

# The

# Computer Link

May 2009

The Newsletter of the Northern Neck Computer Users' Group

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One week after meeting

## Lindsay Gardner: Online Research Resources

Our presentation for April was by Lindsay Gardner, Head Librarian at the Lancaster Community Library. Her topic was the research capabilities and other features available from LCL's website.

She first noted that over the past six months, there has been a significant **increase in library usage** in general, and in usage of the library's computers, which are often used to find jobs, file unemployment, enroll in college classes, or take online classes.

such as Word, Excel, Access and Vista. The *Opposing Viewpoints Resource Center* provides access to articles and statistics on **issue-oriented topics**, such as immigration or stem cells; the articles are drawn from magazines, newspapers, journals and websites.

Lindsay explained that the *Find It Virginia* link lets library patrons search a wide variety of online databases that incorporate sources such as magazines (including Consumer Reports, Time and Newsweek), encyclopedias, newspapers and



**Lindsay Gardner**  
Photo by Albert "Chris" Christensen

Lindsay then took us through the wealth of research resources accessible via the Research Resources link on the [www.lancasterlibrary.org](http://www.lancasterlibrary.org). For example, the **Learning Express link** offers GED and SAT practice tests, and tests and tutorials for improving your math, reading or writing skills in general. It also offers tutorials for various Microsoft programs,

even transcripts of TV and radio segments. These databases include **broad topic areas** such as consumers issues, business and investment, health, and also more specialized interest areas such as religion, archaeology and anthropology, law, and military and intelligence. The *Net Library* link allows library users to "check out"

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## Microsoft Releases Internet Explorer 8

Written by *Ira Wilsker*,  
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### WEBSITES:

<http://www.microsoft.com/ie>  
<http://www.ieaddons.com/en>

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Microsoft has released the latest iteration of its ubiquitous browser, Internet Explorer version 8 (IE 8). This browser is for all versions of XP and Vista, and is a 16.1mb download for XP.

I had tried one of the early beta (pre-release) builds of IE 8, and was **impressed by its features and speed**, a substantial improvement over what I felt was a lethargic Internet Explorer 7. Now I have downloaded and installed IE 8 on all of my computers, and my first impressions of it are quite positive. I have been using Firefox, IE's major competitor, almost exclusively for several years. I was not alone in using Firefox instead of IE, as Firefox has been taking market share from IE for years as it has generally offered more speed, features, and security than IE. Now with IE 8, Firefox has a worthy competitor which has added features, speed and security to challenge the gains made in the marketplace by Firefox.

Within minutes of its release, I downloaded the new version of IE 8 on my work computer. I went directly to Microsoft's IE website at **[www.microsoft.com/ie](http://www.microsoft.com/ie)** to

download IE 8. Microsoft identified my operating system, and proceeded to connect me to the proper variety of IE 8, which I downloaded. The installation process was smooth, with several informational windows appearing with install options. One of the first windows to appear was a statement that the IE 8 install utility was going to download the latest version of Windows **Malicious Software Removal Tool**, and scan my computer for malware prior to the installation of IE 8. My computer was free of any detected malware, and the installation continued. A reboot was required in order to complete the IE 8 process, which I allowed. After the reboot, a small window appeared displaying the setup sequences of the new software. Subsequent windows offered me the opportunity to install add-ons, and **select default search engines. IE 8 imported my selections** from IE 7, and asked if I wanted to keep my IE 7 defaults and use them in IE 8, which I did. The final window displayed correctly identified that I had other browsers installed on my computer, including Firefox, Opera, and Safari, and asked if I wanted to **import bookmarks (favorites)** and feeds from them; I selected yes, and data was imported from my other browsers into IE 8, making them immediately available on that platform. IE 8 did indeed load faster than IE 7 ever loaded, and web pages appeared to load faster, but I have no empirical data to corroborate that.

