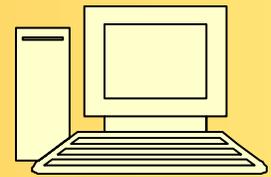


BAY BYTES

Greater Tampa Bay Personal Computer User Group, Inc.



Newsletter

Issue 8

August 2012

26th Year of People Helping People!



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Don't forget to visit our club's site at:

<http://gtbpcug.org>

As well Don Miller's and Darrell Manns' :

<http://www.dmanns.org/dmiller/>

How Criminals Use Google Maps Street View to 'Case The Joint'

Learn how to blur your home from view so the bad guys can't see squat

By Andy O'Donnell, About.com Guide

The Google Maps¹ service just keeps getting better and better. The recent addition of true 3-D terrain makes them even more true to life. Google Maps Street View² is one of my favorite features. It lets you virtually stand in the middle of a road just about anywhere in the world and look around.

Want to see what your old school looks like 10 years later? Punch in the address into Google Maps Street View and, BOOM, you are whisked away to exactly where you told it to go.

Once you choose Street View, you can use your mouse to look up and down, spin around, walk down the block, zoom in on something, just as if you were there. You can see people on the street, all of them seemingly frozen in time by Google's Street View Capture Camera Van that drove by and snapped a panoramic picture that was later stitched together with others to provide you with the surreal experience of being there without really being there.

After you've marveled at the technological wonder that is Google Maps Street View, take a step back and put your 'bad guy hat' on for a second. If you are a criminal, then Google Maps Street View is the best thing since sliced bread. What could be better than being able to virtually 'case the joint' from the privacy of your own home?

Criminals can go to Google Maps, punch in an address, turn on Street View, and check out a residence or building of interest to perform virtual reconnaissance before they break and enter or perform some other nasty deed. Sure the data isn't close to real-time and can be very stale for some areas, but most major buildings aren't going to change a lot over a short period of time. Usually the map data is time-stamped at the bottom of the image so the bad guys know exactly when the image was taken.

Criminals can use Google Maps Street View to:

Continued on the next page

- Locate entrances to buildings
Determine locations of security cameras, gates, etc
- Find good hiding places such as in shrubs and other areas
Find holes or weak spots in perimeter fences
- Locate utility boxes (power, water, gas, etc)
See what make, model, and color of vehicle a building occupant or resident drives
- See if locks, guards, dogs, etc, are normally present
Measure distances³ between objects (using Google Earth⁴) to determine how quickly it would take to run or drive from one point to another.

All of this information can be found without the bad guys ever setting foot near the building or property they are interested in. Using Google Maps Street View arouses a lot less suspicion than if they were to actually visit the site and stand in the middle of the road for a look-see.

Now granted, the Google Street Camera Capture Vans won't drive up a private drive, but if the building is on or near a public street then it is fair game. Google maps is also supposed to automatically obscure (blur) text on buildings, license plates, peoples faces, etc, but even without those tidbits of data, there is still a lot of useful information that is provided via Street View.

How can you prevent your home or business from being seen on Google Street View?

Say you want to blur your home from view on Street View, Google states that they "provide easily accessible tools allowing users to request the further blurring of any image that features the user, their family, their car, or their home." For businesses, the opt out process is less clear.

You can request to have your home, car, etc, removed from Google Maps Street View by completing the following process:

Go to Google Maps and enter your address

Click on the Street View by clicking the little yellow person in the corner of the image window on the left side of the screen

Make sure that the image of your home (or whatever you want blurred) is shown

Click on the "Report a Problem" link in the bottom left corner of the image in the Street View pane on the right side of the screen

Complete the form and click the "Submit" button

Microsoft's Bing Maps⁵ has a similar street view feature called "Streetside View⁶". The opt out process is similar except that you choose the arrow at the bottom right corner of the image and choose the link that says "Report an Image of Concern" to request an opt out image blur.

Your other option is to put a giant blue tarp over your house but I don't think that would be practical so I suggest the opt out method instead.

