



# SoftTalk

The Official Newsletter of the Roanoke Valley Personal Computer Club

Volume 26 Number 7

Serving the Roanoke Valley

July 2010

## RVPCC Officers

**President:** John Leary,  
[president@rvpcc.org](mailto:president@rvpcc.org)

**Vice President:** Bill Scott,  
[vicepresident@rvpcc.org](mailto:vicepresident@rvpcc.org)

**Secretary:** Kay Viskup,  
[secretary@rvpcc.org](mailto:secretary@rvpcc.org)

**Treasurer:** Helen Trenor,  
[treasurer@rvpcc.org](mailto:treasurer@rvpcc.org)

**Public Relations:** Andy  
McLaughlin, [pr1@rvpcc.org](mailto:pr1@rvpcc.org);

Bill Farmer, [pr@rvpcc.org](mailto:pr@rvpcc.org)

**Membership Chairman:**  
Helen Trenor  
[membership@rvpcc.org](mailto:membership@rvpcc.org)

**Roanoke County Schools:**  
Homer Duff, 774-6862,  
[rcschool@rvpcc.org](mailto:rcschool@rvpcc.org)

**WebMaster:** Tim Johnson,  
562-0140, [web@rvpcc.org](mailto:web@rvpcc.org)

**Email:** [info@rvpcc.org](mailto:info@rvpcc.org),  
[members@rvpcc.org](mailto:members@rvpcc.org)

**Web:** <http://rvpcc.org>,

**Newsletter Editor:** Sandy  
Johnson, 774-3979,  
[editor@rvpcc.org](mailto:editor@rvpcc.org)

### 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).



### In this issue:

Dues . . . . .	1
Secretary's Report . . . . .	2
Prez Notes. . . . .	2
Update for Flash . . . . .	2
\Broadband Speeds . . . . .	2
File Extensions . . . . .	3
Broadband Speeds . . . . .	3
Office Suites & Cloud Computing . . . . .	4
Genealogy On-line . . . . .	5
Changing Computer Markets . . . . .	5
Print from Wed . . . . .	5
PC History. . . . .	6

Next Meeting  
Saturday, July 10, 2010  
9:15 a.m.  
Topics:  
Facebook Social Networking  
&  
Protecting your Privacy  
by  
Andy McLaughlin

**Please note:** The July meeting will be held at the Roanoke County Headquarters Library on Rt. 419, across from the Post Office.

Dues are due at the July meeting. In January, the club voted to have the annual dues of \$30 due at the July meeting. If your dues are paid up for 2010, they will be pro-rated. If they were due earlier in 2010, you will be billed an extra \$2.50 for each month of the extension.

The club will be better able to plan its expenditures with the money in hand. Thanks for your cooperation.

This newsletter created with  
MICROSOFT PUBLISHER

## Secretary's Report

There was no June meeting, therefore, there are no minutes to be published.

Kay Viskup, Secretary



## Update your Flash

Adobe's Flash player is probably on your computer since it is used everywhere. We use it on interactive sites and in viewing sites such as YouTube. We use it a lot, and so do hackers. A tip from Kim Komando on June 19 said that 32 vulnerabilities have been found. She recommended updating Flash immediately to a new version that has corrected the flaws. However, updating Flash takes a bit more effort than just clicking an "update" button.

Read Kim's procedure at <http://www.komando.com/tips/index.aspx?id=8990>, "Time to Update Adobe Flash Player." Here is a brief outline of what she says:

Go to [www.adobe.com/software/flash/about](http://www.adobe.com/software/flash/about). This will tell you what version you have and what version is the latest. The latest was 10.1.53.64 on June 19. If you don't have the latest, click on "Downloads" near the top center of the screen, then click on "Get Flash player." Adobe tries to download other stuff with Flash, so be sure to remove the checkmark on "Also Install." Click "Agree and install now."

Are you using a browser other than Internet Explorer, such as Firefox? If you are, close your browser, open Internet Explorer, and go through the update again. Flash has one update for IE, another for the non-IE browsers.

## PREZ' NOTES

John is on vacation. He suggested that you check out this special web site before the July meeting.



<http://www.humorsphere.com/fun/8787/colortest.swf>

## Broadband Speeds

The FCC has released a report saying that four out of five Internet subscribers don't know what broadband speed they are receiving at home.

The agency found that there is often a difference between the highest speed that the Internet providers advertise and what consumers actually receive at home. The FCC is considering requiring phone and cable companies to offer more information about the actual speeds provided to help consumers compare services.

The FCC said it is seeking 10,000 volunteers to participate in a scientific study to measure home broadband speed in the U.S. SamKnows Limited will install specialized hardware in the homes of volunteers to measure broadband performance.

