



Bellaggio Computer and Technology Club Newsletter June 2011

www.thebctc.com

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Next meeting

June 20, 2011

Guest Speaker:

David Chamides

Online Trading

Risk aversion and strategy

**Paul's Computer
Proctology**

**session begins @
6:00PM**

Welcome to summer 2011! While many of our friends have packed up and gone away for a while a few of us still remain. Many of those remaining have volunteered to run some summer SIGs (classes). Are you interested in a beginners class, Word, Excel, photography, eBay, general computer knowledge, or whatever? **If** we have requests for classes we will try to set them up. **Email me at ourbctc@gmail.com and tell me what you're interested in.** Classes will be run if there is a demand for them. Interested in leading a SIG? Let me know at the above email address.

We will not have regularly scheduled meetings in July and August. If we come across a potential program/speaker who can only present during those months, we will send out emails.

Our, now famous, welcome back pizza event will take place in November. Save your appetites.

Our guest speaker for June is David Chamides. He'll be talking about using your computer to buy/sell/evaluate stocks and commodities. Maybe you'll learn a few tips and tricks to increase the value of your portfolio.

Two articles, too late for adding to the newsletter (OK, I was too lazy to copy/paste and fit) are on pages 3 (HP battery recall) and page 8 (avoiding gmail hacking). Clicking on the links should take you to the appropriate articles.

Our condolences go out to Joan Chall and family on the passing of friend, BCTC board member, and advisor, Steven Chall.

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Expert Panel: Cell Phones Might Cause Brain Cancer 'Limited Evidence'

Suggests Cell Phones 'Possibly Carcinogenic' By Daniel J. DeNoon WebMD Health News

The expert panel that evaluates cancer risks today said that cell phones might possibly cause brain cancer. The announcement comes from the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC). Like the World Health Organization, the American Cancer Society relies on IARC for evaluation of cancer risks. "After reviewing all the evidence available, the IARC working group classified radiofrequency electromagnetic fields as possibly carcinogenic to humans," panel chairman Jonathan Samet, MD, chair of preventive medicine at the USC Keck School of Medicine, said at a news teleconference. "We reached this conclusion based on a review of human evidence showing increased risk of glioma, a malignant type of brain cancer, in association with wireless phone use."

continued on next page

In finding cell phones to be "possibly carcinogenic," the IARC means that heavy cell phone use might -- or might not -- cause a specific form of brain cancer called glioma. The finding means that research is urgently needed to find out whether cell phones actually cause cancer, and how they might do it.

The IARC estimates that some 5 billion people worldwide have mobile phones. Lifetime exposure to the magnetic fields created by the phones -- particularly when they are held tightly against the head -- rapidly is increasing.

Children are at particular risk, not only because their skulls are thinner but also because their lifetime exposure to cell phones likely will be greater than the exposure of current adults.

Putting Possible Cancer Risk in Perspective

It's important to put the possible risk into context. Kurt Straif, MD, PhD, MPH, head of the IARC Monographs Program, notes that the IARC currently lists some 240 agents as "possibly carcinogenic," including dry cleaning fluid and some commonly used pesticides.

While the IARC doesn't make recommendations to consumers, Straif noted that there are precautions people can take.

"Some of the highest exposures come from using mobile phones for voice calls. If you text, or use hands-free devices, you lower exposure by at least [10-fold]," Straif said at the news conference. "So this is left to consumers to consider whether this level of evidence is enough for them to take such precautions."

Otis W. Brawley, MD, chief medical officer for the American Cancer Society, notes that the IARC is a highly credible group. But Brawley echoes Straif's advice: People who are worried can reduce their risk.

"On the other hand, if someone is of the opinion that the absence of strong scientific evidence on the harms of cell phone use is reassuring, they may take different actions, and it would be hard to criticize that," Brawley says in a news release.

John Walls, vice president for public affairs at CTIA, the trade group representing the wireless communications industry, notes that the IARC findings do not mean cell phones cause cancer -- and that the limited evidence on which the findings are based are far from conclusive.

"Based on previous assessments of the scientific evidence, the Federal Communications Commission has concluded that '[t]here's no scientific evidence that proves that wireless phone usage can lead to cancer.' The Food and Drug Administration has also stated that '[t]he weight of scientific evidence has not linked cell phones with any health problems,'" Walls notes in a news release.

Do you own an HP laptop? Here's news about a battery recall.