Windows 7: Upgrading Can Be Hard to Do

The easy in-place upgrade is available only if you have Vista and 16 to 20 gigabytes of free disk space.

Otherwise the process is highly frustrating but is included here for folks who haven't yet upgraded from Windows XP or Vista.

By [Stephen H. Wildstrom](#)

Windows 7 is the best operating system offering from Microsoft ([MSFT](#)) in many years, so when it hits the market on Oct. 22, folks who bought PCs anytime in the past three years or so should be prime candidates for an upgrade. But a lot of them are likely to find the upgrade process surprisingly frustrating.

If you are running Windows XP or any flavor of Vista, which is to say virtually any PC, you qualify for Microsoft's discounted upgrade pricing. The cost varies with the operating system you're coming from and the version of Win7 you're moving to, but the most common jump, from Vista Home Premium to Windows 7 Home Premium, will set you back \$120.

The trouble starts with the installation. Microsoft calls the sort of setup most people will want an "in-place upgrade." You put in the installation DVD, enter an authentication code from the package, and after 45 minutes or so, your Win7 system is ready to go with your programs, settings, and data as they were. I have gone through this drill on several systems, and it is generally painless.

Installation Snags

But many people won't be able to use this method. It's available only if you are already using Vista. And you must have 16 to 20 gigabytes of free disk space, which may be a challenge, especially on ultralight systems with solid-state drives. I could not upgrade a Lenovo ([LNVGY](#)) ThinkPad with a 64 GB SSD drive because I couldn't free up enough space. What's more, if you have a 32-bit version of Vista—almost certainly the case if your system is more than about nine months old—you'll be stuck with a 32-bit version of Win7. More on the significance of that in a moment.

If you can't do an in-place upgrade, you'll be forced into a "custom install," a far more difficult process. Your data will be left intact, but plan on spending hours reinstalling all of your applications, meaning you'll have to dig out the original software disks, the Web addresses of download sites, and all your installation keys.

Microsoft says it isn't offering an easy in-place upgrade from Windows XP systems because the bulk of such computers are too old and underpowered to run Win7. It can't prevent unsuitable upgrades, but it wants to discourage them. Microsoft also realizes some users will face hardware and software incompatibilities with Win7, which it would like to avoid. (There were such problems going from XP to Vista.) The odd thing is, Microsoft offers free software that tells you if your machine will run into incompatibilities—say, whether it will work with your old printer. Why doesn't the company just let customers use this tool rather than throwing up roadblocks?

What's Microsoft Thinking?

Now let's go back to 32-bit vs. 64-bit, a reference to the amount of data and instructions the processor can gobble at one bite. Almost all new PCs sold in the past three years have fast, 64-bit hardware. When Vista first came out in 2007, some programs and a lot of accessories, such as printers and scanners, couldn't work with the 64-bit version, so the 32-bit Vista was almost universally installed. Most of those problems have been resolved, and since last fall manufacturers have been installing 64-bit Vista by default on most systems. But any machine more than about nine months old probably came with 32-bit Vista or XP, which means it's subject to the same limits as older PCs. The most important limit: 32-bit systems can't take advantage of more than 3 gigabytes of memory even if, as is often the case, more physical memory is installed.

Continued on the next page

Normally, adding memory is the cheapest way to boost performance, especially if you run lots of programs simultaneously or keep a lot of browser windows open. Now, many users with state-of-the-art hardware face a cruel choice between accepting the constraints of 32-bit Win7 or reinstalling all of their applications.

It's not at all clear why Microsoft made its upgrade options so restrictive. In effect, it is telling its customers to move to Windows 7 only when they buy a new computer. The company has no financial motivation for doing this, since it makes more money selling \$120 retail copies to upgraders than it gets from manufacturers licensing Windows on new systems. And even computer makers who should be pleased with customers being given an incentive to buy new equipment are less than thrilled: They know that complaints about the difficulty of upgrading PCs sold last year are more likely to land on their doorsteps than on Microsoft's.

