

The

Computer Link

September 2012

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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submissions to Editor
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for **NEXT ISSUE**,
One week after meeting

WordPress – Content Creation Extraordinaire!

Brian Riley, the President of the NNCUG, **demonstrated WordPress** at the August Membership Meeting. Brian works in IT and has designed many web sites, both for business and for personal use.

WordPress is a free, community developed, content management system that offers more control to the designer and allows placing content on a web site. **One can create a personal web site or a blog** using this software. This site can be accessed from the Internet or kept private. It provides the capacity to create formats, as well as show messages, and photographs. **Why would one want to use WordPress to create a web site? It serves as a means of communicating in lieu of Facebook, and access to the former can be strictly controlled.**

You can obtain **free software from the WordPress.org web site**, and can also have a free blog (but not a website) hosted at WordPress.com. The software uses PHP scripts (a programming language) from a MySQL database that allows content to be seen on a screen.



Photo by Alan Christensen

There are two major types of information to deal with. A **blog** can be posted, and consists of a collection of related posts. Tags and categories may identify a blog. Added blog information does not overwrite earlier entries. **Pages** typically are

overwritten when new material is added.

Using WordPress, Brian can set up multiple sites off of his main site. He is able to click on WordPress.org, sign in to his account, and then move data about without having it accessible via the Internet. He then

showed how this would work. He set up a page called “collage cooking” added various topics, rearranged them, and set up categories. This was his sample site. From his original headings that were brainstormed with the audience, he showed us how to set up categories and organize information as a subset in a category. After categories are established, one can go back to the original post and move information into the categories. Blogs can be marked as private or public. **Although the WordPress system is very accommodating, it helps to plan ahead.**

To further demonstrate WordPress, Brian then created a blog entitled Bluebird and showed us how it worked. Using the snip tool, it was possible to insert pictures on the Bluebird page. All one needs to do is go to Google, find the picture or text that you want in the header, save it and go to the computer document that was saved and insert. Widgets are small plug-ins, for example a calendar, which can be set up to always be on a page.

Obtaining your own domain is not that hard. Brian mentioned Flagonworkshop.com as his source for a domain. It is pricey but he is satisfied with it. He also noted that while some sites are free and others have a fee, he spends about \$60 a year for another site.

Brian gave some good information about dealing with the Internet and web sites in general. In comparing free blog sites such as Facebook, and Google, information is much less private than what one might place in a WordPress web site. **Just remember, if you are not paying for a blog site, you are the source of income** for those who host the site. Sites, such as Facebook or Google, are selling information or leads (your Followers) that you generate. In other words, you are the product they can sell to make money! He noted that some WordPress themes that you can use may be free and others will have to be paid for. Be-

ware of those free ones that you “Google” – they may have viruses! Those that are obtained from WordPress are safe.

Brian also briefly discussed copyrights. Because of various legal issues, it really is wise to **read terms of service**, which most people just check the box and move on. He indicated that if you are “publishing” material on WordPress, read the terms to see what you may be giving away with regard to copyright. As a realistic matter, Brian indicated that **if you put copyright material on the Internet, anyone could take it, thus minimizing any copyright protection.**

In closing, Brian reminded us that **software and instructions are available from WordPress.org.**

Brian, many thanks for a very interesting presentation!

Anne Moss and Ed.

Want To Talk Tablets?

If you have an iPad, iPod, iPhone, or any type of Android device, and would like to discuss features, tricks or apps, please meet at **09:30 a.m. on September 15 at the Membership Meeting.** We will find a quiet spot at RW-C before the Membership Meeting to explore these fascinating devices.

BJ McMillan

Genealogy SIG Meeting

The September Genealogy SIG meeting will feature a **“webinar” with Lorel Kapke creator of Sort Your Story software.** This software package will organize and store your valuable and irreplaceable family data in one place.

The meeting will be held in the Auditorium at Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury on **September 13, at 1:00 p.m.**

Ann Thompson

File Recovery Strategies

By Dick Maybach
 May 2012 issue, BUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
 www.bcug.com
 n2nd (at) charter.net

Using home computers affords many opportunities for errors and malfunctions. You probably have experienced at least one of these mishaps.

- Shortly after emptying the recycle bin, you realize it contained a file you should have restored.
 - A CD, CD-ROM, or DVD is scratched and unplayable or unreadable.
 - You formatted the memory card for your digital camera with vacation pictures you hadn't yet moved to your PC.
 - Your computer won't boot, and you haven't backed up all your files.
 - Your hard disk is beginning to report errors, and again it isn't backed up.
- You had a fire, a flood, or a power surge, and your hard disk is dead.