IE 8 is more feature rich

than IE 7, and in many ways appears to emulate the finer points available in Firefox. One feature in IE 8 that offers improved possibilities is **"Accelerators"** which provide quick access to information by simply highlighting a word, phrase, address, or other item on a webpage. If the proper accelerators are installed, then appropriate information in the form of maps, web searches, translations, email, blogs, and other relevant resources and outputs are immediately displayed.

Another interesting feature in IE 8 that may be of interest to many users is **"Web Slices"**, where the user can automatically monitor desired information, displaying updated information as it becomes available. Web Slices can monitor auctions, sports scores, weather, stock quotes, and other dynamic content, and can directly provide that updated information, without user intervention. If a Web Slice is available on a web page, a green icon will appear in the top right corner of the page; clicking on this icon will add the "slice" to the favorites bar, enabling real-time tracking of the selection. When new information is available about the selected web slices, the relevant web slice will be highlighted. Clicking on the highlight will take the user directly to the updated information.

IE 8 offers a **"Smart Address Bar"** which displays recommendations as a web address is typed in the address bar.

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## Online Backup Services: There Are Pros & Cons But They Are Up & Coming

Written by *Ira Brickman*,

President, ICON PC User Group, Inc., New York  
From The ICON Graphic, Newsletter of ICONPCUG,  
October 2008 Edition  
www.iconpcug.org president (at) iconpcug.org

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The changing face of how we use our computers includes the latest concept: using programs and services directly from the Internet. Many of us, for example, have found it more convenient to access our email **using a Web browser** (a.k.a. "Webmail") instead of a dedicated client like Outlook Express. The Internet's evermore ubiquitous nature means that receiving email is as simple as finding an available computer with browser software. Backing up your hard drive using an online service is one of the up and coming online services. The advantages are:

- **No need to buy** backup software or purchase external USB drives or optical media to backup to.
- **Not storing** backups where the computer is located secures against fire, theft, and other risks.
- Like Webmail, the backups are available from any computer with an Internet connection & a browser.

As good as that sounds, some of the other considerations are:

- There are **some costs** usually involved.
- Backup privacy and security is dependent on a third party and transmitting your data over the Internet adds privacy and security risks.
- You become dependent the backup service staying in business. If not, you are out of luck.
- It **takes a lot longer** to backup or restore than using a local hard drive.
- There is no imaging which means you are not backing up a picture of your hard drive, including your operating system installation. Rather you are backing up folders and files.

All in all, the pros certainly make trying online backup worthwhile. The cons, however, mean you have to judge how private the files are and how large your backups will be. And the risk of a service folding means you should be wary of using smaller, totally free backup services for anything very critical to you.

There are some well-known, reliable services which can be free to use, within certain limitations. Or for a small monthly fee, you can get all the pros and limit your risks. If you want to use an online backup services, there are three commercial services you can explore and consider to start with. They are: **Amazon S3/Jungle Disk, Mozy, and Carbonite**. All three have similarities:

- They require that you download and install a desktop client to configure backups, manage restores.
- Once your first backup is created, the client program then works in the background to backup of new and altered files.
- All three encrypt your data before transmission and store it in encrypted form on remote servers.
- None require you to restore from the original computer.

### **You can also restore your data to a different computer.**

If you search the Web, you will find an abundance of reviews about each of these services. There is much that has been positively written about Jungle Disk and Amazon's Simple Storage Service (Amazon S3). The S3 service is part of a package of Amazon services meant to be accessed through third party software. Jungle Disk is the leading program to do that. It "mounts" the online storage so that it seamlessly appears as another drive in your Windows Explorer. Jungle Disk can **schedule** automatic backups, but the mounted drive means you can drag and drop to manually backup files and folders. And it allows for incremental backups.

This last is important because there are costs involved. Amazon currently charges 10 cents per Gigabyte per month for storage and another 17 cents per GB for the data transfer. Incremental backups mean the transfer costs are kept to a minimum after your initial backup.

