hosting for our website designed to sell a book stand.

In July, we'll install needed plug-ins for WordPress, including the ECWID shopping cart. We'll also configure ECWID for our product, setting shipping methods, tax charges, payment methods, etc. We'll create appropriate pages for our WP site and tweak the WP theme to more closely suit our purposes.

To get all this done and answer all your questions along the way, we'll have a full three hours, since we'll combine our 8 and 9 am SIGs, plus take advantage of the extra hour from 10-11 made available by the EXPRESSION WEB SIG taking the month off. So remember, come early and stay late in July, as we'll start at 8 am and continue until 11 am.

Digital Photography — 10:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org



Most manufacturers revise their marketing and product every three months. This does not mean that there are many new innovations to buy, but this quick turnaround does makes it difficult for us to recommend a new product every month.

What we will do when promising gadgetry is offered is to open up discussions on the merit of the new product. When it seems as lasting

– we will look at this for pleasure and profit.

When new products are of interest, please bring up the subject during our open discussions. We'll give our opinions and we welcome yours.

We have three new levels of performing cameras:

- Compact digicam – This is a camera designed to be small and easily carried. However, it can usually be replaced by any one of the new cell phone with advanced photo and video capabilities.

- Single lens reflex (dSLR) – This is the highly versatile camera that is most desired by high-end amateurs and professionals. If we were to have two or more cameras, one of these would surely be a digital SLR to allow us to buy into the basic model and expand lenses and ancillary items as our budget allows.

- A new breed of compact digital camera is making its mark in an attempt to perform well, while becoming smaller and lighter. In order to accomplish this, there has to be compromises, meaning leaving some desirable features out. (Sorry about that.)

One goal of this new breed is to attempt to keep as many SLR features as possible in this size (and reduced cost) models. The other attempt is to manufacture models with fixed (non-removable) lenses while expanding the zoom range for focusing to wider limits. This may sound great, but when we push components beyond their limitations, we will not receive SLR quality.

Come join us in July and enjoy learning about new features, photography techniques, and ancillary items to help make your photography more pleasurable, cost-effective, and impress your friends and clients.

Would you care to be a SIG leader? Perhaps an assistant? Let's talk!

Digital Photo Editing Software — 11:00 am

Spike Smith, NCE
harold.smith@ntpcug.org



We basically have two types of editing software typically mentioned in our discussions. Those programs developed for professionals and the other is those programs developed to market products and ancillary equipment.

We might define our SIG members as “professional” if they are selling their images for a profit. The rest of us are here to enjoy learning and practicing photography techniques.

We could spend time providing step-by-step use of complex image editing using expensive software. However, this would not be practical for our limited time frame meetings. We did have a Photoshop SIG at NTPCUG that is dormant at present, but may be restarted when we find a SIG Leader and enough participants desiring this service.

What we do in our present Photo Editing Software SIG is use and exploit basic editing operations as they can be used with free or low-cost image editors up through high-end programs such as Adobe Photoshop.

We all can benefit with new uses for:

- Layers, masks
- Effects, filters
- Cropping, re-sizing
- Quick fixes
- Retouching
- Collages, story books, posters
- Vectors, curves.

A lot of the above functions or elements occur automatically in free editors without asking what tasks are being performed. Whether we are beginners, advanced, or commercial users, we strive to have a little bit for everyone.

Join us at our third Saturday meeting at 11:00 am. Participate, learn, share, socialize and enjoy yourselves.

How would you like to participate? Being a member would fine, but being a SIG leader or assistant would help us out.

Internet — 11:00 am

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org



Cloud Computing and Cloud Services

Using “the cloud” as a secure and safe place to store data appeals to many people, but service disruptions and data loss are still possible. In this session we’ll look at the most popular cloud services to see which have the best service record, reasonable storage costs, and are easy to use.

Investors - 1:30 pm

Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org



In July we will have our usual Q&A session. Drop by and tell us about your latest investing success stories.

IT Professional — 9:30 am - 11:00 am

Larry Copeland, Co-SIG leader
Mark Phelps, Co-SIG leader

See **Special Presentation details on Page 2.**

Linux Installation Project – 9:00 am

The Linux Install Project helps users with their Linux install or configuration problems. Bring your machine and we will help you get it running.

Making Money on the Internet — 9:00 am



Bill Parker, SIG Leader
bill.parker@ntpcug.org
presented by Alan Lummus



In June, we set up an online presence by registering a domain, acquiring a hosting account, and installing a WordPress template on our new hosting for our website designed to sell a book stand.

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Microsoft Access SIG — 11:00 am



Larry Linson
larry.linson2@ntpcug.org



Jim Wehe
jimwehe@gmail.com

On July 16, 2011, SIG Co-Leader **Larry Linson** will discuss an Access database application that can be used to “keep a library” of pictures (or notes), allowing the files to be “cataloged” but stored outside the database (so as not to run into Access’ size limits), searched by title or by characteristics that you choose to record, displayed (viewed or edited) by the software that you have registered with Windows for that file type, and listed in reports organized to your liking.

Larry’s demonstrations will use pictures and files that he stores in connection with his hobby of making beaded and wire-work jewelry, so you’ll get a peek into his “non-computer” side.

In June 2011, on “Third postponed to Fourth” Saturday, Jim Wehe had to fight another battle with the projector in LL16 but covered several topics of interest, including a survey of which version of Access attendees were using. Results were a bit of a surprise:

- Access 2010 - 5
- Access 2007 - 4
- Access 2003 - 2

Coming attractions: We solicit your suggestions for topics.

***VBA:** When, where, and how to use it

We need to know what topics you’d like to hear, see, and learn. Come to the meetings and let’s discuss them. Write some suggestions, add your contact information so we can explore details if what you want isn’t clear to us, and give them to Jim or Larry give them to **Jim** or **Larry**.

A continuing call for presenters: We want

you to show us an **Microsoft Access** database you created and use, a tutorial on an Access-related topic, other Access- or Office-related material, or to contact a friend of yours who'd be a good guest speaker. If you need help constructing the presentation, see **Jim** or **Larry** – we're not from the government, but we're here to help.

Valuable prizes: We expect to resume drawing for valuable prizes at our meetings beginning in July. As is our tradition, the prize(s) will be topic-related.

Microsoft Certification SIG - 1:30 pm

Tom Perkins
tomperki@gmail.com

CertSIG will NOT meet in July, but will continue at the August meeting with our exploration of Entity Framework and points West.

Questions or comments?

Contact Tom Perkins (tomperki@gmail.com) or Chris Morgan (chris.morgan@ntpcug.org)

Microsoft Excel – 8:00 am

Frank Tubbs, SIG leader
ftubbs@sbcglobal.net

Topic to be determined.

Microsoft Expression Web — 10:00 am

Chris Morgan
chris.morgan@ntpcug.org



No meeting for Expression Web in July, but in August we start a 4-part series on **HTML & CSS Basics**.



