

# Bowie Seniors Computer Club Minutes for January 20, 2011

Dan Lee presided.

Visitor and New/Old Member:

Arthur Lembke was one of the initial members of the Computer Club when it began meeting in City Hall. He's just replaced his Windows 95 computer with a Windows Vista computer and wants to learn more about the Vista operating system and how to use it effectively.

Presentation:

Eric Hein, Bob Blum, Sam Duff, Dan Lee, and Dale Grant introduced us to the new computers the Senior Center and the City of Bowie purchased for our Computer Lab/Classroom.

They folded back the wall between Classroom 1 and the Computer Lab/Classroom and we all sat among both the old Dell computers and the new Dell computers. The old Dell computers are running Windows XP SP3 and Microsoft Office 2000. They have VGA (analog) CRT monitors and two 120 GB Maxtor SATA hard disks. The new Dell computers running Windows 7 Home Premium have one 750 GB Western Digital SATA hard disk and digital outputs to flat-screen LCD monitors. The new LCD flat-screen monitors can accept both VGA and digital inputs, so the old VGA monitors have been moved aside.

The primary motivation for obtaining new computers with the

Windows 7 operating system was so that Senior Center classes would be able to teach students who had acquired new computers with the Windows 7 operating system. But there will still be students who have older computers with Windows XP operating systems, so we also want to be able to teach that operating system.

Eric Hein, Bob Blum, Sam Duff, and, perhaps others, have been brainstorming and experimenting with methods to retain the use of the old Windows XP operating systems without having to retain the old computers. There's not enough room on the tables for both computers at a work station and both computers under the table take away too much foot room.

The old computers had two hard disks because the City would occasionally use the classroom. When they did, they disconnected the hard disks that the Computer Classes used and connected the second hard disk that was reserved for City purposes. When the City's increased security concerns impacted the Senior Center's computer classes on internet and email usage, the City agreed to let the Senior Center obtain its own broadband Comcast line and the City stopped using the computers in the Senior Center.

Eric Hein and Bob Blum tried to transfer the Maxtor drives that the city used into the new computers as a second drive. For some unknown reason, the new computers

and the Windows 7 operating system would not recognize them. The Maxtor drives containing the Senior Center's copies of Windows XP are recognized but Microsoft's Windows Genuine Advantage Validation software will not allow the copies of XP to run on the new system.

When a particular copy of a Windows operating system (identified by a Key) is activated on a particular computer, it cannot be moved to another computer, or even a different motherboard without Microsoft's permission. Also, if the operating system was installed by the Original Equipment Manufacturer, Microsoft cannot authorize transfer. That also goes for so-called OEM copies sold to people who build their own computers and buy the OEM copy from the parts supplier. OEM copies are sold at significant discounts, sometimes 50% off. The installer (manufacturer, retailer, or home computer builder/upgrader) is responsible for software support of that copy, and not Microsoft, hence the discount.

One possible way to have both Win 7 and Win XP is to spend \$90 per computer (for a total of 13 computers) to upgrade from Windows 7 Home Premium to Windows 7 Professional. <http://www.microsoft.com/windows/buy/windows-7-upgrade-home-premium-to-professional.aspx> That would allow us to download a "free" copy of Windows XP that would run on a virtual platform within Windows

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7. It takes about one hour per computer to upgrade to the more advanced version of Windows 7 and to download and install XP. We have already exhausted the city-authorized budget, so we'd have to come up with a creative way to obtain the additional \$1170.

Bob Blum presented two alternative configurations for running multiple operating systems on a single computer, including the partitioning of the hard drive and associated use of a dual-boot menu using the EasyBCD utility, or the use of a virtual machine configuration. Bob demonstrated the virtual machine approach using Oracle's free VirtualBox software. VirtualBox is a virtual machine manager (i.e., a virtual machine "visor") which runs within Windows 7. Windows XP can then be run as a virtual machine within a single file under VirtualBox.

This scheme is similar to a "dual-boot configuration" in that it too would require a separate WinXP license (~\$90/CPU) and would not require us to keep the old Dell CPU. It also gets around some of the dual-boot issues we know we would have if we installed WinXP on the 750GB drives that already have Win7. This is currently the most attractive way forward, but requires that we obtain 13 new WinXP licenses. Windows XP is no longer sold by Microsoft but some distributors and retailers have hoarded OEM

or full versions which they sell at premium prices (\$98.95 and up).

A file server was also acquired with the 13 computers. Eric Hein has been hooking that up. He will require Comcast's help in ensuring that the URL of the server remains hidden to computers outside the Computer Lab.

## Computer Problems:

Vic Kiviat reported that he (or maybe he said a relative or friend) has a 2003 version of Outlook. The email won't come up. Has he lost all of his old email. Is there a way to get it back or prevent such losses in the future?

Bill Alli also has an email problem. He can't get email on his Mac Book. He has Apple's Safari email program. In Boot Camp, a virtual platform within the Mac Operating System, he has Windows installed and a pop mail program Mozilla Thunderbird. Yet, on his HP computer, he can get email via Thunderbird. Various solutions were suggested, most of which involved creating another email account on the web, for example a G mail account and have it collect and consolidate emails sent to the other email accounts.

Jerry Kursban was having trouble printing emails from his Google G mail account. He had brought his laptop along with him. We hooked it up, and another member with a G mail account showed

him where to click to print an email.

Enar Sanders asked how he can get Google's Chrome browser off his computer. Go to Control Panel >> Add or Remove Programs (in Win XP) or Programs and Features (in Win 7) >> Find Google Chrome browser in the listing >> Click on Uninstall.

Vail Clemence asked how he could transfer data from Microsoft Access to Open Office. Eric Hein suggested exporting Access data into Excel, then importing the data from Excel into Open Office.

I was writing an email when my computer emitted a loud WUUM-MPP!!! and shut off. At the same time my wife lost her TV program for a few seconds. I don't know whether both were caused by an external power interruption/surge or whether a problem in my computer affected the nearby TV. I was unable to restart the computer until I unplugged the power cord from the Uninterruptible Power Supply and re-inserted it in the surge protector. The computer functioned normally for the rest of the day, but failed to start the next day. The green power light on the back of the power supply was blinking. Bob Rapczynski said that indicates that the power supply is probably faulty. He urged me to bring my computer to the next meeting to demonstrate how a power supply is replaced. I'll do that. Bob is also planning to show how to replace hard

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drives, CD/DVD optical drives,  
and RAM memory.