

TUTOR TALK

Volume 9, Issue 1

Sept. 2007

Company News

Technical Tutoring brings you this newsletter and training information in appreciation of your business and support

Well, I'm definitely behind the times as far as getting this newsletter out. That's just one of the reasons it has taken on a special size for this issue!

As I prepared for this belated newsletter, I gave lots of thought to where the company is now compared to when I started over eight years ago. I was pleasantly surprised to think about how many clients I've had, how many students I've taught, and most of all, to remember how many people have helped me along the way! It was heart warming to remember that I've had **five** different individuals help me with teaching classes during some of my busier times. In addition, there are **two** non-family members who have helped in my office, and my son who has now worked in my office steadily doing data entry and mailings for over four years, not to mention the rest of the family who have 'pitched in' when necessary with office tasks or just the heaving moving of supplies or furniture as I've moved my office around the house.

One of the tasks that has kept me busy and away from this publication is three database projects for three different municipalities—tracking dog licenses, mooring permits, and those in need of special help during an emergency. Each has been a very rewarding project, not just in showing

me how much I have learned to do in Access, but also because of the true appreciation on the part of the recipient for how this particular database will be able to simplify a task or mountain of information.

Holly has been busy with her growing family and learning several of the new software packages and versions described in these pages.

Again, I subscribe to several computer and business magazines and these are where I gather much of the information that I put into this newsletter. This issue is compiled from articles in *PC Magazine*, *Smart Computing*, and *PC World*. Any opinions included are ones from their authors that I happen to agree with.

I had a bundle of information to sift through for this issue—a new Operating System, a new Office Suite, and several good ideas to share. So, it's taken a while to get the issue pulled together and I hope you find the efforts were worth it.

With Gratitude For You Always,

Seema & Holly



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SIX Ways to Print for Less

Preview to Print less:

When printing from a website, use Print Preview to be sure you're getting the information you need. Be sure to check the right margin as it is often cut off. Think about adjusting your layout to landscape rather than portrait. Once in preview mode, make a note of the pages you are interested in and enter those numbers in the Print Dialog box.

Use Draft Mode or Grayscale:

Select the Properties button in the Print Dialog Box and choose DRAFT mode under Print Quality. If color is not important to you, also check the Grayscale Printing option or B/W.

Print just the text:

If you only need a small section of text from a web page, you have two options:

Highlight the text, click File / Print, and choose Selection in the Print Dialog Box Page Range area.

Highlight the text, copy it, and then paste it into your word processor and print from there.

Skip the power strip:

Always use your printer's power switch to turn it off rather than the power strip it's connected to. If the printer's normal shut-down process isn't followed, the print heads may not park properly and this can dry them out or cause them to clog.

Prevent cartridge drying:

Print a page at least once a week to keep the cartridges from drying out.

Know when to go off-brand:

Off brand cartridges may save a few dollars at purchase but they may come with lower or inconsistent print quality which may not be good for the output you are working on. Refill kits

PC Buying Tips

Spring for RAM

More memory means a faster, more flexible system, especially when using more than one program at a time. Start with a 1GB preference and work up from there—it's typically less expensive to add it when designing the machine than later on down the road.

Buy lots of storage

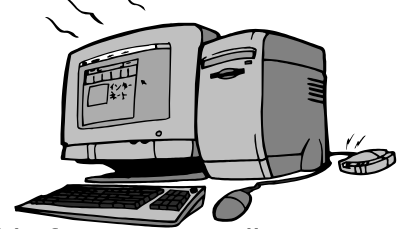
You'll probably need more space than you anticipate and you'll probably fill whatever space you have.

Go Dual Core

It'll probably cost you up to \$50 extra, but a dual-core CPU is faster and more flexible than a single core version.

Buy a Big LCD

Bundles may include a less expensive and probably smaller monitor, try to upgrade to a larger screen.



Easy Upgrades

Add Memory

1GB will be noticeably faster, 2GB will be amazing.

Add Storage

A second hard drive gives more room for digital files. Internal are less expensive, but external may be less hassle.

Improve Graphics (for games & graphics)

Switch from integrated graphics to a dedicated AGP or PCI16x graphics card.

Wide Screen

Wide screen monitor gives more room for work & play and simplifies DVD and television playback.

Amp up Sound

Add a PCI sound card to get multi-channel audio for DVDs or games.

