

Newsletter of Sydtrug Inc.

## Sydney TRS-80/MS-DOS Users' Group

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AUSTRALIA

Website : [www.sydtrug.org](http://www.sydtrug.org)

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### Contents

Title	Author	Club/Source	PAGE
Buying a New Computer – Things to think about (Part 3)	Phil Sorrentino	Sarasota PCUG, Florida	25
Permissions – Do you have the right ones?	Phil Sorrentino	Sarasota PCUG, Florida	27
Windows Lab – Avoiding Web Ads and Cookies	Penny Cano	Cajun Clickers Computer Club	28
Is Your Computer Running Slower and Slower?	Jim Cerney	Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida	30
Coming Soon: Microsoft Office 2013	Nancy DeMarte	Sarasota PCUG, Florida	30
The Trouble with Terabytes	Diane Fahlbusch	ICON PC User Group, NY	32
Ian Mavric collects and repairs TRS80 machines,	Advert		32

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### Meeting Arrangements

Meetings will be held on  
SECOND Saturday afternoon each Month  
Starting 1:00pm at 1<sup>st</sup> Sefton Scout Hall  
4 Waldron Road, Sefton

**2013 Meetings** 8<sup>th</sup> June

13<sup>th</sup> Jul  
10<sup>th</sup> Aug  
14<sup>th</sup> Sep  
12<sup>th</sup> Oct

**Closing date for the Newsletter contributions  
is at the monthly meetings**

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For **single membership**. \$45 per standard financial year (July to June). Or for a **family membership** (which includes all family members living at the same address \$55 per standard financial (as above). These **Fees fall due 1<sup>st</sup> July each year**. They cover the costs of the monthly newsletter, admission to Sydtrug meetings and access to the group's library.

### Our newsletter "SYDTRUG News"

Distributed on a regular basis, it includes the Groups business information, membership list and contact details along with articles and information on software and hardware from local and overseas sources. Contributions are always welcome

COST: Included in your membership fee. **Printed Back Issues** (where available) are \$2.00 an issue, plus postage (60c in Australia). However you should first check our WebPages for available newsletter at **www.sydtrug.org**

### Other Newsletters

We receive numerous exchange newsletters from similar groups, both local and overseas.

### ADVERTISEMENTS

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## Buying a New Computer – Things to think about (Part 3 of 3)

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President,  
Sarasota PCUG, Florida

March 2012 issue, Sarasota PCUG  
Monitor

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Last month we looked in depth at the things to be considered when buying a laptop, and the previous month we discussed manufacturers, laptop vs. desktop, and looked at the CPU. Now it's time to think about considerations for a desktop. A desktop usually is comprised of a tower, a display, a keyboard, and a mouse. But because a desktop usually has plenty of space, it can usually be found in the company of a printer, an Uninterruptable Power Supply (UPS), external hard drives, and special purpose peripherals like a slide scanner, or a VHS to DVD converter.

A desktop minimally consists of a Tower, a display, a keyboard and a mouse. The keyboard and mouse could be wired or wireless. The tower is the heart of the desktop computer. It houses a motherboard which is a large printed-circuit board that includes all the basic computer functions, as well as expansion slots for adding features. The boards that are plugged into these expansion slots are called daughter boards (get it?). These daughter boards can provide other interfaces and capabilities. The tower also houses all the Hard Drives and Optical Drives (and a Floppy drive if you need that kind of backward-looking compatibility). RAM, or Random Access Memory, is located on the mother board, so on the motherboard you will find a number of memory slots. These memory slots are usually there to hold a specific type of memory like DDR2 or DDR3, although the amount of memory may vary. For a Windows 7 computer, the minimum RAM is really 2 GB, although Microsoft indicates it will run fine with 1 GB (on a 32-bit CPU). (As was stated last month, the CPU type, 32-bit or 64-bit, along with the Windows OS version and the motherboard, will determine the maximum RAM for a given computer.) When deciding on a desktop, the only thing that is usually advertised is the amount of RAM, so the amount of RAM is the deciding consideration; the more RAM, the better. (The memory types may differ among different computers, and that may be why the costs differ.) The motherboard also contains

other miscellaneous electronics for audio, USB ports, internet connection, and boot Programmable Read-Only Memories that control the bootstrap process. The motherboard is never a decision consideration because very little is advertised about the motherboard, but it is a crucial part of the tower.