<http://www.pcworld.com/article/229105/>

On advice of our lawyers, the firm of Dewey, Cheatham and Howe, we MUST mention the following:

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Remember: Member discounts with membership cards

Batteries Plus Lake Worth ... located on the southeast corner of Lantana and Jog Rd., behind the Outback Steakhouse & Jiffy Lube. Save 10% on all purchases.

United States CONTRACT Post Office ... Target Shopping Center (across from Bellaggio) ... a few doors north of Sal's restaurant. 10% discount on non-postal items. When I was there they were selling swimming pool supplies. He hopes to expand, selling greeting cards and other sundry items. Please remember **POSTAL items (stamps & services) NOT INCLUDED.**

Have some fun! Make your own Motivational Posters



We've all seen those motivational posters that can be pretty corny or really hilarious, but wouldn't it be great if you could make them yourself using your own pictures?

Well, now you can.

Be creative.



www.bighugelabs.com



The Florida Association of Computer User Groups (FACUG) has announced the details of their 3rd Computer & Technology Conference@Sea. The Bellaggio Computer & Technology Club is fully supporting this effort. In addition, the Association of Computer User Groups (APCUG), the largest computer group in the world, will be joining forces and holding their Annual Meeting aboard the ship. Combine this with User Groups from around the state and country and it promises to be one spectacular event. Don't miss it.

We thought we had a good deal in 2010, but the deal for 2012 cannot be matched. With the experience we have gained the past two years, we are acting as our own travel agents and working directly with Norwegian Cruise Lines to bring you one fantastic package. NCL has free style dining. You dine whenever you want and wear whatever you want. There are no jackets, ties or gowns.

Here is 2012's deal. Enjoy a 5 day 4 night conference aboard the Norwegian Sky. The cruise will leave from Miami on Monday, January 23, 2012 and return January 27th. Buses will be provided to and from the port at \$15.00 per person/each way. Ports of call are The Grand Bahamas Island, Nassau, and Great Stirrup Cay, NCL's private island. They are refurbishing the Island at a cost of \$20 million dollars. It will have a new dock, new restaurants and an amphitheater that will allow for programs to be presented outdoors. We are planning on having one of our two complimentary cocktail parties on the Island.



Those of you who attended the 2011 conference can testify that the variety and quality of the programs offered were outstanding. The final survey of the 350 attendees showed that 98% rated the conference an "A or B". We expect this year's to meet or exceed that event.

How much do you think a conference like this would cost? Inside cabins, including all port charges, fees and government taxes are only **\$294**. For an outside cabin it's **\$344**. Tips are extra and paid at the time of final payment. Insurance too, is extra. The FACUG registration fee is **\$75** for the first person in the cabin and **\$25** for the second. Now here is the best part. As an early bird incentive, **GOOD THROUGH AUGUST 15, FACUG will be refunding \$25 of the registration fee; YES, EVEN THOSE WHO REGISTERED AT THE \$25 SECOND REGISTRANT IN A CABIN RATE GET \$25.** Play mind games by yourself; does that lower the cost of the cruise, the conference, pay for insurance, or does it give you a few extra bucks to "do with as you please"?

You WILL need to act quickly (**by AUGUST 15**) to take advantage of this offer.

We expect to have several non technical, fun type activities for spouses, so everyone attending can have a wonderful time. Come SAIL-ABRATE with us.

To register, you need to go to FACUG's website, www.facug.org. You will register for the conference and then be directed to the 800 number of NCL to book your cabin. The deposit is \$100 per person; it is fully refundable until 71 days prior to the cruise. Book now! Call me for more information.

Which Free AntiVirus Software is Best? www.askbobrankin.com

As a follow up to our guest speaker Charles Prince's talk about FREE anti-virus programs I came across this article...

Comparing AVG, Avast, and Avira

I agree that for most users, one of the free anti-virus programs will perform just as well as Norton, McAfee or other commercial software. But which free anti-virus should you choose?

Avast! Free Antivirus and AVG Free are two of the most popular free antivirus programs of all time. Over a million copies of each is downloaded in a typical week. Another very worthy contender that you didn't mention is Avira. So let's compare all three, and see which program gives the better overall protection against various forms of malware.