Avoid Phishing

Phishing – a fancy name for Fraud – usually in the form of mass emails pretending to be from well-known online companies. These usually include some drastic call to immediate action asking you to log on and confirm your account information or other offer. Unfortunately, following their request plays right into their hands and gives them your personal information to use as they please.

How to avoid the bait:

Don't click links:

Following links from emails that ask you for personal information is basically asking for disaster. Often, the resulting web page is a spoof of the company's real web site, looking very similar but actually built and maintained by someone out to trick rather than assist you.

Check Everything:

One way to help avoid these scams is to watch the URL, or web site name that you are on. Make sure you are where you think you should be before entering any personal information such as passwords, addresses or financial information. (Read the messages on the status bar at the lower left of your browser and check the title at the top left of your browser to confirm your desired location.) Also, look for the lock icon in the bottom right area of your web browser to indicate that you are on a secure site.

Don't be too open:

Don't give up your name, password, address, financial information, or other identifying information unless you're certain you are interacting with a legitimate party and you initiated the 'conversation'. A reputable company should never contact you to ask for a password or other personal information.

Help Tech Support Help You

The more information you can provide to a phone or on-site technician, the better service experience you are likely to have. Trying the simple things on your own first may even help avoid a call or visit all together!

Things to try before you call:

Restart—a file that didn't close or load properly can be easily "repaired" with this simple step.

Check—ensure that power & connection cables are securely connected at both ends.

Updates—check manufacturer's web sites for the latest version of software, security patches, and the newest drivers for your hardware.

Get in the know:

Windows—to get the version information, click Start / Programs / Accessories / System Tools / System Information—this should give you the name, version, installed service packs, and the build number. File / Print will give you a hardcopy for reference purposes.

Brand, model—have them for the PC or motherboard, or any peripheral that's part of your issue.

Changes—anything recently installed, removed, or modified settings should be noted.

Be Exact—copy any error messages word for word.

Make the call:

Having the above information in hand and having tried to resolve the issue yourself, you are now much better prepared to talk to the technician and help them solve your problem faster!



Digital Photography Tips

I love beautiful photographs. When I do have a camera with me (it's usually left on the counter when we leave the house), I enjoy taking photos of all types of things. However, no one will ever pay me to take photos—I've still got a lot to learn about photography.

That's why I've read a few digital photography books and put together an "Introduction to Digital Photography" class and why I'm sharing these tips on taking better photographs—they're your memories and they deserve to be clear and crisp for all time!

Everyday Photography

Don't let the opportunity pass you by—locally, if you see someone you'd like to shoot, shoot first, then go over and thank them. When traveling, ask first!

Shoot and Shoot and Shoot — digital shots don't have the same expense as film - and not every shot has to be perfect —take as many as you can, odds are one of them will be good. Let things play out before you review—if you review right after shooting you may miss something—take shots while you can and review later

Think like Michelangelo—get rid of the superfluous stuff—however you can—stand on a chair or lie down on the ground or throw the background out of focus.

Turn off your flash—photos look better when taken in soft, natural light.

If you can't avoid a flash, muffle it—point the flash up and angle your hand over the flash head, bouncing the light onto your subjects gives a much softer look and makes it appear more like natural light.

Sports

Get near the goal or end zone—that's where the action is

Keep the shutter speed at 1/500 or 1/1000 of a second—shutter speed should be at least as high as the millimeter moniker on your lens.

Keep the ISO as low as possible for greater detail—set it about 800 for nighttime or indoors; 200 for daytime.

If you're in the back of the end zone, switch to a focal length of 600mm.—from the sidelines use 400mm, from the end zone, you can shoot to the 50-yard line with 600mm.

For close shots—especially indoors—downgrade your lens—this lets you capture wide shots, but also zoom in on faces and other points of interest. Indoors, use a 300mm lens for shots at the other end of the court

Want to get artsy? Pan with the runner—blur a runner's churning arms and legs with a slow shutter speed—1/30 second—and panning the camera in sync with the runner's head and torso.

Lay on that shutter—turn on the burst mode and take shot after shot—you'll be more likely to capture that key moment

Travel

Never shoot at high noon—best light for shooting outdoors arrives at dusk, second best in early morning.

Move in—get as close to the front of your picture as you can

Think off-kilter—frame your shots asymmetrically.

Bend those arms—keep the camera close to your face so you can really see the shot.

Say no to auto mode—switch to 'program mode' and set white balance and ISO

Pull out the Polarizer—for serious outdoor shots, fit your lens with a warming polarizer—this increases contrast and color saturation when you shoot at a right angle to the sun.