JungleDisk costs \$20 after a 30-day free trial.  
Amazon S3: <http://tinycloud.com/qx87a>  
Jungle Disk: <http://www.jungledisk.com>

Mozy, at <http://mozy.com/>, on the other hand, can be free if you use the "MozyHome" alternative, limited to 2Gb of storage. But for \$4.95 per month, Mozy offers unlimited backup of a single home computer. Though not as convenient as Jungle Disk, the MozyHome software makes backing up easy and has many backup options..

Carbonite, <http://www.carbonite.com/>, offers a yearly subscription for unlimited backup of a hard drive, starting at \$49.95 per year, with lower costs for upfront payment of multi-year subscriptions. This makes it a little less expensive than Mozy per year. The Carbonite software might be a little easier to use than Mozy. Some reviewers found Carbonite to be slower and the Carbonite Web site does contain a caution about speed.

With costs potentially **less than the upfront cost** of a hard drive, these backup services are at least worth a look for their convenience for computer users.

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## Internet Explorer 8 *fm pg 2*

The suggestions are distilled from the browsing history, favorites, and previously selected feeds, as well as Windows Live Search. If a single word is typed in the address bar, the Smart Address Bar will reach out and try to match the term against domain names, making web surfing faster and more efficient.

I frequently go online to show my L.I.T. students information on the web. Sometimes the fonts on the web pages are so small, that students in the back of the classroom can not view the displayed content. IE 8 solves that problem with its **enhanced zoom feature**, “Improved Zoom”. This feature improves the resolution and readability of a webpage, while maintaining the desired layout. Clicking on VIEW – ZOOM allows the user to zoom in or out on a webpage, from 50% (zoom out, smaller text, more information displayed) to 400% (zoom in, larger text, less information displayed).

Web surfers are often concerned about their personal privacy while browsing on the net. IE 8 offers a feature, **“InPrivate”** that allows the user to control the protection of his personal information

while online. When selected, InPrivate deletes the browsing history, temporary internet files, filled forms, cookies, usernames, and passwords when closing the browser, leaving no traces of browsing or search history on the computer.

Sometimes a website appears to crash the browser while being viewed, shutting down all of the opened tabs, and

**Internet Explorer 8 is much improved over version 7, with improved security and enhanced features**

requiring a reloading of the browser. IE 8 offers **“Automatic Crash Recovery”** where if the content in a tab crashes, the other opened tabs are unaffected, such that other opened pages are not closed or lost unexpectedly. IE 8 will attempt to recover the lost tab once it has identified and resolved the problem.

Phishing, identity theft, and web-borne malware have become endemic, and a threat to web users. IE 8 includes a **“SmartScreen Filter”** which incorporates **anti-phishing tools** to protect the user from imposter websites designed to trick the user into entering his personal infor-

mation. The SmartScreen Filter also incorporates sophisticated anti-malware capabilities to help prevent web-borne adware, spyware, and other dangerous software from installing itself on the users’ computer. If a dangerous website is opened and detected, the address bar and window will turn red on the page, and a prominent warning will be displayed on the red background. Other protection is provided by a cross site scripting (XSS) filter, which can detect and protect from malicious code execution while online, providing additional protection. A cute feature, which can help protect from phishing and identity theft is **“domain highlighting”** which highlights the domain name in the address bar, with the remainder of the address string in gray, displaying the true identity of the website.

Internet Explorer 8 is **much improved over version 7**, with improved security and enhanced features. Users of earlier versions of IE should upgrade to IE 8. Users of other browsers should give IE 8 a try, as they may be pleasantly surprised. Even though I have been a loyal Firefox user for several years, I will be using IE 8 far more than I ever used IE 7.

