

Kennebec Valley Computer Society NEWSLETTER



Just to help you remember the beauty of Summer during these long, cold dead of Winter days. This beautiful place is in a fabulous multi-acre garden complex located in Rockville, Maryland.

WEATHER

As I sit here working on the final stages of this newsletter it is snowing and it promises to snow all weekend. Ah yes, Winter wonderland in Maine. With the Holiday season fast fading away we move into a new year and the second decade of the 21st Century. Time flies.....!

I heard a day or so ago, that 73% of all connections to the Internet are now broadband connections. It wasn't that far back when we thought a 14.4 kbs modem was 'really fast' and 28.8 was the ultimate. There are still some very remote places where you can't get access to a broadband connection even with satellite. A strange case of the haves and the have nots.

In the personal computer world, the laptop and more recently the netbook are gaining ground on the traditional desktop. Why sit locked in at one spot when wirelessly you can move around the house and out onto the porch and even the car at will.

What will the next 10 years bring? One can only guess at it and hope for the best. Happy New Year and New Decade.....

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KVCS MEETINGS

General Membership

The program for this month's meeting will be a presentation by Steve Pooler on Password Vault - organize your passwords, web and text clips bookmarks safely
Thursday, January 14, 7:00 PM
Buker School on Armory Street,
just off Western Avenue near the
National Guard Armory in Augusta.

Board of Directors Meeting

The next meeting will be Thursday, January 21, 6:30 to 8:30 PM at Margaritas, 390 Western Avenue, Augusta



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Kennebec Valley Computer
Society**

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You may upload copy via E-Mail or bring to the KVCS general membership meeting. **Deadline for submission of copy for the newsletter is the 15th day of the month preceding the month of issue and will be run on a space available basis.** Copy is subject to editing.

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KVCS WEB SITE

The URL for our web site is
www.kvcs.org

Check there for more information about KVCS. Bob Wells is suggesting you make it the opening page for your web browser so you get the latest announcements.

Bob Wells is the webmaster for the KVCS site. Go to www.kvcs.org and look around. While there sign up for member access.

Apcug Reprint Series

**The Great Computer Build,
2009 DIY in the
Decade of Dell**

**By Jan Fagerholm, Associate Editor
and 'Puter Parts Purveyor, PC
Community, CA**

PCC News, November 2009

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First in a series on building a high performance computer with the latest technology.

Personal computers have become ubiquitous. Not only as desktop computers, but as a variety of portable computers. These days, laptops of various stripes outsell desktop computers by a large margin. And why not? – Laptops do nearly everything that a desktop computer can do, and are smaller and portable. The present crop of Netbook computers are a case in point: they are the first new variant introduced that break the march of the past (bigger, more features, faster) with a new reality appeal: the just-right size and performance for the task.

This scaling doesn't always work in the performance direction. A high performance

laptop with a big screen will cost lots of low performance dollars but its performance will still fall well short of a desktop computer that costs half as much, particularly in graphics performance. So if you want to build a performance computer, you are still looking at buying or building a desktop computer.

I use a laptop computer for much of my work for the same reasons most people do: it's portable, and good enough for all but the most demanding graphics tasks. For the more demanding CAD/CAM work and for desktop publishing (DTP) I rely on my desktop machine because of its superior graphics capability.

In the early days of PCs, enthusiasts normally built their own machines from individually selected components, which had the advantages of getting exactly what you want, and it was cheaper to roll your own than buy one pre-built from a retailer. Companies like Dell have turned this scenario inside out, and it is now possible to buy a pre-built computer cheaper than you can put it together yourself from identical components. Computer consulting is part of my business, and I have gotten away from building computers for my clients because I can get the computer they need pre-built from an online source cheaper than I can build it myself. This also has the advantage of knowing all the parts will work together (a potential problem when dealing with bleeding edge technology) and I don't have to warranty the machine myself.

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Windows 7 Is Here and it is good and here's how to get there

**By Charles W. Evans, PC
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HAL PC News Magazine,
Fall 2009
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There is no substitute for prior planning.

