



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

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MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING
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The December meeting started at noon with the annual potluck full of good food and desserts.

There was a short business meeting in which it was moved and seconded to adopt a new schedule for new membership payment.

President Neal then brought up the subject of nominations for the club which will be held in January. Neal, Tom, Myron, Angela and Joe were nominated to retain their positions and Terry MacLennan, Joe Schmidt, Dane Neiderman and Jim Wesner were nominated for board members-at-large. Don Hagg was thanked for

all his years of service to the club.

The meeting adjourned and it was then time for Santa Joe to put on his show. Everyone had a lot of fun and there were a lot of prizes for everyone.

The food was great, the fun was great and can hardly wait for the snow to go and the summer picnic to come.

Hope everyone had a wonderful Christmas and the New Year has started well for all.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela V. Rester, club secretary

Club Information

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MINUTES: CLUB BOARD MEETING DEC 15, 2009

Members of the SCUG Board **again met at President Neal's home.** Present were Neal, Don, Joe Schmitt, Joe Fornero, Dane, Art and Angela.

There will be a form included with the newsletter for each member to submit his/her name, current house and e-mail addresses, and phone number to Treasurer Myron.

The club has received a \$500 donation for improvements in the computer lab and already three larger screen monitors have been ordered and a retro USB turntable has been purchased.

This turntable and the monitors will be tagged as property of SCUG, on loan to the Senior Center. The turntable will be used to convert LP records and cassettes into MP3s, with a fee charged for doing so.

Art will be doing the January program based on the disc he is preparing.

The board recognized Don Haag for all his years of service.

The meeting adjourned until next year.

Respectfully submitted by
Angela Rester, club secretary

As a reminder club dues are due in January, \$20 for single members and \$26 for a family. Please fill out form on page #9 and turn in with your dues. For new members that joined with a coupon this does not apply.

Santa Joe hopes that everyone had a good time at the Christmas meeting. It seems that some of the questions and music was a little tough this year. If you will help Santa out, send me Christmas trivia questions that can be used in **next year's game, and I will try to incorporate** them. Then at least one person will know the answer, besides Santa. I am going to try to do some video clips from some old Christmas movies. So be sure to watch them this coming **year. I'll stay away from the Grinch, since no** one could answer any questions from that movie.

We are going to be electing officers and members at large at the January meeting. If you enjoy the club and want to be part of the board make sure you have someone nominate you or nominate yourself. We can always use fresh ideas and new faces. Also if there is a program that you use and would like to give a presentation on it or a program that you think would be interesting to our members contact a board member.

The prices for SCUG members for copying onto an empty flash player in the Computer Lab will be: LP albums \$2 for 1 side or \$3 for both; cassettes \$3 for one side or \$4 for both; cd \$1. \$0.50 extra if flash player needs to be emptied.

Joe Fornero - Editor

iTunes Shortcuts: There are several ways you can navigate your iTunes Music Library without taking your hands off of your keyboard in Windows. For example, to start playing the selected song, press the ENTER key. You can start playing the next file in your Library by pressing SHIFT-CTRL-ALT-Right arrow. Similarly, to start playing the previous song, press SHIFT-CTRL-ALT-Left arrow. You can also browse the iTunes Music Store quickly by pressing CTRL-] to go to the next page or CTRL-[to return to the previous page.

Electronic Readers: Whether you're a bookworm who simply appreciates new technology or an avid reader who wants to travel with your entire collection, ereaders have an appeal unlike many other portable devices. Ereaders are capable of storing thousands of books on a single device, a convenience that can save you from having to find free space in your home to store the same number of physical books. In terms of readability, many ereaders feature an interface with a more paper-like appearance than a typical electronic display. If you're reading in bright sunlight, many displays can deflect glare or, if you're reading at night, provide light via an LED so you don't strain your eyes.

(Continued on page 5)

(From last month's newsletter) Have you upgraded to Microsoft Windows 7? Next month, we'll publish all articles from club members about upgrading and then vote at the meeting who they think deserves a Club Polo shirt. Well Betty told her story but I don't have room for the other 10, so we'll extend it for another month. (Only kidding Betty was only one, but if you have upgraded please tell us your story for next month)

WINDOWS 7: SHOULD YOU UPGRADE?