### **Research Resources** *from Page 1*

eBooks by downloading them to iPods or eBook readers. Lindsay believes that the *World Book* and *Groliers Encyclopedia* links allow more targeted searches than using a web-based search engines such as Google. Other links on the LCL page provide access to *Oxford African American Studies Center*, *Heritage Quest* genealogical database, and

### *Ancestry Library* (use at LCL only).

Following Lindsay’s presentation, most people in the audience agreed that they had been totally unaware of these resources that are available free to any library subscriber. Thanks again to Lindsay for making herself available to educate us.

*B. J. McMillan*

## Minutes of NNCUG April 18, 2009 Meeting

The regular meeting of the Northern Neck Computer Users Group was called to order on April 18, 2009, at 9:30 am by president B.J. McMillan. 31 members and guests were present.

Minutes of the March 21, 2009, meeting were approved as published in the newsletter. Treasurer Jim Thompson submitted a Treasurer's Report and **reported that we now have** 112 members. Jim also said that the treasury would support purchasing a more substantial gadget – in the \$100 or so range – for a one-time raffle item, and asked for suggestions. (Please contact Jim with your ideas.)

Jim Sapione reported on the

activities of the Photo SIG. BJ McMillan reported that the Beginners SIG will no longer be held monthly. Instead, NNCUG will sponsor a workshop for beginners 3 times per year. (IF INTERESTED IN HELPING WITH

**neological SIG**, and passed out a survey to find out who would like to participate and what they want to cover. (Call Ann at 580-8210 for a copy of the survey.) (see article below. **Ed**)

The program for April was a presentation by **Lindsay Gardner**, Librarian at Lancaster Community Library, on the online research capabilities available to library subscribers.

The raffle winners were **George Cadmus, Bruce McMillan, and Linda Boyatzies.**

The general meeting adjourned at 11:00 pm.

### April 2009 Photo SIG Winner



**Bee and Flower** by Richard Davis

THIS, PLEASE CALL BJ at 580-8666.) **Ann Thompson** has agreed to re-start the **Ge-**

Respectfully submitted,  
*B. J. McMillan*

### Membership Report - April 2009

**NEW MEMBER– David Alberts**

**RENEW MAY- - Susan Barrick, Tom Duke, Jean Ehlman, Helen McGonegal, Tom Miller, Tony Rabalnis, Thomas Warner.**

**RENEW APRIL- Jane Jones, Marianne Miller, Ginny Peck.**

Membership dues are \$20 annually. Please send to:

Jim Thompson, Treasurer, NNCUG, P.O. Box 774, Burgess, VA. 22432

*For insertion into our local newspaper advertising, please send to [bevnjim@netscape.com](mailto:bevnjim@netscape.com) no later than 15th of the month.*

### Genealogy SIG Reforms

The Genealogy SIG is reforming and hopes to be underway this summer. Initial programs will focus on:

- Selecting the best software to create our family trees
- Getting our records organized on a computer so that we can find things when we need them
- A first step look at what we can find in the US Census records including various ways to access the records online.

Contact **Ann Thompson** at [athompson@kaballero.com](mailto:athompson@kaballero.com) to get on the mail list for announcements.

# The Computer Link

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## NNCUG Meeting Dates

**NNCUG GENERAL MEETING**

*Third Saturday 9:30 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**

*Reforms this summer .*

*Contact Ann Thompson at [athompson@kaballero.com](mailto:athompson@kaballero.com)  
to get on the mail list for announcements.*

### **PHOTOSHOP SIG**

*First Tuesday every month, 9 a.m.*

*Lancaster Community Library, Kilmarnock*

*For more information, Call Jim Sapione, 804-462-5831  
or message [Bird@kaballero.com](mailto:Bird@kaballero.com)*

For a photo treat visit  
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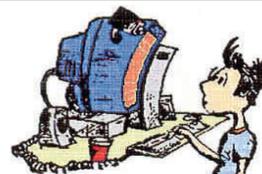
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**Coming Attractions**

**Membership—May 16th 9:30 RW-C—Free Skyping  
Photo SIG—June 2, 9am Lancaster Library**