AV-Comparatives.org is an independent antivirus testing service that answers exactly this type of question. Its February, 2011, report says that Avast! detected more than 98 percent of all sample malware thrown at it, Avira found 97.5 percent, while AVG detected only 91.4 percent. The difference held steady between subcategories, with Avast! and Avira outperforming AVG on backdoors/bots (98.5, 99.0, and 92.6 percent respectively), and Trojans (98.4, 97.7, 91.4 percent). AVG and Avira showed larger weaknesses in the malware/virus category, which scored the two at 80.7 and 87.7 percent, compared to Avast's score of 96.7 percent.

False positives - legitimate programs that are erroneously tagged as malware - is a third important criterion for effectiveness. False positives are more than just alarming. They can prevent a necessary program from functioning properly. All anti-malware programs produce false positives occasionally but the fewer, the better. In AV-Comparatives' test on a standard set of applications, 19 false positives were reported by Avast! and 15 by AVG. Avira reported just 9 false positives.

Other Factors to Consider

Impact on system performance is important when running an antimalware program constantly (as you should). AV-Comparatives tested this impact on a number of computer functions such as file copying, archiving/unarchiving, encoding/transcoding, installing/uninstalling applications, launching applications, and downloading files. Avast, AVG and Avira were all rated "very fast" in most cases, meaning they had less than a 10 percent impact on overall system performance. AVG slowed the installation/uninstallation of programs slightly more than Avast and Avira did, but was still rated as "fast". When downloading files from the Internet, Avast and AVG scored "very fast" and Avira slipped to "fast".

None of the popular free anti-virus programs, Avast, AVG, and Avira, are perfect, as you can see from the test results above. But all three programs do some parts of their jobs better than other anti-malware programs tested. It's worthwhile to take a look at the reports on AV-Comparatives.org to see how other programs such as BitDefender, ESET, F-Secure, Kaspersky, McAfee, Microsoft and Symantec/Norton stack up in the various testing categories.

It's tempting to jump to the end of the "On-Demand Detection" report and make a decision based on the award levels shown there. But if you poke around further, you'll see that each report (detection, false alarm, performance and removal) has its own award levels, and the players tend to bounce around from one round of testing to another, just months apart. My reading of the data says that both Avast and Avira are rock solid "A+" performers over the long haul, but I'd give AVG an "A" or "A-" grade.

Find Your Programs Fast!

Do you find yourself hunting down icons and files just so you can click them to launch those programs? If it's not on your desktop, you might find yourself stuck in a scavenger hunt that you had no intention of participating in. Clicking Start, opening folders, then subfolders and back again to open more folders -- this is madness!

In Windows 7, simply click the Start button and start typing in the name of the program you want to launch in the search box.

As you type, Windows will show you results that are categorized into groups like Programs, Control Panel, Documents,

Pictures, etc. So, if you want to launch Microsoft Word, just start typing in "Word" in the search box and by the time you hit the "o" in Word, you'll see "Microsoft Word" as one of your top choices under the Programs heading. Then all you need to do is click it and it will run. Cool, isn't it? Try it with your favorite song, Internet Explorer, a game on your computer and it magically appears! Oooh ahhh!



Photobie Another **FREE** photo imaging (and more) download

Photobie is image editing software that combines features amateurs can use with advanced tools professionals will appreciate. Photobie is free for personal use with no Pro upgrade to pay for -- all features are free.

It has tools for nearly any editing function you can think of. You can work with layers for more precision. And it can handle tons of file formats.

At the same time, it has a bevy of preset filters. You can tweak images with just a few clicks. And the results look really good. The Photobie Web site also has a bunch of tutorials. These are handy for learning the more advanced functions.



www.photobie.com

Visit our website

www.thebctc.com

Beware of Malware, Apple Users, Even as Mac Defender Details Emerge



There's evidence the Apple scare over malware -- software that is intended to damage or disable computers and computer systems -- may not be over. Brennon Slattery, PCWorld May 29, 2011

Apple users are getting new details about one malware scare, but should be careful not to fall victim to another that may be lurking.

Security researcher Brian Krebs has tied the fake anti-virus software for Apple computers known as Mac Defender to an executive of ChronoPay, Russia's largest online payment processor.

Apple users should keep an eye out for MacGuard, another piece of malware disguised as anti-virus software that, unlike Mac Defender, does not require an administrator password to install on your machine. Security firm Intego says MacGuard was created by the parties responsible for Mac Defender.

ChronoPay has also been linked with many other nefarious activities, including last year's BitTorrent scam that led downloaders to believe the RIAA and the MPAA were privy to their file sharing and wanted cash to make the problem go away.