<http://techtalk.pcpitstop.com/2012/05/01/windows-8-the-view-from-the-inside/?rob-insidewin8=>

Windows 8 So you are running Windows XP on your home computer. But, the old PC just isn't what it used to be. It's gotten very slow, not enough memory; hard drive is nearly filled, etc. And, Microsoft's support for Windows XP will terminate in less than 2 years. You passed on Windows Vista a few years back because everyone was complaining about it. You also passed on Windows 7, even though user reports have been outstanding. Media reports that Windows 8 will be for sale this fall. Should you wait for Windows 8, or buy Windows 7 before Windows 8 hits the retail stores and Windows 7 is no longer available? Click on the web link below to help you make up your mind. While on that web site, make sure you view the 4 minute video of the man using the preview version of Windows 8.

<http://tinyurl.com/7bylg9w>

To export the Favorites folder in IE8 follow these steps:

In Internet Explorer, click Favorites, click the down-arrow next to Add to Favorites, and then click Import and Export. Click Export to a file, and then click Next.

Click to select the Favorites check box, and then click Next. Select the Favorites folder that you want to export. If you want to export all Favorites, select the top level Favorites folder. Otherwise, select the individual folder that you want to export. Click Next.

Note: By default, Internet Explorer creates a Bookmark.htm file in your Documents folder. If you want to use a name other than Bookmark.htm, or if you want to store the exported Favorites in a folder other than the Documents folder, specify the new file and folder name.

Click Next.

Note: If you already have a file that has the same name, Internet Explorer asks you to replace it. Click Yes to replace the file. Click No to provide a new file name.

Click Export.

Click Finish.

From a newsletter by Microsoft Windows 7 News

A brief guide re upgrading to Windows 8. <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-US/windows/explore/newsletter>

Reports claim that Microsoft has told it's partners that full upgrades to Windows 8 will only be possible with Windows 7 machines. ZDNet cited unnamed sources who said that Microsoft has shared this news with selected partners.

Microsoft did announce a few upgrade paths for the Windows 8 Consumer preview when they released that back in February, and they are still pretty much the same.

So here's what we can expect:

- Windows 7 Starter, Home Basic and Home Premium PCs will be able for a full upgrade to Windows 8. That means that all applications, data, user accounts and Windows settings will be kept.
- Users will also be able to upgrade to Windows 8 Pro from Windows 7 Starter, Home Basic, Home Premium, Professional and Windows 7 Ultimate, whilst keeping all applications, data, user accounts and Windows settings.
- For those looking to upgrade to Windows 8 Enterprise, only Windows 7 Professional and Enterprise versions will be able to make the move and retain applications, data, user accounts and Windows settings.
- Windows Vista users however won't be quite as lucky. If you don't have SP1 installed you will be able to upgrade to Windows 8 but only your personal files/data will be saved. If you have SP1 installed your system settings along with your data will be carried across in the move.
- Windows XP users will only be able to upgrade to Windows 8 and keep their personal files/data if they have Service Pack 3 or higher installed.
- Users won't be able to upgrade to Windows 8 and keep their Windows settings, files or applications if they are doing a cross-language installation. However there is an additional option that allows you to keep your data if you do the install using Windows 8 Setup
- For those of you looking to change architecture ie. 32 bit to 64 bit, you won't be able to do this. You'll have to completely wipe your hard drive and install Windows 8 from scratch.

These upgrade paths are very similar to the ones that were available with Windows 7. However Microsoft did make a greater effort to make the upgrade from Windows XP to Windows 7 as painless as possible since Windows XP had a very large proportion of the market at the time.

Fifth-Generation Wi-Fi Is Coming: Are You Ready for 802.11ac?

By Michael Brown

We're on the verge of the biggest change in wireless networking since 2007. Fifth-generation Wi-Fi technology promises to deliver faster-than-cable speed--without the cables.

