



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

DESKTOP VS LAPTOP, MAY DRAWING	2
CD PLAYERS-WHERE DID THEY GO	3-4
SYSTEM MONITORING TOOLS	5-7

The Whiteside County Senior Center will not open in June. We had 16 people last month with the Zoom app from APCUG. We will have to have another remote meeting in June. Neal will host a few practice meeting to insure that you will be comfortable with Zoom. Please try one, it's not that difficult if you have a camera and microphone. The times are all for 7:30pm..... Sat. 16th - Thurs. 21st - Tues. 26th - Fri. 5th - Wed 10th]

Joe Fornero

Club Information

Sauk Computer User Group
PO Box 215
Sterling, IL 61081-0215

Art Bendick - President
abendick278@gmail.com

Website
www.saukcomputerusergroup.org

SCUG Email
saukcomputerusergroup@gmail.com

Editor and Printing done by:

Joe Fornero

My Windows 10 Reset on its Own to Empty Folders!

By Sheila Swaikowski

A strange thing happened to my computer recently. I have both Linux Mint and Windows 10 on my computer (dual boot). After I chose to boot into Windows 10, the sign-in for windows 10 didn't appear on the screen, it was a blank screen. I wanted to watch Timothy Kearn's 17th web design video about .dwt files (dynamic web templates) for updating multiple web pages' header and footer sections more easily. The only way I could sign off of this blank screen was to do a forced shutdown by holding down the off/on the button for a few seconds.

I turned the computer on

again and watched the video on Linux Mint, signed off using the restart option, and this time chose to boot into Windows 10, hoping that the sign-in would be there. I needed to start working on my template project using my web editor program, Microsoft Expression Web 4.

I was able to sign into Windows but my icons were arranged alphabetically - not at all like my cluttered desktop - there were fewer icons, my short-cuts were missing and all of my folders were empty! What an unpleasant surprise!

I started to think about all the ways to fix this:

Some of this info was on a second computer and could be copied over.

I did a system image backup three weeks ago.

I discovered that I could get to my original files if I clicked on 'This PC, Gateway (C:), Users, Sheila' but couldn't work with them.

Presently Windows was using the 'TEMP.Sheila-PC.000' folder instead of the Sheila folder and there was no way I could repoint it back to the Sheila folder. I even copied all the Sheila folder stuff into the TEMP.SheilaPC.000

folder, but on second thought, didn't think that was a good idea.

It was time for a coffee break.

After I took a break, it dawned on me to Google the problem. I did find that other people experienced the same thing and there were suggestions on how to solve this. I tried the first suggestion and it worked! It was to sign off the computer and back on again several times if needed. I was very lucky - on my first sign-off/sign-on I got my normal

desktop and files back along with all my data. It was as simple as signing off and signing back on! I could have saved a lot of time if I Googled for the problem sooner!

This has never happened to me before and I've never heard about it happening to anyone else. I hope you benefit from getting a heads up on this strange Windows reset, and if it happens to you, you won't panic or waste a lot of time trying to get back your normal desktop and data, like I did, but will know what to do! First, Google for the problem, sometimes it helps, - if you're lucky.

By Sheila Swaikowski,
Webmaster, The PCUG of Connecticut
www.tpcug-ct.org
[sswaikowski\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:sswaikowski(at)yahoo.com)



Desktop vs Laptop

By Dan Douglas

The Next Drawing

At a recent learning center meeting, the topic of what was better to get, in my opinion, a desktop or a laptop?

We agreed to include various other devices in the category of 'laptop' - tablets, Chromebooks, netbooks, notebooks, etc. Let's take a look at the various factors that should influence your decision.

Performance - This used to be the biggest differentiator between laptop versus desktop decisions, but this is not true any longer. The modern CPU (Central Processing Unit) chip designs have greatly reduced the heat generated and thereby eliminated one of the biggest problems with portable devices; the need to cool down the CPU effectively in a limited space within the case. The latest Intel and AMD CPUs are available in basically the same speeds and formats across both desktop and laptop motherboards.

