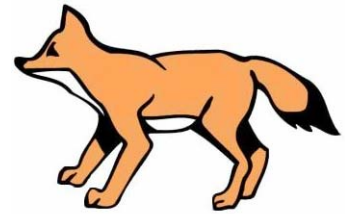


FOX TALES



Volume 20, Issue 6

Official Publication of the
Fox Valley PC Association
"Established January 1985"

June 2007

THE HEAT IS ON

Jon Jackman – President – FVPCA

At our meeting this month we will finally be voting to ratify the updated Constitution and Bylaws. There are no dramatic changes, but we have wanted to bring them up to date for some time. We hope that you had an opportunity to examine them in last month's newsletter. We also sent copies out over the Internet and at the meeting in April. So we will be voting for ratification at our next meeting on June 16TH.

Also at our upcoming meeting, we will be releasing the second version of our Downloads of the Quarter (DOQ). I will have a few of the first quarter thumb drives available if anyone wants to buy one and catch up. For those who want to download this month's selections, be sure to clear off your thumb drive to make room for the files. I'm still working on the final list but there will be a variety of new offerings. I also hope to have an updated table of contents for the first quarter as well as a new table of contents for the second quarter's DOQ. I'll review this month's release at the meeting.

At last month's meeting we had a program which was an overview of "OCR" technology. Ironically, the next Wednesday evening on WGN radio's computer help program, the "expert" told a caller that OCR software only worked 50% of the time. It goes without saying that you need to proof read the output, but my experience has been much better. And it sure beats typing! I always thought that OCR stood for optical character recognition. The "expert" said it stood for optical character reader. Sometimes I wonder. I would agree with his comment that the more expensive programs do a better job. We did not review OmniPage last month, but it had worked for me very well previously, while maintaining a document's formatting quite well. One of the programs that I used for my program was the FineReader program that came with my Epson 1670 scanner that I bought several years ago. It seems to do an adequate job. Again, it's helpful to proofread what the computer gives you. (Much the same as I have to do with my Dragon Naturally Speaking program, which I am using now! I speak, it types.)

We had many things to discuss their recent executive committee meeting. We were able to test drive the local MetroFi WiFi connection. Dean Holste reported that it seemed to work quite well on his laptop. As a matter of fact, the windy weather today seems to have created problems for my Comcast Internet. Perhaps it's my router or modem? In any event, presently I am using the MetroFi connection across the street to e-mail Dean this article for our newsletter.

Bill Powell will be demonstrating how to use Microsoft Movie Maker for the program in June. This program is included with XP, and can do a decent job of organizing photos and other media for video type presentations. I had done something two years ago with PowerPoint as a memorial to the groundskeeper at Fox Valley Country Club. When combined with music and voice recording you can get pretty fancy with your computer, and is a good way to share pictures and memories with family.

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(Continued from page 1)

The progress on this year's FVPCA member survey has been slow. We hope to move ahead with that soon. One item discussed at the last general meeting and board meeting was whether we needed to get a new projector. We agreed to proceed with the research, but will try to employ room darkening devices and a beaded glass projection screen to enhance the picture quality. It would be nice to have a projector that had two separate computer inputs as well as higher resolution and greater lumens. For now, we'll just see if we can get it darker. There are some events coming up in a few months that will force us out of our meeting room at the Civic Center. We will be looking at either a new location at the Yorkville public library or at the AmeriClnn. We will keep you advised of any location changes.

Have any nagging questions or problems with your computer? E-mail them to us via our website and we will try to respond at our next meeting. We welcome comments about the programs in last quarter's DOQ. User reviews are very helpful. Any suggestions that you may have for September's DOQ are welcome.

Last summer we helped out at the Our Lady of Good Counsel school computer lab. This summer we may make an effort to build them a server to replace an old 98 machine. We will see.

Hope to see you at this month's meeting!

Jon Jackman



IE7
By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
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If you are using Windows XP, in the next few weeks when the Microsoft automatic Windows update appears on your computer, you will be asked if you want to upgrade your browser to the newly released Internet Explorer 7. It's great that Microsoft is giving us a choice rather than installing the new browser automatically. However, questions like these are always difficult for the average user.