What's more, 802.11ac will use a modulation scheme that quadruples the amount of data that will fit on an encoded carrier signal. The maximum bandwidth per spatial stream in 802.11n is 150 mbps, which means that an 802.11n router outfitted with three transmit and three receive antennas can deliver maximum theoretical throughput of 450 mbps. In contrast, the maximum bandwidth in 802.11ac jumps to 433 mbps per spatial stream, and the maximum number of spatial streams increases from three to eight. So the theoretical maximum throughput on an 802.11ac network will eventually be several times that of gigabit Ethernet. First-generation devices, however, will be limited to using either two or three transmit and receive antennas to deliver a theoretical throughput maximum of 866 mbps or 1.3 gbps).



Trendnet's TEW-811DR router will support 802.11ac.

As we've seen with 802.11n networks, real-world throughput will likely be one-third to one-half as fast as the theoretical maximums. Still, even mobile devices outfitted with 802.11ac chipsets and just one transmit and one receive antenna--think smartphones and tablets--should be able to handle more than twice the bandwidth that today's devices with 802.11n chipsets can manage. With bandwidth-intensive applications such as videoconferencing and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) moving from the desktop to smartphones and tablets, 802.11ac networks will become essential infrastructure elements for businesses large and small.



To overcome the 5GHz band's shorter range, 802.11ac chipsets will utilize transmit and receive beam-forming technology. Beam forming was an optional element in the 802.11n spec, but its implementation is mandatory in 802.11ac. Most of today's 802.11n devices use omnidirectional signal transmission and reception. Signals propagate in a series of concentric rings, like the ripples you create by dropping a stone in a pond.

With beam forming, the router and its clients develop an awareness of each other's relative location, so they can coherently focus their transmission streams at each other. Without beam forming, reflected signals may arrive out-of-phase and cancel each other out, reducing total bandwidth. A beam-forming chipset can adjust the signals' phase to overcome that problem, thereby substantially increasing usable bandwidth.

The first generation of 802.11ac routers, such as the Trendnet TEW-811DR, will be concurrent dual-band models that support 802.11n clients on the 2.4GHz frequency band and 802.11ac clients on the 5GHz band. These devices are likely to reach the market in the third quarter of this year. Laptops with 802.11ac chipsets should arrive in time for the winter holiday season, with mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets following in early 2013. The Wi-Fi Alliance, the marketing consortium that has assumed responsibility for ensuring that wireless networking products interoperate properly, plans to begin its 802.11ac certification program in early 2013.



How can I select text and move around a webpage with my keyboard?

Rather than using a mouse to select text and move around within a webpage, you can use standard navigation keys on your keyboard-HOME, END, PAGE UP, PAGE DOWN, and the arrow keys. This feature is called Caret Browsing and is named after the caret-or cursor-that appears when you edit a document.

To turn on Caret Browsing:

In Internet Explorer, do one of the following:

- " Press F7
- " Click the Page button, and then click Caret Browsing.

Click Yes to turn on Caret Browsing.

Helpful Tips:

All about a Hard Drive failure

http://ask-leo.com/spinrite_repair_hard_disk_failures_and_recover_your_data.html?awt_l=NQ66_&awt_m=Jb9PEfTEHZdfbL

Tips how to send PPS presentation in e-mail

<http://www.geekinspired.com/computer-software/why-cant-i-email-my-powerpoint-presentation/>



Is Your Internet Security up to Date?

Antivirus up to date?

Firewall?

Windows up to date?

Spy Ware?

See how to protect your computer at:

<http://gtbpcug.org/protect/>



More about Internet Threats

Hackers Fake Microsoft Update; Spread Malware

By Brandon Dimmel

<http://www.infopackets.com/>

Cyber-crooks have reportedly used fake Microsoft credentials to spread the new Flame malware. In response, Microsoft has issued an 'emergency security advisory', along with a guide telling people how to protect their computer systems and networks.