The truth behind the Mac Defender malware scare was cracked through some old-fashioned cybersleuthing.

Krebs did a WHOIS search of the domains -- mac-defence.com and macbookprotection.com -- that victims of Mac Defender were sent to in order to pay for the phony anti-virus software. Both domains were associated with an email address associated with ChronoPay's financial controller.

A leak of ChronoPay's internal documents last year, caught by Krebs, provided further ties between the Russian online payment firm and the malware, which may be hiding under different aliases, including MacDefender, MacProtector, MacSecurity and Apple Security Center, according to eWeek. The documents have also signaled that two new domains -- appledefence.com and appleprodefence.com -- were registered on May 20 to ChronoPay, evidence that the Mac Defender malware, which started its Apple-unfriendly onslaught on May 2, isn't finished yet.

Apple has released an official note on its help forums with instructions on how to avoid or remove the Mac Defender malware. Apple also promised an upcoming security update to OS X that should help eliminate the threat.

Avoiding the 'Google' mail hack. Gmail hack from China has lessons for everyone and there's one simple thing you can do to protect yourself. (as submitted by Paul Hirsch)



<http://news.office-watch.com>

Cellular Technologies Explained ... 1G, 2G, 3G, now 4G by Sandy Berger Compukis

Cellular technologies have always been confusing, but we didn't always have to worry about which technology our cell phone or our cellular provider employed. When cell phones were only used for voice transmissions, we got whatever technology was available and we were pretty happy with it. Of course, times have changed and things have become a bit more complicated.

Now many of us not only talk on a cell phone, we use our cell phones to check email, surf the Web, and play games. This means that we transfer both voice and data over the cellular connections. To accommodate our growing need for increased transmissions, cellular technologies have changed considerably. You have probably heard the terms 2G, 3G, and 4G. These are generations that represent the advancements in cellular technology. Although these various technologies are quite complex, I'll give you a brief history, hopefully, without any techno-babble.

Let's start at the beginning when the only cellular technology was 1G, that is first generation. This was actually the equivalent of telephone technology. It was a narrow band, analog service that only accommodated voice transmissions.

The next generation was 2G. This was the first digital cell service, so it was more efficient. It provided voice transmissions with limited data transmissions.

The big step forward, however, was 3G. This is a digital broadband service that uses packet data transmission. You don't need to understand all the underlying technology. All you need to know is that this makes for much higher data speeds allowing you to surf the Web and get email on your cell phone quickly and easily.

Although 3G was good, the up-and-coming 4G technology is even better. Cellular transmission speeds have a lot of variables like the underlying technology, the carrier, the location of the cell tower, and the amount of congestion on the network, so it is difficult to tell you exactly how speedy 4G will be. You can, however, expect full 4G to be about 10 times faster than 3G, and in the future, it has the possibility of being even faster. At their current speeds, this new technology has transmission speeds similar to those you get on your PC with a cable or DSL connection. With 4G, unlike 3G, voice and data will be transmitted over the same connection. Also, latency will go down dramatically, so there will be a much faster response time.

As you look at 4G connectivity you will hear three new terms HSPA+, LTE and WiMax. Whereas the two largest cellular providers, AT&T and Verizon, used competing technologies for 3G (CDMA vs. GSM) they are in the same camp for 4G. They will both be using the LTE (Long Term Evolution) technology. Sprint will be using a technology called WiMax (Worldwide Interoperability for Microwave Access.) As an interim solution AT&T is using a technology called HSPA+ (High-Speed Packet Access.) Although it is technically a 4G technology, and is advertised by AT&T as 4G, right now HSPA+ is faster than 3G, but only about half the speed of the full LTE network that AT&T is working toward.

All of the national carriers are working hard to get their 4G networks in place. As a matter of fact, 4G is coming faster than I ever expected it. Many large cities already have 4G. You can check out the carrier's websites for details about where each has enabled 4G. A quick comparison will show you that Verizon currently has the most 4G coverage with many large cities already offering 4G connectivity.

continued on next page

The 4G technology will actually reduce the cost per megabyte for the cellular networks. However, because AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint will all be trying to recoup the investment costs for implementing this new technology, you can expect cellular providers, at least initially, to charge a premium for 4G.

Remember that you will need a 4G enabled phone in order to take advantage of the speed of the 4G network. These phones, like Verizon's ThunderBolt are already starting to appear. As an aside, you should know that even though the iPhone 4 has the magic number in its name, it is not a 4G-enabled phone.

