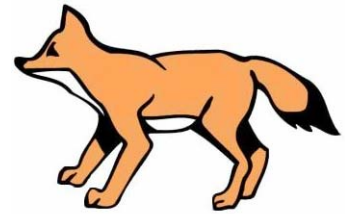


# Fox Tales



Volume 22, Issue 6

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

June 2009

## Summer Is Here at Last! Maybe Broadband too!

Jon Jackman – President FVPCA

Our search for more bandwidth continues as several members of the FVPCA will be meeting this month with the Oswegoland Park District to discuss the options available at the South Point location. We shared some information about this facility at our last general meeting. Some of our future programs will involve the need for greater Internet speed. When we tested the connection at the Civic Center location, the connection speed was only 134 kbps, which will not allow us to do some of the exciting things we want to in the coming year. As discussed previously, using Microsoft Live Meeting (hosted by APCUG) we will attempt to allow members who may be unable to attend a general meeting to participate from a remote location via the Internet. Hopefully, other opportunities for programs that require faster Internet speeds will then become available for us, including the possibility of having remote presentations piped into our meetings. If you have any topics for programs that may interest you in this regard, please submit them to us.

This past month we ran a video "How Compact Discs Are Made", and also reviewed the Lake House DTV Project. As you may know by now, analog television will be discontinued on June 12<sup>th</sup>. If you do not have any cable or satellite connection, you will need to have a television that has a built-in receiver for ATSC over the air signals (OTA), or a set-top converter box that will convert the digital signal to an analog one so that you may watch it on an older television. The program for May also involved a review of a program called "EDraw." The overview included reviewing the tools needed for drawing flow charts something this program does very well.

Tom Anzalone is back from his trip to Disney World. At our June meeting he will give an overview of a Linux style alternative operating system, Ubuntu. He has installed it on a thumb drive and will be able to demonstrate this free alternative to Windows. The program will be entitled, "Ubuntu on a Stick." I have had a peek at Ubuntu and it is a remarkable open source operating system. It will be interesting to see Tom run it through its paces. 2009 DOQ-2 will be available at the June meeting for those members interested. We will review a list of the downloaded "freeware" programs at that time.

Speaking of new operating systems, Windows 7 Release Candidate 1 is available for download. The temporary license will expire in June, 2010. The official release date is October 22, 2009. Several of our members have taken the beta version for a test drive and will share their opinions and observations at an upcoming meeting. At the present time I am pondering reinstalling Windows XP Professional. It has been some time since I had a clean install on this machine. Despite my best efforts to keep it clean from junk, over time it has become sluggish and temperamental. If I get around to it, I will take notes and share my experience in an upcoming program. I may be setting up a dual boot with Windows 7 RC. We will see.

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## Summer Is Here at Last! Maybe Broadband too! (Cont'd)

By the time that this newsletter is distributed, we will have completed another phase of the First Tee of Aurora Project. The FVPCA has acquired an inexpensive all-in-one (AIO) printer that will be installed at the First Tee office. I have installed several HP J6480 AIO printers and have found them to work very well across a network with either a wired or wireless (Wi-Fi) connection, unlike the old Lexmark AIO printer that they have been using for several years. The next stage of this SIG will involve assistance with developing a database application to help with the record-keeping and registration of the youthful golfers in this program.

I recently used Skype to speak with my brother who was in New Delhi, India. We had some problems with the video part of the call, but the audio was crystal clear. The following week I was able to set up a conference call with three of my brothers who were stateside. All four of us were able to speak with my other brother as he travels around the world. This technology is truly remarkable! I recently had problems that turned out to be a short in my microphone. After I had that repaired, everything is working well for me on Skype.

On that note, I had set Skype up for a friend some time ago and he has been very pleased with its utility. However, he recently was called by a friend via Skype. That caller had been infected with some sort of Malware and a security warning popped up to warn my friend of the threat, so he did not take the call. The caller contacted Microsoft and they directed him to a security site that helped him clean up the malware and troublesome software on his machine. One of our members, Kris Simon, had a similar experience and wrote an article for this month's newsletter. We all need to maintain a vigilant attitude with the security of our computers. Be sure to check out Kris's article in this month's *Fox Tales*.

Warmer weather is upon us and I look forward to this season for golfing and several fishing trips. My trip to upper Ontario in July will be a highlight among many for this summer. I grew up using an open reel casting rod, then migrated to a spin casting rig. I have used various spin casting combos over the years. At the suggestion of my fishing buddy, I just picked up a new hi-tech casting rod and reel for those BIG northern pike and walleye that I will encounter. I now find that I have to learn how to cast all over again to avoid getting snarled up in a backlash! It reminds us that we need to get out there and enjoy the challenges that we face each and every day, and be grateful!

Jon

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### Getting Construction Information

**Bill Powell—Membership Coordinator**

The Tollway offers a variety of ways for drivers to get the latest information on construction and traffic on our roads, including a Construction Communications Initiative to inform drivers while they are on the road so they can make informed decisions.