However, the smaller size of laptops does command a premium price over that of desktops due to higher manufacturing costs for the same performance, as a general rule. SSDs (Solid State Disks) are available for both and their performance will be similar in either PC.

Storage Capacity - This is the other major area that has dramatically changed. Desktops typically have had larger capacity hard drives for storage - a 3.5" width hard drive case is still the standard in desktops while laptops standardized on a 2.5" width form. Large capacity drives (1TB+) are cheaper and were only available in the desktop size until the last 2 years or so when SSDs became available at a competitive cost to traditional hard drives. When fitted into a desktop case, newer cases

have drive bays sized for the 2.5" SSD case, while cheap brackets are available for fitting them into any 3.5" case opening.

The latest developments are to move away from both 2.5" and 3.5" sizes to a "stick" SSD. There are several sizes in use today; one of the most common is called m2.

These SSDs clip into a slot directly on the motherboard, similar to how a memory stick would. This saves significant space that would otherwise be used by the storage drive in either a desktop or a laptop case.

Currently, only traditional 3.5" drives have very large capacities available (4TB+), but as time goes by, SSDs will become cheaper and a much better alternative. Check out my journal article earlier this year where I compared the two for full details.

Display - This is an area where desktops can be a better value for the flexibility to connect to whatever

size display you have. Whether it is a 4K UHD 75" panel or a 24" desk LCD panel, either will work on a desktop. Now, many laptops offer HDMI or other ports to connect to displays, but if the reason for the laptop is portability, then the size of the laptop screen is what you'll be using most of the time, typically 13" to 17". The larger the screen, the weight will also increase proportionally on a laptop.

Graphics - Without a doubt, desktops are better suited for gaming due to the flexibility to replace and upgrade the video card. Some laptops, such as those from Alienware, do offer several video card options to compete with the best desktop offerings, but these are limited and more costly. For non-gamers, the basic video in either laptops or desktops is sufficient 95% of the time.

In the December 2019 issue of Consumer Reports, there just happens to be an article about this very topic. They report that in a survey taken in 2009, about 72% of the households

The regular drawing for next meeting whenever that happens, will be \$50 gift certificate from Forest Inn, a \$25 gift card from Pizza Ranch and a local family restaurant and a 1Tb flash drive, plus some misc. items.

The link for the video that Neal showed at the virtual May meeting *Uncover Windows 10 Most Useful Features Today* is:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=do06MPWf9E4>

have a desktop versus the 52% reporting having a laptop. Jump forward to 2019 and the number is now reversed with more households reporting laptops than desktops in almost the same ratio - about 74% laptops and 52% desktops now. Check it out for their recommended models and other factors you may want to consider. If you have suggestions for topics that you would like to see explained, please let me know!

*Author: Dan Douglas, President, Space Coast PCUG, Florida
December 2019 issue, The Space Coast Journal
www.scpcug.org
datadan (at) msn.com*

CD Players – Where did they go? What about all my music CDs?

By Phil Sorrentino

CD players used to be all around us, well, at least they could be found in our computers and our automobiles, but not so anymore. In the age of streaming Netflix videos and Delivery of Software Applications by downloads, CD players have lost their significance. But if you feel you must have a CD player on your computer, you can add an external CD player. These types of devices will usually read and write CDs and DVDs. They are fairly inexpensive, around \$30, and they connect to the computer using USB. (As always, the more USB ports on your computer, the better.)

In our automobiles, many domestic and foreign car models that used to have CD players as part of their infotainment center have eliminated the CD player. In its place, they have included a USB port, and they have included an MP3 player in the infotainment electronics. The MP3 player, in conjunction with the USB port, allows the entertainment center to play MP3 music from a flash memory device plugged into the USB port. That's all well and good, but how do you get your music on to a flash memory device? Fortunately, there is a simple answer –

Windows Media Player (WMP). But before we look into how to use WMP, let's take a quick look at recorded music and a brief history thereof. Recorded music began with Thomas Edison, who invented the phonograph in 1877. Initially, the music was stored on metal cylinders. The cylinders were replaced by disks, tape and finally CDs. The disks evolved from 78s to 45s and finally the 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ albums. Tapes developed from Reel-to-reel to 8 Track and finally the very popular tape cassettes. All of these were developed to record "analog" music and was the way we recorded and played back music until around the late 1980s.

