

The

Computer Link

February 2010

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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Send newsletter
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➔DEADLINE➔

for NEXT ISSUE,
One week after meeting

Charles Wrightson Returns to Explain Windows 7

For the sixth time this century computer guru and edutainer Charles Wrightson returned to the NNCUG to explain the ins and outs of converting to Windows 7. As usual, the membership came in high numbers, gave him a workout and were happy to hear his pearls of wisdom.

Vista users who are irritated with the nanny security flags and generally slow operations will appreciate the Windows 7 improvements. They should have no problem converting by upgrading to the recommended

home or ultimate edition. The professional edition is unnecessary unless you have a server and many stations.

XP users who are happy with a good working system should consider waiting until they are ready to buy a new computer, according to Wrightson. He likes XP and is not a fan of Vista. If wanting to upgrade anyway, XPers should consider

obtaining a 64 bit processor, 4gb of ram and a 512gb video card to maximize windows 7 home edition's capabilities. Intel processors seem to be more compatible with the new software.

He is also a big fan of 600 watt power supplies with two fans and multiple hard drives. He

leaves his computers on or in sleep mode with surge protection and frequently updated security programs. It is easier on the system.

Those converting to **Windows 7 from XP** should copy all files to a

separate hard drive or CD and thoroughly clean the hard drive before reformatting and installing. After re-installing your program software, you may need to hunt for drivers for old printers and other peripherals. You also may be enticed to upgrade to more recent program versions.

Windows 7 has many new "toys"
Continued on Page 5



Charles Wrightson

Photo by Chris Christenson

Windows Experience Index

By Sandy Berger,

CompuKiss

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Have you ever wondered how fast your computer is compared to other computers? Or would you like to know which component you should upgrade in order to speed up your computer? In Windows XP and older versions of Windows, there were always ways to get performance information. However, this information was given in cryptic charts and numbers. The average person would have had to spend a lot of time to find and assess that information. Now, however, with Windows Vista and Windows 7, Microsoft has made finding and assessing this information much easier.

Inside of Vista and Windows 7 is a feature called the Windows Experience Index. This is a simple tool that gives you an easy-to-read assessment of your **computer's performance**. To access this feature, click on the Start button and choose Control Panel. In Windows Vista, choose the Classic View. In Windows 7 choose one of the icon views. Then click on Performance Information and Tools. You will be given a snapshot of your computers performance.

The report is divided into five categories: processor, memory, graphics, gaming graphics, and hard disk. Each one of these has a score that indicates your computer's performance in that area. A Base Score is given in bold letters. You need to be aware that the base score is not the average of the scores, but rather, it is the rating on the slowest component. So if your gaming graphics score is 2.2, your overall score will be 2.2 even if all of the other subscores are higher. The base score is given in this manner assuming that your computer can only be as fast as the slowest component.

Microsoft has made finding and assessing this information much easier.

Currently the scores for a computer running Vista range from 1 to 5.9. The scores for **Window 7 computers range from 1 to 7.9**. They do not go all the way up to 10 because Microsoft is allowing a little leeway for the added performance levels of future hardware components.

Don't be shocked if your computer has a low base score or low subscores. Microsoft says that a score of 2 is adequate for basic computer tasks like email and word processing. Graphics-intensive software like Photoshop and games should have a score of 3 or higher.

If you use your computer for heavy duty computing including media center for multimedia like recording HDTV programs, then subscores in the processor, memory, desktop graphics, gaming graphics, and hard disk categories are all important and should be at least a 3.

In most cases, **inexpensive computers will have the lowest score in the graphics category**. This will be more important in a laptop computer because you cannot easily upgrade the graphics card later. In a desktop computer, you can always add a better graphics later, if you choose to do so.

To give you an idea of how these scores stack up, here's the scoring of my one-year-old dual-core, 64-bit computer that was recently upgraded to Windows 7.