- [www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com)—Construction section—for details by road
- 1-800-TOLL-FYI—daily lane closures
- Roadway and electronic signs
- [www.gcmtravel.com](http://www.gcmtravel.com)—travel times
- Sign up for e-mail updates:
  - Up-to-the-minute traffic by road—[www.nbcchicago.com](http://www.nbcchicago.com)
  - Construction Newsletter—[www.illinoistollway.com](http://www.illinoistollway.com)

# Windows 7 RC1 Update

Dean Holste—FVPCA Member

I just wanted to update you on my experiences with Windows 7 RC1. I started out by building a new computer. This box contains the following:

**XFx 750i SLI N-Force Socket 775 Motherboard w/SATA, Gigabit Network, 2 GB's of RAM, built-in audio, and a plethora of USB, Firewire, and E-SATA ports.**

**Intel Core 2 Duo 2.80GHz Processor 45nm, L2 Cache 3MB, LGA775**

**Sapphire Radeon HD 4770, PCI-E, 512 MB with GDDR5 memory w/ dual DVI ports and one HDMI port w/ 7.1 Channel Audio**

**Western Digital 320 Gig Hard Drive (really overkill for me!)**

Just about the time I completed the build, I read that Microsoft was going to release Windows 7 RC1. I then downloaded the iso file and burned it to a DVD. Making sure my BIOS was set to boot off the DVD Drive, I loaded the disc, and was greeted with the Windows install screens. To me, there was not much difference in the way this version loaded. But I will say that even though the install package stated there would be “numerous” re-starts I only had two of them. It has been written that this version of Windows is leaner than previous versions and I tend to agree. The install seemed to go faster than previous installs I've done. Maybe it was the Dual Core processor I asked myself. My install only took about 30 minutes including the two re-starts. I then threw in the motherboard drivers disc and set that up. Next came the graphics card drivers. Interestingly the graphics set up software stated that Windows Vista was detected. So far so good.

I then connected the Ethernet cable from my network and fired up the browser. Win 7 automatically asked me if I wanted to set up a home network group. I clicked yes and it gave me a “security code” to add other “Win7” computers to the group. Although I can connect to the Internet, I cannot get the other computers on my network to see the Win 7 box. I know it's a “home group” thing, but I haven't had time to really sit down and troubleshoot it. Of course I performed the obligatory Windows update and it sent a couple of drivers back to be installed. I then went to the Sapphire website and got the latest drivers for the video card.

This box has worked flawlessly so far, save for one issue. I was on the MSN website and clicked on a video link. Once the video started, I went to full screen. When that happened the video started to sputter, become pixilated, and eventually froze. I had to re-start the computer to clear it off the screen. The hazards of an incomplete operating system. Both of my sons have created log on accounts without any help from me. They have both played on-line games, and even loaded Flight Simulator 2004 on it and ran it successfully along with a couple of other older pre-teen and teenage games. Despite the Microsoft documentation that warns against making the Win7RC1 computer your primary box, I think this will become my main computer after all. I've had to stop everyone in the family from loading more programs and games due to the popularity of this box. Once I clean it up a bit, I will pull an image of the drive and put it in a safe place, just in case!

# Stealth Spyware: The New Spyware Threat

Kristofer Simon – FVPCA Member

For most of us, the word spyware is not an unfamiliar term anymore. It can mean cookies that track your movements on web pages or other little programs that put garbage applications on your machine. While spyware intentions have not changed much over the past few years, their infection practices appear to be doing so. The newest kind of spyware, which I personally came in contact with a few months ago, should be referred to as “stealth” spyware. What I mean by that is that this spyware installs on your machine without you even knowing about it. You do not become aware of the spyware infection on your machine generally until the next time you reboot and the spyware program activates. In this short article, I will describe my experience with a piece of this spyware and what I had to do to get rid of it so that, hopefully, none of you have the same experience that I did.

The piece of spyware that infected my machine was called “**XP Police Antivirus.**” I became infected, I believe, after visiting a third party website that provided updated information and screen shots for Nintendo Wii games that were about to hit the market and that were in development. As I said earlier, this program was a piece of “stealth” spyware and installed on my machine without my knowledge. It did not slow down the performance of my machine at all (at least not that I was able to notice), nor did any installation screens pop up during the install. The next time I booted up my machine, an icon appeared on the lower right hand part of my screen that looked like the XP Security Center shield. When I put my cursor over it to see what it was, it said “XP Police Antivirus.” For just a split second, I wondered if maybe Microsoft had tried to install a new version of an antivirus program they created on my machine, but I quickly realized that this was a piece of spyware that had infected my machine without my knowledge.

The program tried to fool me into thinking that anonymous users from the Internet (it would put public IP addresses in the warning dialog boxes) were attempting to access my computer maliciously and it recommended that I install the full program to prevent these attacks. I wasn't going to do this because I had the full and up-to-date version of McAfee Security Center so I knew this was bogus. When I tried to remove the program through the Add/Remove Programs option in the Control Panel, I was able to wipe out the program temporarily but the next time I rebooted my machine, the application icon was in my system tray again and I was getting the same bogus dialog boxes about people trying to access my computer. This spyware also put another program on my machine called Security Center 2009 that also was made to look as realistic as possible.