PowerShell – 9:00 am

Larry Weiss
lfw@airmail.net



Gil Brand
gbrand@ntpcug.org

The PowerShell class continues using examples from Chapter 8 “Formatting” from the book “Learn Windows PowerShell in a Month of Lunches” by Don Jones continues, followed by a Q&A session. <https://sites.google.com/site/powershellsig>.

Windows Inside Out — 12:30 pm

Glynn Brooks
glynn.brooks@ntpcug.org



Installing a Solid State Disk (SSD) in your laptop

Now that the second generation SSDs are starting to drop in price, maybe it's time we see if the speed gain, durability, and low-power consumption are enough to justify the price. I will demonstrate the hardware, talk about what it took to do the upgrade, and let you know a few of the tricks that are necessary to get top performance from an SSD

Windows Tips & Tricks — 8:00 - 9:30 am

Gil Brand
gb1@ntpcug.org



Chuck Stark
chuck.stark@ntpcug.org



What is UEFI and why do I care?

Hank Williams will tell us about his new system (Asus P8P67 MB, Intel Core i7-2600K Quad core CPU @ 3.4GHz, 8GB DDR3 12800, Sapphire Vapor-x HD5770 1G DDR5 PCI-e video) and the issues he had with creating an image backup and testing restoration of that image. If you are planning to build (or buy) a new system, this is a must-see event!

Wireless Communications — 11:00 am

Birl Smith
birl.smith@ntpcug.org



We will discuss the risks of using and/or providing free Wifi.

Word — 9:00 - 11:00 am

Sharon Dorsey
Sharon.Dorsey@ntpcug.org



In June, we talked about functions in the Mailings tab. We started with printing one envelope, one label and one page of labels. Then we discussed mail merge of multiple addresses into a letter. Since we had in-depth conversation about several of the steps, we did not quite finish. Therefore, in July we will continue our session with learning more ins and outs of merging data into letters, labels, envelopes, directories or Outlook emails.

Tips and Tricks - Digital Photography

by Spike Smith

Secrets for making great pictures.

Well, the secret may be inside you – the taker of images who also edits them into perfection.

Yes, but where do we start? If you say ‘secret’ then how should I know? The facts are: we unravel new secrets every day. We set out to accomplish a task and an idea strikes us to create something new or work around prior methodology making it better.

Can we define great pictures as having:

- sharp details
- skillfully focused
- colorization
- a favorite location.

We may set out to photograph a piece of scenery and then try for good contrast, balanced color, include objects of attention and believe everything is just right. Yes, but...

- does anyone see these works as a masterpiece
- is there something different about your photo
- or is it a clone?

If our photos are of something fantastic, then many others have already taken this shot with those same careful parameters you have just used. Will yours be just like everyone’s attempt at perfection? You may now have an ‘Me Too’ to add to your collection. To bring these out of this category, we all must do something a bit clever to make the image unique and attract admirable attention.

We can have similar situations arise with our willing subjects being dressed well, properly groomed; being in the mood to pose, and with proper lighting available. Yes all of the ingredients for textbook photography are at your fingertips. When you follow all of the instructions available you will end up with a picture that looks just like Aunt Agnes or Uncle Harry. In fact, you will likely have some of the most suitable passport photos of your subject that were ever made. Was that your intent?

If you relax for a moment, can you visualize something cute, attractive, inventive, something to make the subject stand out enough to be different but not distract from their natural beauty and charm. Consider adding uncle’s fedora or auntie’s straw hat or perhaps a Texas belt buckle. Visualize a different use of existing lighting to bring out objects. Do not follow the rigid passport photo rules so that we may turn the subject, not place in center of frame, and place emphasis on those dimples, beautiful eyes, soft blown hair, and perhaps an object of affection. As you are busy selecting ways to show off your subject; do not make the mistake that this is for you. You are taking a picture for either your subject’s approval or other person’s approval. You will be capturing what is best for the viewer or end user.

Take idea notes.

When you come across ideas that will make certain image captures and their edits stand out, write them down. Develop these notes at your leisure and work over the details for making the ideas pan out. Make images a visual standout but please don’t let those viewing your handiwork

say, 'Your camera takes good pictures.' Let them know that it is you that converts the good images into the great ones.

Your goals to personal success are to develop your images with the end result being unique to you and methods you have developed. Feel proud when several others can see your unique handiwork and loudly speak your name saying, 'That's your photography.'

Getting there.

As you are working on your special techniques, keep up the practice, practice, practice on basic details. A clue to remember when posing your subject – never say, "Gosh that look is bad!" You will not get his/her cooperation after saying a truism like this. Instead, try this, "Hmm, this is going to be even better if you move your chin up and over a bit." You just can't let them believe you think they have lousy chins, noses, and the likes. Get their cooperation with their needed help.

Incidentally, the greatest passport picture I ever received was taken by a photographer who snapped me sometime while I was entering his shop. When I asked him if he would take my passport photo he said, "I already have. When I saw you in a particular way I took it because that look was you." He was right. Clever. I never failed recommending this fellow for photographing people well beyond just the passport level.

NTPCUG Member Websites

Are you an NTPCUG member? Do you have a website that you would like to share with other members? Here is your opportunity to publicize your hobby, personal interests or perhaps a business.

NTPCUG now permits each member to post their name along with one website at www.NTPCUG.org and in our newsletter. Member links to be posted are subject to Board approval, and cannot contain inappropriate content or promote illegal activities – all the usual conditions that responsible persons expect. Send us your links now!

Here are our current member sites:

Member Website	Member Website
Howard Lee Harkness www.choicetraveltx.com	Bob Hawkins www.fairviewmicrowave.com
Bill Parker www.Partec.net	Doug Gorrie www.JanetGorrieInteriors.com

If you wish to post as shown above, just e-mail webmaster@ntpcug.org with your name, member number and the URL of your desired website. We'll post your name and URL on our website and in the newsletter for as long as your membership remains current.

News from the Northwest

By Teresa Hennig

News from the Northwest

By Teresa Hennig

Microsoft MVP for Access, President of the Seattle Access Group and Pacific Northwest Access Developers, INETA Community Champion, and member of the North Texas PC User Group since 2008.