There is no substitute for prior planning. (Oh! Did I say that twice? Hummm.) Before beginning installing Windows 7, create a plan that details what's on your original system, where it is going to wind up on the new system, configurations, and how you are going to get from one to the other. And yes, it is OK to employ your original word processor to do this and it migrates easily to Windows 7... technically it's called a pencil and paper. ;-)

Determine which edition of Windows 7 you need.

1. Is your hardware up to snuff?
2. Back up your data before you start the upgrade. Acronis TrueImage, Casper and Ghost are good back up programs and have been reviewed by the Magazine.
3. Update Windows XP or Vista data before you begin installing Windows 7.

4. As a rule of thumb, if it works under Vista it should work under Windows 7.
5. Before installing Windows 7, download the current Windows 7 drivers onto a flash drive or burn to a CD. This part of being prepared.
6. If you are using Windows 7 RC1, no upgrade is possible and you have until June 2010, when it dies. If it is on the hard drive you intend to use for Windows 7, format the hard drive. You will no longer have use of RC1.

Four important notes:

1. Clean up your existing computer – really! Get rid of old programs and files and defragment your hard drive.
2. Your best option is NOT to upgrade – start with a clean hard drive.
3. You will be told that you CANNOT upgrade from Win XP to Win 7. Not so, but it is a convoluted process. I do not recommend this, period. But all is not lost. There are two ways to “salvage” your XP programs. One is to get a new computer with “V” certification; i.e., virtualization gives you capability to run your XP programs on a virtual hard drive under Win 7! There is a different route and that is to “migrate” your XP files to Win 7. I've listed a web site that will help you do this. There are some programs that will not successfully migrate. I'll explain later.
4. If you upgrade from Windows Vista, you must upgrade to a like edition. For example, Vista Home to Win7 Home or Ultimate to Ultimate.

Upgrading from one operating system to another is no longer as simple as inserting a diskette and pressing the Enter key. Questions arise about the right hardware, about compatibility of existing applications and data files with

the new operating system. This article helps you think through the process of upgrading to Win7.

Windows Easy Transfer migrates your application settings and data, other options allow complete migration of both applications and data as a single operation. Windows Easy Transfer, which is available for free from Microsoft's website, allows you to migrate both application settings and data from your XP system to a Windows 7 system. It even allows you to create a disk repository with this information. This is an acceptable method, but by no means foolproof.

Windows Easy Transfer lets you identify the programs and related data that you want to transfer and accomplish most of this migration work in one set of actions. The easiest workaround in transferring application data from Windows XP to a Win7 environment is to use Windows Easy Transfer on the Windows 7 DVD to transfer XP documents and settings to a backup location; e.g., flash drive or another hard disk, and then restore from this backup.

This would be a very good time to re-think your data storage location(s). Generally, Word will store your DOC files and other data created by Office under the Documents and Settings folders. Other programs will have a default location for the data you create. You might think about creating a partition just for the files that you generate. If it would be helpful, subdivide the partition by using folders for each type of file. In this method, you simply backup the entire partition and you have your backup accomplished.

Following are some points you should keep in mind:

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1. You can use Windows Easy Transfer to move both programs and all their associated data as a package, but before you get to that stage, make sure that the move will transfer everything you want moved.

2. If you're using the move as an opportunity to upgrade from one version of an application to another (for example, moving from one version of Microsoft Office to another version), you should do two things:

a. Verify that the new application is compatible with the new operating system (some applications that worked with Windows XP or Windows Vista may not work under Win7).

b. Verify that the new version of the application will be able to use the data files from the older version. A good way to prevent problems like this is to use the same shared folders to store data on the old system and the new system.

Migration versus Reinstallation

I recommend that you migrate a software package intact. At times that may not be an option since some software packages register a unique ID based on both the license key and the CPU. If you migrate from one physical system to another, or significantly change the hardware configuration, the ID may change, as will the unique ID used by that software package. In this instance, you are forced to reinstall the software. This is one reason you cannot simply move your existing hard drive from one system to another.

In a new system with a different motherboard, you would need to reinstall programs.

There is no substitute for prior planning.

There is no substitute for prior planning.

(Oh! Did I say that before? Hummm.) I've listed four sources of information that I'd strongly recommend you download, print, read and make a few notes. I know, I know, we all thought we were through with homework in the 12th grade. Turns out life is just one big homework assignment!