To read the FCC report, and to find out about volunteering for the speed test, go to [http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs\\_public/attachmatch/DOC-298525A1.pdf](http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DOC-298525A1.pdf)

How fast is your own Internet connection? Test it online now at several sites:

<http://speakeasy.net/speedtest/>  
<http://speedtest.net/>  
<http://www.broadband.gov/>

RVPCC  
P.O. Box 322  
Salem, Va. 24153  
Web: <http://rvpcc.org>  
Email: [info@rvpcc.org](mailto:info@rvpcc.org)

## File Extensions

Usually when you click on a file's name, your computer opens the file with the correct program. Your computer doesn't often try to open a photograph with a spreadsheet program. But if your computer does misbehave, you should know how to discipline it.

Or, if you change your word processor, say from WinWord to OpenOffice, you have to instruct your computer to open documents with the new program.

But first, a brief review of file extensions. Files have to be identified so the operating system can address them. The file name extension is that identification. The basic form of a file name is **filename.ext**. The common extension is 3 alphabetic characters but it can be 1 to 4 characters, and some symbols may be used.

The computer keeps a list in which it "associates" each extension with the matching program that it needs to start when you open a file. If the incorrect program opens, it means that the list of file associations needs to be changed.

For more reading about file extensions:

More detail can be found at [http://filext.com/faq/file\\_extension\\_information.php](http://filext.com/faq/file_extension_information.php)

A list of file extensions is at <http://filext.com/alphalist.php?extstart=^A>

How to change your file associations:

In Windows XP, Vista, and 7:

Find a file of the type you want to open, and right-click it.

Click **Open With** and click **Choose Program**.

Select the program needed to open your file.

Click "**Always use the selected program to open this kind of file.**"

Click **OK**.

Meeting space provided by  
Roanoke County Schools

More detailed instructions are at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/307859>, in the article "How to change or select which program starts when you double-click a file in Windows XP." (Although the title says XP, it covers XP, Vista, and 7.) The article includes instructions on changing association by going directly to the list, bypassing the right-click procedure.

Windows 98 is similar, except start with shift-right-click instead of right-click. Instructions are in the Win 98 Help. Search for "file" and then select the article "**To change which program starts when you open a file.**"



## Reminder on Microsoft support

Support for the following popular Microsoft products will end July 13, 2010:

Windows 2000 Professional

Windows Vista with no Service Packs installed

Windows XP 32-bit without Service Pack 3

Windows XP 64-bit without Service Pack 2

Users of Windows 2000 should consider upgrading to XP or 7. Users of XP and Vista must download and install the free Service Packs soon. XP (updated) will continue to be supported until April, 2014. Vista (updated) will last longer, perhaps to 2017.

If you aren't sure what version of Windows you are using: for XP, click Start, click Run, type "winver" (without the quotes), and press Enter. For Vista, click Start, type "winver" (without the quotes) into the search box, and press Enter.

## Office-Suites and “Cloud Computing”

What is "cloud computing?" Probably not the best name, but it refers to running applications over the Internet, on somebody else's computers. You are using it now -- when you do a Google (or Yahoo! or Bing) search, you are using their computers. The search software is not on your computer.

Desktop Office-suites like Microsoft Office are large and expensive. There are free desktop suites like Open Office, but there are also free cloud computing alternatives. Three examples are from Microsoft, Google, and Zoho. All three providers have multiple applications, all store your data on their servers or on your own PC, and all can read and save in Microsoft formats. SoftTalk will look at the word processor and spread sheet applications from each provider.

**Microsoft On-Line Office**, at [www.office.live.com](http://www.office.live.com). You will need to sign up for a free account if you don't already have one. Your Hotmail account will do. A quickie test by SoftTalk was disappointing. Word and Excel seem to be basic versions, with many functions missing. However, they may be enough for many people. The apps are further handicapped by not having a good Help section and by not having an obvious way to print the document. It appears that Microsoft doesn't want to hurt sales of their desktop version. Microsoft allows a total of 25 GB of on-line storage for On-Line Office and all other Microsoft applications, such as Hotmail.

**Google Docs**, at <http://docs.google.com>. Again, a free account is needed. Your G-Mail account is accepted. Google's applications seem less stripped-down than Microsoft's. Help is good and print is easily found. There is a spell checker for the word processor, but not the spread sheet. On-line storage is specified in terms of document sizes and quantities rather than a GB number, but storage appears to be adequate for most users.

**Zoho Office**, at [www.zoho.com](http://www.zoho.com). Also requires a free account. Zoho will accept your G-mail, Yahoo!, or Facebook accounts. Zoho's applications seem to be the most feature-laden of the three. There is a spell checker for the word processor, but

not the spread sheet. Their Help is only fair. On-line storage is not clearly defined.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of a cloud computing office-suite?