Downloads, Updates and Other Good Stuff

NSIS - Open Source System to Create Windows Installers

At the May meeting, we discussed some options for creating Windows installers that can smoothly deploy Access solutions. NSIS was among the systems that some members have used and recommended. Thanks to David F for sending the link http://nsis.sourceforge.net/Main_Page

Windows Thin PC (WinTPC) -- Repurpose your old PC and stream maintenance (June 2011)

You and your clients may benefit from using the new WinTPC to save time and resources. See if the locked down version of Windows 7 fits with your plans. www.microsoft.com/windows/enterprise/solutions/virtualization/products/thinpc.aspx

Back up and Recovery.. Win IT Pro White Paper (June 2011)

This article is an excellent follow-up to discussions a recent meeting about online backup services. Download the paper on how to select a provider for online backups. www.windowssitpro.com/whitepaper/windows-7/migrating-to-windows-7-how-to-select-a-provider-for-pc-online-backup-and-recovery-135628?code=EPDedIronMountainNov10WP01_061511

On the topic of Online folders -- The Tech Republic Article -- Dropbox -- Convenient ---but is it Secure? (June 2011)

www.techrepublic.com/blog/security/dropbox-convenient-absolutely-but-is-it-secure/5618?tag=nl.e101

Tech-ED 2011 -- Content and Labs for online viewing and download (June 2011)

Just because you missed Tech Ed doesn't mean that you have to miss out on the content and training opportunities. You can register online (you aren't really registering for 2012 -- it just looks that way). After you set up a Tech Ed account, you can navigate the links to find Post Session Content -- or search for Content Catalog. This gives you and then have access to hundreds of session videos (903 --- really??), downloads, 108 hands-on-labs, webcasts and more. And, if you really just want to check out the resources, you don't have to "Join the Community." Maybe you'll be lucky and this link will get you there directly. <http://northamerica.msteched.com/contentcatalog#fbid=LvABfvtoM1L>

Access Tip - Streamline Reporting on Recurring Data Imports (May 2011)

Leading the way with scenario based articles, Mike Stowe walks you through creating an Access database to import and analyze data from a text file, complete with sample database. Visit the Microsoft Access Blog for this new article on how to make data easier

Link to article on the Microsoft Office Blog - <http://blogs.office.com/b/microsoft-access/archive/2011/04/26/streamline-reporting-on-recurring-data-imports.aspx>

Link to the article: <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/access-help/streamline-reporting-on-shared-business-data-by-using-queries-and-macros-HA102571244.aspx>

PLEASE - use the blog post to share thoughts about the article and your preferences about scenario based articles -- as compared to feature based. --- For those who are hesitant to make public comments, you may send your feedback in an email to accesshelp@microsoft.com

Microsoft Access Small Business Solutions, by Teresa Hennig and an MVP team. - Free Chapter Download (May 2011)

A team of 11 Access MVPs share their expertise and experiences to help you design table structures that will support your current and anticipated needs. It start with the fundamentals of good table structure, and then delves into specific issues and options of different business functions, from contact management, to manufacturing and accounting. You'll see a variety of techniques for determining requirements, interviewing users, and storing data. For a limited time, you can download Chapter 4, People, Organizations, Addresses from www.SeattleAccess.org

Access 2010 Programmer's Reference, by Teresa Hennig, et al. - Free Chapter Download (May 2011)

This chapter will help you to VBA to expand and leverage the features that Access provides. You'll learn about events, procedures, expressions, and recordsets You'll also see how to use VBA behind forms and reports as well as working with variables and error handling. The book contains 25 chapters and 9 appendixes. Visit www.SeattleAccess.org to download **Chapter 7, Using VBA in Access**. Then ... let me know what you think!

Rick Fisher's Find and Replace (May 2011)

Rick's tool will search through the design elements, such as the table and field names and modules (not the data). It can change the names of objects throughout the entire database. Version 9.0 works with Access versions from 2000 through 2010. For more details and the download, visit <http://rickworld.com>

Doug Steele's Web Site (May 2011)

Access MVP and author of "Access Solutions" shares tips and links to other resources at www.accessmvp.com/djsteele/AccessIndex.html

Optimize Access when using ODBC data source (May 2011)

Access MVP George Hepworth referred to this article in his April 2011 presentation to Seattle Access Group and Pacific Northwest Access Developers Group on "DNS-Less data connections". Read KB286222 at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/286222>

Microsoft Office 365 Beta - sign up today (May 2011)

Join the Office 365 Beta and start getting familiar with the next-generation of communication and collaboration that leverages email, calendar, Office Web Apps, online collaboration, IM and online meetings.

Learn more and sign up at www.microsoft.com/en-us/office365/small-business/beta.aspx

Designing and Deploying SQL Server on VMWare - on demand seminar by Windows ITPro (May 2011)

Learn about the design considerations for vitalizing SQL Server. The discussion will cover workloads, performance, scalability, high-availability and support. The seminar is provided as a free download so that you can watch the seminar when it fits with your schedule.

www.windowsitpro.com/utility/virtualization2/apps-quickstart-series-part-2-designing-and-deploying-sql-server-on-vmware-vsphere-135755?code=EPDedVMwareAppsMar11WS05051211

The Essential Guide to Virtualizing Desktops and Applications by Windows ITPro (May 2011)

With the features and mobility expectations for today's programs, it can be beneficial to have a basic understanding of the key factors and options associated with virtual desktops and applications. For those of you wanting to learn more, Windows IT pro has offered a guide for download.

www.windowsitpro.com/guide/virtualization2/the-essential-guide-to-virtualizing-desktops-and-applications-135780?code=EPDedQuestApr11EG01051311

Hosted or On-Premises Archiving - OnDemand Presentation by Windows ITPro (May 2011)

With the convenience and affordability of external drives, it might seem that local backups are the easy answer. This presentation will cover several key factors that you should consider when determining what back-up option might be better for a given situation.

<https://www.vconferenceonline.com/event/regeventweb.aspx?id=185&CID=EPDedIronMountainMar11WS01050311>

Virtual Environments - 7 Essential Backup Capabilities OnDemand Presentation by Windows ITPro (May 2011)

Going virtual is just part of the process; just like the real world, you still need to manage backups. This seminar discusses considerations and approaches so that you can fast and efficient backups for your virtual systems.

https://www.vconferenceonline.com/event/regeventweb.aspx?id=134&CID=AppAssureDec10WS01_P2M2

Clonezilla - Image Your Drives for Free -- (Tech Republic article and instructions for using Clonezilla) (April 2011)

Disc imaging is a valuable resource for disaster recovery, but it can also be used for maintaining and upgrading systems. Clonezilla is a free download that allows you to clone the image of a machine and use it to restore the image to a single machine or multiple machines. In this Tech Republic article, Jack Wallen provides the background and walks you through the process. www.techrepublic.com/blog/doityourself-it-guy/diy-image-your-drives-for-free-with-clonezilla/179?tag=nl.e056

Ready for IE 9? (April 2011)

Streamlined for better user control and customization and for high speed performance. An excellent fit with Windows 7. Learn more and get the download at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/internet-explorer/products/ie/home>

Choosing between Windows Azure Table Storage and Windows SQL Azure - Intertech paper (Jan 2011)

If you are looking at options for moving data to the cloud, you may benefit from Jim White's (Intertech) article that discusses some of the basic features and differences of the two platforms. <http://www.intertech.com/Blog/post/Windows-Azure-Table-Storage-vs-Windows-SQL-Azure.aspx>

RESOURCE TIPS:

Doug Steele's Web Site (May 2011)

Access MVP and author of "Access Solutions" shares tips and links to other resources at www.accessmvp.com/djsteele/AccessIndex.html Access Blog – by the Access Team --- one of the top blogs on MSDN!!!