Because the desktop usually has plenty of space, the Display can be as large as you like, and you may even want more than one. A second display can expand the desktop size or be a copy of the first display. The copy of the first display might really be an HD large screen TV, which might be good for viewing those episodes of shows you missed when they were broadcast. Usually you can find those episodes on [hulu.com](http://hulu.com) or [abc.com](http://abc.com), [nbc.com](http://nbc.com) and [abc.com](http://abc.com). Very good displays in the 22 to 24 inch category can be found from all of the large display manufacturers like HP, Samsung, Dell, Viewsonic, and Sony. With a display, “size counts”, so try to get the largest display that will fit into the space available.

The display is driven by a Graphics Adapter which is either on the motherboard or is provided by a Graphics Adapter daughter board. Today, most desktop computers are configured to use the on-board graphics adapter, which usually does a pretty good basic job. If you are looking for improved graphics, like multiple display support, better resolution, or faster performance for gaming, it is up to you to add a daughter board graphics adapter to the motherboard. Graphics Adapters are available from ATI, nVidia, and Matrox, as well as others.

Now for the Hard Disk Drive (HDD). This is where the desktop really starts to show its value. (As we stated last month, for a Windows 7 computer, it is suggested that the HDD size be at least 200 GB, but because we are talking about a desktop, consider much larger drives.) Most desktops will come with one large HDD, but there is usually enough room in the tower to add typically up to 3 more drives. Adding just one other drive gives you the ability to backup your data within the tower, making the backup process so easy that you might actually do it regularly. Once you commit to more than one HDD, there are a lot of ways you could use the drives. If the drives are large, say greater than 500 GB, you can partition the first drive so you have a C: drive of about 100 GB for the OS and applications, and then use the rest, the D: drive, for data (documents, pictures, videos, music). Then the second drive, the E: drive, could be for backup.

Almost all computers are called upon to access the Internet. Because the desktop is usually in one place, and usually near the router, this can be easily accomplished by a wired connection to an Internet Service Provider (ISP). (Wired connections are faster and more secure than wireless connections.) All of today's desktops provide this type of connection by an RJ-45 plug somewhere on the back of the tower.

Desktops again, because of their size, can accommodate multiple optical drives. Having two CD/DVD Drives can make the process of copying CDs or DVD easier. One drive can be read-only, which will keep the cost down, and the other can be read/write. With two drives, you don't have to interrupt the copying process to exchange the disks; the software just copies from the read-only to the read/write and lets you know when it is done. So, if a second optical drive is available, that may become a good decision consideration. Most towers include a CD/DVD drive, but some of the newer, more expensive towers are including newer, more expensive, Blue-ray drives. (As stated last month, CDs hold 700 MB. DVDs hold 4.7 GB, and BDs hold about 25 GB.) The optical drive is only a decision point if you are specifically interested in reading and/or writing BD disks, otherwise there is little difference between manufacturers' optical drive products.

As discussed last month, all computers have audio capabilities, usually a microphone input, provided by a 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch mono mini-jack, and a stereo output provided by a 1/8<sup>th</sup> inch stereo mini-jack. The microphone input can be used for audio/video telecommunications like Skype and Google Talk. If you want to enjoy audio from a desktop, you'll have to add a set of computer speakers, which are easily connected to the stereo output, and fairly inexpensive.

All desktops have USB 2.0 interface ports. The number of ports may be a decision point. And the newer USB 3.0 may show up on some newer, more expensive towers. Other types of interface ports such as Firewire or eSATA, can be added to a tower's motherboard, using an expansion slot, so that the interface connector is available on the rear of the tower. This is definitely a decision point if these types of interfaces are needed.

The desktop tower's power supply is not usually a decision point, but a desktop's power supply can be easily replaced. If one adds a lot of expansion slot capabilities, the power requirement may increase beyond the original

capacity. Replacement power supplies are fairly inexpensive and available from many sources.

A desktop is usually cheaper than a laptop of similar capabilities, and the desktop capabilities can be expanded to provide many more capabilities. These capabilities are only limited by your imagination and sometime your wallet. Good luck with your next computer purchase.