### Advantages:

The cost is low compared to buying desktop Microsoft Office.

There is no need to download or install or upgrade software

Online office suites provide the ability for a group of people to share and work on a document.

Users can access their documents from almost any computer with a connection to the Internet, regardless of brand or operating system.

Offsite secure storage.

Desktop Office has regular security problems. This shouldn't be a concern with on-line suites.

### Disadvantages:

Most suites require a broadband Internet connection.

The Internet may not always be up and running.

Online office suites lack the more advanced features.

Office-suite hosts insist that they're safe. But how can you know for sure?

Even considering the disadvantages, the world is moving toward cloud computing. Most people don't want to bother with software. As they become aware of the cloud, they will move toward it. The on-line capabilities will continue to improve.

### RVPC Meetings

**When:** 2nd Saturday of every month

\* **Where:** Arnold R. Burton  
Tech Center  
Room 105  
1760 Roanoke Blvd.  
Salem, VA 24153

**What time:** 9:15 am until noon

\*July & August meetings will be held at the Roanoke County Headquarters Library on Route 419 at regular time

## Genealogy On-line

There are several websites to help with your genealogical projects.

[www.ancestry.com](http://www.ancestry.com) - Some free, mostly fee-based. 14-Day free trial. Membership is \$19.95 per month for U.S. data, \$29.95 for worldwide data. There are several sister sites such as RootsWeb.com, Myfamily.com, Genealogy.com, MyCanvas.com, and Mundia.com.

[www.onegreatfamily.com](http://www.onegreatfamily.com) - Compare your family tree with a huge database to mind missing people. 7-day free trial, then \$9.95 per month.

[www.familysearch.org](http://www.familysearch.org) - Free. Sponsored by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com) - Free. Good for hard-to-find relatives.

[www.progenealogists.com](http://www.progenealogists.com) - Primary purpose is to sell expensive searches, but has free informative articles and links to other sources.

<http://usgenweb.org> - Free. Extensive databases organized by US states and counties. Many links to other sources of information.

[www.cyndislist.com](http://www.cyndislist.com) - Free. Good beginner's section at [www.cyndislist.com/beginner](http://www.cyndislist.com/beginner).

Other related goodies:

Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter at <http://blog.eogn.com> - Published daily, circulation of 40,000. Free with ads, or ad-free version with extra content for \$19.95 per year.

Family Tree Builder 4.0, from [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com) per [www.myheritage.com](http://www.myheritage.com) per [family-tree-builder](http://www.myheritage.com) - Free download. Enhanced versions with access to research facilities and charting are \$6.25 and \$9.95 per month.



## Print from the Web, Not a Computer

HP has announced that it will add hardware and software to connect all of its printers to the Internet. Every printer will have an email address. You will be able to download information and print it directly without a printer being connected to a computer. Users will be able to print from a smart phone or a public location such as a hotel. Documents can be stored on the Web and printed as needed.

Four consumer printers have been released, with prices from \$99 to \$299. Commercial model will follow later in 2010.

Printing has been one of HP's most profitable business. They make little money on the printers themselves, but profit margins are above 20% on printer ink. HP has more than 41% of the worldwide printer market. Next-largest Canon has 17%.

As on June 11, the new printers were not shown on HP website as currently available. One model was shown as "coming soon."



## The Changing Computer Market

At the D8 conference in June, Microsoft CEO Steve Ballmer discussed the market share of various types of computers from 2008 to 2010 to 2015:

Type	Percent of market		
	2008	2010	2015 Forecast
Laptop	45	43	42
Desktop	45	31	18
Mini PC	10	18	17
Tablet	0	8	23

Only percentages were discussed, no units-per-year numbers were given.

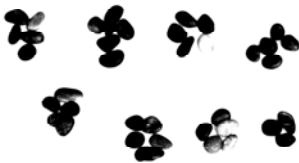
# Personal Computers Have Come a Long Way!!!

1



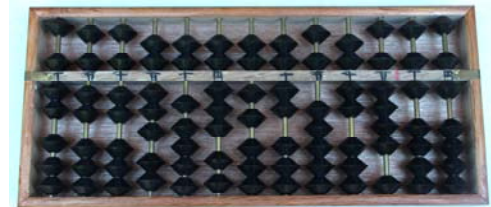
Fingers

2



Pebbles

3



Abacus—can you use it?

4



Slide rule—do you still have one?

6



Scientific Calculator

5



MITS's Altair 8080—you enter each CPU code separately using switches on front panel

8



Modern laptop  
Weight <7#

7



Kaypro 'luggable' computer—  
about 1983  
Weight about 35#