Surprisingly, you can probably recover some and perhaps most of your data in each of these cases, as you will see in this article and the two that follow it: Windows graphical tools, and command-line tools. As will become apparent, by far the best approach is prevention in the form of a good backup regimen, and if you haven't already, reading this series may inspire you to begin one.

Regardless of what happened, the first step is usually the same – turn off the equipment that contains the damaged medium. Don't power it up again until you have collected any equipment and software you need and have developed a good plan. If the plan involves using unfamiliar software, practice the procedures on a test medium until you are comfortable with them.

It's most important that you not write anything to the device from which you hope to recover the files. This implies several things.

- If the device is your system disk (C: for Windows users), you must not install any software before you have recovered the files. Ideally, you shouldn't even reboot from it.

- To recover files from your system disk you must remove the disk and mount it in a different PC (unless you have recovery software installed) or use a Linux live CD. When you recover files from a device, you must rewrite them to a different device.

The general approach depends on the nature of the problem.

- *Complete device failure or physical damage from fire, water, electrical surge, or physical shock* – You can't do anything and neither can your local shop; instead, you must send the device to a specialist. Expect the fees to start at above \$1000, and they could be much higher. Reputable firms don't guarantee success, but many charge you only for what they are able to recover.

- *Problems resulting from a gradually failing system disk* – You must either move the drive to a new computer or boot from a live CD (which doesn't use the internal hard drive). Regardless of your approach, your first task is to move all the data from the failing device to a good one. The preferable way to do this is with a program such as gddrescue (discussed in part 3), which is designed to recover as much as possible from a corrupt file system.

- *Problems resulting from a gradually failing storage device that is not a system disk* – Since your system disk is fine, you can use your computer to salvage the data. Again, the first step is to move all the data to a good device.

- *A computer that won't boot* – Most likely, your data isn't affected, but you should move all your files to an external device before you try to repair the operating system.

- *Problems resulting from malware or a software malfunction* – If this occurs on a system disk, you must not boot from it, as this would allow the problem software to continue its mischief. Thus, you must use either a live CD or attach the disk to a clean computer. Once you do this, there will be no new damage, which means you can recover files at your leisure.

Problems resulting from user errors – If these occur on a system disk, you should not boot

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from it until you have recovered the data. This is because each boot causes files to be written, which could overwrite what you are trying to recover. The best time to recover that data is immediately after you delete it, providing you had already installed the recovery software you need. Thus, this case is an exception to the rule that your first step should be to shut down your computer.

Your first decision is whether to attempt the recovery yourself or pay a shop to do it. If the data is very valuable or belongs to a business, strongly consider having a competent professional do the work. Also consider a professional if the medium is failing; here, you have little time, as data losses will continue. Ask what approach they will use, and if their strategy is different than what I discuss here, they should be able to justify it.

You must next decide whether you will use a tool in your native operating system or a Linux (probably command-line) tool. A strong advantage of working in your native environment is that it reduces the likelihood of serious errors. However, to recover files from a Mac or Microsoft system disk, you will have to remove it and connect it to a separate, healthy computer that has the appropriate recovery software. Rather than opening the healthy computer's system case to install the hard disk in it, consider buying a IDE to USB, a SATA to USB, or a laptop disk to USB adapter (depending on the drive you're working on). (Of course, this isn't necessary if the problem is on a removable medium, such as a memory stick or CD-ROM.) An alternative is to use a Linux live-CD, which runs from a CD-ROM or memory stick without accessing the hard disk at all, except to recover files from it. As a result, you don't have to move the hard disk to another PC. Even die-hard Windows users should consider acquiring and experimenting with a Linux-based maintenance disk, such as Parted Magic, to be ready in case of difficulty. (See my article in the April BCUG Bytes, available at <http://www.bcug.com>)

Next month we'll look at recovery tools that run under Windows. (I'm not able to test Mac procedures, but a Web search will find graphical recovery tools for the Mac.) The following month, we'll look at Linux command-line tools, two of which also run on both Mac and Microsoft operating systems. To decide between graphical and command-line tools, consider the following.

Graphical tool pros:

- familiar environment and intuitive procedures. (You probably don't

need a manual.)

Graphical tool cons:

- need to remove the system disk from the PC,
- need a second PC and probably an adapter to work on the system disk, and you can work only on native filesystems (FAT and NTFS for Windows).

Command-line tool pros:

- handles a greater range of problems and if used with a live-CD, allows working on a system disk in place and on many different filesystems.

Command-line tool cons:

- user needs more expertise and if used with a Linux live-CD, the environment is probably unfamiliar.