You might think we're finished because we've covered most of the technical aspects of the computer purchase. But there is still one thing to be considered: What if things don't work the way you expected after you open all the boxes, remove all the parts and put it all together (even with a laptop you typically have to install the battery). Now it may be a matter of where you bought your equipment. It seems there are at least three choices: the "big box" stores (Best Buy, Office Depot, Office Max, Staples, etc.); on-line retail websites (Amazon, Buy.com, Newegg, etc.); and Local computer stores (Discount Computers, Computer Repair, - see their Ads in this issue). The concern here is support after the purchase. With all of these options, there is typically 15 to 30 days where you can return your equipment for a refund or at least store credit. If you bought from a website you'll have to package it all up and get an RMA (return material authorization) or something similar. Returning it to a "big-box" or Local store is probably a little easier. After the initial "return period" comes the time of ownership. I can't speak from a position of great authority here, because I have not used either "big-box" or local help, but support is readily available from both "big-box" stores and Local computer stores. (I have been told of some excellent experiences friends have had with local stores.) Local computer stores might have an edge in follow-on support because of the smaller number of people involved, but I'm sure there are many success stories using both alternatives. (Personally, I like the ability to call someone I know, and have a relationship with, to discuss the problem.) Local stores may even include a number of hours of training with the purchase.

No matter where you purchased the computer, sometime in the future you will have a problem (I'm intentionally using the word "will" rather than "may"). Where you purchased the computer may then play a very important role in getting the computer back up and running. The problem may be hardware (disk drive, or CPU chip), or software (virus effects or simply slowed down operations), so one of the last things to think about would be a backup plan.

This is a good opportunity to go back and re-read the backup articles published right here in the Monitor. Now that you've got all bases covered, go out and buy that computer and look forward to many years of happy, successful computer use.

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## Permissions – Do you have the right ones?

Phil Sorrentino, Member, Sarasota  
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March 2013 issue, PC Monitor  
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In the early days of computing, when we didn't have multi-users Operating Systems and networks, permissions were less necessary because the files and folders created were for the use of the one and only user. Files were shared using floppy disks and sneaker-net (run with the floppy from computer to computer). But, as operating systems improved and allowed multiple users and our computers were connected by Ethernet networks, permissions became necessary to make sure only those intended could view or change your files and folders.

If you have ever tried to share a folder on one of your computers on your home network, you know how frustrating it can be to get things to work. Well, "permissions" is one of the things that has to be understood and setup properly. Of course, there are many other things that have to be set up first, but permissions, often times, is a stumbling block. If you are setup with a "Homegroup" (all machines are running Windows 7), then the job is a little easier than if you are setup with a "Workgroup" (machines can be running XP, Vista, Windows 7 or even be Apple computers). All the computers in a Workgroup must be setup with the same workgroup name (check in the System control panel for this setting, on the computers running Microsoft OSs).

Permissions may be a challenge because there are two types of permissions to be considered. There are "share permissions", and NTFS permissions. Share permissions are necessary when accessing folders across a Local Area Network (LAN), from another machine. NTFS permissions are necessary when accessing any file or folder that you do not own (i.e. created it yourself). So, both permissions must be set up when you are trying to share files and folders

on a LAN. Share permissions are easily setup for a file or folder. Just right-click on the file or folder you want to share (in Windows Explorer) and choose "Share with" and then select those that you want to share with. (Selecting "Specific People" will open a window that will let you select those people you would like to share with. Pull down the arrow and select "Everyone" and then click "Add", if you would like to share with anyone on the network. But keep in mind that "Everyone" includes anyone you let onto the wireless portion of your network. Be especially aware if you do not have your network protected with at least WEP encryption.)