Photography Tips—continued

Portraits

Find open shade—best photographs are shot in soft, even, natural light. Indoors use sunlight spilling in through windows or candlelight. Outdoors avoid bright sunlight.

Set up on the edge of the sunlight—let the sunlight hit just in front of the people you're shooting.

Get as close as possible—you want sunlight reflecting up into your faces, but no glare on your lens.

Use a flash when it's too dark—or too bright—overcast weather needs a flash to put more detail in the faces. Using a flash when the sun is bearing down helps eliminate shadows in eye sockets.

Never tell your subjects how to pose—the shot will look more natural and your subjects will look like themselves. Make sure everyone in the shot can see the camera—If they can see the camera, you can see them.



*No man really becomes a fool until
he stops asking questions.
- Charles Proteus Steinmetz*

OneNote

OneNote is an application developed for people using Tablet PCs but it has received many updates as part of Office 2007 and is likely to become an important note-taking and research tool.

OneNote combines the flexibility of a three-ring binder with the productivity of combining several types of electronic information—handwriting, typed words, and web page snippets. You may find that OneNote is the answer to collecting, organizing, and sharing digital information.

Expression Web

Expression Web is the new application replacing the popular FrontPage for Web Page Design. It looks like FrontPage 2003, with a similar menu structure and choice of views. However, new task panes and toolbars let you build and edit CSS styles and give point and click control over XML data sources.

Expression Web does lack Secure FTP file-transfer support, but is otherwise an elegant and efficient application.

Not Everyone Upgrades

Here's information from a survey of over 9,000 computer users on the versions of Microsoft Products that they use:

Office Version	At Home	At Work
2003	43	45
XP/2002	20	19
2000	22	23
97	6	5

But, don't be alarmed, the newer versions are always going to have a slightly higher number because that's what you get with a new machine!

Office 2007

has been on the shelves and shipping with new computers for a few months now. There are 8 versions of Office 2007—various combinations of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, Outlook, Publisher, Access and Business Tools. Here are the lists I compiled of new features for the suite in general and some of the specific components.

Office 2007 in General:

THE RIBBON:

Panels that can be narrow or wide depending upon how many icons or how much text they contain

Organized via tabs for things similar to the older menu bar

Occupies the same space as two or three old-style toolbars

Might justify a larger monitor

Can be minimized

Galleries:

Display thumbnail images of formatting and other options.

Quick access to features that were always present but known only to hard-bitten experts

Quick Access Toolbar

Next to the Office Button

Customizable

New circular Office Button at the upper left works like the classic File menu

Two panel drop down

Left—standard file operations

Right – interactive based on choice from the left pane

New graphics engine called Smart Art

New additions – Groove 2007 collaboration software & Share Point Designer 2007

New security features to help you erase traces of authorship, revision, and collaboration from documents.

Keyboard shortcuts:

Older versions still work!

Many new ones added

Shown in little boxes on drop down menus

- Brand new XML file formats:
 - Adheres to open standards
 - Doesn't allow macros
 - Makes for smaller documents.
 - New file extensions – add an 'x' to the end of the old ones.
 - More universally accessible to other applications.
 - Actually a zipped collection of component files
- Expert users may spend time digging for features that seem to have disappeared.
- Graphics are greatly improved.
- Cannot bring back the old menu system.
- Can save in older formats for sharing with other users
- More demanding learning curve than predecessors.
- Live preview – select all or a portion of your document and hover your mouse over a formatting option and you'll see how it changes the actual document's appearance
- Allows you to save files as read-only PDF

Word 2007

Almost all features are logically and visibly accessible

Ctrl-F1 to toggle the ribbon.

New three pane compare document interface

Tighter integration of Web functions.

Status Bar Additions:

View features

A slider that replaces the zoom box

Running word count

Document Inspector – clear out comments, metadata, tracked revisions, and other information you might not want to share with the world.

Access 2007

More colorful and graphical toolbar

Improved template library

Visual Report Designer – live preview of your data as you build a report.

Reformat database reports on the fly

Simplified query tools

Excel 2007

Over 1 million rows / 16,000 columns
 Chart types are easier to read
 Pasted charts are automatically linked
 Conditional formatting is more extensive
 Formulas with more layers
 Improved Formula AutoComplete
 Active Page Layout view
 Rulers at top and sides show row numbers, column letters, and inch measurements.
 Easier to manage pivot tables via a new task-pane interface
 Enhanced help for beginning users.

