East SIG Report – August 2016

A good rollup of members to the August meeting were welcomed by **Dave Botherway**. The first session started with Q&A with **George Skarbek**.

Q: As the Windows 10 anniversary update (version 1607) is now available, should I install it now or wait till later?

A: There is no right or wrong answer. The anniversary update has 2 or 3 improvements that I feel are worthwhile. Backup your important data first in case something goes wrong. This is in case you are forced to reformat and reload Windows 10 from scratch. On my laptop the update took 36 hours to reach 99% and stayed there. I was forced to reboot and everything rolled back to the earlier version.
[Dave Botherway] On my 3 PCs running Windows 10, Insider Program Fast track & Slow track versions all loaded without problems. The 3rd PC is still waiting for the update to arrive. Although the anniversary update started to arrive on 2nd August, based on previous updates these are likely to be phased in over a month. The Edge browser had no problems and has been stable for a very long time. Install time was about 1 ½ hours but this will depend on how much of your data needs to be backed up into the windows.old folder during the install.

Q: I'm concerned that the anniversary update will be a large download.

A: Windows is not alone with the size of its updates. The Android operating system has been updating more recent phones from version 5 to 6. Before the update proceeds a warning is displayed that the download is 1.05GBs. If you want to proceed with the upgrade I suggest you turn off your roaming data to ensure everything goes through your Wi-Fi.

Q: I use LastPass with Firefox for storing passwords. They don't seem to want to talk to one another now as they previously did. Do you have a simple solution?

A: I had a similar problem and it took me a while to fix. What I ended up doing is to uninstall Firefox completely and then uninstall LastPass. Next install the latest version of Firefox and then install LastPass. After that everything worked as it should.

Q: I've used System Restore many times both in Windows 7 and now in Windows 8 and it's never been successful. An error message is displayed that 1 file is missing.

A: This will be a very difficult thing to fix as the message doesn't say what file is missing or corrupted. You could try System File Checker scannow ("sfc scannow") but I don't hold out much hope though. I don't think it's a problem with Windows, but more likely something in System Restore that didn't end up in the right place. System File checker scannow command is unlikely to help as it looks at the kernel of the operating system whereas System Restore looks at data.

Q: After upgrading to Windows 10 a friend has lost all sound on their PC. I've checked all the obvious things such as connections and settings and wonder if you might have a solution?

A: The first thing to do is run dxdiag which is part of Windows. Among other things that will show you your sound cards manufacturer and model number. Go to that manufacturer's website and download the drivers for that model sound card and install it. The likely cause is that the Windows 10 upgrade didn't work properly.

Next up **John Swales** demonstrated some of the keyboard shortcuts he uses and recommends. For tasks you repeat often, short cuts can save much time and effect. John started with the simple shortcuts that most members should know and use. Eg Cut (Ctrl+X), Copy (Ctrl+C) and Paste (Ctrl+V). Two other that can save time is Select All (Ctrl+A) and Alt+F4 to Close a Program

should your mouse fails. Two Windows (Win) key shortcuts worth knowing are those to open File Explorer/Windows Explorer (Win+E) and to Show Desktop (Win+D). If there are any operations you repeat regularly check whether there is a shortcut for it or if not create your own.

Next up John demonstrated numerous shortcuts available in MicroSoft Word. If a shortcut does not exist John demonstrated how to create your own. In addition to shortcuts the Auto Correct function in Words can be a real time saver. John uses an unused keyboard character such as ` and text when using Auto Correct. E.g. `tb = Thunderbird and `w = Windows. In summary there are many shortcuts that will save you time so look at your work patterns and usage for these. The trade off in learning shortcuts is the time spent learning them versus the future time to be saved.

After the break **Stuart Bedford** posed the question "Should I try Linux or Stay with Windows?". Stuart has often expressed his concern about the lack of privacy and snooping by Microsoft, particularly with Windows 10, so recently gave Ubuntu Linux a try on an old laptop. Linux is open source software, it's free and is widely used on Smartphones (Android), Smart TVs, Servers and many household appliances. It is reliable and stable and there are over 350 different versions that are based on the Linux kernel. Linux is fast due to low overheads, so is a good option for an older PC. Some versions will work on PCs with only 512MB RAM and 5GB hard drives.

There are drawbacks that need to be considered before changing your operating system to Linux. It's not as user friendly as Windows and not all Windows programs have Linux versions. You may still need Windows to run some Windows programs, although there are usually good alternate Linux programs available.

When upgrading to Windows 10 Stuart found his current scanner no longer worked due to a lack of Windows 10 drivers. Stuart presented two options to this dilemma. Purchase VueScan software for around $40 that would work with Windows 10 or use SimpleScan a free Linux program. The latter proved more than adequate for his needs.

Those not wishing to spend the time to learn a new operating system should stick with familiar old Windows. However Linux is worth considering as it comes preloaded with a host of programs that would cover most user's needs. For basic use such as word processing, email and internet browsing Linux is ready to go. Many Linux distributions can be tested before you load them onto your hard drive using a live CD or DVD.

Neil Muller