The NTFS permissions are the next things to consider. NTFS permissions is a core component of the Windows 7 security system. Using this feature, you can specify exactly which other users are allowed to open your files and folders, and how much they can do with the files and folders. Using Windows Explorer to setup the NTFS permissions for a file or folder, right-click the file or folder and select "Properties". In the Properties window, select the Security tab. Here you will see a list of Users and the Permissions for each User. Click a User in the "Group or user name" box and the permissions will be shown in the "Permissions for Authenticated Users" box. In this box you can Allow or Deny the following Permissions "Full control", "Modify", "Read & execute", "List folder contents", "Read", "Write", and "Special Permissions". (You would think that Deny is just don't Allow, but there are further details that complicate this issue and it would take more than the length of the Monitor to completely explain, however there is a good description of these issues in the best seller "Windows 7, the missing manual".) A brief explanation of these permissions is as follows:

- List folder contents, which can only be set for folders allows a user to see the files and folders inside the folder.
- Read, allows a user to examine the contents of the file or folder, but not make changes.
- Read & execute, allows a user to examine the contents of the file or folder and also run any file that is in the folder.
- Write, allows a user to read a file and make and save changes to it.
- Modify, allows a user all the abilities of Write and Read & execute, and also allows the ability to delete the file or folder.
- Full control allows a user to do anything to the file or folder, including changing

its permissions, and even taking ownership of the file. (Ownership is normally given only to the user who created a file or folder.)

- Special Permission, seems to be fairly extensive and best described by an article from Microsoft at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/308419>.

This is a little to the side of the topic of Permissions, but it is related. You will notice that there are two levels of Computer Users, Administrators and (Standard) Users. Administrators have permissions to create, delete, and manipulate files and folders. Administrators can also execute programs, install programs, create accounts and change permissions. Some of these can be very dangerous in the hands of a malicious person or piece of malware. (There must be at least one Administrator for every computer.) (Standard) Users typically have lesser permissions but permissions can be increased as previously discussed. Microsoft recommends, for security reasons, that there be only one Administrator, and all other Users be the (Standard) User type. This is probably good advice for most installations because of the extent to which an Administrator can manipulate files and folders. Should a virus or Trojan horse get control as an Administrator, the malware could easily wreak havoc. But with the lesser permissions of a Standard User, the malware may be thwarted and not be able to pull off its nasty job.

Setting the share permissions for different Users on a file or folder can be done if necessary, but if you are on a small LAN and all the Users are known to be trustworthy, then when it comes to sharing a file or folder, you might consider sharing with “everybody”. And set the NTFS permissions for each User to what that User needs, and no more. This will probably help make it easier to setup your network and share files and folders on that network, and if a problem occurs, it should make the troubleshooting less difficult.

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## Windows Lab – Avoiding Web Ads and Cookies

by Penny Cano, a member of the Cajun Clickers Computer Club and Instructor for the Dumb & Dumber Workshops  
November 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News

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Web advertisements often take up half of the real estate on a webpage. Supposedly, they entice the viewer into buying the products. In actuality, they help to financially support the host website. Cookies, on the other hand, are outwardly invisible. They are put on your computer by websites to identify you. There are good cookies and bad cookies. A secure website (bank, credit card, prescription order, etc.) requires a cookie (good) on your computer to verify your identify. You cannot use the website unless you have their cookie. Public, retail, and other non-secure sites put tracking cookies (bad) on your computer to do things like determine which websites you frequent so they can customize all those ads to what they believe are your interests. Personally, I like to avoid both intrusions. Here is how it can be done on the two browsers I use, Internet Explorer and Firefox.

Firefox is the easiest because there are add-ons you can download and install from . On the Firefox toolbar, select Tools/Add-ons/ Get Add-ons.Mozilla.org/



The two I find most useful are Adblock Plus and NoScript. Adblock Plus doesn't require setting changes other than to be sure the updates are automatic. NoScript installs easily, but it takes some personal interaction to make it work to your advantage. Many ads on websites use Java script, Flash player, or other tools for the animation. NoScript gives you the option to choose which of these scripts you want to allow.

The two I find most useful are Adblock Plus and NoScript. Adblock Plus doesn't require setting changes other than to be sure the updates are automatic. NoScript installs easily, but it takes some personal interaction to make it work to your advantage. Many ads on websites use Java script, Flash player, or other tools for the animation. NoScript gives you the option to choose which of these scripts you want to allow.

If an unknown script is attempting to execute, there is a yellow warning bar at the bottom of the Firefox window. Pressing the small “S” in the lower right corner of the status bar pops up a menu that allows you to trust (permit) scripts

or block them. Usually I make “Untrusted” websites with “ads” (msads.net, adrevolver.com) or “click” (doubleclick.net), etc., in their name. If you make a mistake and block something you need, you can always press the “S” button and go back and “Trust” the script.



