

COA Computer Center

www.coacomputerclasses.com

Newsletter Summer 2008

Laptop computers seem to be getting less expensive every day and having more features. Maybe this is the time to consider an upgrade? If you do mostly Email, Internet and a few documents here and there, consider one of the \$299. Units that are available at Costco or BJ's. They use Linux rather than windows, but are super light, have long battery life and are much faster than windows based units.

Touch screen computers are showing up. HP is showing its TouchSmart™ line (look Ma, no mouse!!). Might be an answer for those having difficulty with the mouse.

Well, Microsoft is finally letting the computer manufacturers 'downgrade' to Windows XP. Some of the new computers are now being offered with XP installed and Vista on a disc for upgrading when you want. Glad they are finally listening to their customers!!

Dick Kraycir

My computer is running very slowly, what can I do? This is still our most popular question. The short answer is: add more memory. It will make the computer run like a new puppy!. If you have less than 1 GB of memory treat yourself to a great upgrade. Also, consider a flat screen and BIG!! Doesn't make the computer any faster, but does make it more fun! They are available to 30" for some computers...and now you can enjoy watching TV on your computer. <TigerDirect.com> has some refurbished 22" monitors for \$179. That is a buy!

Watching TV on the computer? PBS has many of their programs available on the web

and I have enjoyed several episodes of 'The Independent Lens when I want to watch them. Pictures are not full screen but still enjoyable...and if you get that 22 " monitor, it will be a lot larger. PCWorld magazine (September 2008) has a good article on watching TV programs. Our next update of 'Internet and E-mail" will include watching some TV programs.

Firefox 3. Wow, has internet browsing gotten great. Download and install this beauty from www.Mozilla.com. Try it out for a while, you can always go back to whatever you were using before. It has enhanced page resizing (Magnifies entire page or just the text) better blocking of sites known to spread malware, blocks phishing sites and more. Firefox 2 users, note that you have to do the upgrade, it will not happen automatically. There is a free extension called 'Link Alert' that will show you what is behind that virtual button before you click. Helpful way to stay out of trouble.

Startup Monitor Here is a free program from PC world (<find.pcworld.com/60612>) that has really helped windows XP users from malware getting started. It tells you when a program wants to start by itself, and allows you to block it. This is built into Vista, but XP needs this guardian. It does not seem to affect the computer speed.

Call us at 508-945-9800 or visit our website at www.coacomputerclasses.com to see our Fall 2008 schedule. But PLEASE let us know what you would like to know more about. We have many volunteers who can

put together a class covering your needs. We need at least 5 students to justify our volunteers time, so get your friends together and have a 'Computer Center Happening' where a special interest to you can be covered. Perhaps it is using one of the programs in Windows, maybe learning to use some of the advanced features of windows, making your own Holiday cards or whatever. Look for our most popular Classes starting in September:

Keep those Original Discs!! The Recovery disc that came with your computer, and all of the program discs that you have accumulated as you add Photoshop Elements, etc. are very important to keep safe! Many programs for accessories (e.g. Printers) are available on the internet, but the Recovery disc is not. Several folks have run into problems that require a reload of the system (malware infections) and it cannot be done without a disc. Newer computer are coming without a recovery disc and you need to open Help and support under the Start menu to find how to make recovery discs. It is possible to purchase replacements from the manufacturer but be prepared to spend \$20.-\$50. for them and wait several days. Also, periodically backup your email address book, put your important photographs on a CD or DVD, and copy all of 'My Documents' onto a DVD or stand alone drive. When the computer has a failure, you will at least be able to recover these important items. Put your name on a waiting list for a class on this subject and we will schedule a class when there is enough interest! The Microsoft website has some good information on this subject if you would rather 'Home School'.

Courses available on-line We have mentioned this before but repeat for those who have not tried them. Hewlett Packard (HP.com) has many courses available on Digital Photography, Picture Editing, Tuning up your computer, and other subjects. They are very good and available for Free on the internet. Go to the 'PC Learning Center' from their home page and see what is available. These courses are as good as you can find anywhere!! Their courses on Tuning Up your

XP computer and Tuning Up your Vista Computer are especially good. Microsoft has some great courses on Office and Windows at Microsoft.com. Click on Training and Events from the Home Screen and see what is available.

Hope you found some interesting information in this newsletter. Much of our information comes from PC Magazine and PC World Magazine . Reading an issue now and then at the Library can make your computer experience more interesting and rewarding.

We look forward to seeing you at our classes this year. Forward this newsletter to your friends who might be interested in some of our hints and tricks for the computer.

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