The Flame virus is a bit unusual, in that it is designed to steal data rather than corrupt or take down computer systems. Described by researchers at Kaspersky Lab as a "complete attack toolkit," the Flame virus is considered by many to be an even bigger security threat than the massive Stuxnet worm, which it closely resembles.

Flame Masquerades as Legitimate Microsoft Code

Although it was dangerous before, Flame now poses an even bigger risk. The cybercriminals behind it have successfully configured their virus to use legitimate Microsoft credentials to help it slip under network defenses. In a recent post on the Microsoft Security Response Center blog, Microsoft stated: "We have discovered through our analysis that some components of the malware have been signed by certificates that allow software to appear as if it was produced by Microsoft." (Source: pcmag.com)

Experts believe that the people behind Flame have found and exploited a new flaw in the Terminal Server Licensing Service used by many IT administrators to authorize Remote Desktop services on Windows-based networks. Because most IT systems accept legitimate Microsoft code by default, the Flame virus -- which can now appear legit to network defenses -- is often accepted and passed through to vulnerable computer data and systems.

Microsoft Sends Emergency Security Advisory

To combat this new danger, Microsoft has now released an Emergency Security Advisory that explains in great detail exactly how IT administrators can block any of Flame's rogue security certificates from gaining unauthorized access to networks. For some IT administrators, this may be too little, too late. nCircle security expert Andrew Storms warns that the "discovery of a bug that's been used to circumvent Microsoft's secure code certificate hierarchy is a major breach of trust," and points out that "it's a big deal for every Microsoft user." (Source: pcworld.com) However, Flame is a highly targeted form of malware, so the systems of most home users are not likely to be targeted by those who designed this potent virus. Storms believes the sophisticated nature of Flame's most recent attack lends weight to the theory that the hackers behind it represent a nation-state, meaning they may have the financial backing of a powerful government.

10 reasons why I avoid social networking services

<http://www.techrepublic.com/>

By Alan Norton

Takeaway: Social networking has had a huge impact on how we communicate and interact — but some people refuse to get caught up in the trend. Alan Norton explains why he's one of them.

I have a confession to make. I don't do social networking. That's not *that* unusual for someone my age. Just 8% of all Facebook users fall into my age group. Nonetheless, according to the Pew Internet & American Life Project, social networking is popular and still growing. While only 8% of adult Internet users used social networking sites in 2005, that number had grown to 65% by 2011. Why then do some people in general and older Internet users in particular avoid social networking services? I can give you 10 reasons why this experienced ancient one doesn't use them.

1: I have privacy concerns

The recent IPO of Facebook wasn't as successful as its backers wanted. But it was successful bringing to the public's attention Facebook's privacy concerns. I, like many others, don't fully understand how serious those concerns are. It does make for a great excuse though to avoid Facebook altogether. Putting your personal information in the care of others, no matter how diligent their stewardship, increases your risk of that information getting into the hands of third parties.

Our image is, in part, defined by our words. Each of us should ask how much of ourselves we want to give to people we don't even know. Once gone, that private piece of our lives can never be retrieved.

2: Ownership of content is unclear

Who actually owns and who controls "your" intellectual content that you post is not as clear as you might think. Terms vary by social networking service, but typically you give up control of how your content may be used. Which raises the question: If you don't control it, do you really own it? It *isn't* clear who legally owns your content. The Twitter Terms of Service as of July 4, 2012, clearly states that you own the content you post:

"You retain your rights to any Content you submit, post or display on or through the Services....But what's yours is yours — you own your Content (and your photos are part of that Content)."

According to a New York judge, however, Twitter owns your Tweets. That should at least cause you to pause before posting *anything* at any site other than your own. I am not a lawyer, but it appears that the legal ownership of your Tweets and other posted content may not be fully determined for years.

3: It's too impersonal

Social networking offers an easy way to meet people — perhaps too easy. No commitment is required, and you can invest as much or as little of your time as you wish. Social networking services can be a great way to keep people at a distance: Interact only when and where you want with whom you want. That may be great for some people. I prefer more meaningful ways to interact, like face-to-face and over the phone. People value your full attention and time. Social interaction is only as rewarding as you are willing to make it, whether in person or online.

