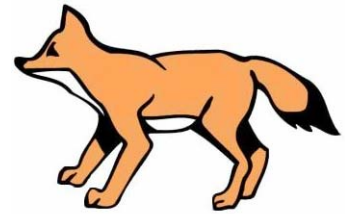


FOX TALES



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"Established January 1985"

June 2008

Summer Begins

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

With temperatures breaking into the 80s, we begin to enjoy our summer weather, albeit a bit wet! At our May meeting, Craig McGregor demonstrated the typing tutoring program, Mavis Beacon Teaches Typing. Craig did a good job on explaining the features of this helpful program. I did a quick program on setting up a printer server using an Ethernet switch to set up a local network and then attached the print server. We were able to print a test page across the network. FYI: having a printer available on a network can be very helpful and work better than sharing a printer off a port on a computer that would need to be left on. I did not explore the Internet printing capabilities. Perhaps at a future meeting? At the meeting we also set up a new do-it-yourself projection screen that allows for us to project a much larger image. We will work on the problems with the skylight at our next meeting. Larry LaSourd won the auction for the Epson S1 PowerLite LCD projector with a bid of \$325. **Thank you Larry!**

I have been collecting various programs for our June DOQ. It will include the Windows XP Service Pack 3. (Take a look at the article that discusses the end of the retail availability for XP to take place on June 30th in this newsletter. I also wrote up my recent experience in purchasing an XP notebook for my wife who will now be working out of our home one day a week.) If anyone has had some hands-on experience with recent DOQ offerings, please submit a short review detailing your impressions of any of the programs to date. So be sure to bring your USB thumb drive to our meeting on June 21st. Presently, 2008 DOQ-2 is at 446 MB! Remember when our Disks of the Quarter were on 1.44 MB floppies? Such a deal!

It may be just a coincidence, but there is a six month gap between Father's Day and Christmas. If you're one of the lucky fathers who may get an interesting technological gift on June 15th, consider sharing it during our "Show and Tell" segment at our next meeting on the 21st. Happy Father's Day!

We continue to look forward to our displaced meeting location in September as we attend the Chicago User Group's sponsored APCUG conference. As we get more information, we will pass it on to our members so we can plan to attend. We will be looking at carpooling and also find out more details about the conference as they develop.

We would like to try to develop more hands-on learning opportunities at our meetings for our members, beginning with something in June.

(Continued on Page 3)

Need Microsoft Windows XP? Last Chance On June 30th!

By Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

According to an online article at TechRepublic.com, XP will no longer be available from retail vendors after June 30, 2008. They go on to report that even though XP is still the most-used version of Windows, Microsoft is going to force retailers to stop selling it in just five weeks. According to Microsoft, June 30th is the last day it will permit retailers and OEMs to sell the nearly seven-year-old operating system.

An online article in Computerworld (May 26, 2008) reports that the newest data from web metrics vendor Net Applications Inc., notes XP as driving 73% of the personal computers that went online last month, five times the nearest competitor, Microsoft Corp.'s own Windows Vista. The article answers some basic questions:

How long until Microsoft shuts off the XP spigot? Five weeks from today (May 26th) is the last day Microsoft will officially allow retailers to sell the old operating system and let major computer makers -- called "OEMs," for "original equipment manufacturers" -- to sell PCs with XP pre-installed. Monday, June 30, is the EOL -- or End-Of-Life, a term Dell Inc., not Microsoft, has publicly used -- for XP's retail and OEM availability.

So what's the June 18 date I've heard about? That's the day that Dell has said is the last possible day for its customers to buy a machine running Windows XP. "To meet Microsoft's June 30 last-day-to-ship OEM Windows XP deadline, June 18 is the last time to purchase a Dell laptop, desktop, or workstation with an OEM Windows XP license," Dell says on its web site. Other big-name OEMs, such as Hewlett-Packard Co. and Lenovo Group Ltd., have not announced cutoff dates, but they must also abide by Microsoft's rules that no XP-based system can ship after June 30.

Are there any loopholes? A "downgrade" clause in Microsoft's guidelines for OEMs lets computer makers install Windows XP Professional -- but not the more common and less expensive Windows XP Home -- on new PCs at a customer's request when those machines are ordered with Windows Vista Business or Windows Vista Ultimate.

Dell took advantage of the clause to announce last month that it would use the downgrade rights of Vista Business and Vista Ultimate to install XP Professional free of charge at the factory. Assuming customers want to, they can later use the included Vista installation media to upgrade from XP Professional. Other vendors are doing similar things. HP, for example, also offers a free at-the-factory XP Professional downgrade option on some systems sold with Vista Business.

I would report that I recently purchased a Lenovo Laptop at Tiger Direct that had XP Pro installed. As of the writing of this article, they also sell XP in several flavors that are still, "In stock" items. It is imaginable that eBay will also be a place to buy XP after the June 30th cutoff. It would not be a big surprise to see the laws of supply and demand drive the prices up after June 30th. However, it is expected that Microsoft will be supporting XP for several more years. Maybe it will still be supported when Version 7, the next planned release of a Windows OS, with a release sometime in 2010. I wonder how that will stack up against its predecessors? Time will tell! But if you want to get XP, I suggest doing so as soon as possible!