Stay tuned to the community ... The team shares insights into their schedule, their favorite features, new features and how to use them. This is also an ideal avenue for the team to talk about issues that are of interest to the Access community. You'll learn about the people and some of the factors that are helping to shape the future of Access. Whether you're a seasoned developer or just learning about Access, you'll find invaluable information and techniques. From creating a database template to getting help when you need it, The Access Blog covers the gamut. <http://blogs.msdn.com/access/default.aspx>

Access 2003 Solution Center

Find the materials and answers that you need for Access 2003. Downloads, articles, tutorials and other reference materials are conveniently listed in an easy to search fashion. Check out <http://support.microsoft.com/?scid=ph;en-us;2509>

Other Good Access and Office Resources

A couple of good sites to search for information and programming assistance are <http://www.mvps.org/access> and the Office Developer Center on MSDN at <http://msdn.microsoft.com/en-us/office>.

And, we've been mentioning the newsgroups. You can search and drill through thousands of threads. Check out <http://www.microsoft.com/office/community/en-us/FlyoutOverview.mspix> for a comprehensive display topics. You may also find what you are looking for by using <http://groups.google.com> or try <http://www.google.com/microsoft.html> for Microsoft related pages or by setting multiple search criteria at http://www.google.com/advanced_search?hl=en.

Utter Access Discussion Forum

Touted as the number one Access community forum! This may be a great place to get answers to your questions. And, you'll see several familiar names as some of our members are prolific posters. Hey, there are even photos from the MVP Summit, so check it out! <http://www.utteraccess.com/forums/index.php>

A compilation of links to Access Resources

This site provides an impressive array of links to a variety of resources for Access developers and users. http://www.cbel.com/ms_access/

DYNAMIC LINK LIBRARY ARTICLE by Mark Liron, MVP

Learning more about DLL's is in ongoing theme, so you might want to bookmark or download this page. <http://www.updatexp.com/dynamic-link-library.html>

Access Developer Portal MSDN

Database samples and tutorials provided by Access MVP and other experts.

<http://msdn2.microsoft.com/en-us/office/aa905400.aspx>

Database Issue Checker

Access MVP, Allen Browne offer tips and utilities for casual users through expert developers. The Issue Checker can be used during development or to trouble shoot legacy files. Allen's site provides a host of other tips and resources, including a compilation of reserved words. <http://allenbrowne.com/> or <http://allenbrowne.com/AppIssueChecker.html>.

This Month in Our History

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

Summer is certainly here and the air conditioner is working overtime. So, in the cool air of home or office, let's take a look at the July editions of *PC News* from 1986 and 1991. Again, a reminder that the full issues of past newsletters are available on our website.

The 1986 issue began with the final installment of **Fred Williams'** series *Introduction to RS-232*. Here, he covered null modems and several kinds of serial printer and plotter cable designs.

Also, there were three special presentations in the auditorium at the InfoMart. Microsoft had a presentation on their Quick Basic Compiler and MS-DOS C compiler. **Chris Morgan**, President of Morgan Computing (yup, the same guy who is a current Director and also past president of NTPCUG) gave a presentation on Disk Toolkit, a floppy and hard disk utility with more power than Norton's Utilities. A special discount was available to members.

Following Chris, two executives of Westlake Data presented PathMinder, a shell/ disk manager that had been well reviewed in the press. Finally, a representative of Great American Software Products spoke about their company's entry into the DOS shell market. Door prizes were available to members.

SIG News included reports on Advanced Programming, APL Language, Artificial Intelligence, Assembler, Basic, Business Applications, C Language, Communications, DOS, Genealogy, Graphics, Lotus, N-Squared Analysis, Science/Engineering, Turbo Pascal and UNIX SIGs. This lineup clearly shows that the bulk of our membership at the time was made up of IT professionals and would-be professionals.

In July 1991, there were three special presentations. Microrim Corporation representatives presented Personal R:BASE, a data management software program for the PC. There was a drawing for free product. Then a representative of Lotus Development presented Ami Pro Release 2.0, a Windows word processor which had won several industry awards. Again, there was a drawing for free products. Finally, Lotus Development presented Lotus 1-2-3 for Windows.

Then President **Jim Hoisington** wrote in *Prez Sez* that newsletter printing and mailing cost us \$15.50 per member per year – a substantial portion of the membership dues. Fortunately, at the time, advertising revenues helped to offset this cost. It was printing costs that forced us to discontinue mailing of the *PC News*. Jim also encouraged members to pick up their new or renewal membership cards at the Info Desk. This advice is also good today.

Reagan Andrews had another of his *The Variety Store* columns in which he speculated on the effects on humans of the then-new wireless networks which were beginning to be implemented in office environments. You will recall that Reagan was not the only one to have concerns over the effects of RF energy on humans. To a degree this continues today with the controversy over cell phone radiation causing tumors and reducing fertility.

Whenever I fill out an application, in the part that says, 'In case of emergency, notify:' I put 'DOCTOR.'

More Change, It's a-Comin'

by Chuck Fiedler
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org

The Nobel Prize in Physics for 2010 was awarded to **Andre Geim** and **Konstantin Novoselov** at the University of Manchester for groundbreaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material called grapheme. Graphene is an atomic-scale honeycomb lattice made of carbon atoms, a form of carbon, whose structure is one-atom-thick two-dimensional sheets of carbon atoms densely packed in a honeycomb crystal lattice.

The term graphene is a combination of graphite and the suffix –ene and the name was coined by Hanns-Peter Boehm when describing single-layer carbon foils in 1962. Graphene is most easily visualized as a one-atom thick chicken wire made of pure carbon atoms and their bonds. The crystalline or "flake" form of graphite consists of many graphene sheets stacked together.

By now you're certainly thinking, "Gee, Chuck, that's interesting and all, but why should I care?" Well, friends, graphene is about to transform our electronic lives. Graphene has been called "the new silicon."

Researchers at IBM recently announced that they have built the first graphene integrated circuit. The chip is as thin as humanly possible – one atom thick. And yet it is powerful enough to make mobile phones work in places they can't now and make almost any electronic device run faster. IBM has created a 150 gigahertz (GHz) transistor, while the quickest comparable silicon device only runs at about 40 GHz. Any device with graphene-based components would also run with less electricity, resulting in longer life for battery-powered devices and less heat buildup when operating.

"As a material, it is completely new," declared the Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences upon bestowing the prize. "As a conductor of electricity, it performs as well as copper. As a conductor of heat, it outperforms all other known materials.