Continued on the next page

4: I want to minimize online gaffes

There is that risqué limerick you shared while in high school or those embarrassing statements you made about a former employer that can be found with a simple Web search. Pity the poor job interviewee grilled by an interviewer who did his homework and found your ignorance, or worse, the bad information you posted about a topic for which you are supposed to be an expert. If you must post, practice safe posting. Of course, abstinence means never having to say you're sorry.

5: I want to minimize data points for possible data mining

Make a spelling mistake or grammatical error and you can be dinged for it forever. For me, it would be embarrassing as a writer and a blow to my ego but not a great loss. To a younger person interviewing for a job, consider what this report would do for a first impression:

User Name - Alan Norton For the period Jul-01-11 to Jun-30-12	Average # of posts per month	Average # of words per month	Avg #/% of misspellings per month	Avg #/% of grammatical errors per month
Facebook	0	0	0/0%	0/0%
Twitter	52	520	18/3.5%	4/0.8%
Google+	0	0	0/0%	0/0%
Usenet - alt.comp.hardware	11	506	22/4.3%	12/2.4%
Usenet - alt.support.depression	28	980	59/6.0%	33/3.4%
Other	76	2204	76/3.4%	62/2.8%
Totals	167	4210	175/4.2%	111/2.6%

6: I don't subscribe to social fads

Call me a rebel, please. I don't like following the sheep to gain their acceptance. Clothing from Sears has always been my fashion statement, though the local thrift store has of late been getting my business. Twitter and Facebook may just be another fad that comes and goes, like AIM and MySpace.

7: I don't like being pressured to join

The sinister way that social networking services sneak into even the most ardent holdout's daily life is through invitations from friends and family members. Yes, I am now a lousy brother in law because I ignored an invitation from my brother's wife to join her inside circle at Facebook. I became a rotten friend when I politely turned down a request to be in a friend's LinkedIn professional network. Thank goodness my nephews and nieces have yet to ask me to "join up." I would hate to be a terrible uncle too.

8: I don't need the abuse

I used to think that posting at services like Usenet was something akin to self flagellation. Why would I risk being verbally flogged for posting what others might perceive as flame bait? I still don't need the abuse but, thankfully, I no longer take name calling like "idiot" or "nimrod" as personally as I once did. Being flamed has instead become part of the profession "writer" and a badge of honor. Those who post on TechRepublic are a class act by comparison — people who disagree with me here call me "Mr. Norton." *Continued on the next page*

9: It's more work

If your work is anything like my experiences in the cubicle, you already spend enough time typing when you answer emails, update status reports, and write code. It's just no fun coming home to more of the same.

This may not apply to you, but when you write for a living, it's not a lot of fun interacting socially with the written word. After calculating the amount of wisdom I spew forth per dollar received, I have to tell you, I am working cheap (1:51 - 2:23). I just can't afford to give away my wisdom for free.

The bottom line...

...is that it's just not me (#10). Some of us prefer to keep ourselves to our self. I have heard about certain sites that cater to the courtship rituals of modern *Homo sapiens*, but every day that goes by I become less modern than the day before. Neither do I need to network for a job, though I *used* to believe that getting published was far better than social networking when it came to that big job interview. My notoriety, or lack thereof, has me now questioning the accuracy of that belief. Then there's the fact that I have yet to find a reason why I should tell countless others how totally devoid of meaning my life really is.

According to an analysis of tweets by Pear Analytics, 40% of all tweets are pointless babble. I have better ways to atrophy my brain, better ways to slowly turn my gray matter into mush. Is it possible that we will prefer communicating via machine rather than one on one? Personal social interaction could become a lost art. And it would be a shame for humanity to become so impersonal.

