

Mother Board

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January 1

This Month Computers at the (Louis Armstrong New Orleans International) Airport By Reed Barnes

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General Meeting Date Moved to Wednesday, January 8th

Since the first Wednesday in January 2014 is New Year's Day, the General Membership Meeting has been moved back one week to Wednesday, January 8. The New/Intermediate User Special Interest Group will meet the following week on Wednesday, January 15. Mark your calendars and remind your friends of the schedule change.

NOPCC in 2014

By Mike York, Vice-President, Webmaster, Mother Board Editor
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So here we are in the year 2014 and I hope this finds you and yours doing well. Overall, things went well in 2013 for NOPCC, but there is room for improvement. I'm excited about the direction NOPCC is heading in 2014. Revival of the Mother Board is probably the most notable. Electing Don to Board of Directors has already proved prosperous. Expanding our use of cloud-based tools affords us a more effective way to collaborate. You'll see, 2014 will be good to NOPCC.

Before I get all giddy on you, I do need to remind you that there are a few jobs that need to be filled. Paramount, the Secretary position is still vacant. It is not a very taxing job, but it is important. If you wish to take a look at the duties of Secretary, or any of the offices, go to the Officers page of [nopcc.org \(http://www.nopcc.org/members/board.html\)](http://www.nopcc.org/members/board.html). Also, I'm sure you've already noticed, just a few members are trying to take on all of the tasks of maintaining NOPCC. The biggest problem is that we can't be as effective as we would like to be. Any time you could offer would be a big help. Get with anyone on the board and let us know what you'd like to do.

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This Month at the NOPCC

Computers at the Airport

**Location: Congregation Gates of Prayer
4000 West Esplanade Av, Metairie, LA 70002
Wednesday, January 8 6:30pm - 9:00pm**

Reed Barnes, Customer Service and Website Manager for the New Orleans Aviation Board will cover computer technology used at the airport to keep passengers informed and moving to their destination. He will also discuss the airport's website, www.flymsy.com, as well as social media, LCD status boards, free wi-fi, and all the other computer tech that keeps the flying public informed and safe. This will also include security directives and new procedures, such as the time-saving TSA Pre-Check

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Back to the good stuff. This month we've added the New/Intermediate User Group meetings to the events section of Meetup.com; providing a discussion area we can use to suggest topics for our monthly meetings, issues we'd like Ray to cover, issues we have solved, etc. Email anything you wish to submit for the Mother Board and/or the website. You'll have to bear with me while I enhance my newsletter skills, but I'm planning to port the Mother Board to an ebook format sometime this year. Ray has already announced his intentions to broadcast our meetings over Hangouts on Air. At the very least, this month he will take a shot at recording a meeting and posting it on YouTube. Behind the efforts of A.J., Greg, Walt and Don it looks like we'll have some very good programs this coming year. We will do more to tie-in Meetup, Twitter, Google+, Facebook and LinkedIn to improve our communication.

Goodbye XP

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ

October 2013 issue, BUG Bytes
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On April 8, 2014 Microsoft will stop supporting Windows XP and Office 2003. After that date there will be no new security updates, non-security hot-fixes, free or paid assisted support options, or on-line technical content updates. However, all your software will continue to work just as well as it did on April 7, so you needn't panic, but it would be prudent to come up with a rational transition plan. There are three choices: (1) continue to use XP, but take some precautions, (2) keep your present hardware, but upgrade the software, and (3) purchase new hardware and software. The hardware and software vendors as well as the media in which they advertise prefer that you take the third approach, but let's consider all of them.

There are many advantages to staying with XP, which may not hold with the other two approaches.

- Your present hardware works with it.
- Your present applications run under it.
- It supports your present peripherals.
- You don't have to learn anything new.
- It costs less than the alternatives.

The main disadvantage is that as time goes on, you become increasingly more vulnerable to attack over the Internet and by malware. You can reduce this and its consequences by the following.

- Before April 8, 2014, use Microsoft Update to install the latest patches to all your Microsoft software.
- Update all your anti-malware software, and check that the vendor will continue to support it for XP after April 8. If not, change to a vendor that will.
- If you are connected to the Internet through a router, install the latest firmware in it. If your PC connects directly to your ISP's modem, purchase a hardware router, and update its firmware if necessary. For good measure, if you haven't already, install a software XP firewall.
- Be very careful about what you download, and avoid doing it if possible.
- Review your backup program; improve it if needed, and resolve to follow it rigorously.