During the 1980s, even before the release of the iPod, research was being done to develop methods of compressing digital music. (The iPod would eventually replace the Walkman, a device that almost every music lover owned.) The outcome of the research was the .mp3 music file specification that allowed music files to be created that would be small enough to fit into the amount of memory that could be put into a portable device, in those days. Large memory devices were not as available then, as

they are now, so the size of a music file was very important. (By the way, there are other music file types, but .mp3 has become the de facto music standard.) The .mp3 file type is considered a lossy compressed file, meaning that there is some quality degradation in the resulting music. The amount of "loss" is established when the original uncompressed file is compressed. This is accomplished by the use of a "Quality" setting. The quality is indicated in "Kilobits per second" (kbps). A setting of 128 kbps is termed "near-CD" quality, which gives you a file size of about one-tenth the size of the original file, and sound quality that is quite impressive. A file that produces a higher quality will be larger, but I'd be surprised if those of us over 65 could tell the difference, so the near-CD quality is probably more than adequate.

The .mp3 file specification allows us to create music files that we can use on our devices but it is the .wav file that creates a music file that is an exact reproduction of the originally recorded music; this is what you find on music CDs. The .wav file contains all of the musical quality of the original performance. The .wav file contains the

digital results of the analog music signal being sampled at a rate so as to include all frequencies that can be heard by the human ear. This sampling results in a digital representation of the original music. To be technical, this is called a linear pulse-code modulation format. When played on a CD player, the stream of digital information produces music exactly as it was originally performed. But these .wav files are fairly large; most music selections will create files in the 30 to 40 Mbytes range.

So now that we know about .wav and .mp3 file types, we can get back to Windows Media Player. WMP is a component of Windows 10, so everyone has a copy of WMP which is currently at version 12. WMP not only plays CDs and music files, but it is capable of “ripping” the tunes from a standard CD. (“Ripping”, though it sounds horrible, it is perfectly legal.) When you start WMP you will not have controls for ripping if there isn’t a CD in the CD tray (you will see “No disk” under the Tools tab). Once

you put a CD into the tray, the “Rip CD” and “Rip settings” controls will appear on the WMP toolbar.

Before you rip the CD, check that the settings are to your needs. Click the down-facing arrow next to “Rip settings” to check a few of these settings. First, select “Format” and then check the box next to “MP3” in the pop-up window. Next, select “Audio Quality” and check your selection (128 Kbps is probably fine and it will create the smallest files). Next, select “More Options” and it will open a window for making “Rip Music” adjustments. The first adjustment is where the ripped files will be stored. If you want to change the destination, click “Change” and in the pop-up window navigate to the location of your choice. Next, on the Options Window, click “File Name”. This is where you determine how the ripped music file will be named. Check the items that you want to be in the file name, like “Artist” and “Song title”, move the items up or down to get the right sequence. Next, choose the “Separator” like space or dash. The “Preview” shows the choices that have been made. (I typically name the files “Artist dash Song title”.) Click OK on the “File Name Options” window. The other two Rip settings, Format and Quality,