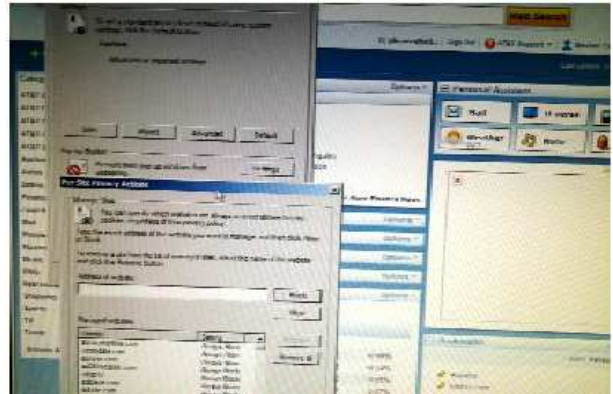
The third Add-on I find useful is BetterPrivacy which lets you choose which cookies to accept or deny. The same rule applies in choosing which website's cookies – deny “ads,” “track,” “click.” et c; accept “Discovercard,” “Chasebank,” and the like. Internet Explorer provides more of a challenge to block ads and cookies. I have not found an Add-on for IE that allows you to choose which scripts are allowed or blocks ads and tracking cookies on a wholesale basis. So it takes more effort on the user's part to accomplish the same thing. Somewhere in the IE settings there is a check box that says to tell websites you do not want to be tracked. But many of the websites do not honor this.

Also, you can use InPrivate Filtering (“Safety” button or under “Tools” on the menu) to block some sites. The most effective way I have found to block ads in IE is not in the IE settings. I use the Parental Control settings in my Virus/Internet Security suite. I use TrendMicro Titanium Internet Security. Under Parental Controls, I block the general category of “Web Advertisement,” but that doesn't get everything.



There is also a section of the Parental Controls that blocks individual websites. The same rule applies here as in Firefox – if the name includes “ads,” “click,” etc., it's usually a “Block.”

Cookie blocking can be done with IE settings under Tools/Internet Options on the menu or the Internet Options icon in the Control Panel. Initially, it is a pain in the neck, but worth it in the long run. On the Privacy tab chose the “Sites” button. If you already know the name of the website whose cookie is to be blocked, you can enter it and choose “Block.”



If the website doesn't work right without the cookie, you can always come back and remove the block. The next part can be annoying at first. On the Privacy tab choose the “Advanced” button. Check the box to “Override automatic cookie handling” and mark “Prompt” for First-party and Third-party cookies. Now, each time a website tries to put a cookie on your computer, a Privacy Alert box will pop up. Hit the “Block” button.



They are persistent and may try 20-40 times before the website loads. But if you can do everything you need to do while denying the cookies, the next time you visit the website and the box pops up, you can check the box that says “Apply my decision to all cookies from this website.” Then when you choose block, the website is added to the “Sites” list and you won't get the alert again. If you do this, after a while you will get few alerts and the cookies will automatically be blocked.

## Back to Basics

### Is Your Computer Running Slower and Slower?

By Jim Cerney, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

February 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

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If your computer is over two years old, have you noticed that it is taking longer to turn on (or “boot-up” as they say in computerese?) Do programs take longer to run? Are you getting lots of “pop-up” windows asking about things that you don’t know anything about?

Well, it is normal for a computer to slow up with age and show some other symptoms of not being as quick as it was when it was new. The reasons for this are many. It is probably NOT because you downloaded 700 photos from your vacation to Newark. Certainly photos take up much more computer memory than documents and it does take more time to copy photos, but that is not an indication your computer is working more slowly. It more likely that you have a virus – no virus protection program is perfect (have you noticed that they do not come with guarantees?).

And, over time, just using the internet opens the door to your computer for various things like ads, start-up programs, malware, cookies, and other things which find their way onto your computer without you knowing it. So, even keeping up your virus protection program, scanning your C: drive for problems, and doing other good computer maintenance does not mean you will be problem free. It happens to all of us.

Here is my advice (and I actually follow my own advice in this case). After two or three years when you notice your computer running more slowly, take it in to a technical expert to have it “cleaned up” and tuned up, just like you would have your car looked at for a maintenance or safety check.