EXAMINE THE PROS & CONS

The question of whether you should upgrade to a new OS (operating system) is always a **tricky one**. On one hand, you're familiar with your current OS, and you know the installed applications are compatible with it. On the other hand, Win7 offers several new features and enhancements that should improve your ability to use the PC. **In this article, we'll examine a few scenarios where it'd be a good idea to upgrade as well as situations where you may be better off sticking with your current OS.**

A Vista-Capable System

You have a PC that can run Windows Vista without a problem. For example, the PC can handle Vista's glass-like Aero interface with live thumbnails of the open programs in your Taskbar. Win7 offers system requirements nearly identical to Vista, but initial reports suggest that Win7 is faster when booting up and launching applications. Microsoft indicates that Win7 has greater support for 64-bit hardware (most processors and computers purchased within the last three years feature 64-bit components) and improved memory utilization to better take advantage of advanced equipment.

One of the early problems Vista adopters experienced was incompatibility issues with some applications and hardware, but Microsoft boasts that Win7 will work with a wide variety of hardware and software. Thus, you have fewer PC compatibility issues to worry about when upgrading from Vista to Win7 than you did when upgrading from Windows XP to Vista. Other speed enhancements include a Sleep mode that quickly awakens your computer and gives you the ability to connect to wireless networks with a single click. If you want to further speed up your PC load times, upgrading to Win7 from Vista is a move **you'll want to consider**.

Unhappy With Vista

Although Vista offered some **new features, it wasn't everyone's cup of tea**. If you **weren't thrilled about Vista's features, Win7 may offer enough for you to consider the upgrade**. For example, no longer will you need third-party software to play back DVDs, and Microsoft also incorporated native support for Dolby Digital 7.1 surround sound. **Additionally, Win7's Jump List** feature lets you quickly load the content you regularly

view, including music, pictures, documents, and Web sites. Just hover your mouse pointer over an application in the Taskbar, and Win7 will display that **application's most commonly viewed content**. For example, Windows Media Player 12 will show the songs or videos you most frequently play, and **there's a Play button to let you start watching or listening directly from the Jump List window**. Internet Explorer 8 shows your most recently visited Web sites, and your word processing application displays your most recently viewed documents.

Microsoft also enhanced the way you connect to your home network. In Vista, you have to double-click the network, select the network from the pop-up window, and click the Connect button. In Win7, you only need to click the Network icon and select the network you want to **log on to**. **There's also a HomeGroup feature** that lets you quickly select what types of files you want to share, such as Music, Pictures, Video, Documents, and Printers, to make it easy for computers on the same net-

work to access local file libraries. Microsoft has also made it easier to password protect your files. You can decide what files to share and then opt to make those files "read-only." Other than files, Win7 also makes it easier to stream media to Internet-connected devices, such as a media streaming box connected to your home-theater system.

Windows XP Users

You heard all the negative publicity surrounding Vista and decided to stick with WinXP, but after more than eight years on the same **operating system, you're** thinking about something new. Unfortunately, WinXP users cannot simply upgrade their PCs from WinXP to Win7 without losing their existing data and applications. If you **want to move to Win7, you'll** have to perform a clean install, which requires you to format your hard drive. Before **you do so, you'd need to back** up all your personal data, such as your music and documents, so the format **process doesn't erase your** files.

Furthermore, if your PC is three years or older, it may not have compatible hardware. The minimum system requirements for Win7

are a 1GHz processor, 1GB (32-bit) or 2GB (64-bit) of memory, 16GB (32-bit) or 20GB (64-bit) of free hard drive space, and a graphics card or integrated graphics processor that supports DirectX 9. Microsoft notes for some video playback, such as footage recorded in HD (high-definition), your PC would need a faster processor, more RAM, and possibly a newer graphics processor. If you have an application that only works in WinXP, you can purchase the Professional or Ultimate versions that feature a Windows XP Mode, which essentially creates a virtual WinXP OS. But to utilize WinXP Mode, Microsoft **indicates that you'll need at** least 2GB of memory, an additional 15GB of free hard drive space, and a processor capable of hardware virtualization (most recent prebuilt systems and processors support virtualization).