Microsoft Win7 Information
[http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd446674\(WS.10\).aspx](http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/library/dd446674(WS.10).aspx)

Virtual PC 2007 – information about a virtual drive/PC
www.microsoft.com/downloads/details.aspx?familyid=04D26402-3199-48A3-AFA2-2DC0B40A73B6&displaylang=en

Windows 7 Upgrade Advisor – advice on software/hardware compatibility
www.microsoft.com/downloads/thankyou.aspx?familyid=1b544e90-7659-4bd9-9e51-2497c146af15&displayLang=en

Migrate to Windows 7 – Softpedia
[I n f o r m a t i o n http://news.softpedia.com/news/XP-to-Windows-7-Upgrade-Scenario-Hardlink-Migration-109722.shtml](http://news.softpedia.com/news/XP-to-Windows-7-Upgrade-Scenario-Hardlink-Migration-109722.shtml)

Windows 7 Release Candidate 1 expires July 1, 2010 – you should have updated long before that date. Notice I said “updated” since you cannot upgrade RC1 to any Windows 7 version. Don't rush it. You have time to do it right. And I think you will like Windows 7.

Windows 7, Thanks, But No Thanks!

**By Herb Goldstein, Editor,
Sarasota PCUG, Florida**

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This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups; all other uses require the permission of the author (see e-mail address above).

I am a devout XP user. It's not by any means perfect. It has its own set of quirks (like everything else), but it's better than anything that came before and it works quite well. It's like my house...I know where everything is. I can navigate it in the dark. I've got it furnished and decorated just the way I want it, and it took me, bit by bit, a long time to do. So why should I move across the street and start all over again? For whose benefit?

Some weeks ago, Microsoft provided their release candidate of Windows 7 free for all takers. I installed it on a spare hard drive and have been playing with it every now and then. It's a nice functional operating system, but from a practical standpoint it provides me with nothing that I really need or must have that's missing in XP. If you are starting as a new computer user with a new computer, it's just fine. In fact it will be on your new computer right from the get-go, want it or not.

For whatever the many reasons, there is no upgrade path to migrate from XP to Windows 7. You need to start from scratch reinstalling all your software

programs, all their many updates and upgrades, and all the customized settings you have factored into them over the period of time. Now that's providing you even have your original installation disks or some record of those that you originally downloaded for which you have no installation disks at all. You will also need all their serial numbers that you were originally required to provide, if you still have them. Talk about monumental tasks!

As though that were not enough to completely turn off the bravest among you, Windows 7 has another curve ball to pitch at you. Whatever applications you want to install in Windows 7 must have perfectly valid drivers that it will recognize. Windows 7 is much more fussy about what it wants to approve. Many smaller software publishers whose applications you may now be using in XP may not have developed drivers that will work in Windows 7. You may well have to kiss some of your most fabulous freebies goodbye. The loudest argument I have heard by those urging the switch is that Microsoft will cease to recognize XP. If the automobile industry operated in similar fashion you would be forced to junk all cars more than a few years old.

So pardon me folks while I continue to avoid fixing what isn't broken. Unless and until Microsoft can offer a much better operating system that will easily migrate everything I am currently using in XP, thanks but no thanks!

**Happy New Year from
Central Maine's First Computer
Users Group**

**KENNEBEC VALLEY
COMPUTER SOCIETY**

My Take on This

I have moved along with Microsoft through the operating system launches from DOS 3.1 to Windows 7 so I can speak from some little bit of experience.

The basic truth is Microsoft will stop supporting their earlier operating systems sooner or later and *often sooner than later*. In some cases that is merciful. Millenium was one good example and I will venture forth and predict Vista will rate right up there with Millenium for a fast demise.

Every so often Microsoft scores and they did that with Windows 98, 2000 and XP. I believe that will be true with Windows 7 as well. The introduction of the 64 bit operating systems has resulted in better system stability (difficult if next to impossible to crash) and better protection against all sorts of virus, trojans and malware incursions. On the flip side of the 64 bit migration you will find that lots of old hardware (printers and scanners for example) and 16 bit software just will not work. However, if you do decide on Windows 7 be sure to consider getting the Professional version so that you can install virtual machine software, available for free from Microsoft. My wife has a program that she absolutely has to have and it will not run on Vista or Windows 7. With Windows 7 and the virtual machine software it works and.... if she's happy I'm happy.....