The wording on the MS Website implies that old patches will remain available, but why take a chance? Update your software early, as the download rate may slow near the deadline. At the present time, about 35 per cent of the computers in the world use XP. This is a sizable market for anti-malware vendors, and I would expect them to continue supporting XP for some time. Your first line of defense against Internet aggression is your router and its firewall. Most likely, your ISP's modem also includes a firewall, but how careful is he about keeping it up-to-date? You don't know. With your own router, you have ability to keep it up to date, and as a result, having one is desirable even if you have only one PC. Despite all your precautions, as time goes on, and the bad guys find more XP vulnerabilities, your risk will increase. Be wary of any download, including e-mail attachments from friends. The best malware defense is to keep it off your PC. Your last defense is your backup program. Any information you haven't backed up on an external drive is one mouse click or one device failure away from trash. Although its most important to back up your data, you should in addition make an image backup of everything on your hard disk, because once XP becomes an orphan, applications and drivers for it will become increasingly difficult to find.

The second alternative is to keep your hardware, but change your operating system.

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- Your vulnerability will be less than if you stay with XP.
- If your PC is old, it may not support some current operating systems.
- Your present applications may not run under the new OS.
- Drivers may not be available for some of your peripherals, requiring you to replace the devices.
- You will have to take care during the transition not to lose any data.
- You will have to learn new ways of working.

The hazard with this approach is that to install a new operating system, you generally must format your hard disk, but you must first insure that all your data is safe and readable by the applications in your new OS. For example, if all your financial records are stored in Quicken files and there is no financial program available in your new operating system that can understand them, you essentially have lost all your financial records. A second problem is to insure that your current hardware supports the new operating system before you format your disk. If you are considering a newer version of Windows, run the Windows Upgrade Advisor (available at <http://windows.microsoft.com/is-is/windows/downloads/upgrade-advisor> for Windows 7). Don't forget to check your peripherals; I found that there was no Windows 7 driver for my scanner and had to buy a new one when I upgraded from XP. If your PC is compatible except for insufficient RAM, this is an inexpensive upgrade, even if done by a shop. (You should have at least one Gigabyte of RAM, even if you stay with XP.)

Consider Linux, especially for a secondary PC. I've converted two XP machines to Xubuntu (<http://xubuntu.org/>), which is more responsive than XP on old hardware. It has the advantage that you can try it out with a "live-CD," which is bootable from a CD drive. It will be slow in this mode, but since it doesn't make any changes to the hard disk, you are just a reboot away from XP. While running Xubuntu, all the files on your hard disk are available, so you can check whether Linux applications can read them. (Instructions on how to create a live CD or DVD in Windows are available at <http://www.ubuntu.com/download/help/try-ubuntu-before-you-install>.) If you have room on your disk or can add a second one, consider a dual-boot system in which you can run either system. (All your Windows

files will be accessible in Linux, and Windows applications are available that can read Linux disk partitions.) However, Linux is not Windows, which means there are many differences between the two systems. Try to find a sympathetic, experienced Linux user to help you get started, especially if you are less than comfortable in adventure mode.

The third alternative, buying new hardware and software is the easy and safe, but expensive. You are probably best off to purchase new components. XP-era processors, RAM, displays, and hard disks are woefully inadequate for any current OS. Keyboards and mice now cost just a few dollars, and your old ones may use obsolete connectors. You can keep your printer and scanner if drivers are available for the new OS; your old speakers will be fine.

- Your old PC with your data, applications, and peripherals remains available for use.
- You will probably have to purchase new applications for your new OS and probably some new peripherals, especially if the existing ones are several years old.
- There will be a learning curve for the new system.

Spend some extra money; in particular, get more RAM and a larger disk than you think you can get by with.

I haven't considered a piecemeal hardware upgrade, because I don't think it's cost-effective. Most modern CPUs are incompatible with XP-era motherboards; new motherboards are usually incompatible with XP-era cases and expansion cards; and old RAM is incompatible with both modern CPUs and motherboards. My preference is to get a new PC up and running with all the essential software installed, and keep the old PC operating until you are comfortable with the new one and are sure that it has all the applications you need and that all your data has been successfully transferred to it.

Securing Your Electronic Devices - Just Do It

By Mike York, Vice-President, Webmaster, Mother Board Editor
vp@nopc.org

Early one Saturday morning a few months back I was at
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work trying to infuse enough caffeine to reach a quasi-functional state. An acquaintance (not really sure if we were friends then, but I'm sure we're not now) called with a serious computer problem. After reminding him that I had warned him numerous times of his cavalier approach to personal computing, and casting a few aspersions on him and his family to at least 5 generations back, I cranked out a screed and posted it on Facebook with a somewhat disappointing response. But a few friends did join in the discussion and I was glad to get a few people take a more proactive role in their electronic endeavors. Decorum dictates that I reign in, a little, the language freedoms afforded in the FB arena, but here it is just a little bit softer.