Another online source, Yahoo Tech, indicated some more FAQ's on April 14...

(Continued on Page 4)

Summer Begins (cont'd)

It's one thing to see someone demonstrate a program, but it is something else altogether if you are more involved in making it happen. It's a great help when people pitch in to help set up before our meetings begin. I am usually too busy to chat during the setup phase as I scramble to have things just right. Good help may be easier to find! With some basic guidelines, we should be able to allow our members to assist with some of the routine tasks that need to be completed before our meetings get under way.

See you the 14th, and bring a friend!

Jon Jackman, FVPCA President

Another Telecommuter's Story

By Jon Jackman – President of the Fox Valley PC Association

My wife works at Viant, a medical support company in Naperville. The drive is not too far as we live close to the toll way near Orchard Road. If she gets started early enough she can miss much of the traffic that plugs up the Ronald Regan Raceway as you approach the Fox River toll plaza. Then there is the recent construction traffic as the Illinois Department of Transportation and Illinois Tollway Authority work on widening the lanes from Orchard to the Fox River. That includes a new wider bridge. These delays extend her travel time quite a bit and contribute to more gas use, the price of which has gone sky high. Years ago when she worked for Travelers, she was able to work at home. They put in a dedicated line and provided a desktop machine with a larger CRT monitor. It was a great option as she was raising our younger sons at home at the time. Recently, she told me that she had an option to work one day out of the home. I have a couple of XP machines linked together and she suggested that I take one and give it to her to use at home. It would need to be stripped of all utilities according to the IT people at Viant. They also indicated that it had to have Windows XP or Windows 2000 for the operating system. They did not want to set up their applications on a Vista machine. At first she thought it would be easy for me to let her use one of my XP machines, but as I have various programs installed, the IT people at Viant would have a heck of a time removing them. I was able to persuade her to consider the notebook. If she travels or has to take it into work its light weight will make it much easier and would not have the risk that a full size box presents. She has since thanked me for my insight and persistence. Yes dear, you were right, I'm sorry! I use a KVM switch to go back and forth between two mid-sized computers in my office. This allows me to share the Keyboard, Monitor (Video) and Mouse between two machines. It comes in quite handy when I am scanning and one machine (as a copier) and doing word processing on the other. As it will not be possible to buy Windows XP after June 30th, I was fortunate enough to locate a decent laptop from Tiger Direct prior to the deadline. Three years ago I purchased a laptop for about \$1300. I was able to get this Lenovo model for just \$599! (I just checked the website and see that there are only a few left! Look for T70-15017 if you are interested. Also, see the article on XP's End of Life [EOL] in this newsletter.) They removed the PC Doctor software that came with it and installed McAfee as the security program. They did not want any other security software installed. (We'll see how it holds up!)

(Continued on Page 5)

Need Microsoft Windows XP? Last Chance On June 30th! (Cont'd)

By Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

Microsoft originally announced over a year ago that Windows XP would be going off the market in January 2008. XP was later given a brief stay of execution, to June 30, 2008. That deadline is fast approaching, which has led to much panicking from people who aren't quite sure what XP's "going off market" means, exactly.

People are still as confused as ever. So let's take a stab at clarifying, once again, what's going to happen by answering some frequently asked questions about XP's imminent disappearance.

Will Windows XP really no longer be on sale after June 30? Sorry for the double negative, but no. All this means is that Microsoft will stop selling the OS. Finding a computer with XP preinstalled will likely be very difficult, as well. However, you'll still be able to find copies for the foreseeable future, and likely the unforeseeable one, too. See for yourself: You can find copies of just about any Microsoft product, including ancient versions of Windows and even MS-DOS, by simply searching online. But hang on to your current copy of Windows XP. You may need it down the road if you don't want to move to Vista.

Will I be forced to upgrade to Vista soon? No. But it will get harder and harder not to, especially since new software and peripherals are likely to stop working with XP. That could take years.

Will my XP machine stop working in June? No, but Microsoft will stop releasing non-security software updates to the masses on April 14, 2009. But let's be clear: XP will continue to "work" even after this point.

Will Microsoft shut off product activation for XP after June? No, that would be crazy. While no one has said this will happen, it's conceivable that Windows could shut down product activation for XP at some point. But that would only happen after XP reaches its end-of-support term (when all support plans expire). The good news for you: That happens on April 8, 2014, which should be plenty of time to get the kinks worked out of Vista-or switch to a Mac, Linux, or anything else. Bottom line: Your copy of XP will work, totally legally, for at least six more years.

What about this exception for Windows XP Home Edition I hear about? Doesn't apply to you. Microsoft will continue to sell XP to makers of ultra-cheap laptops like the Asus Eee PC until 2010 because they just can't run Vista. But it is *not* going to make XP Home Edition available as installable software to end-users.