Yet with this question, you don't have to hesitate to answer "yes" because the new Internet Explorer (version 7) is a great improvement over previous versions. I have been using it as part of beta testing for the last six months with no issues. I love its many new features.

While the toolbar has been simplified and some buttons have moved to new locations, you will find that the move to the new version is pretty intuitive. So you can continue to browse the Internet with minimal additional effort.

In fact, any effort you need to exert to learn how to use this new browser is more than worthwhile because it has some extremely useful features that make Internet surfing easier and more fun.

First and foremost is the fact that Microsoft has added tabbed browsing. While other browsers like Firefox and Opera have had these for years, this is a new addition for Internet Explorer.

Tabbed browsing allows you to open a new webpage in a tab rather than a new window. So you can have several web pages open at once and you can switch from one to another easily. You will see all of the tabs across the top of the browser with the webpage name or part of it on the tab.

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What is a Web Site?

Craig Landes, (Former Fox Valley PC Association member) — clandes@new-individualism.org

Nowadays, we're all talking about Web sites, Web pages, URLs (that **http://www** thing), and so on. We're inundated with e-commerce, online this, broadband that, domain something else. People tell us, "You oughta get a Web site!" Okay, but what exactly is a Web site?

This question actually relates to other complex questions. What is a Web developer? What's a Web designer? What's the difference? What are all these terms like "search engine rankings," "optimization," HTML and so forth?

A Web "site" actually is one single thing: It's a folder on a computer, somewhere in the world.

The computer (a hosting server) containing the folder is connected to the Internet. The Internet is a global computer network made up of countless smaller networks. A network is a connection between computers, allowing them to share information.

That's all it is—a subfolder. So if you have a domain like *www.ibdesignsusa.com*, that "domain" is actually a folder called */ibdesignsusa.com* sitting on a computer. People sometimes forget that a folder can have an "extension," the three-or-less characters to the right of a period. That's the "dot" COM, .NET, .BIZ, .ORG, and other extensions.

Domains are very much like all the folders and subfolders you see when you open up the Explorer or any other file manager on your computer. It could be anywhere on the hosting computer, way down among branches and subfolders, none of which really matter to you.

The Web and Text

So what's all the mystery? How come it's so hard to get a Web site together, up and running? Why are there so many bad Web sites where you can't figure out what they do?

The key is to understand that HTML is entirely made up of plain ASCII text characters. ASCII is the old original standard for how a computer presents the alphabet, numbers, and basic characters. It provides for a digital number to describe a capital "A" or a lowercase "a," or a number "1" or the "\$" sign. All the standard keys on a typewriter were included in the basic ASCII standard.

The explosive growth of the World Wide Web (the "www." part of a Web address) came about when "they" figured out a way to format plain text. Formatting means things like big or little letters, bold, italics, underlining, colors, and that sort of thing. To actually see this formatting, two things had to take place.

First, we had to have some kind of software that could understand formatting. Most computers already had some sort of way to connect to the Internet and show what was sitting in files in sub-folders on servers. Those were the very first "browsers." Netscape was a new kind of browser that included programmed intelligence to read formatting codes. Internet Explorer (IE) soon caught on.

HTML—HyperText Markup Language

A Web "site" is only the many files that sit in folders and subfolders on a computer, somewhere in the world. That's it. That's all the site actually is made up of: Files—text or graphic.

For the most part there are only two types of files used on a Web site. There are text files, and a few graphics files, sometimes called "image files." Even these image files are limited mostly to .GIF, .JPG, .TIF and .BMP. A new type, the .PNG (pronounced "ping") file is well-accepted, but not yet standard to all browsers.

What is a Web Site? (Continued from Page 3)

By Craig Landes

A Web text file is just that: one long, continuous line of plain ASCII text. It can be opened by any text program like Notepad, EdLin (for those old DOS people), or any other kind of plain text editor. You also can open a Web file in MS Word, MS Write, or some other word processor. HOWEVER!...if any sort of programmed formatting is introduced, under or along with the plain text, the file may become unreadable on the Web.