"It is almost completely transparent, yet so dense that not even helium, the smallest gas atom, can pass through it. According to the New York Times, "It is not only the thinnest material in the world but also the strongest -- a sheet of it stretched over a coffee cup could support the weight of a truck bearing down on a pencil point."

So it will have uses other than electronics, but those are beyond the scope of this article.

Graphene is extremely flexible, meaning that materials could be ultra-thin and could be manipulated at will. Imagine a phone that can be rolled up and put behind your ear like a pencil, such that the size restrictions of today don't apply.

We're not just talking about mobile phones either, we're talking about the technology in its vastness. Once the technology exists, your TV could – in theory – just be unrolled and pasted to your living room wall, like a roll of wallpaper.

In 2008, researchers created a one-nanometer graphene transistor, only one atom thick and 10 atoms across. This is not only smaller than the smallest possible silicon transistor; it could very well represent the absolute physical limit of Moore's Law governing the shrinking size and growing speed of computer processors.

A Rice University team in 2008 created a new type of graphene-based, flash-like storage memory, more dense and less lossy than any existing storage technology. And there's no

moving parts.

The energy applications of graphene are also extraordinarily rich.

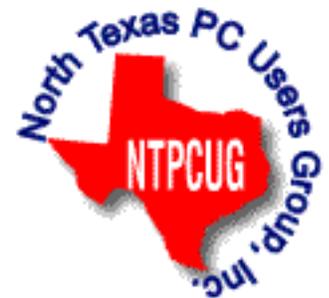
Texas' Graphene Energy is using the film to create new ultracapacitors to store and transmit electrical power. Companies currently using carbon nanotubes to create wearable electronics — clothes that can power and charge electrical devices— are beginning to switch to graphene, which is thinner and potentially less expensive to produce. Much of the emerging research is devoted to devising more ways to produce graphene quickly, cheaply and in high quantities.

So imagine smaller, more flexible mobile and desktop devices operating at greater speed, producing less heat, and having battery power that potentially could span several days of operation on a single charge!

So I hope you'll agree now that there is a reason to be aware of, if not even excited about, this dramatic new material.

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Install and customize a nice Ubuntu desktop

*by Ralph Green, Jr,
VP of ntlug.org*

Ubuntu is currently the most popular Linux distro. I hope to accomplish two things with this article. First, I will describe the install process the way I do it. This may help people who want to try Ubuntu and want to install it in a way that keeps their drives private. In the second part, I'll show you a number of ways I customize Ubuntu to make it safer and more pleasant to use.

Phase 1, install Ubuntu

To install Ubuntu, There are two main ways to install Ubuntu. Most people do it using a live CD, which boots up and runs without installing anything. This Live CD has an installer you can run to put Ubuntu on your hard disk.

There is also an alternate installer, which is taken from debian. It is a text based installer that does not come up as a Live CD, so lets you try Ubuntu without installing. The alternate installer gives you a desktop with the same user desktop, linux kernel and tools as the normal installer, but just uses a different process to install Ubuntu. I almost always use the alternate installer.

On a few computers, the regular live installer has trouble, and the alternate installer may work better for you. That is how I first discovered it. The alternate installer has more options than the live installer and I have come to appreciate some of those differences.

To get the alternate installer, open your web browser and go to: <http://www.ubuntu.com/start-download>. This takes you to a "random" web server where the CD images are available. The servers are not really random, but the load is distributed among servers by picking a random entry from Ubuntu's list of approved mirror sites. Choose the version number you want.

At the time I wrote this, the current version was 11.04. That choice will take you to a web page where you get the actual CD image, where I chose the file named `ubuntu-11.04-alternate-i386.iso`. That name tells you it is the alternate installer version 11.04 of Ubuntu for the i386 architecture.

As a side note, let me comment that the file name above is slightly misleading. Ubuntu follows the debian naming conventions for architectures, but chooses their own compiler settings. So while you typically think of the "i386" as signifying-a 32 bit Intel-compatible CPU, 11.04 actually requires 686 chips or higher.

I have installed Ubuntu versions 10.04 and earlier on 486 chips. But beginning with version 10.10, in order to get some extra speed, the Ubuntu project started compiling the system with options that required more recent, higher-powered CPUs. Even debian has since dropped support for 386 chips and now requires 486 CPUs or higher, yet they still call the architecture "i386".

On some installation steps below, I will provide some comments. Some steps are so obvious that there is not much I can really say. For instance, your system should be connected to the network when you start the install. True, it is possible to install without a network connection, but you don't get all the updates that way. We install on computers downtown at First Saturday with no network connection, so have experienced that restriction.

My install steps assume that the only operating system on the computer will be Linux. While I

often setup dual boot computers, I'm skipping that part here to simplify these instructions. But if you need dual boot, be very careful or you may wipe out your other operating system. Come to our 3rd Saturday Linux meeting and ask questions if you need more guidance there.

There is a security weakness in my setup that I am working to resolve, and while I do not believe this is a big problem, you should be aware of the vulnerability. The boot filesystem is unprotected, so someone could theoretically borrow your laptop and install a keylogger there. Later, they could borrow your machine again and see what that passphrase is.

To address this weakness, I plan to add monitoring of a few key files to detect whether they have changed from a known good state. But since I don't have that process where it is simple to explain, I will postpone that topic for a future article. This weakness is not one that most people would ever be concerned with, but you have to decide for yourself.

Below, I am going through the options that I use. I am not saying English is the only language to use or that any of my options are the only way. I am an English speaker living in the central United States and these options work well for me and members of my local computer user's group.

If you have never installed Linux before, I suggest following these instructions fairly closely. Try it a few times on an old machine and gain confidence in the process. Then, vary it to better suit your own needs.

Steps to install Ubuntu using the alternate installer

- 1) Ensure your computer is set to boot from the CD drive, then boot using the alternate installer CD.
- 2) Choose English. While this choice indicates the language the installer will use, it does not set the language the installed system will have.
- 3) Choose **Install**.
- 4) Choose the language to be used for the installation process, in this case English. This will determine the language to use for the installed system.
- 5) **Select your location** (Choose United States).
- 6) **Configure the keyboard**. Choosing No will allow you to manually set the keyboard layout. If you want to experiment, try Yes, but it will take you more time.
- 7) **Configure the keyboard**. Choosing USA will indicate the language layout of your keyboard.
- 8) **Configure the keyboard**. Choosing USA indicates the key arrangement of your keyboard.
- 9) **Please enter the hostname for this system**. Type the name you want for this computer. The default is ubuntu, but how many machines out there already have that name. Name it after your favorite vacation spot, or dog breed or something. I have a bunch of machines running Ubuntu, and I have to give them unique names to tell them apart on the network.
- 10) Configure the clock by choosing Yes. If you have a network connection, the installer tries to figure out what time zone you were in, and it is usually right. But if you don't have a network connection, you will have to set the time zone manually.
- 11) **Partition disks**. Choosing Manual says you are going to assign drive partitions your-

self and not use the system defaults. This option is the primary reason we want to use the alternate installer.