If you plan to try to run Windows 7 on a computer that is a few years old, be VERY careful. The hardware requirements are quite steep. The aero features in Windows 7 will require a very substantial video capability and plenty of system memory, like at least three or four GB of RAM. As usual, if it takes 30 to 40% of the cost of a new computer to get the old one in some kind of shape to run Windows 7 don't go there.

-Editor-

The Great Computer Build - continued-

I remain an enthusiast, though, so the compulsion to roll my own still remains. The justification is that I still think I can build a machine best for my needs (not all rational) at a price I am willing to pay. If you lean toward the performance end of the scale, it is still possible to just throw money at the problem and get a high performance machine. Moore's Law is still the rule (George Moore, while Director of Research at Fairchild Semiconductor, wrote an article for the April 19, 1965 anniversary edition of Electronics magazine where he hypothesized that the number of transistors in an integrated circuit would double every year through 1975. Others, later, dubbed it "Moore's Law") Bill Machrone, in PC Magazine in 1984, stated a pragmatic corollary; "the computer you want will always cost \$5000." Neither Moore's Law nor Machrone's corollary has changed much to this day. Niklaus Wirth, inventor of the Pascal programming language, popularized what he credited as Reiser's Law: "software is slowing faster than hardware is accelerating" (Martin Reiser, then at IBM Research, subsequently demurred, "It is not the first time I am accused of having said something that I cannot remember having said".)

Stated in a canonical context, "what Moore giveth, Gates taketh away." Ask yourself, does your newest computer boot and load applications any faster than the computer you had ten years ago?

But I digress. Today's point is that I have been one of those who have spent money on the bleeding edge of this

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KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY
Presents

Password Vault

**Organize and secure your passwords,
web and text clips bookmarks safely**

**Presented by
Steve Pooler**

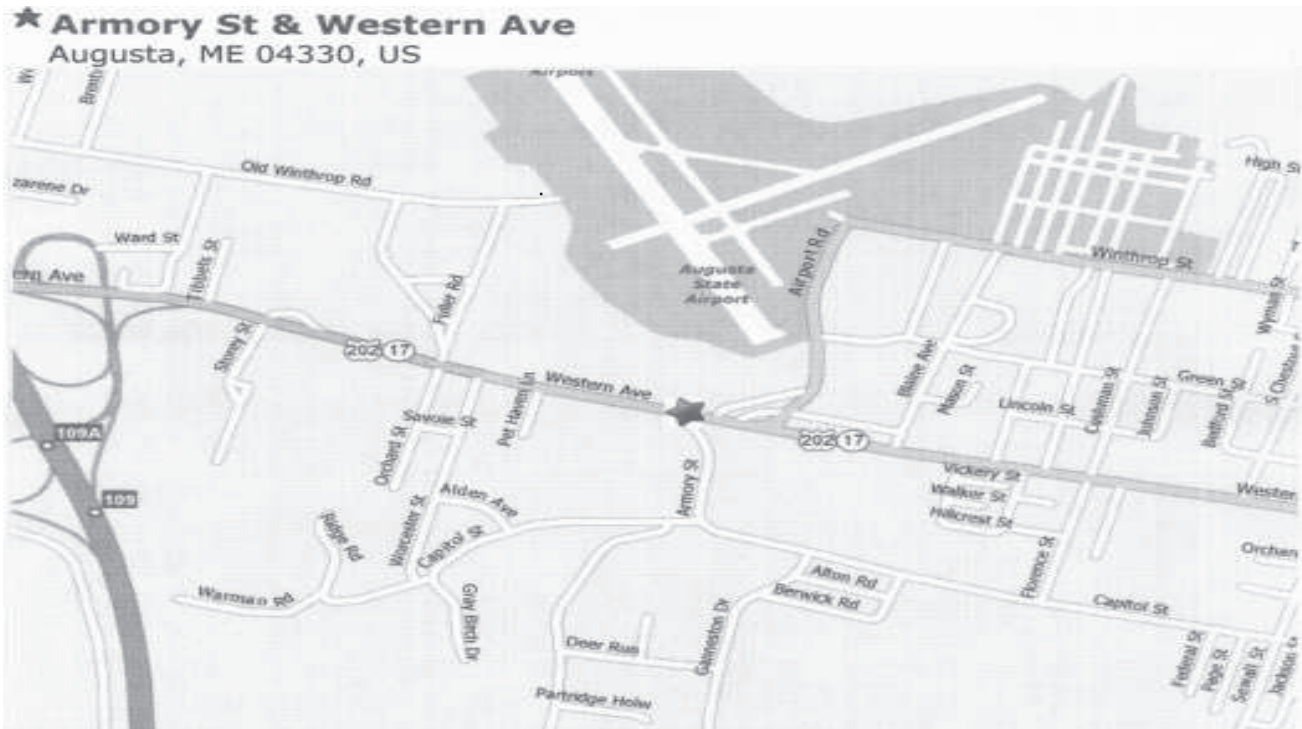
**Thursday January 14 th 2009 - 7 PM
Social Time 6:30 to 7 PM**