Finally, I went on my Motorola Q Smart Phone and searched on the XP Police Antivirus program. Immediately, I got a link to a page that told me that this was a piece of stealth spyware and told me how to get rid of it. I actually had to go into the computer's registry (kind of like the computer's brain) and delete the entry that the spyware had made there, as well as delete a number of files the program had put on my machine. Once I did that, the spyware programs (both XP Police Antivirus and Security Center 2009) were finally gone but I still had one more hurdle to overcome from this program. The spyware also installed a software program known as a “browser hijacker.”

(Continued on Page 5)

# Stealth Spyware: The New Spyware Threat (cont'd)

For those of you who don't know what this is, let me explain. Let's say you launch a web browser and you want to go to [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) to see the latest news. You type [www.cnn.com](http://www.cnn.com) into the address bar of your browser and either hit "go" or hit return. The browser initially begins to go to that page, but suddenly the browser gets "re-directed" to another page. This happens every time you try to access a web page. These programs are EXTREMELY hard to get rid of but I was able to get rid of the one on my machine using a third party program that found the program and removed it.

While this may sound like a dire situation, the most important thing you can do as an end user in these situations is to remain calm and scrutinize every program that you see on your machine, that you haven't specifically downloaded (ex. a game, a patch from Microsoft, etc.). If you do get infected by stealth spyware and can't seem to get rid of it, go to a non-infected PC or web enabled cell phone and do a search on the program's name. You will almost always get a link telling you how to get rid of the program. Also, never send personal information over the Internet to any site that you cannot confirm is a legitimate site that you use (ex. Amazon.com, Paypal, etc.). Using these steps you can help eliminate most of the problems caused by spyware, but you should always remain vigilant. You can get infected with a stealth spyware program from just about any website, so be careful out there!

*Kris Simon is a FVPCA member and submitted this article for the Fox Tales. He has presented a program on the Wii gaming system in January, 2009. If you have an interesting experience, please share it with us!*

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## Preventive Computer Maintenance

Written by Stuart Rabinowitz, Editor-in-Chief, the PULP, newsletter of the Hartford User Group Exchange, CT  
[www.huge.org](http://www.huge.org) s.e.rabinowitz (at) att.net

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The single most important maintenance item that should be done on a regular basis is BACKUP YOUR DATA. What the schedule is depends on much data you can afford to lose. Try daily/weekly to an external hard drive and monthly to a CD/DVD, or use a backup application. Make sure that your software is updated; primarily the operating system and your primary browser. Use utility software: get a sense of how your computer operates when it's operating correctly. For the Mac use 'Activity Monitor' or 'Tech Tools'. On the PC (in the control panel) administrative tools/performance. You can also check your internet connection speed at: <http://reviews.cnet.com/internet-speedtest/?tag=ont.int.band> For the PC users--do regular spyware/virus scans. Make sure the definitions are up to date. Primarily for PC users--Defragment your hard drive (this may take a while). Mac users do not really need to do this since OS X (10.3 +) does it automatically. Free up some space on your hard drive (PC users can use disk cleanup; Mac users can use CacheOutX). Clean out old files that you don't use, after you've backed them up. Uninstall those programs that you don't use. Apple recommends that you have at least 10% free, a bit more for PCs, this will improve virtual memory and may improve disk performance.

**Clean the Hardware** -- to clean the monitor and keyboard use a dry microfiber cloth (be sure the computer is turned off) and gently (don't press hard) wipe the monitor, unplug the keyboard and wipe. If there are hard to clean areas, spray the cloth lightly

with a vinegar/water solution and then wipe. For an optical mouse wipe the bulb gently. You'll need to open a mechanical mouse to clean the rollers. Use a cotton swab with isopropyl alcohol. If your computer case is easy to open (i.e. not an iMac or Mac Mini), then open it up (after shutting down and unplugging it) and use compressed air to blow out the dust. Do not use a vacuum since it may create a static charge that could damage the electronics. After closing the case you can clean out the fan in the back.

### You'll also probably want to have the following tools:

Screwdrivers--standard, phillips, and torx in different sizes (especially the small ones)

Nutdrivers--1/4" and 3/16"

Pliers, part grabbers, and tweezers

Compressed air

Microfiber cleaning cloths

Antistatic strap--especially if you want to put your hands inside the computer



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

**Dave Chrestenson  
Ana Eng**

**Thank-You for your continuing support!!**

## **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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#### **Location:**

Kane Co. Circuit Clerk Office  
540 S. Randall Rd. St.Charles, Il 8:00am-12:00pm

#### **Items Accepted for Recycling:**

Personal Computers, Monitors, Printers, Scanners, Modems, Tape, Disk, CD Drives, Cables, Keyboards, Mice, Plotters (*Limit of 25 pieces on Towers/CPU's and Monitors*)

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# Fox Tales

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The Fox Valley PC Association Web site is:

**[www.fvpca.org](http://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:**

**Ubuntu On a Stick**

**With Tom Anzalone**

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

**June 20, 2009**

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