What about after 2014? Well, that's unclear. But it's possible XP will stop being installable at that point. Microsoft's official policy is that these dates have "no affect [sic] on how long you can use a product," which may imply product activation will work forever. However, two things come to mind:

- 1) Even the most die-hard XP enthusiast will probably be ready to upgrade at that point (as XP will be nearly 15 years old, and your PC will be dead by then, I'm sure).
- 2) Even if Microsoft shuts off product activation, the hacker community will certainly make dozens of tools to let you continue using XP with abandon. Fret not.

Can I install XP on a PC that has Vista already on it? Yes. You can delete any partition with any OS on it (and reformat it) during the installation of XP. If you're feeling brave, you can even run both Operating Systems' at the same time by setting up a dual-boot machine.

So you can see that the end is near and also far away... Hope this is a good heads up for our members! We will be looking into the dual boot option very soon!

Jon Jackman

Another Telecommuter's Story (cont'd)

By Jon Jackman – President of the Fox Valley PC Association

The people in the IT department at Viant set it up so that she has remote access into her desktop at work via a Virtual Private Network (VPN.) This would include the Microsoft Office Suite as well as Lotus Notes for e-mail that she is running on her machine at the office. They discouraged use of a WiFi connection, so I was able to connect using a regular Ethernet cable that had been run to that room previously. (It was my son's bedroom before he moved out after college.) We may revisit remote user access at a future general meeting.

I picked up a USB floppy drive for about \$15, so that I could boot into Ghost 2003 from a floppy drive and save the original configuration onto three DVDs that were burned in the notebook's own DVD burner. I then burned an image after Viant had set it up. The BIOS in newer machines and notebooks will recognize an external USB device in the boot sequence. This solves a major headache that I had previously with working with Ghost!

All in all, she seems quite pleased with the machine. The part-time aspect is nice, as she is able to maintain contact with her coworkers on a regular basis. Initially there were some glitches with passwords, but it seems to run well now. I will keep you posted on how this solution works out for her. Should help with the gas too!

Jon Jackman, FVPCA President

O'Reilly User Group Program

Vice President Tom Anzalone

I am excited to let our membership know that we now have a great opportunity to purchase computer books through O'Reilly publishers. If you are not familiar with O'Reilly publishers, they offer a great selection of computer related books written in plain English. I have personally read many of their books over the years and found them to be easy to understand and a great reference on many computer topics. As a user group member, you as a club member, will have some great deals. Group members receive a 35% discount on O'Reilly, No Starch, Paraglyph, PC Publishing, Pragmatic Bookshelf, Rocky Nook, SitePoint, or YoungJin products purchased directly from O'Reilly. The discount code members should use is DSUG. Orders can be placed online at <http://www.oreilly.com/store/> or by calling 800-998-9938. Members are also entitled to a discount on O'Reilly conferences and tutorials.

Other special discount offers may also be forwarded to our group from time to time. In addition, they regularly donate books and other promotional items for raffles or auctions to help us raise money, or for meeting door prizes. Some of their authors are able to speak at group meetings so hopefully we can arrange for this for future meetings. I encourage you to purchase a book and write a review for our monthly newsletter, post a review on Amazon or other site to support O'Reilly for their support of all computer user groups.

So, I hope you take advantage of this great offer and if you do, send me an email at tanzalone@gmail.com and let me know your experience.



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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 for (June) will be at the Oswego Civic Center, 5 Ashlawn Ave, Montgomery, IL 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!

"USERS HELPING USERS"

Membership Renewals

No renewals this month!

Thank-You for your continuing support!!
Don't forget to check the mailing label for your dues date!

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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July 14, August 11

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540 S. Randall Rd. St.Charles, Il 8:00am-12:00pm

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Fox Valley PC Association Officers & Board Members

President

Jon Jackman 630-892-7767

e-mail jockjokj@aol.com

Vice President

Tom Anzalone 630-482-9808

e-mail tanzalone2@earthlink.net

Secretary

Bill Palmer 630-859-8939

e-mail william_palmer@att.net

Treasurer

Richard Chamberlain 630-892-9361

e-mail Rsqrd chmb@aol.com

Newsletter Layout Editor

Dean Holste 630-966-8521

e-mail deanholste(at)sbcglobal.net

Membership Coordinator

Bill Powell 630-553-1887

e-mail wpnkp81@sbcglobal.net

Website Webmaster

VACANT

e-mail:

Publicity Coordinator

VACANT

e-mail

Program Coordinator

Craig McGregor 630-554-1923

e-mail Craig.McGregor@ACXIOM.COM

Fox Tales

Fox Valley PC Association
P.O. Box 369
Oswego, IL 60543-0369

The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

www.fvpca.org
Courtesy of APCUG



Have a computer hardware problem or a technical question? Head over to our website and click on the red question mark to send your question! We will research it and have an answer at the next meeting or sooner if needed.

June Program:

Exploring Disk of the Month Favorites

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

June 21, 2007

At the Oswego Civic Center
5 Ashlawn Ave. Montgomery, Illinois