I can guess that some of you more analytical thinkers are saying, "Hold on there just a minute, Alan. You participate in the forums at TechRepublic. Doesn't that make you a hypocrite?" I believe that every writer should be available to answer any questions that you, the patient reader, might have. What you may perceive as hypocrisy is merely *relativistic disingenuous behavioral prioritization*. I would be hypocritical if I didn't participate. Besides, sometimes you've just gotta throw 10 silly reasons to the wind and risk acting the goat so you can help someone.

How about you?

Do you share some of these objections and concerns? Or have you come to rely on social networking as a means of enriching your life and advancing your career? Share your thoughts with other TechRepublic members.

The lighter side

Geek Busters! Part Deux

By Bryan Lambert – www.geeks.com

In this week's Tech Tip we'll look at some common "techy" misconceptions that we'd like to dispel with "[Geek Busters!](#)" - sending myths into hiatus! Without further preamble, I give you our items for this week's Tech Tip Geek Busters!

#1 Facebook wants to charge you money for its service

It seems like a week doesn't go by that the rumor mill churns yet again that Facebook wants to charge you some kind of fee for its service. Basically, put them out to pasture - Zuckerberg and company loves your information that we all (maybe too) freely give out to want to charge us for the privilege of paying him to give it. So, feel free to grouse about the latest changes to the format but know that for now and into the foreseeable future, **That Facebook is content to just be happy mining YOUR data.**

#2 Apple "invented" the PC (or the MP3 player; or the Tablet computer).

All of these are an astounding no. Apple marketed one of the first Do It Yourself (DIY) personal computers (for an astounding \$666.66 (no, Steve Jobs is not the Antichrist either) and had a strong foothold in the market well before IBM unleashed its version of the PC onto the world a few years later - but many companies marketed computers well before Apple (some notable examples are the MITS Alter; HP 9100 (and even if you want to dig further back you can find examples like Honeywell's Kitchen computer and even the DIY Simon that you could purchase the plans for).

Ditto for MP3 players (remember the Genica Tavarua) and **tablet computers have been around for ages** (it just took Apple to make them fun and bring them out of the business world and into our lives - with tons of knock-offs coming on its heels screaming "me too! me too!").

#3 Running Windows Updates will ruin my computer

Actually, quite the opposite may be true - if you avoid running updates, especially security updates, you put your computer at risk. While it is true that every once in a while an update has some - unexpected consequences - for the most part you are better safe than sorry running the update. However, it has to be said that if you update an entire operating system, then there is the strong possibility that many of your favorite programs will not migrate well to the newer version of the operating system (not that this has ever held me back - thank goodness for Virtual Machines and especially for XP Mode on Windows 7)

Continued on the next page

#4 Dell (or Apple, or HP, or Acer; or “insert companies name here”) manufacturers their own computers

While some companies may still ASSEMBLE some of their computers to order, most computer companies no longer own any manufacturing facilities or make their own computers. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part, large computer companies have third party manufacturers build their computers (which is why some of the largest BUILDERS of computers are companies that you may have never heard of, such as Quanta Computer, Compal Electronics and Hon Hai Precision (aka, Foxconn Electronics)).

Be assured that the computer you are probably reading this Tech Tip on was more than likely not actually MADE by the company that is on the label. This is one of the big reasons computers are basically considered commodity items (yes, even that shiny Apple PC - rolling off the same assembly line with Dell, HP, etc.) and tend to have similar repair rates (which also means that they also tend to use many of the same OEM parts and components as well). **This doesn't mean that your computer was made poorly; or even that one computer may be “better” than another - it just means that they are all pretty much the same.**

In Conclusion

We hope you liked this week's Tech Tip! While urban legends and myths run rampant in the tech arena, rest assured that we here at Tech Tips have your back and are ready to beat back the hounds of ignorance and set a world on fire with Geek Busters!



“What's the point of having an opinion if you don't email it to everyone you know?”

Tampa Bay Times

Some of the material appearing in this Issue was sent to the editor by other members of the GTBPCUG. Thank you.

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