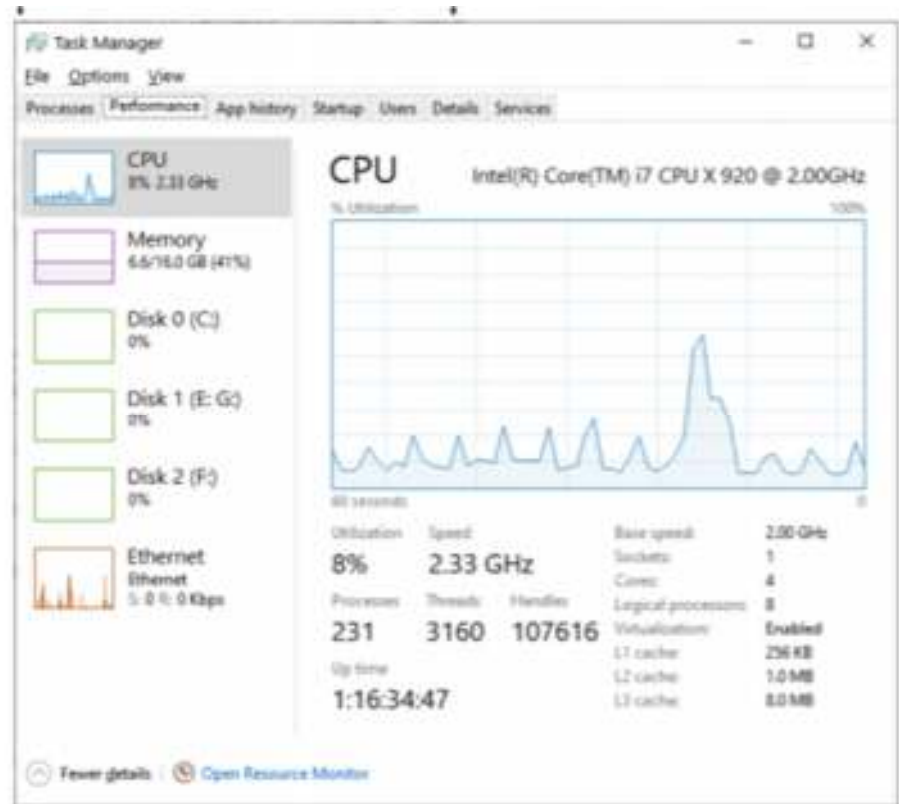
have already been set up so now you’re good to go. Click “OK” in the Options window to get back to the main WMP window. Now all you have to do is click “Rip CD” and let’er rip. When you originally put the CD into the tray, all tunes were selected. If you don’t want a particular tune ripped, uncheck the box next to the tune’s name. The “ripped status” will show how the process is proceeding. When all the tunes are ripped, you will find them in the location that you set up in the Rip settings. They will be in a folder with the name of the artist or CD. Using File Explorer, move the tunes to your permanent “Music” folder. From here, you can put them on a flash memory device for use in your car, or put them directly into any of your devices, like a tablet, a music player, your smartphone, or another computer. Now you’re ready to take advantage of the music you previously purchased for a CD player on any of your other devices.

*Author: Phil Sorrentino,
Contributing Writer, The Computer
Club, Florida
November 2019
www.sccccomputerclub.org/
[Philsorr\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:Philsorr(at)yahoo.com)*