Outlook 2007

New built-in search
 New To-Do bar provides a snapshot of appointments and tasks for the day.
 Ability to preview image, text and other files before opening them.
 Have multiple calendars visible side by

side or overlaid on one another.
 Improved junk-mail filters.
 New time-zones feature.
 Ability to send a calendar page or a request to share a Microsoft Exchange calendar.

PowerPoint 2007

New themes
 Improved effects for text and graphics
 Easier to style tables
 Dual-monitor support is more sophisticated allowing you to blank out the presentation display if you need to do something on your laptop that you don't want projected to your audience.
 No live preview of chart selection.
 Broadcasting over the Internet is gone altogether.
 New Selection Pane shows a list of objects on the current slide and can be used to alter their order (layers).
 New recolor tool to tint photos and clip art for a monochromatic look.
 Ability to save custom layouts

INTRODUCING: THE RIBBON

The Office Button is an enhanced version of the old File menu.

You can customize the Quick Access toolbar to show as many buttons as you like; you can also move it below the Ribbon if you want it to extend across the window without bumping into the window title.

These down arrows lead to mini galleries of bullet and numbering options.

Each of the items (Home, insert, and the like) is a full-fledged tab, not a drop-down menu. Only the currently selected item is visible at one time.

The down-left arrow opens a list of items previously saved to the clipboard, ready for pasting.

The down-left arrow opens the familiar dialog named in the label to the left (in the this case, the Font dialog).

In Galleries, only the top row appears, until you click to display a larger list of options.

Windows Vista

Much like Office 2007, Windows Vista hit the stores and the new machines awhile ago. Again, I had several articles to read about this latest Operating System (O/S) from Microsoft and here are the highlights as I could decipher them. I did take a quick look at this while comparing new laptops and have used it a little bit on the new laptop I purchased in July.

Some things that are new in Vista:

Windows Sidebar—much like the Task Pane in Office versions, the Sidebar appears on the right of your desktop. There are several 'gadgets' that you can have appear here, including a clock and calendar. If it gets crowded and there's a gadget that you don't need 100% of the time, right-click the gadget and set opacity to 40% - it'll fade in and out when not in use.

Hover over a minimized window and a thumbnail pops up with its contents!

Typing the first few characters of a program name into the bar at the bottom of the Start Menu will bring up your program, probably quicker than navigating the 'All Programs' list.

Search by voice—enable the built-in natural language search feature—Control Panel / Folder Options / Search tab—now you can say what you're looking for!

Not friendly with the keyboard, or is yours just not convenient? - Type OSK into the Start menu's Search field and hit enter to bring up the on-screen keyboard and use your mouse to 'key in' data.

Scalable live icons—thumbnails of document's actual contents rather than simply the icon of the application that created them.

Some things people like about Vista:

More fun

Improved security—firewall with outbound filtering, better browser, a lot under the hood offering better protection.

Improvements in tools that can help you cope with information overload

Better support for multimedia and mobile devices

Better version of Internet Explorer

Dramatically revamped User Interface (UI)

New Start menu

Internet Explorer 7

New Windows Explorer

Live views of application windows

Faster, image-based installation process

Improved back up

Ad hoc collaboration with Windows Meeting Space

Mobility Center

New Reliability and Performance Monitor, Task Scheduler & Event Logs

Aero—transparent windows, tasteful animation, elegant design

Search—fast, smart

Network map—great way to get an overview of your network and its devices

Wireless Networking—connecting to multiple wireless networks and hotspots is a simple affair

New Multimedia tools— Bona fide photo manager & beefed-up versions of Windows Media Player and Movie Maker. Photo Gallery is now a single place for organizing, editing, and sharing digital photos.

VISTA Continued

Versions of Vista and their intended audience:

Home Basic—home user who wants to browse the web, use e-mail and create documents

Home Premium—mainstream PC user, designed for music, video, mobile computing, and personal productivity

Vista Business—small to mid-size business

Vista Enterprise—large global organization or one with a highly complex IT infrastructure

Vista Ultimate—professional, tech enthusiast or gamers

Things to try yourself:

Be an icon artist—open My Computer and click on VIEW where you'll find a slider with an endless selection of icon sizes

If Vista seems slower than XP—open the Power Options Control Panel and change it to "High Performance" to give it full throttle.