Generally speaking, if your PC is near the minimum specifications for Win7, you may be better off investing in a new computer to run Win7 to let the OS process tasks at **a speed you're used to. And** because people running WinXP must back up their data and format before installing Win7, the upgrade

may not be worth the trouble for some users.

Decision Time

If your current PC is capable of running Vista, the OS enhancements in Win7 may be enough to entice you to upgrade. In **particular, if you're looking** for a speedier experience in loading and running applications as well as a more efficient method of accessing files, Win7 is a good fit. If your PC ran **Vista poorly or doesn't** meet the necessary requirements, it might be best to stick with your current OS until you buy a new PC. We expect that Win7 will be the OS for PC vendors in the near future and beyond.

by Nathan Lake

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WINDOWS 7: SHOULD YOU UPGRADE? (CONT.)

Which Version Is Right For You?

Most people will probably select the Home Premium and Professional versions of Windows 7, but we've listed all the available versions and the features to help you decide the edition you prefer. The Starter edition may come preinstalled on some netbooks and other portable notebooks, but as of press time, it was not available for purchase.

Windows 7 Editions	Starter	Home Premium	Professional	Ultimate
Retail Pricing		\$119.99	\$199.99	\$219.99
Features				
Jump Lists, Windows Search, HomeGroup, and other improvements to Desktop	Yes*	Yes	Yes	Yes
Faster boot up and application load time	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Internet Explorer 8.0	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Watch DVD movies	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Support for viewing, pausing, and recording digital TV	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Windows XP Mode to support 32-bit applications	No	No	Yes	Yes
Ability to automatically back up PC to home network (Backup And Restore feature found in all editions)	No	No	Yes	Yes
BitLocker drive encryption to keep your data secure	No	No	No	Yes
* Starter Edition lets you join (but not create) HomeGroups.				

SMART COMPUTING TIPS & FUN FACTS (CONT.)

Solve Network Connection Problems: Many factors can adversely affect the strength of the wireless signal reaching your computer, such as the structure of the building, the number of people, distance, or electronic interference. Letting your mouse pointer dwell over the wireless connection icon in the System Tray will provide you with some information about the signal strength of your connection. The Windows Vista pop-up is just like the signal indicator on most cell phones: a series of bars. The more bars you have, the stronger the signal. In WinXP,

the indicator is text-based: weak, strong, excellent, and so on. In Windows 7, clicking the icon will display the signal strength of each available wireless network. If you have a weak signal, try moving to another area. Sometimes, simply getting closer to the access point or eliminating sources of interference is all that's needed.

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UPGRADING TO WINDOWS 7

BY BETTY BEATTY

In June I saw an ad for **Windows 7** that seemed too good to pass up. The ad was from the Microsoft Store offering most versions (but not Windows 7 Ultimate) for half price. I was running VISTA Ultimate but decided to purchase Windows 7 Professional (since Ultimate was not part of the **deal**). **There wasn't much difference** between Windows Professional 7 and Windows 7 Ultimate other than the extra \$120. The Windows 7 Ultimate Upgrade was listed at \$219.99, no discount offered. Windows 7 Professional Upgrade lists for \$199.99, and pre-order offer was offering it for \$99.99. It sounded like I could simply do an in-place upgrade from Vista to Windows 7, so **that's what I went with**. Well, it turned out that my Vista OS entitled me to upgrade pricing, but I would actually have to do a clean install - more about that later.

The first thing you should do before purchasing Windows 7 is run the **upgrade advisor** to make sure your computer can run Windows 7. You can download it from the web at: <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/windows-7/get/upgrade-advisor.aspx>. Be sure to plug in all devices such as printers, scanners, external hard drives, etc. so the upgrade advisor can check them too.