If your Operating System is one the Windows versions, DO NOT run under administrator privileges!!!! If you don't know what this means, find out ASAP. Do not try to demote the built-in Administrator account to User, you still need that one and make sure it password protected (STRONG PASSWORD). You may need to setup a new account with User privileges. And while you're in there, disable the Guest account and rename it, I like to use Intruder. In the newer versions of Windows, if you need to run as an administrator, right-click on the icon then left-click on 'Run As Administrator' in the dialog box.

Be vigilant about updates and patches!! Not just your operating system, but the applications as well. Especially the applications and plug-ins you use while surfing the internet. These include Acrobat Reader, Flash and JAVA. On your Windows machine BelArc Advisor is a good free (for personal use) tool to use to monitor your machine and it's fairly easy to understand. Secunia PSI is another good free tool, it may have a little steeper learning curve but their site has some pretty good tutorials.

Browsers are the applications you use to surf the internet. The various versions of Internet Explorer are still the most common browser in use. Try not to use it unless absolutely necessary. I heard a security expert say that you should only use Internet Explorer once! And that is to download another browser. There really are quite a few options. Firefox, Chrome (Chromium), Safari and Opera among the most common I've run across. Because of Chrome's popularity it is coming increasingly under attack by malicious code writers. Install an ad blocking add-in. Ads are not just an inconvenience, but a ready-made portal for malware. AdBlock Plus is a good one for Firefox and Chrome. You also need to bolt down your browser. Delete history, cookies, temporary internet files, form data and any other content data on exiting. Do NOT save passwords in your browser, use a password manager (More on that later). Limit script functionality for general surfing. You can set exceptions and relax those limits for trusted sites.

Password protect your devices and DON'T REUSE PASSWORDS!! Sure, it is a pain to have to enter a password every time you want to do something but remember every convenience creates vulnerabilities. Use a password manager like PassSafe, KeePass, etc. You really only have to remember the STRONG password for the password manager and you can look up whatever password you need at the time. Look for one that will work on each of your devices and has a separate database from the application. This way you can store the database in your iCloud, Dropbox, Box, Drive, Evernote,... and synchronize the db regardless of which device you use to modify the data. Use 2-step verification whenever possible, especially on your more sensitive data. Don't answer security questions with information easily found on the internet. For example, 'What is your mother's maiden name?', the last thing you want to set the answer to is your mother's maiden name! And you can put that in your password manager too.

Install security on your device(s). You need malware protection, and for your mobile device(s), the ability to locate your device and remotely wipe it. Make sure at least one person you trust, and should be available almost any time, has access to the locating service. An acquaintance left her iPhone in the restroom of restaurant, realizing it about 15 minutes after leaving. She happened to be with her best friend and they could see the phone was still likely at the restaurant. While asking around the restaurant if anyone had turned it in and getting No in response, her friend invoked the scream feature and everybody in the restaurant could hear it was in the pocket of one of the workers.

Make sure your bank(s) and credit card companies employ the safest practices affordable. While, it may be an inconvenience, don't let your bank make changes to your account or disseminate information unless you are physically present. There is software available to spoof the caller-id. It would look like a call from anywhere in the world is coming from your phone. Use temporary credit card numbers for online shopping. If your credit card provider does not offer this service, change companies today. Let your credit card company know when and where you are traveling. Activate any and all alerts of unusual behavior.

There, now I feel a little better. This is in no way anywhere close to being comprehensive, this is just a start. Once you start employing these practices, you will inevitably become aware of even more things you should do to protect your devices, yourself and your family in this electronic age.

What You Need to Know about QR Codes By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

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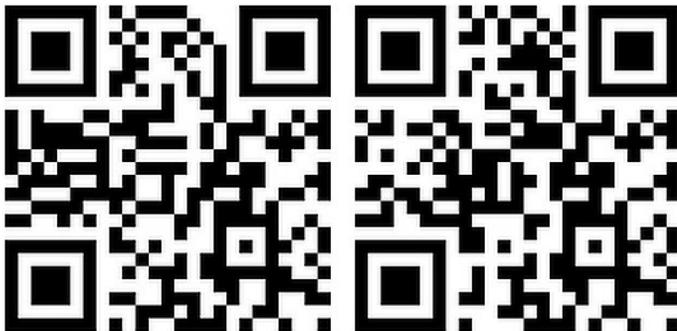
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If you've seen QR or Quick Response Codes, but don't know what they mean, this article will explain it all for you. QR codes are becoming more and more prevalent and offer additional information on many of the things you read and see. QR codes can be found in many current magazines and newspapers.