Icons in the Quick Launch Toolbar have automatic short cut keys assigned—the Windows key, plus the number of their location on the toolbar.

Vista offers a lot of improvements over Windows XP, but most of them are conveniences rather than essentials.

Estimates are that the next changes to Windows will arrive in 2010 or 2011—so if you're thinking about changing computers between now and then, you'll be learning Vista!



Software Tips

Office 2007

Users of older versions of Office who want to open files in the new edition's default formats must first update their current version of Windows and Office via update.microsoft.com and then download and install two Microsoft patches for their version of the OS: the File Format Awareness Update, and the Compatibility Pack. These exceed 60MB and the downloads took one author over 30 minutes over a DSL connection.

Internet Searching

Reduce your search results to those more applicable by incorporating some of these simple steps:

- Put quotation marks around your query—"air conditioning" - this creates a query for the entire phrase rather than each individual word.
- Use the minus (-) sign—"Shakespeare-William" - this tells the search engine to eliminate the word or phrase following the minus sign
- Get Definitions—use the modifier 'define' as a handy way to turn the search engine into a dictionary (you may need a colon after define in some engines)
- Ask in plain English—try everything, rather than racking your brain for alternative language, just write your question as you would ask another person.
- Get Quick Weather Previews—enter the name of a city followed by the word, 'weather', for a fast forecast.

Word

Erase those persistent lines—Auto Format will replace a line of hyphens, underlines or tildes with a horizontal line automatically. When this happens and it won't go away, it's probably because it is actually a border below the paragraph. To remove, select Format | Borders and Shading, and select NONE

The ruler along the top of the screen is there to help you change and identify margins, tab settings, and indents as well as place graphics and text boxes (if you don't see it, click on View | Ruler).

If you've typed text in a case setting other than the one you want, highlight the text then press Shift-F3—this will rotate the text through title case, uppercase, and lowercase.

Editing a long document? To find where you left off in your last session, open the document and use the Shift-F5 key combination to move the cursor to the position it was in when the document was last saved and closed.

When you attach an envelope to a document, (Tools | Envelopes) printing the document will also print the envelope. The envelope is always added at the beginning of the document, but it is not considered Page 1! So, if you need to print the envelope only or the document only, use the Print Pages option in the Print dialog box and know that the envelope is Page 0 and the document, or letter, begins on Page 1.

Software Tips

Outlook

Change the color of your reply message—Tools / Options / Mail Format, click the Fonts button and the change the options under When replying and forwarding...

Force yourself to think twice before sending—If you find yourself often saying “I wish I hadn’t sent that”, when addressing your message, include the recipient DON’T. When you send your message, Outlook will warn you that it doesn’t recognize the recipient DON’T, giving you a second chance to review, cancel or send your message (delete the DON’T recipient before actually sending the message).

CC and BCC—these are admitted ‘throw backs’ to the days of typewriters and carbon paper. CC stands for Carbon Copy and was often referred to as a Courtesy Copy—a ‘for your information only’ courtesy to the recipients. BCC stands for Blind Carbon Copy as that would indicate that someone received a copy without everyone else knowing about it. These have carried over into e-mail programs and are typically used in the same ways—just to let someone know about something without asking them to take any action.

*Remember to check our website:
www.TechnicalTutoring.com*

*For previous newsletters and more helpful
software tips!*

Publisher

To create rotated text in Publisher, you need to rotate the text frame as opposed to the text itself. Select the frame and then click the rotate button (blue circular arrow with a green dot inside).

Don’t like the ‘helpful pointers’ that appear in Publisher—the moving van, etc—to turn off the graphics, choose Tools | Options | User Assistance tab | turn off Use Helpful Mouse Pointers | Click OK.

Excel

Avoid broken lines in line charts—if data is missing or a cell is blank, a line chart will have a gap. To avoid the gaps, enter the following into the cell: =NA() - this indicates to Excel that the value is Not Available and it will draw a continuous line between the two cells on either side of the gap.

Display the results of data arithmetic in hours—when adding or subtracting two date and time entries, Excel displays the result as a fraction of a day, multiply by 24 to see your results in hours.

Access

Office Links allows you to export data from Access into Excel—simply choose Tools | Office Links | Analyze it With Excel. Exporting from a datasheet your gridline and font attributes are carried over to Excel; from a form, text box shading and font properties are applied.

The season is changing, the holidays are
approaching...

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Mail merge for labels or letters

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Just three reasons

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