Dear Annette,

I know that you’ve been very busy moving into your new home and are pretty tired by this time of the year. Publishing the STCA December 2009 Newsletter this month is your job, but since the STCA Board caused you to use up all your brain cells recently doing the Holiday Greeting Card Presentation, I feel that you deserve a needed break.

Since you were not naughty (I’ve gotten a bunch of emails telling me how good you’ve been this year), I’m giving you permission to take off the month of December to do Christmas shopping for your family and friends. I did hear from one of my elves that you scratched the names of the STCA Board off your list this year, we’ll have to discuss that when I see you on Christmas Eve.

But you must first remind the STCA members about the December 8 general meeting. The topic for December is **Stump the Experts.** This is your chance to get answers to your questions.

And tell them that Santa said to have….

**A VERY MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY HANUKKAH!**

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**Introduction into Computers-XP:** For members just learning about computers and have either Windows XP or Windows Vista operating system, (1st Saturday 9:30 a.m. and 4th Tuesday 7:00 p.m.) Instructor: Paul Parker

**Introduction into computers-Vista:** For members more advanced using the Windows Vista operating system, (1st Saturday 9:30 a.m. and 4th Tuesday 7:00 p.m.) Instructor: Shirley Sharpe.

**Intermediate Computers:** For members who have a reasonable grasp of the Windows operating system. It explores the operating system in more detail along with available Windows applications, (1st Saturday 9:30 a.m. and 4th Tuesday 7:00 p.m.) Instructor: Danny Moragne.

All classes meet at the **Peace Lutheran Church, 1320 Gause Blvd. W., Slidell, LA.**
Delete Favorites

Take a second to look through the list of your favorites that you have saved on your computer. How many do you have? Too many? Think you should maybe get rid of some of those? Yes, no, maybe so? Well, if you decide you should, here’s how you can clean up your space.

To delete any of the favorites you have saved in your list, simply highlight the one you’d like to discard, right click and select Delete. A box will come up asking if you’re sure you want to send it to the Recycle Bin and if you’re sure, click Yes.

That will take the unwanted file to the Recycle Bin. To complete the deletion, you can just go to your desktop, find the Recycle Bin icon, right click and select Empty Recycle Bin. That will remove it from your computer forever.

Proceed the same way until you have all of your favorites cleaned up to your liking!

Membership Dues

DUES for 2010…those who pay their dues at the December meeting will have an opportunity to win an STCA $25 Gift Certificate at a December Drawing. Then, your name will also be added for the drawing for the STCA $25 Gift Certificate drawing for February. All dues need to be paid by the February meeting and those who pay by the February meeting will be entered into the STCA $25 Gift Certificate drawing.

STCA is a non-profit organization. The goal of the association is to share information and to help educate the public in the use of personal computers. Members range from experienced to beginners. Programs feature topics and subjects of interest to the general membership with emphasis on basic computer skills. Member and guest speakers provide demonstrations, lectures, questions, answers and, on occasion, hands-on experience.

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Membership: Is open to anyone who has an interest in learning about and sharing information about computers. Dues are $10 per year for full-time students, $20 per year for non-student individuals, and $30 per year for families.

Let there be Peace on Earth And let it begin with Me
People are always telling me to "copy and paste" this or that. I hate to admit it, but I don't know how to copy and paste. Can you help?

A:
You can copy and paste just about anything: text, web pages, files, pictures, you name it. The idea behind the process is to take information from one place and deposit it into another. For an example, let's pretend you're working in a word processor and need to copy and paste a section of your document into an e-mail. Here's how:

1. First, you'll need to select the text you wish to copy. You do this by putting your mouse cursor at the first character you want to copy and, holding down the left mouse button, drag the cursor to the last character you need copied. As you drag, you'll notice everything gets highlighted (selected).
2. Next, right-click the selected area. Choose Copy from the menu that pops up (or you can use CTRL-C if you like keyboard shortcuts).
3. Finally, right-click the area in your e-mail document where you would like to insert the word processor text. Click Paste from the menu that pops up (For this, CTRL-V is your keyboard shortcut). That's it.

The steps are basically the same for any copy & paste procedure you need to do.

Here's another example. In the image below, we'll take a line of text, copy it, and paste the copy below the original line:

If you want to get a little more fancy, place your cursor at the first character you want selected and, while holding down the SHIFT key, click next to the last character you want selected. It's sometimes easier to follow this procedure than to make selections by dragging, especially when you're wrestling with a lengthy document. Another fun way to use the SHIFT key is adding to an existing selection.