12) Now, let me explain the philosophy of how I setup the disk drive. I am making this a little simpler than I normally use, but this is a pretty good working setup.

I will create three partitions. The first will be small and only contain the files needed to start the system booting. The second will contain an encrypted swap file. The third will contain an encrypted filesystem with most of our files. So if anyone gets your computer, they can only see a few files, unless you give them the passphrase. Those few files are in the /boot directory and don't include any of your personal data.

The encryption is good enough that I don't think that even the government could read the disk at this moment. But, they might hold onto it and find a way to read it in the future.

a) Scroll down to the hard disk and press enter. You will be asked if you want to create an empty partition table and you should choose Yes.

b) Scroll down to the free space and press enter. Select "Create a new partition", then type in the size of the boot partition. Make it small since not much goes there, but if you make it too small, you will have problems updating your operating system in the future. I usually make it .3 GB to .5 GB.

Make it a Primary partition, and locate it at the Beginning of the disk. The Use As field sets the type of filesystem we want -- make it an EXT2 filesystem since we don't need journaling for the boot partition, which is what EXT3 or EXT4 would add. A FAT filesystem would also be bad because of the way it treats upper and lower case letters in filenames.

Change the Mount point to /boot. Set the Bootable flag to on. Select Done setting up the partition.

c) Now, scroll down to the free space and press enter. Select "Create a new partition" and type in the size of the swap partition. Make it big enough -- usually .5 GB to 2 GB depending on how large my disk drive is and how much real memory I have.

Again, make it a Primary partition, and locate it at the Beginning of the free space.

For Use As, select "physical volume for encryption" and choose "Random key" for encryption key. This means a new random key will be generated every time your system boots up and the swap file will be encrypted with it. Since we don't need to preserve the data in the swap partition between boots, this will work fine and means that no one can get data from your swap area by reading the disk. Select Done setting up the partition.

In versions of Ubuntu before 11.04, I used to stop and configure this encrypted swap volume now. The 11.04 installer has a bug and if you try, you won't be able to encrypt the root partition.

d) Now, scroll down to the free space and press Enter. Select "Create a new partition", and type in the size of what will become your root partition. Unless you have a good reason not to, give it the rest of your disk. Make it a Primary partition, and locate it at the Beginning of the free space.

For Use As, select "physical volume for encryption", and choose "Passphrase" for encryption key. We need to always be able to read and write this partition, so choose a good passphrase and remember it or write it down (just not on the computer). If you chose a decent

passphrase and then forget this passphrase, don't expect to ever recover the data on this hard drive. Someday, breaking this encryption may be possible, but, it won't be any time soon.

Select Done, setting up the partition. Scroll up to "Configure encrypted volumes" and press Enter. If asked if you want to write volumes to disk, choose Yes.

e) Choose "Create encrypted volumes" and look at the list that comes up. You should see two entries that say crypto. Scroll down to each of these and press the space bar to toggle them as active. You can't see it, but that did a basic setup for the encrypted partitions.

Now, choose Finish in the Actions dialog that comes back up. You will be asked to enter your passphrase twice. If you look at the partitions defined now, you should see an encrypted swap partition and an encrypted partition with ext4. We are almost done with the partitioning.

If I was not picky about filesystems, we could finish this step by just setting the mount point.

f) Scroll down to the ext4 filesystem and press enter. For Use As, select a good journaling filesystem like jfs or xfs. I am using btrfs in testing and it works well so far, although btrfs disk writes may be a bit slow, but I am still testing.

Reiser has some nice characteristics, but is considered slightly unstable by some. EXT3 and EXT4 are hacks such that I rarely use them. Select Mount Point and choose "/ - the root file system". Select Done setting up the partition.

g) Scroll down to Finish Partitioning and press Enter. You will be asked if you should write the changes to disk. If you were careful, the list will look good and you should choose Yes.

13) The installer will now proceed with the basic installation. That means it is putting a few basic files on the hard disk so that it has enough to finish the installation.

This will take a few minutes, so go get a Dr. Pepper. The ones from Dublin, Texas are much preferred by those with discerning palettes. <g>

14) **Full name for the new user.** Here, we setup the main user account to be used on the system by entering their first and last name. The first name will be converted to all lower case and suggested as the user name for the account. That is usually a good choice, but maybe you have two Daryls; if so, you might want to make it daryl1 or something similar.

Pick a good password. Because we have a nice encrypted filesystem, we are not as worried about someone physically getting into your files. But, when your system is running, you may expose services where a remote user can try to get into your computer. A decent password will slow them down, so pick a good one.

We encrypted the entire root filesystem, so you can probably choose No when asked about encrypting your home directory.

Some people are behind firewalls that limit the places they can visit on the web. If you are in such a place, you may have an http proxy address you need to enter. Most people can just leave that field blank and press Enter when asked about the http proxy.

15) Now, you can let the system install - the step with the longest wait time (20 minutes to several hours). The length of time depends on how fast your system is and how fast the network is. If you have a network connection, the installer goes out and gets some newer

packages, if any have been released since the CD was made.

16) If you did as I did and used the entire hard disk for Ubuntu, you will see a message asking if you want to install grub to the master boot record. On a few embedded computers with unusual BIOS setups, I have had to install grub to a partition. But, generally, the correct answer here is Yes.

17) You will be asked if your system clock uses UTC. Most people should just answer Yes.

UTC is the same as GMT, except the French approved it. They prefer UTC because they could not stand having to say the name of an English town.

If you want to understand more about setting the time, read the rest of this paragraph. Most people do not live in the same time zone as Greenwich, England, so their time is offset from GMT by a number of hours. In Dallas, that offset is 5 or 6 hours, depending on the time of year and the whims of Congress. The clock on your computer can store the time either as it is in Greenwich, England (GMT/UTC) or the time in your time zone (Central Standard/Daylight Time). Configuration files then tell the system which time zone you are in and which value to store.

The convention on UNIX and Linux is to store the time and date as Greenwich Mean Time, but Linux can handle it either way. Until Vista, Windows required the system time to be the local time, so users of dual boot systems found it convenient to use that.

18) The installation is now complete. Choose Continue to boot into your new system. When your computer is just a little ways into the boot process, you will be prompted for your passphrase. Enter it correctly and the system will boot up. This is the encryption passphrase we used to create the root filesystem above.

The conventional password is an access control device and either lets you in, or not. If you are only using access control, someone can take the hard drive out of your computer, mount it on another computer and read the data on it without having to log in. Or, they can boot the computer with the right CD and copy your files over the network. Technicians do that all the time and they don't need your password.