QR codes: They are small squares filled with black square dots arranged in a grid pattern on a white background. If you look carefully at a QR code, you will see that each one is unique in the placement of the small black and white squares. While this doesn't mean anything to the eye of the beholder, the placement of the dots defines the additional data that is embedded in the code. The QR code on the left will lead you to The website of The Pilot, a newspaper I write for. The one on the right will lead you to the home page on my Compu-KISS website.



Although most QR codes are black and white, they can also contain stars, squares, and other color and/or black and white images.

QR codes are now linking paper content like newspapers and magazines to digital content. To understand QR codes, you can think of them as paper-based hyperlinks that work like bar codes. To access the digital content, you need a QR reader which you can easily download to your smart phone or tablet. Most of these are free. They use the camera in your phone to read the QR code and take you to the digital content.

You can find a QR code on a newspaper or

magazine article, a business card, or a menu. Actually QR codes can be printed on just about anything. I've even seen them printed on T-shirts. Of course, they can also be used digitally. For example a QR code could be displayed on a web page to transfer information directly to a cell phone. A QR code can even be added to a Tweet.

To access the information in a QR code, after you download a free QR reader, you simply start the app and hold your mobile phone or tablet about 4" to 6" with the camera squarely above the QR code. When you get it positioned properly, your phone will take the picture and display the additional information on your device. You don't have to press any buttons or the screen, everything is done automatically.

QR codes can give you many different types of additional information. If you see one on an advertisement, it will probably lead you to more information about the product. A QR code on a business card can lead you to more information about that person or company. QR codes can lead you to things like coupons, movie trailers, phone numbers, or directions. I find them invaluable when on a recipe because they allow me to view the recipe on a tablet and use it immediately in the kitchen.

Several companies have developed further enhancements for QR codes allowing them to be hidden in a picture. They embed imperceptible digital information in pictures or behind text, creating an invisible hyperlink to online content. They can even embed a QR code in an audio file.

Digimarc is a company in the forefront of the QR world. I use the free Digimarc app because it works with their own "hidden" codes as well as regular QR codes and barcodes. It is available for both Android and Apple.

When a QR code is hidden, there will usually be a note to that effect or a small logo on or near the picture to indicate that it is, in fact, a QR code. Even though you don't see the code, you can hold your phone or tablet over the picture to activate the code.

QR codes are very popular in Japan and are becoming more and more popular here as people

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find new uses for them. I imagine that sometime soon, all smart phones and tablets will come with a QR code reader so you won't have to download one.

If you are interested in creating a QR code for your T-shirt, business card, or website, the easiest way to do it is to use a third-party QR code generator. I created the two QR codes shown in this article using a website called Kaywa at <http://qrcode.kaywa.com> or <http://qrcode.kaywa.com>. Of course, Kaywa has professional options that you have to pay for, but creating a few simple QR codes is completely free.

The Jeopardy Answer Is...What?

By Linda Gonse, Editor & Webmaster, Orange County
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October 2013 issue, Nibbles & Bits
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The final question on Jeopardy on its September 26 episode was based on the category "Internet." The question was "The animal for which this computer program is named is actually a red panda."

Do you have any idea what that program is? When I tell you the answer, you will shake your head — as I did — and you will say "What? That's not right!" — just as I did.

Are you ready? The answer is "What is Firefox (the internet browser)?"

"Fire fox," in Chinese, is another name for the red panda.

In fact, Mozilla launched a website called "Firefox Live" in November 2011 to educate and raise awareness of the endangered red panda species.

Live videos of three baby red pandas, Bernadette, Dolly, and Winston, that were sheltered at the Knoxville Zoo, were streamed on the Firefox Live website until March 2012. When the babies reached maturity they were sent to breed and become part of the animal families at the Virginia Zoo (Norfolk,

Virginia) and the Zoo Boise (Boise, Idaho). Subsequently, the Firefox Live website was retired.

If you'd like to find a red panda in a zoo near you, go to http://redpandanetwork.org/red_panda/find-a-red-panda-near-you/

Fun With Your Scanner

By Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
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In a previous article we looked at the many options and ways of having fun with your printer. This time I would like to look at using a scanner. It only makes sense that if you are purchasing a new printer it is a good idea to get a "combo" printer that includes a scanner.