I ran the upgrade advisor and I was told: **"You can do an in-place upgrade to 32-bit Windows 7 Ultimate**. If you choose to upgrade to a different edition you will need to perform a clean installation. [Go online to see detailed instructions about how to upgrade.](#)" **As it turns out**, you can only do an in-place upgrade

if you are upgrading **from Vista to an equivalent version of Windows 7 or a higher-end version of Windows 7**. **OK, I was upgrading from a higher (Vista Ultimate) to a "lower" (Windows Professional 7), so I was going to have to do a clean install.**

I was also told: "Windows Mail, Parental Controls (Web Filtering), and Ultimate Extras are not included in Windows 7. You can get similar programs from other software manufacturers or [go to the Microsoft website to learn more.](#)" Since Windows 7 does not include an email program I moved all my email from Outlook Express to Outlook. I would be able to use Outlook 2007 with Windows 7. Outlook 2007 is very easy to back up. I backed it up before upgrading. After upgrading I was able to restore all my mail folders and contacts from the backup, no problem. Or, you can go get **Windows Live Mail** from Microsoft. You can download it at: <http://download.live.com/>. It is part of the new **Windows Live Essentials** which includes: Windows Live Messenger, Windows Live Writer, Windows Live Photos Gallery, Windows Live Movie Maker, Windows Live Family Safety and the Windows Live Toolbar and a few additional programs can also be found on the web site. You can pick and chose which programs you want to download and install. These **Windows Live Essentials also work for Windows XP with Service Pack 2** (32-bit edition only), Windows Vista (32-bit or 64-bit editions). **Mozilla Thunderbird is another FREE email option**. You can get it at: <http://www.mozillamessaging.com/en-US/thunderbird/>.

I was told that all my devices were compatible with Windows 7 with one exception. My EPSON Perfection V200 scanner would require an update to make it compatible with Windows 7. I was told to go to the **manufacturer's website to get** the latest driver. There was an update there for Windows 7 so no problem.

A few days after the October 22nd Windows 7 release date my copy of Windows 7 arrived. It contained both the 32 bit and 64 bit versions. So I also had to decide whether to install the 32 bit or 64 bit version. I have 4 GB of RAM on my computer which is the maximum amount for 32 bit. That is also the maximum amount of RAM my computer can take. From what I have read the 64 bit OS can address up to 192 GB of RAM with Windows 7 Ultimate, (Home Basic: up to 8GB, Home Premium: 16GB, Professional 192GB, Enterprise: 192GB). I also checked both of my external hard drives for compatibility using the online Windows Compatibility Center at <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/compatibility/en-us/default.aspx>. They both came up as 32 bit Compatible, no action required, but on the 64 bit **tab it stated that "We [Microsoft] are working with the device manufacturer to confirm this product's compatibility."** I did some snooping on the Web and saw many posts stating that people were having problems with 64 bit Windows 7 not recognizing their external hard drives. OK, since all my backups were on these external hard

drives, and all my software was written for 32 bit, and the maximum memory my computer could handle was 4 GB, I **decided to go with the 32 bit Windows 7.**

There was one more thing to think about. My Dell computer purchased in the summer of 2007 came with a 3 year deal on McAfee Security Center. It came pre-installed on my computer. So before upgrading I made sure I could get the latest version, the Windows 7 compatible version, of the McAfee Security Center from the McAfee web site since the clean install I was going to do would wipe off my present version. This turned out to be no problem. I just logged into my McAfee account and found that I could download the latest version anytime as long as I my account was current.

Since I was going to do a clean install, wiping all my files, settings and programs, I made a full backup image of my Vista Ultimate system using Acronis True Image Home 2010 so I could restore my full system from the backup if something went wrong. Also, since my full backup image contains all my old files and folders, I could use it to move these back into my new operating system. And I also made a second back-up of some of My Documents, desktop stuff, etc. just in case.