Let's say you select an area of text and you came up short of what you really needed. Rather than trying to re-select the whole thing, just hit the SHIFT key and click your mouse where you would like the selection to end. (You can also shorten a selection by doing this too.)

After you have used the SHIFT key to get your text selected, follow the pervious steps to copy / paste.

Steve……Worldstart.com
I’ve heard that people are advised to “format and reinstall Windows”. What does this mean? Is it a task to be performed habitually? When do I know if I have to do it?

A: Formatting is when you delete everything off of your hard disk. **This includes Windows**, which is why you have to reinstall it.

You should never have to format unless your computer is completely beyond all help. There are a few possible reasons responsible for this. Maybe you caught a virus which has destroyed any way for the computer to function. Or maybe someone came over and wanted to “play on your computer for awhile”, found a folder that looked interesting, pressed a couple of keys that they shouldn’t have and deleted some files. You go in that night to get on your computer and the Windows screen never even comes up. It seems that nothing you do can make your computer work. You pretty much need to start all over, and that means to format (wipe ALL of the data off of your hard drive) and install a brand new copy of Windows.

It is a lot of work to format your hard drive and there are tools out there that can help you keep that computer humming without you having to go through the pain of reinstalling Windows. In addition, if you don’t know how or don’t feel comfortable reformatting, you will end up spending money on taking it to your local computer store to have them do it. Finally, if you are going to format your computer, **you have to back up all of your files and data because when you erase the hard drive, you lose it all**.

In summation: Only reformat when you have to! 

Lori….worldstart.com

I am the only user name on my computer. How can I skip the user login step? 

A: For security reasons, it can be a good idea to leave this be. However, if saving time is important to you, try the following:

In Windows XP Go to "Start" and choose "Run".

In Windows Vista click "Start" and type in the Search Bar

In either case, type "control userpasswords2" (without the quotes) and click "OK"

Under the "Users" tab, uncheck the box "Users must enter a user name..." and click "Apply".

You'll be asked for your Administrative password. If you have one, type it in and confirm. If you don't, just click "OK". The windows may disappear automatically, or click "OK" to close them.

The next time you boot up your computer, you shouldn't have to log in. 

Chris…..worldstart.com
I was looking through my Add/Remove Programs list the other day and I noticed most of the items were updates. There were Windows Updates and others I've run for other programs in the past. Is it safe to remove them or do I need to hang on to them? Please explain!

A:

What a great question! I'm almost positive you're not the only one who has wondered that same thing at some point or another. It's true, if you go to Start, Control Panel, Add/Remove Programs and run through the list of applications you have installed on your computer, you'll find that most of them are for updates you've run in the past. There might even be some in there from years back. So, if they're so old, it's safe to assume you can get rid of them, right? Well, maybe not. Keep reading to find out why!

The easiest way to explain why it's not okay to delete some of the updates is because they're there for a reason. If your computer didn't need them, you wouldn't have had to install them in the first place. The updates are there to keep your computer working at its best and if you removed them, you'd basically be undoing the work the updates did to begin with. Plus, removing the updates could put you at risk for security holes or other vulnerabilities and trust me, you don't want that to happen!

Now, as you're going through your Add/Remove Programs, you're probably going to think your list is a bit long. But in all actuality, it's probably not as long as it could be. You see, when you run an update for one of the programs on your computer, the new material always overtakes the old. If the program you're using is programmed right, it will automatically remove any older updates you no longer need. It works the same as when you're installing a new version of a program. It's a basic rule that the new overrides the old. So, basically, the updates are already doing the removal work for you. Cool, huh?!

The same goes for Windows Updates as well. Those often include several patches and the newer patches always go right over the old ones. Patches are sometimes all rolled in together as well, so either way, you're going to have a shorter list of patches. You can remove individual patches if you want, but again, that can put you at risk for certain vulnerabilities. Like I said before, by doing that, you're just undoing the work of the patch and defeating the whole purpose.

Of course, there will be times when you need to uninstall a certain patch because of unexpected problems, but that doesn't happen too often. All in all, your best bet is to just leave the updates alone. It's really not a good idea to weed through your list and uninstall any you may think are unnecessary. A good rule to go by is if they're in your Add/Remove Programs list, they're supposed to be. They're serving a purpose, even if they look like they're just taking up space. They're not hurting anything, so just leave them be!

If you really don't like looking at them, you can uncheck the Show Updates checkbox at the top of your Add/Remove Programs window. That will hide all of the updates to make your list look a little shorter. If that makes you feel better, it's a much better option than removing something you might need on down the road. I hope this clears everything up for you.

Erin….worldstart.com

Merry Christmas

From the STCA Newsletter Staff