



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

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July 2007



The following announcement is posted on the Yahoo! site:

For some time now we've supported two great photo sharing services, Yahoo! Photos and Flickr. But even good things come to an end, and we've decided to focus all our efforts on Flickr, the award-winning photo sharing site that Time Magazine has even called "completely addictive."

More information, including what to do about your existing photos, is available at [help.yahoo.com](http://help.yahoo.com).

Yahoo! Photos will close on September 20, 2007. Yahoo! will help its members transition to a new photo-sharing site. Of course they want members to switch to their own **Flickr**, but they will help members transfer their pictures to **Snapfish**, **Shutterfly**, **Kodak Gallery**, or **Photobucket**.

If you are now using Yahoo! (See **Yahoo** page 3)

## NEXT MEETING

JULY 14

TOPIC :  
USING LINUX  
AND UBUNTU

### Linux? Ubuntu?

What in the world are they, and why should I be interested?

**Linux** is a free operating system first published in 1994 by Linus Torvalds in Finland. Since then, it has been improved until Linux is now the main alternative to expensive Microsoft Windows. It is still freely available to everyone.

**Ubuntu** is a Linux-based operating system that includes all the applications you need such as a web browser, presentation, document and spreadsheet software, and instant messaging. It too is free to everyone.

Come to the meeting and learn more.

### RVPC Officers

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### Help your newsletter

You are invited to share favorite websites, reviews of software or just general computer experiences. Send your article or notes to [editor@rvpcc.org](mailto:editor@rvpcc.org).



## Secretary's Report

ROANOKE VALLEY  
PERSONAL COMPUTER  
C L U B  
Saturday, June 9, 2007

The June meeting of the RVPCC was opened by Earl Abbott, President. He welcomed all members.

**DOOR PRIZE:** Thumb drive -  
Sandy Cunningham

**OFFICERS REPORTS:**  
**Secretary:** Margaret Ann Hoag stated that the minutes of the last meeting were published in the newsletter.

**Treasurer:** Margaret Ann Hoag gave the treasurer's report in the absence of Helen Trenor. She gave the treasury balance and said that the club was solvent.

**Public Relations:** John Yeatts announced the program for the July meeting. Bill Scott and John Leary will give a program on "Linux." The public relations committee still need ideas for future programs.

**Roanoke County Schools:** Homer Duff said that the Adult Classes have finished for the summer. He stated that there is some reorganization going on and



to please promote Adult Education. **Newsletter:** Sandy Johnson reported that the June newsletter is available online.

**PROGRAM:** Bill Scott brought his "Mindstorms" robot, showed how to program it and gave a demonstration.

A short Q&A period followed. There being no further business, the meeting adjourned.

Margaret Ann Hoag,



Bill Scott with his robot



The Lego Mindstorms NXT at work

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## Prez' Notes

I am happy to report that I am now more healthy than last month when I had nerve pains which forced me to remain seated during the club meeting. A month of physical therapy has been quite helpful. Electrical stimulation therapy was also beneficial.

Electrical stimulation usually evokes a contraction by excitation of the nerve rather than by excitation of the muscle directly. This fact, and a lot of other facts are available on the Internet to people who make good use of their personal computers. The computer club has helped me to become more familiar with my computer, and to share experiences about computers with others.

I hope to see many of you at our next club meeting.

Earl Abbott

### We Meet the 2nd Saturday of the Month

**Next Meeting**  
**July 14, 2007**

**Place:** Arnold R. Burton  
Technology Center, Room  
105, 1760 Roanoke  
Boulevard, Salem, Va. 24153  
**Time:** 9:15 a.m. - noon

*This newsletter is  
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## Desktop Icons

**Too many icons?** Is your desktop so crowded that it is difficult to find the icon you want? Get rid of the extras. There's no need to have an icon on the desktop unless you use it often – it takes very little extra time to click on your program in Start > Programs.

However, before you remove an icon, check it out. If the icon has a little upward pointing arrow in the lower-left corner, it is a "shortcut" and a candidate for deletion. Next, go to Start > Programs and make sure that you can start your program. If the program starts properly, you can remove its shortcut icon from the desktop. Right-click the icon, click delete, and then confirm the deletion.

If the icon you want to remove from your desktop does not have that little arrow, it isn't a shortcut and deleting it could remove files you need. Right click the icon and then click delete. A message will pop up telling you what will happen if you delete it – it may just remove the icon or it may remove folders and files. If in doubt, don't delete it.

**Too few icons?** What if you don't have a desktop icon for a program that you use often? As an example, suppose you want an icon to start the audio editor Audacity. Use Explore to look in C:\Program Files, find Audacity, and then double-click it to list all of Audacity's folders and files.

Select the file needed to start Audacity. Look for "Application" in the "Type" column (you'll need to use View > Details). In this case, it is audacity.exe. If in doubt, double-click audacity.exe to see if the program opens properly.

Right-click and drag audacity.exe onto a blank spot on your desktop -- you may have to reduce the size of the Explore window to see the desktop. When you drop audacity.exe on the desktop, a small window will pop up. Click Create Shortcuts here and your shortcut will appear.

Close the Explore window and click and drag the new icon to a better location on the desktop. You can rename it from audacity.exe to Audacity by right-clicking the icon and clicking Rename.

## Photo Acronyms

All those acronyms for digital pictures can be confusing. Here are several:

GIF ("jiff" or "giff" with a hard g) For simple images, doesn't handle color well.

PNG ("ping" of "P-N-G") An improved GIF.

BMP ("bitmap") Large images usually not compressed.

TIF ("Tiff") Large images, little compression.

JPG ("JAY-peg"). Used on most cameras today. Quality loss increases with increasing compression.

RAW ("Raw") Image unprocessed and uncompressed.

(Yahoo from page 1)

Photos, go to [www.help.yahoo.com](http://www.help.yahoo.com) immediately to learn how to transfer your pictures. Don't put this off – when Yahoo! Photos closes, any photos that you have not transferred will be gone.

Kim Komando recommended that if your pictures are stored only on Yahoo! Photos and you have no backup, you should download them onto your computer before making the transfer to a new service. If there is a problem when making that transfer, your photos could be lost.

**Meeting space provided  
by Roanoke County  
Schools**

You know you're living in the 21st century when you insert your password in the microwave!

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