From this I recommend that if you are familiar only with Windows or the Mac and are recovering files from a removable medium, use graphical tools that are native to your operating system. However, in part three, we'll look at two command-line tools (TestDisk and PhotoRec) that run on both Windows and the Mac as well as on Linux, and both are almost as easy to use as the graphical tools. If you have a system disk problem, use a Linux live-CD (such as Parted Magic), mount the disk in a second PC that has the proper recovery tools, or take the PC with the problem disk to a good shop. Of course, by far the best approach is to use an effective backup program, which lets you avoid this whole mess.

The Artistry of Photography in the Digital Age

Dr. Charles Albert Huckins, from Mason Neck in Northern Virginia, will address the September Membership Meeting on how **"One Analog Photographer's Stumble into the Digital Age"** was accomplished while maintaining his photographic artistic objectives.

He and his wife, Til, have combined extensive world travels with his photographic goals centered around documentary photographic studies.

The **Membership Meeting** will take place in the Auditorium of RW-C on Saturday, September 15, 2012, with coffee and donuts at 9:30 a.m. The meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. Visitors are welcome!

Chris Christensen

August 18 Meeting Notes

Brian Riley, President, conducted the meeting.

TREASURER'S REPORT: 95 members.
Treasury Balance: \$4349.14.

GENERAL: The **Smart Computing magazine is phasing out its subscription based service as current subscriptions expire**. It has entered into an arrangement with the office supply firm, Staples, and is **now available for free through Staples stores, or online**.

Of interest in the news is **Apple's lawsuit against Samsung** about copyright issues surrounding smart phones and tablets. **Apple largely prevailed in a US court**. Both sides are expected to appeal various aspects of the decision. (**Samsung just won in a Japanese court**. Ed.)

B.J. McMillan announced that in September a **possible new NNCUG subgroup on the subject of Tablets/Androids** will convene. This group will **meet on September 15 at 09:30 a.m., one half hour before the regular Membership Meeting** in the RW-C Auditorium. Anyone owning or interested in

all tablets, including the iPad is welcome. Please attend if interested.

SIG REPORTS:

PHOTO: Reminder - **the group meets the second Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m.** at the Lancaster Community Library. The group has novice and expert photographers. Any person, regardless of skill level, is welcome to come and participate. Topics will vary, and participants are encouraged to share photos or current work projects.

GENEALOGY: There was no report from the Genealogy SIG. Reminder - **the next meeting is on September 13, 1:00 p.m.**, in the Auditorium at RW-C in Irvington. Additional information is posted on the NNCUG website. If you have questions, contact Ann Thompson at ann@ann-thompson.net.

Q & A: **Can an existing hard drive partition be changed?** Rob Mink said **it can be done, using Acronis Disk Director** to create, resize or remove partitions.

Membership Report - August 2012

Welcome - None

RENEW September 2012 - Sandra Armstrong, Geraldine Holmes, Marilyn Jurkops, Ginger Klapp, Dick Rounds, Beverly Wellford

RENEW August 2012 - Dorothy Hoffman, Jim Sapione

Membership dues are \$20 annually. Please send to:
George Cadmus, Treasurer, NNCUG, 150 Pine Drive,
White Stone VA 22578

SPEAKER: Our speaker was **Brian Riley**, NNCUG President who **demonstrated Word Press**, a content management system that can be used in setting up your own website or blog.

RAFFLE WINNERS: **Carol Hallett** - chose Microsoft Wireless Mouse 4000;
Loretta Stover - Quirky Rest & Recharge USB Docking Station; **Linda Boyatzies** - Kinston 16GB Flash Drive with Case Logic Flash Drive Case; and **Marilyn Jurkops** - clip-on reading light.

Anne Moss, Secretary

The Computer Link

Northern Neck
Computer
Users' Group
150 Pine Drive
White Stone, VA 22578

NNCUG Meeting Dates

NNCUG GENERAL MEETING
Third Saturday, 10:00 a.m.

Rappahannock Westminster-Canterbury Meeting Room

BEGINNERS SIG

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

GENEALOGY SIG

*Meets bi-monthly, 2nd Thursday, 1:00 p.m.—RW-C
Contact Ann Thompson at ann@ann-thompson.net
to get on the mail list for announcements.*

PHOTOSHOP SIG

*Second Tuesday, every month, 9:30 a.m.
Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock
For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831
or message Bird@kaballero.com*



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Coming Attractions

Membership - Digital Photo Artistry, A Huckins, Sept 15
Genealogy - Sort Your Story Software, L. Kapke, Sept 13
Photo SIG - Sept 11, 09:30 am, Lancaster Community Library