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AT A GLANCE

When we were little everyone said "time flies when you're having fun!" Now that I am older I know that statement is a myth. Time just goes too darn fast, PERIOD!

I started this issue in mid May, just after the release of the May issue. What with work, home projects, a brief fight with a cold *(the cold lost), here it is the middle of June and I am just getting back into it.

I figured it was time for a Spring Cleaning issue, hopefully before Summer actually arrives. Everyone knows what Spring Cleaning is—it's that time when you open drawers and closets that haven't been look in for months (years?) and clean out the junk. My version is to find all the articles I have started over the last few years and put them into one issue and start over with a clean slate.

So, here we go, and I hope you find something interesting. §

JUNE SPECIALS

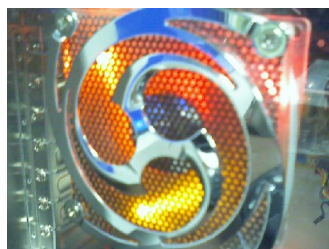
In the past six weeks or so I have been out cleaning systems and looking inside other peoples computers. I have found a lot of dust, and even a dead bug or two.

My phone has a camera (like most peoples phones) and it takes lousy pictures. Except, when you consider it's a phone the pictures aren't that bad. I couldn't resist snapping a couple of before and after shots of a recent cleaning to share with you.



Before

and After



The pictures are the exhaust fan on the side of the case with the power running. Minute dust particles were thrust through the mesh screen until it looked like someone had installed a piece of grey felt over the fan. It even blocked out the colour. One can only imagine how hot the interior temperatures were when the system was running.

Even with the price of gas going through the roof, we are not increasing our prices. Our system cleaning, to prolong the life of your investment, is still just \$ 99.00 plus tax per system.

This month we have a second offer. We recently purchased 6 Lexmark x3470 All in One printers and are passing the savings on to you. Print borderless photos in as little as 38 seconds; up to 17 pages per minute in colour; copy articles on the flatbed scanner; scanner pictures into your computer. The x3470 is PictBridge compatible, to allow printing directly from your camera, and also has card slots on the front panel. The cost:

**\$ 124.99 including all taxes,
USB Cable & Wpg Delivery**

BUT there are only 5 left, and when they're gone, they're gone. §

[HTTP://WWW.MBTS.MB.CA](http://www.mbts.mb.ca)

If anyone doesn't know what this banner represents, you should plug that URL into your browser and find out right away. For everyone else, we know it as the home page of MicroByte TekSolutions.

I am sorry to say that I haven't done much updating lately, but I do have a fair bit of content to upload. What I haven't had is time.

My last work period was early May and I was updating the tweak options. I can't provide an exact date, but I am hoping by the end of June to have a new update in place. §

TEMPORARY SHUTDOWN

MicroByte TekSolutions will be closed Friday July 11 through Monday July 14 inclusive.

I am undergoing my second round of knee surgery on July 18 and expect to be back at work no later than the first week in August, but I can't provide a guarantee at this time. Hopefully I will still be able to sit near the computer and answer emails and I will return calls if you leave a message.

I hope that with a month's notice this interruption won't cause too much grief. §

BETA TEST AREA

Have you ever wanted to be the first one to use something new, but didn't want to be the lab rat. Then this column is for you. Here I will showcase one (or maybe two) software applications each issue that I have already tested and found to be useful. HOWEVER, be forewarned, all the software identified here is still in Beta testing and to some degree you will still be the lab rat.

[IOBit Smart Defrag](http://www.iobit.com) can be found on the web at <http://www.iobit.com>

The Defrag utility that ships with Windows XP is a watered down version of Diskeeper and I have been recommending that people use the full retail version. Until Now!

This utility is in fact "free" and is the best defrag utility I have seen in a while, and the price is right. Installation is a breeze, and it takes up about 14 MB of RAM when running.

The first item you will probably do is Analyze your drive to see what is fragmented, and how badly it is fragmented. The next option is to defrag. However, now you have a choice: Defrag or Defrag and Optimize? I choose the latter which seems to help my systems performance.