4G phones will be backwardly compatible with the 3G network of the cellular provider that you use. So if you are in an area where 4G is not available, your 4G cell phone will be able to automatically jump on the 3G network.

For those of you who use your cell phone only for voice calls, the upgrade to 4G, won't mean much, but those of you who use a smartphone will see a big change in the near future.

Lightning Fast Lines

A horizontal line spanning the width of a Word document can be helping in illustrating a clean break in a thought. AutoCorrect creates a number of different lines according to three characters you can type. If you type three consecutive hyphens, underscores, or equal signs and press enter, Word creates a line, bold line, or double line, respectively.

How to Move Pictures Around in Word Documents

- click on the picture
- Select 'Picture Tools' at the top center of the screen
- Select 'wrap text' from the ribbon
- Select 'tight' to have words to wrap around it.
- Now drag and drop it anywhere you'd like. It's that simple.

Short, fun videos

Go random or sequential...



<http://www.dump.com/>

Monthly Term

zeptosecond ... One billion trillionth of one second.

A Pop Quiz on Scams Sid Kirchheimer of aarp.org

You weren't born yesterday. But how savvy are you really at avoiding scams? Take this quiz and find out.

1. A message flashes on your computer screen: "Warning! Your system requires immediate antivirus scan." It offers a free scan. What do you do?
 - A. Click "No thanks" or the corner symbol to close the pop-up message.
 - B. On a PC, hold down the Ctrl and Alt keys and hit "delete." Under the Applications tab, choose "End Task," then do a full scan with your existing antivirus software.
 - C. Click "OK" to run the free scan.

2. Your wallet is lost or stolen. Should you file a report with the police?
 - A. No. The police are unlikely to have time to investigate.
 - B. Yes. Sending copies of the report to card issuers and credit bureaus will help clear up any ID theft.

3. The phone rings and a recorded voice tells you to call a number concerning an undeliverable package. Which area codes suggest it's a scam?
 - A. 284, 649, 809 or 876
 - B. 473, 664 or 784
 - C. All of the above.

4. You receive a \$4,850 check and a letter saying it's partial payment of a lottery win. You're told to deposit the check and wire some or all of the money to the prize authority for insurance or other fees to get the full jackpot. You should:
 - A. Trash the check.
 - B. Deposit it and send the requested fee.
 - C. Deposit it, but don't send the fees.

5. When getting cash at an ATM, how can you protect your debit card data from scammers?
 - A. Wiggle the ATM's card slot to see if it's secure.
 - B. On newer ATMs, look for a bright or flashing light at the slot.
 - C. Cover the keypad as you enter your PIN.
 - D. All of the above.

6. After filing a tax return, you get an e-mail from an IRS address seeking personal data. Your response:
 - A. Click on the link in the e-mail to get details.
 - B. Provide the requested info via e-mail.
 - C. Delete the message unless it's clearly a reply to an e-mail that you sent the IRS.

answers on page 18



EVERYTHING, WELL ALMOST EVERYTHING, YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT LAPTOP BATTERIES

Give Your Laptop Battery a Longer Lease on Life Rick Broida, PCWorld

Does your laptop spend more time on your desk than your lap? If so, you're probably causing your battery to wear out much sooner than it needs to.

See, it's a sad (and expensive) fact of life: You're lucky to get 18-24 months from a battery before it loses a good chunk of its charge capacity (meaning it no longer powers your laptop for as long as it used to).

And you're accelerating this unfortunate timeframe if you leave your laptop plugged in 24/7, which is common for most folks who work at a desk. Because the battery rarely (if ever) gets a chance to discharge, it loses its capacity to hold a charge.

The simple solution: Pull the battery out of the laptop and leave it out when you're deskbound. Most laptops can run on straight AC power, so there's no need for the battery. And it's easy enough to pop back in when you hit the road (though obviously you'll want to make sure it's charged, so plan ahead a bit).

It's a hassle, sure, but consider the price of a replacement battery: usually \$100 or more.

What's more, old, discarded batteries wreak havoc on landfills. Sooner or later, they'll leak acid into the ground. So it's in your best interests to keep your battery as long as possible, and to keep it from dying a premature death.

Laptop Battery Not Charging Lincoln Spector, PCWorld

There are a number of things you should try before you give up and replace the battery. Let's start with the simplest.