On the Internet I had read about a cool tool called the Laplink PC Mover Upgrade Assistant. This tool would allow one to upgrade to Windows 7 and automatically restore all your applications, data, and

settings after the upgrade – no reinstallation of applications needed. It only cost \$20 and was good for one move, so I decided to try it. To make a long story short, it did not work for me. I got a couple of runtime errors; it stopped working when trying to re-install everything back into Windows 7, etc. But from reading posts on the Web it looks like it did work for people. I emailed Laplink and told them what happened in my case and they issued me a refund without hesitation. Later, after I **upgraded the “old fashioned” way** I read reviews in both *Smart Computing* (November issue) and *PC World* online (http://www.pcworld.com/article/181114/pcmover_makes_migration_to_7_a_simple_matter.html). They both used the **full product PCmover Professional** which sells for \$59.95. Apparently it works great. You can read more about it and the different editions at: <http://www.laplink.com/pcmover/>. And finally, I ran the **Belarc Advisor** on my Vista system before upgrading to have an inventory of all the hardware and software on my Vista system. This is a very useful tool. You can find it at: http://www.belarc.com/free_download.html. **It's FREE.**

Ok, I was finally ready. I did the upgrade on Saturday night, October 31st. It only took about 30 minutes. I put the Windows 7 32-bit DVD in my computer and re-booted to boot from the DVD and followed the on-screen instructions. I selected my language, chose Install Now, accepted the license terms, and I chose the Custom install. I was reminded that this option

would not save any of my files, settings, or programs. I had to tell it where I wanted to install Windows. I chose my C drive. The rest of the installation proceeded automatically. When it was done I was asked to name my PC and assign a user name and password (password is optional). Next I was prompted to enter the Windows Product key, and choose options for security settings, time zone and date settings & setting up your home network. **Windows finalizes the settings and the next thing you see is the NEW BEAUTIFUL WINDOWS 7 DESKTOP! YES!**

Windows 7 also created a folder called Windows.old. It moved all my files and folders from my Vista system to this folder. I think this is really a good thing. All My Documents, Pictures, etc. are in there. In my case this folder was almost 80 GB (YIKES!) so I moved it to one of my external hard drives.

After Windows 7 loaded I was able to connect to the Internet immediately. My printer printed. I loaded the latest version of McAfee Security Center. I did get Windows 7 updates from the **manufacturer's web sites** for both my HP printer and Epson Scanner. My external hard drives and all my USB flash drives are working. I installed all my software. (Yes, it took a lot of time.) I am bringing over files from my backups as needed. **It feels like I have a new computer.** So far I really like Windows 7. **Life is good.**

A SLICE OF APPLE: INSIDE ITUNES 9

By now, iTunes users have been prompted to upgrade to the new iTunes 9, which became available in early September. There are a number of new features added to the new iTunes, with varying levels of **usefulness and “ooh la la” cachet. Let’s have a look.**

Much Ado About Nothing

First, let’s get the uninteresting bits out of the way. There’s some good stuff in iTunes 9, but the following features aren’t it.

One such feature is the **ability to “share albums”** on Facebook and Twitter. At first blush, that sounds kind of cool for those who use those services. In reality, though, this is the sum total of how to share and what that means exactly: When viewing an album, movie, or TV show in the iTunes store, there is a little arrow next to the Buy button. Click the arrow and select Share

On Facebook (or Twitter, if you prefer). Then, you can post the link with a comment. If your friends click the link, it just sends them to the iTunes store, where they can purchase the **album. That’s it. (Yawn.)**

Another feature I don’t quite see the value of is Genius Mixes. iTunes users are no doubt familiar with Genius, which automatically selects a playlist of music that goes with a song you selected. Genius Mixes is slightly different in that it just creates mixes from your library with no input from you. For example, when you turn on Genius Mixes, it may create Rock Mix, Rock Mix 2, Jazz Mix, and Hip-Hop Mix, depending on what type of music you have. You simply click Play and let it run. (Double yawn.) It seems unnecessary and adds flab to iTunes, which is starting to get a little too bloated for my taste.