Remember; a Web file (a “page”) must be plain text, and plain text only. The images and graphic files that a browser can understand aren’t plain text. But the reference to those files within a text file are plain text. It’s all in the way these plain ASCII characters go together.

HTML is sort of like a programming language, but not really. It’s actually more a set of indicators that “suggest” to a Web browser how to show the plain text in the browser. In order for that to happen, the browser itself must have certain format capabilities built into it.

For example, suppose you want a word to be *italic* on a Web page. All you can do is use plain ASCII characters to suggest to the browser that you’d like the person using that browser to see italics. If the browser can do it, the browser itself first must have access to the font. That’s the shape of the letters in the “character set.” It then must have access to the typeface, usually “normal,” “bold,” “italic,” and “underline.” Finally, it must be able to “scale” the character to some size.

A typeface is actually a graphic representation of a letter. To make it bold, the “drawing” has to change. To make it italic, underlined, or plain (normal) requires four different drawings of that single letter or character. Back around IE 3.0 and Netscape 1.0, a set of very basic “fonts” were included into those browsers.

Most browsers include a “serif” font, which has tiny little tails on letters like “L” or “P” or others. They also include a “sans serif” (“without” serif) font that doesn’t have the little tails. They include a “fixed font” that has no variable spacing, and then a sort of “fantasy” font that’s a bit more artistic. These fonts are typically “Times” for the serif, “Helvetica, or Arial” for sans serif, along with “Courier” for fixed, and “Verdana, or Comic Sans” for fantasy.

Formatting Codes

When a Web *developer* helps you create a Web page, they’re using certain types of codes in HTML (or JavaScript, XML, or another Web language). These are the “tags” you sometimes hear mentioned. They know that to make a paragraph, they have to insert into the really long line of text the characters <p>. At the end of the paragraph, they insert </p>. To put a line somewhere, they use <hr> characters.

Understand that the Web browser could care less if you put some line spaces, hard returns, bold, or anything else into this “source code.” All of that goes away when it’s read as a simple, plain text file. The developer is a “programmer” who knows the many ways to use HTML tags.

The Web *designer* is someone who understands the eventual way the page will “render” in a browser. That means “how it will look” when someone opens the file with their Web browser. The designer figures out where all the subfolders go, what they should be called, and what they should contain. The domain folder is like the “root” folder on a hard drive. All other folders are subfolders.

A developer is skilled in using “markup” languages. A designer is someone who tries to make a pretty-looking layout and page. Unfortunately, not all designers have a background in page layouts and graphic arts

The problem for most people is that they see a nice-looking Web page, lots of pretty colors, a fine navigation bar, tabs at the top, some graphics, a logo, and things like a shopping cart. Each of those “elements” seems like an isolated thing, done as a picture. No, that’s not the way it is.

Everything you see on a Web page is either a graphic file that’s being referenced by plain text, or it’s plain text. All the headings, titles, sub-headings, colors, lines, tables, boxes, forms, buttons, and so on, are the result of your browser reading a simple Notepad type of file.

What is a Web Site? *(Continued from Page 4)*

“So what would you like on your site?”

When you purchase a domain and talk to a developer, the first thing they’ll ask you is what it is you want. Obviously, you want a Web site! But now let’s change that question.

Suppose you’ve just purchased a second, blank hard drive for your computer at home. You go to a “hard drive developer” and say you want it to look great. What does that even mean? Which drive letter will it have? What will ANY of the subfolders be called? What will you put into each subfolder? Files, of course, but containing what?

Think of a Web site as a folder on your hard drive. Below that folder you can have as many subfolders as you’d like. Fine and dandy, but then you have to create files with some sort of meaning. Someone has to write “stuff” to put into those files. Someone has to figure out what that “stuff” will say. Then someone has to decide how it should look.

When you create a Web site, you’re simply creating a folder structure on a computer. A Web designer isn’t in charge of writing anything for your site. A designer isn’t in charge of anything other than helping you to make your words look pretty. A “content writer” writes articles and sentences. But overall, when you start to build a Web site, you’re mostly just creating subfolders on a computer, somewhere in the world.