I call it the Battery Reboot. Shut down the PC, unplug it, remove the battery, plug in the laptop, boot up, shut it down again, unplug it, insert the battery, plug it in, and reboot.

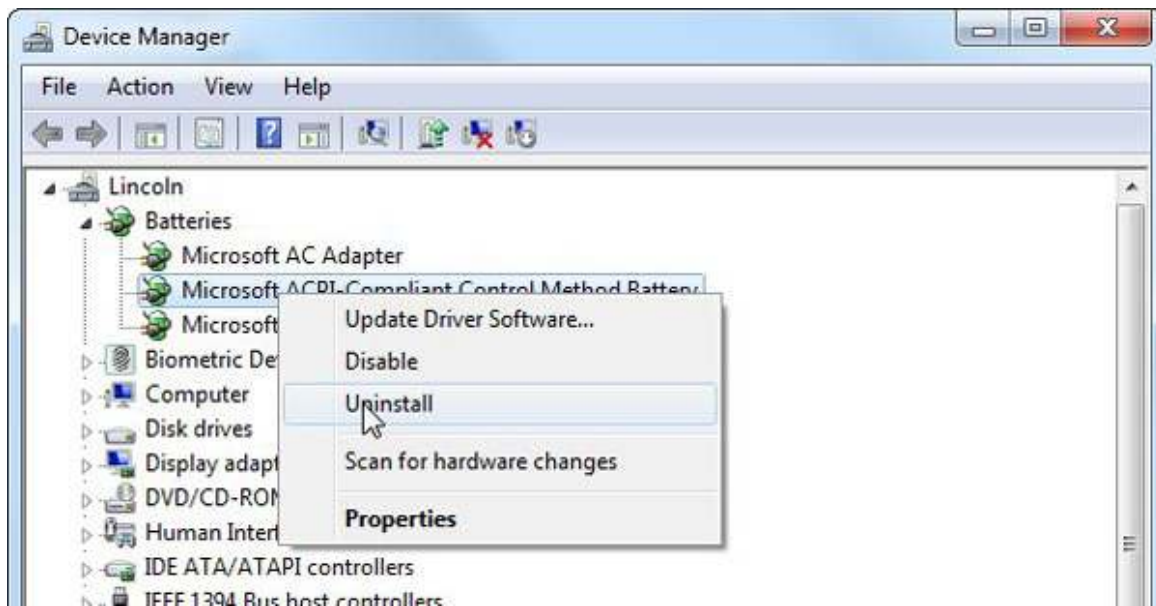
Did it work? Oh, well. It was worth a try.

The battery's driver may have become corrupt. If so, uninstalling and reinstalling should fix the problem. But first, just to play it safe, create a restore point.

Once you're safe, open Device Manager: If you're using Windows XP, click Start, right-click My Computer, and select Properties. Click the Hardware tab, then the Device Manager button. In Vista or Windows 7, just click Start, type device manager, and press ENTER.

Continued on next page

Once you're in Device Manager, expand the Batteries section by clicking the little icon to the left of the word Batteries. Right-click Microsoft ACPI-Compliant Control Method Battery and select Uninstall. Verify that that's what you want to do. Do not uninstall any other drivers.



Once that driver has disappeared, click the Action menu at the top of the window and select Scan for hardware changes. This will bring the driver back.

If that doesn't solve your problem, try draining the battery. Doing this too often will strain the battery and shorten its lifespan. But in an extreme situation like this, it might help and it can't hurt.

But how do you do it? Windows won't let you run the battery all the way down. When it falls below a certain percentage, Windows automatically hibernates itself and powers down the computer. Under normal conditions, this is a good thing. But these aren't normal conditions.

So here's what you do: Run the PC without AC power until Windows hibernates and shuts down the hardware. Then reboot and go immediately to your BIOS Settings screen. I can't tell you exactly how to get there; it varies with different PC models. If you study the screen as it boots, you'll see a message telling you to press a certain key "for setup." Press that key.

This will bring up a text-based full-screen menu system. You don't have to do anything with it. just leave it on that way until the PC shuts down.

Then plug in the AC power and boot to Windows.

If the battery still isn't recharging, I've got bad news for you: Your battery is as dead as John Cleese's parrot. It happens. They don't live forever.

You have three options: You can buy a replacement from the manufacturer, search online for a better price, or accept that you now have an AC-only laptop.