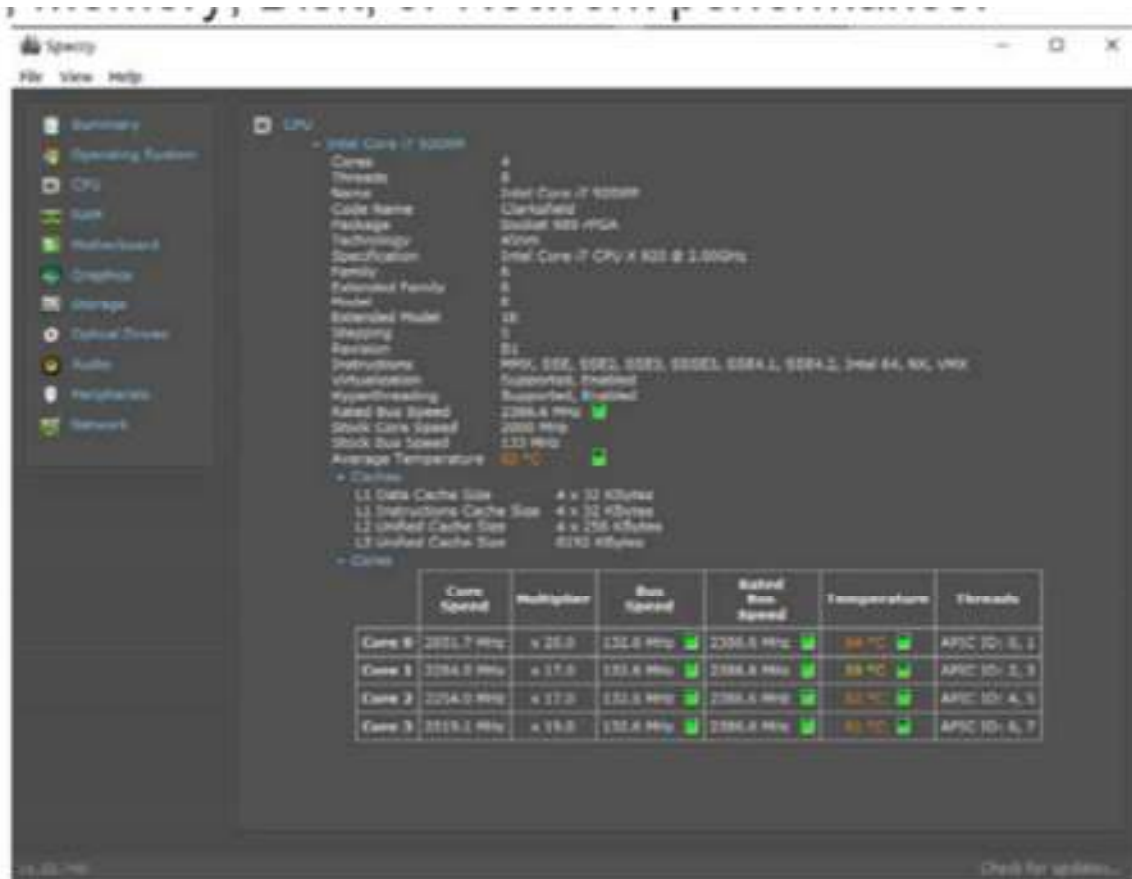
System Monitoring Tools

By Frank Fota

Have you ever wanted to view the impact a program has on your computer's performance? A quick internet search reveals that there are other many monitoring tools available. Some are freeware and others require payment. Resource monitoring tools are also bundled with system utilities (e.g., Norton Utilities®). Microsoft Windows has a "Resource Monitor" that can be run from a Command Prompt or via the search box by typing, "perfmon.exe." Windows Resource Monitor is extensive but, difficult to configure. A quick look at resources can be found, however, by opening the Windows Task Manager (i.e., Ctrl-Alt-Del then click on Task Manager). Click on the Performance tab in Windows Task Manager and it's easy to see the effect that a program has on CPU, Memory, Disk, or Network performance.



If you need more details about the hardware on your PC (e.g., the effect a program has on CPU or GPU core temperatures), I recommend Speccy®.



Speccy® is written and published by Piriform (now owned by Avast); the same company that developed CCleaner®. According to Jeffrey Wilson, Lead Analyst for PC Magazine, “This utility serves up a wealth of data about your PC's operating system, attached peripherals, memory, storage, and much more.”



If you are looking for a program that will overlay hardware statistics on top of a running game, you can install MSI's Afterburner program. It's compatible with both Nvidia and AMD's Radeon graphics cards.

*Author: Frank Fota, Newsletter Editor, Fredericksburg PCUG, MD
November 2019 issue, FPCUG Notes
www.fpcug.org
Fotafm (at) gmail.com*

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

The next meeting of the Sauk Computer User Group will be on Zoom

June 13, 2020

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Presentation: 2:00 PM

The link to the meeting will be sent to you in your email. Be sure to check your spam folder if you think you didn't receive it.

Neal Shipley will be host an online Zoom meeting with a Question & Answer time and a presentation on Word.