Scanners have been around for a long time and their technology keeps improving. If you have a scanner, you can think of it as a digital camera — it is really taking a digital photo of what you are scanning and making a new file of that image on your computer. Anything you can do with a digital photo you can do with what you scan with your scanner — it creates a ".jpg" file, for example. Here are some basic tips for using a scanner (but read your scanner's manual!).

When you install your scanner (i.e. combo printer) it will create an icon on your computer Windows desktop to control it. Whenever I scan something I first double-click on that icon to open it and use the controls there to control the scanner. Many combo printers have some controls and buttons to push on the control panel to make copies, print, or do a scan, but I always find that I see more options and get better results if I always use the controls on my computer window. When you do a scan you need to provide the scanner with some information — such as the following:

- + File type — do you want to save your scanned image as a ".jpg" photo file? That is my usual choice. But other file types may be available too if you want or need them.
- + File name — give your new file a meaningful name.

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+ Destination folder – into what folder would you like your new file to be placed? My usual selection is “My documents”. I can move the file anywhere from there whenever I want. You should always be aware of where your scanner is putting the new files so that you can find them!

+ Scan resolution – the higher the density (of dots per inch) the higher the resolution and the more time it takes to scan and create the new file. Go with the suggested default resolution settings to start with and change them later if you need to. Usually 200 dpi (dots per inch) is fine, although most scanners are capable of much higher resolutions.

Scanners will have “default” settings for these and other options. Read your manual to understand how to change these default settings – or you can change them before each scan is performed.

Double-click (the right mouse button) on the printer/scanner icon on your desktop and follow the instructions. Place the object you would like to scan flat (and I mean totally flat) on the clean scanning bed – facedown, of course, the scanner is not an x-ray machine! Then click on the “scan” control box on your computer window. The pop-ups should tell you what the settings will be for the scan or give you an opportunity to change them. I always give the file a good name, put it into the “My documents” folder, and use “.jpg” as the file type (scanning the object to create a photo file). When I hit the “scan” button on the screen, the scanner will do an “initial scan” of the object and display it in your window. Now you may be able to change the area scanned (that is, you can select only a portion of the image to scan, sort of like cropping a photo). So if you are scanning the page of a magazine, you can select only what you want on that page to be scanned for your final image. When you are ready, hit “scan” again and wait for the results. After a scan has completed, always view the file you created right away to make sure it worked! Scanning your old family photos to create timeless digital images is always a good use for a scanner.

If you are scanning text (and this is really amazing) you can scan the text and put it directly into a Word file, for example. Do you understand what this means? It means your scanner can actually “read” text and put the text right into a Word file (or another text file) just as if you typed the text in using your keyboard. You can then edit and change the text in the file all you want. So in this case, your scanner is

not “taking a photo” of the text or creating a .jpg file - it is interpreting the text and entering it into a word processor file for you – so you do not have to enter the text from the keyboard! An example of this would be scanning a recipe from a document, letting your scanner create a text file with the words (you would select a text “file type” such as Word (.doc) or .txt or other text file type you know you can open and edit) and then opening the file and changing the recipe.

Don’t forget that Google is a great source of information. Even if you lost your scanner manual, just enter the make and model in Google and get all the information you need. But take some time to try your scanner and see what happens. You are not going to break it by trying it out. I am sure you will be impressed.

Finally, remember that it is illegal to scan (or copy) copyrighted material – you know, like books or money. Well, maybe you could scan a few coins but I don’t think they would work in a vending machine anyway.

January 2014

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
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5	6	7	8 NOPC Gen Mtg Congregation Gates of Prayer 6:30p - 8:30p	9	10	11
12	13	14	15 New / Interme- diate User Group Congregation Gates of Prayer 6:30p - 8:30p	16	17	18
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The New Orleans Personal Computer Club (NOPCC) is a private non-profit organization chartered under the State of Louisiana. Its purpose is to provide an open forum for discussion and education of the membership in the use and application of personal computing devices, peripheral equipment and software. The opinions expressed in this newsletter are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect those of the NOPCC, its members or its officers. The club does not verify for accuracy the articles in this newsletter and leaves verification of accuracy to its readers. Articles in this newsletter may be duplicated as long as credit is given to the author(s) and the NOPCC. Annual Dues Schedule: Regular Member, \$40/yr.; Family Membership, \$60/yr.; and Students (under 21), \$20/yr. Meetings are held at 6:30 on the 1st Wednesday of each month at Congregation Gates of Prayer on West Esplanade Avenue in Metairie, Louisiana.

NOPCC Directory

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Director At Large

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