I do NOT recommend that you download anything from the internet to “clean-up” your computer. A GOOD tech person will have all the latest and best tools (software) to scan your computer, they will also have lots of experience

doing this for others. And you can talk to them to understand what they are going to do for you.

They know what to look for to find and eliminate any viruses that got through your protection program, eliminate unwanted programs, clean up your C: drive and get it running again like new. Of course you need to tell them what NOT to delete. Get a good estimate of the cost of this before you tell them to go ahead. It should take about one but no more than two hours of their time, unless you want something else done as well. So it should cost around US\$75 to US\$150 or so. If it is more than that, ask someplace else for another estimate.

When you get your computer back, it will be like, “Wow, it’s like a new computer!” But, in another year or two you will find that it will start getting slower again. Then, my friend, it is probably not worth the money to get it clean up a second time -- so it is best at that point to get a NEW computer!

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## Coming Soon: Microsoft Office 2013

Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida  
October 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

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“Oh, no,” you say. Not another new version of MS Office, just when you were getting used to the 2007 or 2010 versions. Calm down. This version is both very much the same and very different from previous versions. If you’re comfortable with the newer Office suites, it’s not at all a problem to learn. The main differences are found not as much in the specific programs as in the overall look and purpose of the suite. Office 2013 is designed to be compatible not only with PC’s, but also with the new devices that Microsoft is rolling out, like the Windows phone and its new tablet called Surface. To compete with rivals Google and Apple, Office 2013 is also highly integrated with Microsoft’s cloud area, SkyDrive.

An Office 2013 preview came out in mid-July. The reviews I read from the tech writers were quite positive, which made me decide to download the preview and give it a look. I was immediately impressed with most of the changes that have been made to the programs



of the suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, etc.), some of which will be discussed below, but the overall appearance took some getting used to. They call the new look Metro, which means a cleaner, more modern design. The text on the ribbon is simpler, less ornate than in previous versions. And it is easy to hide the ribbon details and toolbars, leaving only the tabs. There is much more white space, giving a less cluttered feel. And if you use Office 2013 on a touch screen device, even more white space opens up for easier touching. I found I could accomplish more in Office 2013 with fewer clicks than in Office 2010..

Besides a cleaner look, the other big focus of the new Office is storing files on the Internet, where they can be accessed from and synced with other devices no matter where you are. This is certainly the future of computing. For example, the default saving location in Office 2013 is no longer “My Documents,” but SkyDrive. It took just two clicks for me to save a document to my SkyDrive location. If I edit it there, the changes will sync with the same file on my PC.

Another general change is the demise of “add-ins,” which are optional downloads that provide extra features to Office programs, like the International character toolbar. Instead, Office 2013 will offer “apps” from a new Windows Store, much like the app store in Apple’s iTunes. Apps stay on the host website so they can be accessed from any device at any time.

#### **Program changes:**

Microsoft got quite a bit of resistance to the ribbon in Office 2007, so changes within the new Office programs have been few, but useful. Here are a few of my favorites:

**Word 2013** has added the ability to edit PDF documents, a real time-saver. In versions 2007 and 2010, you could save a document as a PDF, but it was “read only.” If you wanted to edit it, you had to save it as another file type, like a .docx, then re-save as a PDF. Read Mode (different from Reading Layout View) displays a document in landscape orientation (wider than it is tall) and removes all the toolbars and rulers to maximize the reading area. As I know from my iPad experience, this is something especially suited for mobile devices. Another upgrade is the ability to insert online video from within a document.

The move to make things simpler for Office users is represented by the new, updated templates found in Word, Excel, and

PowerPoint. When you open the program, a group of templates appears on the screen, ready to be used. Many more are available online. One, of course, is a blank document or spreadsheet or slide.

**Excel 2013** has a couple of helpful changes. For example, it includes a Recommended Charts button. Selecting a group of data and pressing this button will show a short list of charts best suited to display your type of data. Flash Fill will sense that you are performing repetitive actions and complete them for you, as long as the data is in the same form.

**PowerPoint 2013** has new, updated themes. This pleased me because some of the themes had been in existence since the early 90’s and had become a bit stale. Another nice upgrade is the Presenter view, where the presenter can see on his laptop not only the projected slide, but a small version of the slide before and after, not visible to the audience. The Zoom feature lets the presenter zoom in on a graphic or text on the screen during a presentation.