IE7 By Sandy Berger *(Continued from page 2)*

With tabbed browsing you can have your favorite newspaper www.thepilot.com open right next to the weather, your favorite financial website, and your favorite computer help website www.compukiss.com. Click on the small icon to the left of the tabs and you can see each open web page as a thumbnail. Click on the arrow next to the icon and you get a text list of the open web pages. You can close any open web page by clicking on the red x on its tab.

The ability to view and to print web pages has also been improved in Internet Explorer 7. In Internet Explorer 6 you are able to change the size of the text, but often that change made the whole web page look askew because the size of the graphics is not increased. Not so with IE7. Just look in the lower right hand corner of the IE screen for the magnifying glass. You can click on the magnifying glass to make the entire web page, including the graphics, larger. This lets you adjust the size while keeping everything in proportion.....a boon to aging eyes and those with vision problems.

Printing functionality in IE 7 has also been greatly improved. Remember how when you tried to print a webpage the right side was cut off or you wasted paper as a second page would print out with only a line or two on it. Well, IE 7 has solved those problems with a feature that automatically shrinks the webpage content to fit the printed page. This does not necessarily work with web pages that have been poorly formatted, but it does work well for most web pages. Also there are many other printing options including adjustable margins, customizable page layouts, and removable headers and footers. IE7 also has a search box that can be customized to use your favorite search engine. So you can perform a Google, MSN, Ask, or Yahoo! search without having to navigate to the search engine’s home page first.

Just to the left side of the magnifying glass on the bottom bar of the screen, Microsoft has also added a security bar. This lets you change your security settings without sifting through menus. Also included is an icon that you can use to check whether the website you are visiting is a bogus site known for phishing. Microsoft has also added other security enhancements and it is worth upgrading just to get a more secure browser. The only time you may not want to upgrade is if you are using a specialized Web software program. This caution will apply most to corporations and Web developers who need to make sure that the customized or specialized software they are using will work with this new version. For the rest of you, take the jump. Internet Explorer 7 is stable. It is chock full of new features. And it’s FREE.

There is no restriction against any non-profit group using this article as long as it is kept in context with proper credit given the author. The Editorial Committee of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), an international organization of which this group is a member, brings this article to you.



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There are a growing number of locations that offer free Internet via a wireless WiFi connection! We would like to find a place where we could meet and have WiFi too!

*THE FOX VALLEY
PC ASSOCIATION*

The Fox Valley PC Association is dedicated to the task of providing computer information to our fellow members. We are a non-profit organization. The group has been active since January 1985. The dues are \$30 per year. Our meetings are held on the third Saturday of the month (except December.)

The meeting place this month (June) will be at the Oswegoland Civic Center at 5 Ashlawn Avenue, Montgomery, Illinois. The formal meeting starts at 9:15 A.M. Non-member visitors are always welcome. If you can, please come early & help with set-up. Thanks!

The following members have renewed their membership:

No Renewals this Month!

Please check the label on your newsletter to see when your subscription is due!

The "FOX TALES" Newsletter

The "Fox Tales" Newsletter is published monthly by the Fox Valley PC Association, Post Office Box 369, Oswego, IL 60543, a non-profit organization, established to provide information about IBM PCs and IBM Compatible personal computer systems (and almost anything "digital") to our members.

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Recycle Corner

If you have an old computer or other electronics you want to get rid of, check out these recycling websites...

www.mygreenelectronics.org

www.Earth911.org

www.computertakeback.com

www.dell.com/recycle

www.hp.com/hpinfo/globalcitizenship/environment

Kane County residents should check out:

www.co.kane.il.us/Environment/recycle/electronic.htm/recycle.doc



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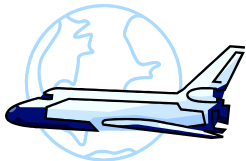
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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org
Courtesy of APCUG



Program for the June Meeting:

Microsoft Movie Maker

Presented by:
Bill Powell

The Next Meeting Will Be at 9:15 A.M.

June 16, 2007

At the Civic Center location
5 Ashlawn Avenue, Montgomery, Illinois