Processor: 6.0
Memory: 6.0
Graphics: 3.8
Gaming Graphics: 3.4
Hard Disk: 5.9
Base Score: 3.4

My computer retailed last year for about \$500 and would currently be selling for less. I do everything on this computer including running as many as 10 programs at once, working with Photoshop, playing movies, and

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Hints for the Wannabe Blogger

By Joan McIlmoyl Cleghorn,
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Do I Need Or Want to Have a Blog? Now, for many, the first question is “what on earth is a blog?” and, “why would I want one?” The origin of the actual word 'blog' comes from the definition of what it really is – a **web log** – which then became shortened to 'blog'.

People are using blogs for many varied purposes. Some use them like a personal diary, as though the world is truly fascinated by the minutiae of their daily lives (though in the case of celebs, that may be the case). Others, for sharing their knowledge of a particular subject which doesn't necessarily lend itself to publishing a book; and still reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest. In many instances now, professional reporters, whether radio, TV or in print, are writing blogs as well as their regular reporting functions. Others, for reporting on the constantly changing happenings in a specific area of interest.

There are two advantages of using **blogs over publishing in the more traditional** ways – first, they can be interactive, allowing the readers to make comments, add to the information or contradict the writer; and,

second, as mentioned, the ability to update immediately with new or additional information.

My purpose in starting a blog at the end of June was prompted by an article in the Family Chronicle which pointed out how, by publishing a **family history book**, relations that you'd never known or connected with would suddenly contact you.

This struck a chord with me as I was in the midst of planning a family history book and wanted to connect with others researching this same family. Obviously, publishing a book wasn't the answer for my particular situation.

After some thought on this, I decided to investigate what was involved in creating a blog, thinking this might accomplish my purpose. Of course, one can use any of the social media sites such as **MySpace, Facebook, etc.** as a type of blog. However, I was looking for specific 'blog' sites. Well, typing 'free blog sites' into Google gave me far more results than I could have dreamed of! Fortunately, there were two with which I was somewhat familiar so I opted to check them out first.

I wanted simple and easy to use.....nothing fancy, just the ability to type whatever I wanted to post and have it work. Obviously I was asking a lot for anything connected with technology right? Actually, wrong. I was able to set up the blog, type out my first posting and have it **online within an hour!**

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recording TV. My point is that even though the scores can go as high as 7.9 on a Windows 7 computer, you don't need extremely high scores to have a very useful computer.

This index is a good way to **pinpoint slower components** that may be worth upgrading. For example, my computer's scores tell me without a doubt, that if I were to purchase a high-end graphics card for my computer, I could almost double its base score and speed its

performance.

While this little tool is a great way to score your own PC, it also excels at letting you see how the **computer you may be thinking of purchasing stacks up** against the others. Most stores that sell computers have a demo running in the store. If that is the case, you can pull up the Windows Experience Index on any computer that you are thinking of purchasing. You can also use it to compare computers. This tool is not perfect, but it does give you a fairly accurate assessment. While you

will still have to compare things like the amount of memory, hard drive size, and cost, you won't have to understand as much about the processors and other components. And best of all, you won't have to **rely as much on the salesman** in the store.

Although I still feel that computers could be made easier to use, the Windows Experience Index is one example of how the newer operating systems are at least making computers easier to understand.

Wannabe Blogger *Continued from Page 3*

You want a site that gives clear, easy to understand directions and allows you to have some choices on the appearance or theme of your blog. Also, if you want some interaction with your readers, **make it easy for them to add their comments**. The site I chose definitely qualified under these points; much more so than the second site I checked out. I also checked out a few that I wasn't as familiar with and found that my first choice was still the best for my purpose. The two choices I initially checked out were Google's Blogspot and Wordpress. They can be found at www.blogspot.com and www.wordpress.com; however, be sure to check out some of the others as well.

Should you decide to start a blog, there is one caveat I'd both read about as well as heard about from others – don't start posting, and collecting followers of the site, only to lose interest, and just stop posting, or be-

come very erratic in your postings. When first starting my blog, I hoped to **post about three times a week**, with no less than once a week. In the nine weeks since I started, I've made 18 posts so have averaged two per week, even though I had a couple of weeks when I didn't make any posts due to the death of my mother.