QuickView

Although QuickView is really just a small navigational improvement **to the iTunes store, it’s a welcome new feature.** For **example, when you’re** browsing for music to purchase, now you can point to an item and click **the italicized “i” to bring up** a new, small window that contains all the album information including a track list, so you can preview the album without having to navigate away from the page you were **looking at. When you’re** done previewing the item, just close the pop-up window.

iTunes LP & iTunes Extras

An album in the iTunes store that bears the iTunes LP mark includes extras such as album art, interviews with the artist, short films, and other media candy, all exclusive to iTunes. For movies, you get iTunes Extras, which is essentially the same thing as iTunes LP—fun extras that are exclusively on the iTunes store, available to

A SLICE OF APPLE (CONT.)

you upon purchase.

It seems that in addition to providing DVD-like extras to movies, Apple is bringing back the concept of reading the liner notes **and enjoying an album's artwork while listening to the music. It's a lost art,** to be sure.

Home Sharing

Home Sharing is a powerful new feature, **and it's possibly the most compelling one** in this version of iTunes. Basically, Home Sharing lets you easily share your iTunes library between computers on the same

home network.

To use it, just open iTunes and click Home Sharing on the left panel. Log in using your iTunes username and password and click Create Home Share. Click Done to exit. Now, if you log in to iTunes on another computer using the same username and password, that computer will appear in a list under Home Sharing on your computer. You can then **access that computer's** iTunes library. All you have to do is select some music, movies, or TV shows and drag them to your own library. Beautiful.

The only caveat is that both computers have to be on,

"awake," logged in, and running on the same network for Home Sharing to work. You can further customize settings so you only see **items you don't already have when viewing the other person's library or only snag new purchases from the other computer.**

by Seth Colaner
seth@smartcomputing.com

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UPDATE MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Name: _____

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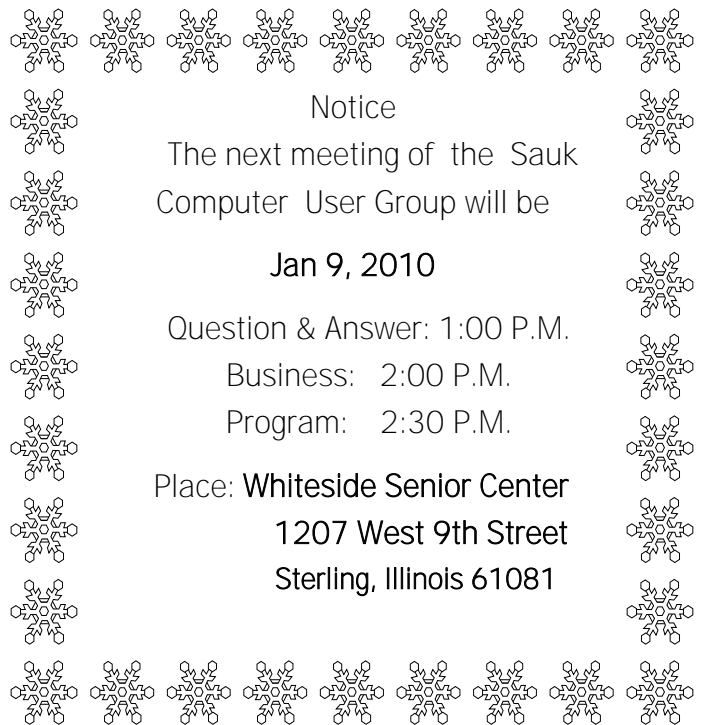
Email Address: _____

Operating System: _____

We would like to update your personal information so we can be sure you get the newsletter and any meeting information that may change at last minute. No information is shared with anyone outside the club. Thanks for your cooperation. Please turn in with your dues: \$20 for single and \$26 for family living under one roof.

Sauk Computer User Group
User Helping User
3406 E. 19th St.
Sterling, IL 61081

There will be a Question & Answer
Session starting at 1PM.
Bring any questions you have about
your computer or problems you may
be having. It will be conducted by:
Neal Shipley & Art Bendick



Notice
The next meeting of the Sauk
Computer User Group will be
Jan 9, 2010
Question & Answer: 1:00 P.M.
Business: 2:00 P.M.
Program: 2:30 P.M.
Place: **Whiteside Senior Center**
1207 West 9th Street
Sterling, Illinois 61081

JANUARY'S MEETING THEME: CLUB DVD BY ART BENDICK