The encryption passphrase we use is required to decrypt the contents of the disk. Without the encryption passphrase, the disk drive just looks like it is filled with noise. But not everyone should use this kind of encryption. For instance, if your grandmother is forgetful, don't setup her system this way. It will confuse her, and she will forget the passphrase. (I am not attacking grandmothers; I am just speaking with experience about my own dear grandmother).

Phase 2, customize Ubuntu

Ubuntu is pretty nice out of the box, but there are a number of ways to improve it. Here are some things I do to a new machine after I install Ubuntu. I don't think everyone will make all of these changes, but I really make them to every machine I setup. Even if you don't do them all, knowing where some of these options are set can be handy.

Ubuntu uses Gnome by default. Even version 11.04 of Ubuntu is based on Gnome, although it uses a different program called Unity to manage running programs on the screen. While I encourage users to try Unity, I don't think it is ready for daily use yet.

After installing and rebooting, you get to the login screen. When you select the user, look down at the bottom of the screen and observe the place to select your desktop. Click on it and

choose “Ubuntu Classic”. Or, if you will be accessing this computer with VNC, choose “Ubuntu Classic (No effects)”. Then go back and enter your password and login.

The changes in this article are for Gnome users, and many of the changes below also improve systems using Unity. Although I’d like to do a similar article for KDE users under Kubuntu users, I need to figure out a few more things first. Maybe someone else will write that article first (hint hint).

Here are my suggested changes:

1. Apply all available updates. I usually use Synaptic. Press the “Reload” button so your computer will know the latest versions of all software installed. Then, press “Mark All Upgrades” to indicate that you want all upgrades installed. Then, press “Apply” and “Apply” on the dialog that pops up. A reboot is often required at this point, because of things like a new kernel version coming in.

2. Fix three bad default Gnome settings. Go to System/Preferences/Main Menu. Select System Tools in the left panel and then put a checkmark beside Configuration Editor in the right panel. Now, press the “Close” button at the bottom of the program. This put the Gnome configuration editor into our menus. Now go to Applications/System Tools/Configuration editor. If you are running Unity, and don’t have those menu choices, just open a terminal prompt and type `gconf-editor` and enter. We are going to adjust 3 settings. Click the down arrow beside apps.

- a) This first change moves the buttons at the top of programs back to the top right side.

Scroll down and click the down arrow beside metacity. Select general under metacity and then look to the right panel. Select the text to the right of `button_layout` and change it to `“:minimize,maximize,close”`. Don’t put the quote marks in.

- b) Nautilus is the file browser used in Gnome. As you maneuver through your disk, you can have a field near the top of Nautilus that shows the directory you are in. You can cut and paste from this field, if you enable it. This change will give you that option. Now, go back to the left panel and press the arrow beside nautilus. Select preferences under nautilus and put a check mark beside `“always_use_location_entry”` in the right panel.

- c) Ubuntu checks to see if updates are available and will tell you when they are ready, but the default is very distracting, as it pops up a program on your desktop whenever it finds an update. The change I am suggesting will still alert you, but in a more discreet manner, by putting a little red icon near the top right corner of the screen and mostly stays out of your way.

Go back to the left panel of the Configuration Editor. Scroll down to update-notifier and select it. Remove the check mark beside `auto_launch`. Now, close the Configuration Editor.

3. Change bash settings. `ll` is the command I use most often to list the files in a directory. It is an alias to the `ls` command with a couple of options set. The default in Ubuntu is for `ll` to also show hidden files, but normally, I don’t want to see those files since I am looking for my own files.

Go to a terminal prompt and edit `.bashrc` with your favorite editor. I normally use `gedit`, but other editors are already installed and ready for you. At the terminal prompt, I would start the editor with this command:

```
gedit ~/.bashrc
```

Scroll down to the line that starts with `ll` and change it to look like this:

```
alias ll='ls -lF'
```

That alias starts in the first column. It is moved over here just for typographical reasons. The `~` character tells the shell to look for the file in your home directory.

4. Change boot options to give you a bit more information during boot. I am going to assume you have `grub2` here. There is a similar thing that can be done for `grub1` users, but it has to be redone after every kernel update. Go to a terminal prompt and type:

```
sudo gedit /etc/default/grub
```

If it comes up with a blank file, you don't have `grub2`. Talk to me and I'll explain how to do this with `grub1`(aka `grub`). If the file comes up, scroll down to where you see `quiet` and replace that with `verbose`. Save the file. That is all I normally do at this step. This change won't take effect until your next kernel update. If you are in more of a hurry than I am, go back to your terminal prompt and type:

```
sudo update-grub
```

5. Change the frequency of update checking. Go to `System/Administration/Update Manager` and click the "Settings" button at the bottom. You will probably be prompted for your password. Then go to the `Updates` tab and change the selection beside "Check for updates". Press the "Close" buttons until you get out of the program.

6. Install a few more programs. You could install these through the `Software Center` or `Synaptic`, instead of the way I do it here. I think it is easier to explain this software installation by using the command line. I am going to break this up into several commands so the lines don't get too long. But, you could really create one command to install all of these programs at once. These are the programs I add to get a good, usable Linux desktop. Go to a terminal prompt and type these commands:

```
sudo apt-get install smbfs ssh build-essential ffmpeg gstreamer0.10-fluendo-mp3
```

```
sudo apt-get install gimp gstreamer0.10-ffmpeg gstreamer0.10-doc gawk
```

```
sudo apt-get install gstreamer0.10-plugins-bad gstreamer0.10-plugins-ugly
```

```
sudo apt-get install ipython python-gst0.10 xvnc4viewer openvpn python-docutils
```

```
sudo apt-get install traceroute xchat audacity flac vorbisgain vorbis-tools lame
```

```
sudo apt-get install k3b libk3b6-extracodecs speex speex-doc yatm ttf-liberation
```

```
sudo apt-get install clamav clamav-freshclam samba mpgtx mencoder mplayer
```

```
sudo apt-get install mplayer-fonts inkscape dselect libdvdread4 sox
```

Reboot after this step.

7. Customize Firefox.

a) In Firefox, there are two add-ons that you can't really browse safely without. In Firefox, go to Tools/Add-ons. Search for "Cookie Killer" and NoScript" and add them. You will need to restart the browser after they are added.

There are others that I regularly use, but Firefox 4 and 5 are here and many add-ons are more difficult to use in Firefox 4, so I'll skip them for now. If you are using Firefox 4 or 5, you will need to customize it to make Cookie Killer visible.

b) These two add-ons go a long way to making your system more secure. Noscript disables javascript on sites unless you specifically allow their code to run. I practically never allow it, but you can decide for yourself.

Javascript is a programming language that web site creators can use to create dynamic web sites. That sounds good, but in reality, it means the web site owner can do anything to your computer that they want. Javascript runs in a sandbox and some people say that keeps you safe. They are wrong. The sandbox is not effective and to the extent that the sandbox is effective, it only works against people who don't try very hard. So, rather than allow javascript at most sites I visit, I either view their site without javascript or I just move on to another web site.