**Lou Buker Community Center
Armory Street
Augusta, Maine**

The Public is Cordially Invited

Bring a friend, meet a friend

KVCS MEETING LOCATION



MELUG-Central Linux User Group Meeting

Saturday, January 16 at 10:30 AM, Room 110 at the Frye Building, Kennebec Valley Community College, Fairfield.
The presenter will be Rick Gatewood from MidCoast and the topic is Clonezilla.

-The Great Computer Build - continued-

technology since 1978, and while I still want a fast computer, I'm not willing to spend \$5000 on it right now. These days, that money will get you a high end gamer machine (that's where the technology really rides) with the fastest quad core CPU (\$1000), the fastest quad PCI-E video cards (\$2400), 16 GB DDR3 RAM (\$800), two 7200 RPM 2 terabyte hard drives with hardware RAID 0 (\$750) (note that "10,000 RPM" and "terabyte" do not come together at this time – more on that later). We have spent \$4950 on this and we don't even have a monitor, case, power supply, keyboard and mouse yet... What's a 3D gamer, -er, high end CAD/CAM user to do? Obviously, some scaling down in

expectations is required when you budget purchases. Your performance vs. pocketbook price point will vary, but I will explain mine as we go along. The objective is to build a machine capable of running high end software (Adobe CS4, CAD/CAM) and provide respectable performance with 3D game software. (3D games are one of the better informal benchmarks for hardware.

Right now, I'm starting with a budget constraint and working within that, much as I do for my clients.

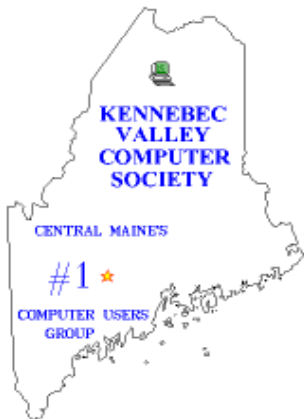
Buying computer by parts, we are dealing with essentially these parts: CPU, motherboard, memory, hard drive, optical drive, monitor, the case, power

supply, and probably a new keyboard and mouse to make the newness complete. (When building your own, it is tempting to recycle many of the parts from the old computer, but if the computer you are considering is more than three years old, you will probably compromise the new computer's performance by using these parts.)

In subsequent articles, we'll examine in turn CPU-motherboard-memory, then the rest of the stuff. Yes, there is even something to learn about cases and power supplies.

Stay tuned.....

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KENNEBEC VALLEY COMPUTER SOCIETY

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____ Change of address

____ I would like to see more. Please send me a complimentary issue of the Newsletter.

____ I would like to join KVCS / renew my membership.

() Annual Renewal (Dues waived for 2009 membership year)

FOR KVCS USE

() New Member (Dues waived for 2009 membership year)

DP _____

() Family (Dues waived for 2009 membership year)

CH _____

() Student (Full time status - Dues waived for 2009 membership year)

CA _____

Name: _____

E-mail address: _____

Address: _____ City/State _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Date of Birth: ____/____/____

Your Interest in Joining KVCS? _____

Referred by: _____

10/01 Signature: _____