The **Outlook 2013** email program can display your Facebook or LinkedIn accounts at the bottom of the screen. The new Peeking feature opens a mini-window as you are composing an email so you can refer to your calendar or contacts list without having to open another program to get information.

All in all, I like Office 2013. Much of what exists in Office 2010 is still there, and the new features helped me complete tasks more efficiently. After a small period of adjustment, I like the modern look. I have had no trouble saving documents to my SkyDrive area and really appreciate the advantages of accessing files on multiple devices. The one feature that I haven’t yet been able to get used to is the change in the Save As window. To save a document to My Documents, I had to go through four clicks: Save As – Computer - Browse – My Documents. If I save to SkyDrive, the clicks are reduced to two: Save As – SkyDrive. Perhaps before the actual Suite is released, that problem might be fixed, or maybe there is an easier way that I have yet to find.

According to Microsoft, Office 2013 will not run on Windows XP or Vista; it will run on Windows 7 and 8, but is designed to integrate best with Windows 8, which itself is advertised as being compatible with mobile devices of all kinds. Windows 8 is scheduled to go on sale October 26, 2012. Office 2013 won’t be released for a year or so. It will have several versions for

home and business, and claims to have versions compatible with Mac and open-sourced formats. Pricing has not been set. As a reviewer said, “It will cost more than Google Docs, but it has many more features.” Anyone can preview the suite by going to <http://www.microsoft.com/office/preview>. Don’t be confused. The download will be called Office 365, which is the subscription-based version of Office 2013.

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## The Trouble with Terabytes

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Technological advances, different materials and cost efficient manufacturing have made it possible for computers to leap from standard 20 GB hard drives of a decade ago and the 200+ GB drives of yesterday to breaking through the gigabyte ceiling affordably in a relatively short period of time. Now having a 1 terabyte drive is passé as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.

No, I will NOT wax poetic about my personal opinion of larger drives, including the “Scarlet O’Hara” mindset of maintenance, indiscriminate saving of files and the time for security scans. (For that you can read “*The Lurking Dangers of Larger Hard Drives*” in the June, 2010 issue of **The ICON Graphic**.) Instead, you will need to consider whether your current computer actually knows what to do with all that storage space.

Not so long ago almost all computer operating systems used the partitioning scheme called the “Master Boot Record” (MBR). Unfortunately, the computer will not be able to recognize anything over 2.2 TB. So that larger drive can be installed, but the additional storage space will be useless. The MBR scheme is common on all Windows operating systems through Windows XP, as well as other operating systems from that time period. Windows Vista and the Mac OS X Leopard ushered in the new GUID partition table (GPT) which allows them

to recognize the larger drives. Windows 7 and Vista users can use the larger drives as SECONDARY drive without worrying about whether it is a 32 bit or 64 bit version. But for anything larger than a 2 TB drive to be used as the PRIMARY drive, the computer MUST be running the 64 bit version of Windows 7 or Vista.

The systems boot-up firmware must be checked as well. There are many computers using a newer operating system and the GPT partition system, but still using the BIOS firmware. This will need to be updated to the new UEFI firmware, which has become the new industry standard. Check with the terabyte drive manufacturer to see if they offer a firmware update. Of course that updated firmware is useless if the motherboard cannot run the firmware, so again, check with the manufacturer’s specifications. Some will work, but you must use a different connection, such as the PCI-Express card slot.

Most newly manufactured computers ARE equipped with 64 bit operating systems, the GPT partition system AND UEFI boot-up firmware. So if you are thinking about running amok in terabyte land, these are some things to know about before upgrading, or buying that new computer. Remember *new* just means that it has not been used by anyone – it does not necessarily mean that it has the latest technology.

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Ian Mavric collects and repairs TRS80 machines, he will provide a home to any unwanted TRS80’s complete or otherwise. He is trying to stimulate interest in the TRS machines, not so much as a useful alternative to a current Win7 or MAC computer, but as collectors and restorers of old hardware for posterity. Ian repairs, upgrades, purchases and re-sells TRS stuff... following is the address of his website to give you more of an idea of what he does.

<http://ianmav.customer.netSPACE.net.au/trs80/>