Cookie killer makes it easy to kill cookies set by web sites. If you allow cookies to be set at all, and I rarely do, this helps you get rid of them quickly. Getting rid of those few cookies you accept as soon as you are through with them keeps other sites from reading them.

Although cookies are supposed to be readable only by the web domain that set them, there are many cross site cookie vulnerabilities, and the security of cookies has proven illusory. So if you delete them, they can't be read. (Well, maybe if you have vulnerability friendly software like Adobe Flash installed, but I don't do that.) Sloppy web site creators require cookies, and I only have to allow them to login to a few forums.

c) Now, we will fix the way new tabs are opened. In the URL bar, put "about:config" without the quotes and press enter. In the Filter field, put the word related. The preference name "browser.tabs.insertRelatedAfterCurrent" should come up. Click on that line to change the setting to false.

d) Go to Edit/Preferences and choose the Privacy tab. Set it to use Custom settings for history, and Uncheck "Use third party cookies". There is virtually no good reason to accept those.

Also, uncheck Remember search and form history. If you are willing to put up with a little inconvenience, choose "ask me every time" for Keep until. That way, whenever you visit a new site that wants to set cookies, you can tell it no and to remember the decision. It is not very often that there is any good reason to accept a cookie and after you have been to a site, you won't get bugged about their cookies anymore.

Cookies can be used to aid web site navigation, but usually they are there to track you and why should you enable that kind of anti-social behavior?

e) Still in Edit/Preferences, click on the Security tab. Uncheck Remember passwords for sites. Nobody can get your password file, if you don't have one. There are some Firefox add-ons that manage passwords in a more secure way than the default Firefox behavior. There are quirks to each one and I don't have one I can recommend for everybody. If remembering passwords is important, try a few of these add-ons and study their behavior to find the one that suits you best.

8. Window borders, especially on large screens are too thin to be able to easily grab when you want to resize a window. We will make them a bit thicker. You won't see the effect of this change until after you restart X/Windows. Rebooting is an easy way to do that. If you like this change, note it somewhere because system updates can sometimes overwrite it. Edit `/usr/share/themes/Ambiance/metacity-1/metacity-theme-1.xml`. Set the following values in `frame_geometry_normal` as desired:

```
<distance name="left_width" value="3"/>
```

```
<distance name="right_width" value="3"/>
```

```
<distance name="bottom_height" value="3"/>
```

9. Make bash the default shell. Ubuntu has used a cut down version of the bash shell for a while. It takes less memory and is good enough that most people don't notice a difference. The cut down version is called dash. I prefer to have the full bash as my shell, so I just run the following command. `sudo dpkg-reconfigure dash` and answer no

10. On Ubuntu 11.04, they decided to make scroll bars harder to use. They did this because they thought it looked cute. We can restore scroll bars to their prior, useful behavior by removing two packages and rebooting. The quickest way to do this is from the command line. `sudo apt-get remove overlay-scrollbar liboverlay-scrollbar-0.1-0`

11. On Ubuntu 11.04, they decided to make menus for most programs harder to use. This change will only be noticed when you are running Unity. The new Global Menu, as it is called, makes the screen cleaner, at the cost of less discoverability and more time to access menu items in most programs.

Until I found a way to fix this, I really disliked using Unity. You can restore the normal behavior of most programs by removing two packages and rebooting. `sudo apt-get remove indicator-applet-appmenu indicator-appmenu`

12. `sudo /usr/share/doc/libdvdread4/install-css.sh` This will let you play DVD movies. Ubuntu can't include the pieces to decrypt DVDs. The source code is considered expression and this script compiles that expression into usable modules. I am not a lawyer, so my understanding here could be wrong. Use this at your own risk.

Questions? Feel free to come to the Linux SIG and ask them or talk about Linux. I am frequently in the `#ntlug` irc channel on freenode logged in as Severian.

Monthly NTPCUG Meeting Flyer – Can You Help Distribute?

Each month, we send members a flyer listing the upcoming second and third Saturday SIG meeting information. We work to fit it all on one page so it can be easily printed and posted in offices and public areas. It can also be sent by email to family members, friends, colleagues, etc.

With your help we hope to generate increased interest in User Group activities, thereby helping us grow. We rely on members, SIG leaders, Board members and volunteers to share this information with others. We also need you to consider new options beyond the obvious – bulletin boards, etc.

We ask you, our members, to think of places where you can post the monthly flyer and to e-mail it to anyone you know who may be interested.

We try mightily to get this out before the weekend preceding the second Saturday of each month so you have time to “do your thing”.

With your help we can grow our Group and reach others who can “Share what you know, learn what you don’t.”

Where have you sent the July flyer?

Volunteering

Every board member, officer, chairman, and SIG leader is a volunteer. No one in this organization receives any payment for their work. Without our volunteers, NTPCUG would not exist.

Please consider volunteering for one of these important jobs:

Information Desk — Charles Rem

crem@ntpcug.org

Assist with check-in process at 3rd Saturday. One or more hours will make a difference.

This is an ongoing need. YOU can help, and it's not difficult. Training provided, so you really have no excuse not to assist - right?

Mentoring — Tom Sweet

tom.sweet@ntpcug.org

Communicate with new members to ensure they are aware of the benefits, SIG opportunities and help them in numerous ways to feel welcome and to know that we care about them.

Newsletter — Doug Gorrie, Chuck Fiedler, David Franke

*doug.gorrie@ntpcug.org
chuck.fiedler@ntpcug.org
davef81@gmail.com*

Prepare, contribute to and distribute the monthly newsletter. Edit articles for better wording, formatting.

To be sure of hitting the target, shoot first and call whatever you hit the target.

Emeritus Members

John Pribyl (1924 – 1993)
Reagan Andrews (- 2006)
Connie Andrews (- 2008)
Phil Chamberlain
Jim Hoisington
Guy Andrews
Stuart Yarus
Timothy Carmichael
Mark Gruner
David McGehee
Tom Prickett
Kathryn Loafman
Fred Williams
Andy Oliver
Alex Lilly
Doug Gorrie
Claude McClure
Robert McNeil
Gil Brand
Bill Parker
Diane Bentley

Thank you!

from your 2011

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Calendar

July

July 16 8:00 am—2:30 pm

Both “**2nd Saturday**” and “**3rd Saturday**” **SIGs meet at** King of Glory

August

Aug 20 8:00 am—2:30 pm

Both “**2nd Saturday**” and “**3rd Saturday**” **SIGs meet at** King of Glory

September

Sept 17 8:00 am—2:30 pm

Both “**2nd Saturday**” and “**3rd Saturday**” **SIGs meet at** King of Glory

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