Smart Defrag doesn't run as a service, like Diskeeper, but does run in the background like other terminate and stay resident programs. It continually monitors the fragmentation of your drives, and when a certain threshold of fragmentation is achieved it auto-

matically defrags your system in the background (as long as your CPU is idle).

Defragging while using your system is no problem, I am running it while I create this newsletter. However, for those users who like things to run on schedule, there is a scheduling option as well.

This is one application that should be a part of everyone's system.

[RAINLENDAR](http://www.rainlendar.net) <http://www.rainlendar.net> comes in a lite (free) version and a paid version. The paid version synchronizes with your Outlook.

This little app pops a calendar on your screen and keeps track of tasks that you schedule for each day and appointments that you make. For those users who don't have Outlook this is a good alternative.

For testing I have it sitting in the top right corner of my desktop with transparency at 0% which makes it invisible. When I pass my mouse over that corner the calendar becomes visible at stay visible while the mouse is on it, then it disappears again.

Clicking on the plus sign of the Task or Schedule bar pops up a window for entering information about the task or appointment.

I am not one to create lists of appointments and things I have promised to do, so this little app may help me to stay more focused in my chores and promises. I think I will leave it on my desktop even though I am a regular user of Outlook. §

INTERNET EXPLORER

For some time now everyone has been using Internet Explorer 7 with tabbed browsing. This column will offer a few points on how IE7 can be spruced up to teach the new dog some new tricks.

On most installation of IE7 the first item you notice is that there is no menu bar. Pressing the Alt key will make the menu bar display and pressing it again will make it go away. If you want it to remain as a constant, press the Alt key to make it appear, click on View, Toolbars, and then select Menu Bar and it will

stay at the top of your screen where it always was. I personally like the fact that it disappears and gives me a few more lines of display area.

I don't like popups but some web sites use them to show content about their own site. That is where this next item gets tricky. I have my Explorer set to open popups in a new tab. Therefore, when I am testing my own site and I am in the Help section, all my help links pop up in a new tab. The default which pops them up in new window has that window popping up on the same page as the help menu. I am not sure which way I like best.

To change the way pop ups appear, click Tools and Internet Options. On the General Tab, under Tabs (2nd from the bottom) click Settings. Use the options in "When a popup is encountered" to decide how to handle popups. Click OK twice to save your changes.

Here are a few shortcuts I found that you might also find useful.

Ctrl + I will open Favorites

Ctrl + J will open RSS Feeds

Ctrl = H will open History

Type a new URL into the address area and press Alt + Enter to open the new address in a new tab (I use this one a lot)

Ctrl + Q shows all the open tabs as Quick Tabs (large icons of all open tabs)

Ctrl + E moves you to the search box in the top right corner

After playing with all the settings in IE7, you may want to go back to square one and start over only turning on or off the things you really want to change. Good news, there is a reset button (well hidden of course).

Access the menu bar and choose Tools and Internet options. Next click the Advanced Tab and select the Reset button at the bottom. READ the warning carefully, as you are at the point of no return. If you want to proceed, choose accept, otherwise Cancel is a great option.

Happy Surfing§

FREE SOFTWARE

This heading just has a nice ring to it. Once per year I try to publish a list of utility applications that can be useful to some users. Past winners have been PDF makers and backup utilities. This year, who knows what will strike ones fancy. MicroByte TekSolutions does not guarantee any of the programs listed here will not have an adverse reaction with your current system configuration. Use any program found here at your own risk.

[FSAutoStart](http://www.fs-gs.com/downloads.htm) www.fs-gs.com/downloads.htm

Any gamers in the crowd, this utility is for you. FSAutoStart can shutdown any background service, load game enhancing programs, and then your game all with one click. Exit your game and your system goes back to normal.

[SpeedFan](http://www.almico.com/speedfan.php) www.almico.com/speedfan.php

This app is for the tweakers and power users who want control over the environment. Check temps, fan speeds, set fan speeds, and monitor S.M.A.R.T. activity on all your drives from one little app that uses about 2MB of RAM. You will have to add this program to your Startup folder to get it to start automatically.