Now, was posting my blog successful in my original purpose? So far, yes. I've heard from a couple of re-

searchers with whom I'd lost contact a number of years ago, plus another couple of whom I'd never heard, so I certainly accomplished that part of my goal. Another bonus is the information I'm gaining from those connections that I might not have otherwise found. Should you wish to take a look at my blog, here's the address:

www.mcilmoylfamna.blogspot.com . If you decide that having a blog is something you'd like to do, I wish you well, and have fun with it! For tips on 'how to blog' just type '**blog tutorial**' into a search engine and you'll find lots of choices.

2010 NNCUG Officer Slate (Vote at March Meeting)

President. - **Chris Christensen**
 Vice President - **Phil Allen**
 Secretary - **Ann Moss**
 Treasurer - **George Cadmus**
 Member at Large - **BJ McMillan**

Bruce McMillan will be taking over as Editor of the Newsletter

Windows 7 *From page 1*

that make computing simpler and more pleasant. It is leaner and less busy than Vista. One can simply click or shake the mouse to change programs. One can visit many program **screens simultaneously**. One can see pages of several programs and transfer, copy or send multiple documents simultaneously. Wrightson had a list of 12 worthwhile features. Google has little mini-videos and tours. The December *Computerlink* had three articles on Windows 7 that were very helpful (see www.nncug.org/newsletters)

As a finale, Charlie told us how his now teen-age son (who sometimes comes) is doing and what he recently

found and has been anxious to try out. His son now has a **four hard-drive tower** with one for Windows and three for complex games and videos. He has surpassed Charlie on time at the screen and

But Charlie also has a new toy called a **solid state hard-drive** that he considers the wave of the future. For about \$150 and headed down, he has something cooler with exponential capacity that is guaranteed for a million hours with no moving parts and runs cool. Similar but smaller units are coming on certain new small laptops. His can be used as a replacement or new drive on his desk top. He showed us the adapter hardware that allows it to be installed on standard tower installations.

Will progress ever end? Charlie, come back in twelve months or less and tell us all about it.

Thanks for your sage and attention-getting presentation.
Ed.

January Photo of the Month

Dameron Marsh Winter
by Bruce McMillan

in many ways on technical know-how.

Membership Report - January 2010

New - George VanSant, F.N. Lee, Dr. Maricel Baker

RENEW February 2010 - Margaret Alderson, Philip Allan, Susan Christopher, Joanne Crichton, Jerry Hawley, Alden Head, Joe Hecht, Betty Lehman, Doris Lundegard, Joyce Page, B.J. Thomas McMillan, David Mower, Brandon Rohr, Clark Schumacher, Bob Shultz

RENEW January 2010 - Anne Moss, Bill Pregnall

Membership dues are \$20 annually. Please send to:

Jim Thompson, Treasurer, NNCUG, P.O. Box 774, Burgess, VA.

For insertion into our local newspaper advertising, please send to bevnjim@netscape.com no later than 15th of the month.

January 2010 Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 9:45 on 1/16/2010. 42 members and visitors were present.

BJ McMillan asked for volunteers to come forward for next years Board Members election in March. She led a discussion of questions and answers.

The speaker was Charles Wrightson on Windows 7.

We adjourned at 11:45 am.

Don Beard, Secretary

The Computer Link

Northern Neck Computer
Users' Group
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NNCUG Meeting Dates

NNCUG GENERAL MEETING

Third Saturday 9:30 a.m.

Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room

BEGINNERS SIG

***Meets three times a year. Those interested, contact
B.J. McMillan at 580-8666***

GENEALOGY SIG

***Meets bi-monthly, 2nd Tuesday, 1:30 p.m.—RW-C
Contact Ann Thompson at athompson@kaballero.com
to get on the mail list for announcements.***

PHOTOSHOP SIG

***First Tuesday every month, 9 a.m.
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831
or message Bird@kaballero.com***

**For a photo treat visit
www.raptapp.homestead.com**



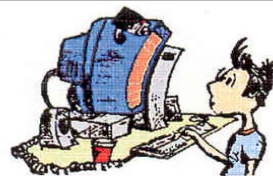
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Computer Help available by appointment. Call Betty Lehman 435-2011 or B.J. McMillan 580-8666

Coming Attractions

Membership—February 20th, 9:30 am NNCUG Website
Photo SIG—February 2, 2010- 9 am—Library