Could these storm alert apps save your life? By Gloria Sin The ToyBox

I do not have a "smartphone" and am unable to check this out (I usually evaluate sites before I put them in our newsletter), so you folks are on your own with this information.

Here are two mobile apps that offer geo-targeted weather and traffic alerts, delivered directly to your devices, to help you brave the upcoming storm season.



For those with BlackBerry or Android (running Froyo/2.2 and up) smartphones, you can download the free Global Alert Network App from App World and Android Market. In exchange for the freebie, you will have to put up with (the usual) "advertisements, coupons and promotions to the mobile device," according to its media kit. This app works by tracking and sending geo-targeted weather alerts and traffic information directly to your phone. (Like any location-aware app running in the background, this app sounds like it could be a power drain but maybe worth the extra juice if it's as useful as it sounds.)

Scott Hughes, President of Global Alert Network makes a good point about why a mobile app is necessary when radio alerts already exist:

"While weather radios are essential for every home in specific areas, there are times when you're just not around it to hear the warning. The one device that is with people everywhere they go now is their mobile phone. Our alerts are literally with you wherever you are, delivering up to date important local weather warnings and emergency information."



Don't despair if you have an Apple device because Weather Decision Technologies also makes a similar product. Its iMapWeather Radio Touch App is designed to work on everything from the iPhone to the iPad, but it does cost \$9.99 from the App Store (with a later rollout for an Android-friendly version). Like the GAN, it automatically broadcasts location-sensitive, multimedia (alarm, audio, video and text) weather information to mobile devices.

Did you ever lose your Mouse Pointer?

Windows has a feature you can turn on to show you where your mouse cursor is. Here's how you do it.

1. Click on the Windows Start button and go to the Control Panel.
2. In the Control Panel, double-click on the Mouse icon.
3. Now select the Pointer Options tab and check the box for "Show Location of Pointer When I Press the CTRL Key."
4. Click OK and close your Control Panel.

Next time you 'lose' your mouse click the control key and watch what happens.

You've Been Hijacked! www.askbobrankin.com

If your Internet Explorer or Firefox browser suddenly behaves in unexpected or undesirable ways, it may have been hijacked. Browser hijacking is an attack by malicious software that changes your Web browser's settings. Some users who have been hijacked report popups or having searches redirected to pages for online casinos, weight loss products and even porn sites.

Here are some other symptoms that indicate you've been hijacked, and how to fix it.

Browser home/start page changed to an unwanted site

New favorites, bookmarks, toolbars, or desktop shortcuts that you did not add

Typing a URL into the address bar and being taken to some other URL instead

Your default search engine has been changed

Inability to access certain sites, particularly anti-malware sites that might help you

Your Internet security settings have been lowered without your knowledge

Endless pop-up ads for things you don't want to see

Sluggish computer response; malware often slows your whole system down

How does hijacking happen? In many cases, the hijacking software is something you downloaded and installed, thinking it was something beneficial. Many hijack programs are written in ActiveX for Internet Explorer, so be very leery of requests to install ActiveX components. Other hijackers are buried in toolbars, add-ons, and even fake anti-malware programs. A hijack is not necessarily malevolent -- some are just annoying -- but you're still better off getting rid of these unwanted browser parasites.

Getting Back to Good

If you believe your browser has been hijacked, shut down your browser immediately. If you cannot close the browser in the usual way, press Ctl-Shift-Esc to access Windows Task Manager, highlight your browser's file name in the Processes column (i.e., IEXPLORER.COM, FIREFOX.COM) and click "end process" to close the browser.

Hijackers are one reason it is vital to have real-time anti-malware defenses in place at all times. If you're already running internet security software, obviously it didn't protect you from this particular menace. If the problem happened recently, System Restore may "undo" the problem and get you back to normal.

If that doesn't do the trick, reboot your system in Safe mode "with networking." This will load Windows with the minimum of startup options, hopefully omitting the hijacking software. You will need the network connectivity to download some anti-malware utilities. Then open your browser again.

Download Microsoft Security Essentials or another free anti-malware utility such as MalwareBytes Anti-Malware. Install the software and run a full scan on your system. Delete any suspected malware that it finds. Empty the Recycle Bin and reboot in normal mode.

Open your browser and put things back in order. Review and reset your home page, security settings, privacy settings, etc. Delete any unwanted favorites/bookmarks. Review the list of add-ons and uninstall any that look unfamiliar.