[CPU-Z](http://www.cpuid/cpuz.php) http://www.cpuid/cpuz.php

Want to look in the box without removing the covers? This little app will provide information about RAM, Cache, and the CPU. Great for troubleshooting.

[Comodo Firewall Pro](http://personalfirewall.comodo.com/)

http://personalfirewall.comodo.com/

I personally don't use a firewall believing that my router blocks all the bad stuff. Never having had a virus I guess I am lucky. Having said that, for those that want a firewall as added protection for their system, this free one is one of the best. IT protects against inbound and outbound traffic. It uses a simple interface and powerful configuration options to get the job done. I may even keep it.

DVD Flick http://www.dvdflick.net

A few Christmases ago my sister bought a

(Vista Continued from page 3)

Sony Handycam to record the festivities. We then downloaded the movies onto a hard drive, and she promptly returned the camera. But we forgot to copy the software that made the movie files useful on anything other than a computer. OOPS! Enter DVD Flick.

Download and install the program and with just a few clicks, and some waiting, I made a DVD of Christmas that we can watch on our own TV with our own DVD player. Simple!

[ZipGenius 6 Suite Edition](#)

<http://www.snapfiles.com/get/zipgenius.html>

I couldn't find the download button on the authors website, but I did find it on snap files. The hype is that it will compress and uncompress from and to almost any type of compression—Zip, Tar, Rar, etc. So I tried it. Uncompressing Zip files was insanely fast and better than Winzip. Other formats were not as good. WinRAR uncompressed RAR files while the genius failed. I may not be able to get all the formats to work, but I have a new zip program and it has no annoying reminders that I haven't bought it.

[Folder Size](#)

<http://www.rotebetasoftware.net/wp/freeware/folder-size/>

I have 4 hard drives in my system, the smallest being 200GB and the largest being twin 500GB. I am running out of space. Enter Folder Size to tell me where all my space is going. My guess is MP3's and avi movie files, but this utility will tell me exactly.

[Unlocker](http://ccollomb.free.fr/unlocker/) <http://ccollomb.free.fr/unlocker/>

How many times have you been wanting to move a file from one folder to another, or just delete the file, only to be confronted by "Cannot Delete File: Access is Denied". The other favourite is "The source or destination file may be in use". I used to just give up, make a note of the file, and when I next booted to safe mode, would then go and delete or move the pesky file. With Unlocker you don't have to wait.

That's it for the free closet at this time. There will be more in the future. If you hear of anything good, pass it on. §

INTERNET EXPLORER

Just after we finally got use to Internet Explorer 7, Bill goes and does it again. I know that Bill Gates has stepped down from Microsoft but remains as a part time Chairman of the Board (I guess it does help to own the company first). However, this little blurb is to tell the adventurous users in the crowd that Internet Explorer 8 is now available in Beta test format. Here is the website you can copy and paste into your browser

<http://www.microsoft.com/windows/products/winfamily/ie/ie8/default.mspx>

And if I get the hyperlink to work this issue this link will work too—[Get IE8 Beta Here](#).

What's supposed to be new in IE 8?

Webslices which lets you monitor specific bits of dynamic web page (like an auction site) without having to actually load the page.

Activities allow you to interact with special text like eBay or Facebook searches without having to navigate away from the current page.

IE 8 is supposed to break source code down into HTML, CSS, and Script Tabs for perusal or debugging.

A Research bar will allow lookups via a dictionary, thesaurus, Encarta, etc. Hey, isn't that what a search engine does?

A new safety filter is to be included to take care of anti phishing chores.

Saving the best for last, you are supposed to be able to have multiple home pages. I like this because I have about 4 favourite sites I like to rotate between.

BUT REMEMBER, IE8 is still in Beta which means if your system crashes, and it might, you will have no one to blame but yourself. §

That's it for another issue. Let me know what you liked, didn't like, want to see more of, and if you want to buy a printer or get your system cleaned and tuned. Next month I will tell you about my new multiple boot system.