But Wait... There's More!

Continued on next page

You're not done yet. Hijacking malware also likes to mess with registry settings. Run Advanced System Care Free to remove bad registry entries and close security holes in the registry.

The HOSTS file is another favorite target of hijacking software. The HOSTS file contains pairs of host names and their associated IP addresses. When a host name listed in the HOSTS file is requested by your browser, Windows directs the request to the associated IP address instead of looking up the host name in the DNS system. Hijack software may add entries to the HOSTS file so that certain sites are blocked or redirected to unwanted sites. The HOSTS file is located at C:\WINDOWS\SYSTEM32\DRIVERS\ETC\HOSTS and can be opened with Notepad or your favorite text editor.

On Vista or Windows 7 you may need to open your text editor by right-clicking, then select "Run as Administrator".

Make sure the HOSTS file includes ONLY the line "127.0.0.1 localhost" and any other pairs that you know you added yourself. Delete unwanted entries and save the HOSTS file.

To avoid browser hijacking, use real-time anti-malware defenses; don't give unknown websites permission to install software, toolbars, or ActiveX controls; and keep your browser's security settings on medium or high level.

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"THAT'S TO BACK UP MY DATA. AND THAT'S TO BACK UP THAT DEVICE. THAT'S TO BACK UP THE DEVICE THAT'S BACKING UP THAT DEVICE. THAT'S TO BACK UP THE DEVICE THAT'S BACKING UP THE DEVICE THAT'S..."

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Apple Releases Mac Defender Security Update--Everybody Relax!

By Lisa Greim, PCWorld



MacOS users now can fence themselves off from the Mac Defender malware. Apple released a security update to Mac OS 10.6.7 that detects and deletes the malware that allegedly rode in as a Trojan horse on Google Image files.

Apple offers Security Update 2011-003 to ferret out any trace of the Mac Defender malware or any of its variants (including Mac Guard) and

move them to quarantine.

What will be harder to fix is the gaping hole in Mac users' sense of self--where their faith in the concept that "Macs NEVER EVER have security issues" used to be. Another tough task: convincing many Mac users to take the basic privacy and safety precautions that Windows devotees learned in pre-school.

Ironically, the Mac Defender Trojan exploited some Mac users' insecurity about security by tricking those who unwittingly installed it into thinking they had malware--which, of course, they did. It launched pop-ups and links to porn sites to freak out users and get them to hand over a credit card number to buy "virus protection."

On his Macintosh Security blog, Mac expert Derek Currie offers a soothing list of free tools Mac users can enlist to restore their (our) sense of balance in the universe, including ClamXav antivirus protection, FileVault encryption, and how to use the sparse image feature in Disk Utility to eliminate the security flaws of DropBox.

His best advice is probably the most obvious: "Don't ever blindly click on web links in e-mail."

How to Install

To get the Snow Leopard update, click "Software Update" under your Apple menu or download it at Apple's support site. It will quit the malware, delete persistent files, and fix any changes the Trojan may have made to config or login settings.

The update also adds a daily malware definitions check to reduce the likelihood that your Mac will get mugged by the next malware to hit the streets. If you attempt to download anything containing a Trojan horse, according to Apple Insider, it will flag the file and tell you to move it to the trash. This feature can be disabled by unchecking a box in your Security Preferences.



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Correct answers from **A Pop Quiz on Scams** on page

Answer 1: B

Clicking anywhere in the on-screen alert can give your computer a virus.

Answer 2: B

Also alert issuers of other missing cards — driver's license, Medicare card, etc.

Answer 3: C

All are Caribbean codes. Scammers hope to run up your bill by \$50 or more per call.

Answer 4: A

You never have to pay to collect a contest prize. And the check is fake, and your bank will hound you for any money you withdraw.

Answer 5: D

A and B test for "skimming" devices that steal card data. C blocks prying eyes or cameras.

Answer 6: C

The email is a scam for sure — the feds don't send unsolicited emails like this. If there's an issue with your tax return, expect a mailed letter.

Results: 1-2 correct: There's a bull's-eye on your back; 3-4 correct: So-so; 5-6 correct: Congrats!



"I CAN HELP YOU WITH THE MEANING OF LIFE, AND GIVE YOU SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE, BUT REMEMBERING YOUR PASSWORD IS SOMETHING YOU'LL HAVE TO FIGURE OUT ON YOUR OWN."

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