



ARTICLE

Windows 7 Service Pack 1 by Chris Taylor

On February 22, 2011, Microsoft released the first service pack for Windows 7 (SP1). I immediately received a lot of questions from people asking me if I think they should go ahead and install it.

In the universal answer to all IT-related questions, "That depends."

I generally encourage a bit of caution with Windows service packs. They basically rip out the entire guts of Windows and replace them. There is little reason to rush out and install them. There are lots of guinea pigs out there willing to install service packs. I figure, within a month or so, a few million people will have installed the service pack. If I have not heard of major problems by then, it is probably safe to go ahead.

As an aside, I say this when I updated the BIOS on my new netbook 2 days before going on a trip where it was really important for me to have a working computer! It worked. Whew.

Microsoft will continue to provide security updates for the Release to Manufacturing (RTM) version of Windows 7 for another 2 years. So from a pure necessity point of view, you have a long time to decide to update. There are a few new, non-security, fixes in SP1. If you want these, the only way I know to get them is to install SP1.

What's new?

The main thing about SP1 is that it rolls up all the fixes released at Windows Update so far.

Microsoft highlights very little that is new in SP1, mentioning improvements in;

- reliability when connecting to HDMI audio devices
• printing using the XPS Viewer
• restoring previous folders in Windows Explorer after restarting.

There are other fixes noted in the detailed documentation Notable Changes in Windows 7 and Windows Server 2008 R2 Service Pack 1.doc but, unless you understand things like Support for Advanced Vector Extensions (AVX) or SP1 introduces a number of key enhancements to improve support of recently introduced storage devices with a 4KB physical sector size (commonly referred to as "Advanced Format"), the above list seems to cover what most people are going to be interested in.

Getting SP1

The most efficient way to get Service Pack 1 is from the Windows Update site. Just click on Start | All Programs | Windows Update. Service Pack 1 will be listed as an Important Update. The

update will not be selected by default so you have to select it. The size of the download will depend on your particular configuration. If you are running 32-bit Windows 7, the download may be as small as 44 MB. The 64-bit version may be as small as 74 MB.

If you have several computers to update, you might consider downloading the entire Service Pack 1 locally once and then running it on each of your computers. The 32-bit version weighs in at 537 MB. The 64-bit version is 903 MB.

You can also order Service Pack 1 on DVD at http://go.microsoft.com/fwlink/?LinkId=208642. The DVD is free, but the shipping will cost you \$10.

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April Raffle

Thanks to the generosity of Corel, we have a copy of **CorelDRAW Graphics Suite X4** for the April raffle. This powerhouse suite of applications includes CorelDraw, Corel PHOTO-PAINT, Corel PowerTRACE, and Corel CAPTURE.

CorelDRAW Graphics Suite will give you the tools to handle just about any illustration job. Valued at \$500.

Raffle tickets may be purchased at the door; \$1 for one, \$2 for three, or \$5 for ten. Help keep your membership dues low by buying raffle tickets and you just might take home this very powerful graphics tool.

Coming Up...

► April 13th, 2011

Presenter: Alan German

Topic: So, you want to be a blogger...?

You want to keep your family up to date on your world travels, share your mouth-watering recipes with friends, make your buddies envious of the fabulous changes to your model railroad layout, or simply impart your philosophy to the world. You need a blog. But, you don't know where to start. Don't worry. We will have you creating a blog, and making your first post, within 15 minutes of deciding what name to give to your new on-line venture. It won't cost you a cent. And, we will show you how to use the many features offered by free blogging software. Join our expert (he has been blogging for – well – more than four weeks now!) to explore the curious world of the blogger.

March Prize Winners

A number of folks went home happy from the March 9th meeting of the OPCUG.

Dave Clark, John Middleton, William Palamar, Arthur Bowker and Richard Aylesworth all won a door prize copy of Windows Vista. **Dan Byrne** won the door prize copy of McAfee Total Data Protection Suite.

And our raffle prize winner of the evening taking home a brand new copy of Windows 7... **Mike Hogan**.

Congrats to all the winners and thanks to Microsoft and McAfee for the generous prize donations.

Correction

In the March newsletter, the author listed for the article **Google Maps Error** is incorrect. The correct author is **Jocelyn Doire**.

2011 CALENDAR

Meetings	Date	Time and Venue
OPCUG General Meeting	Wednesday, April 13 th	7:30 p.m. Auditorium of the Canada Museum of Science and Technology , 1867 St. Laurent Blvd. http://www.sciencetech.technomuses.ca/english/index.cfm
Beginners' SIG	Wednesday, April 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Linux / Open Source SIG	Wednesday, April 13 th	Immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting.
Beer BOF (Wing SIG East)	Wednesday, April 13 th	10:00 p.m. (after all other SIGs) at Liam Maguire's, St. Laurent Blvd. at Innes Rd.

Please note that unless otherwise noted, SIGs meet at 9:00 p.m. (immediately following the OPCUG General Meeting).

CLUB LIFE

Help Plan our Program

I wanted to reach out to the group to see if there was anyone willing to help out with planning our upcoming meetings. Any contribution would be appreciated. Maybe you have a few good ideas for topics or presenters. Maybe you have a bit of time and could contact potential speakers on behalf of the group. Or maybe you want to take the lead in planning speakers for the next year.

Thanks to all those who have already approached me with ideas! I appreciate all of the help and good suggestions. If there is anyone else who could help me maintain our great program please email me or come see me at our next meeting.

Andrea Wells

Meeting Coordinator (andrea.wells@opcug.ca)

ARTICLES

IPv6 Summit

The following was received by email and is being published for the convenience of members. The OPCUG has no involvement with this summit.

As you may already know IPv4 addresses are running out. At this time it's predicted that Asia/Pacific will run out sometime in the next 6 months; Europe and North America will soon follow. The successor to IPv4, is IPv6 and will soon be required to access all of the internet.

I'd like to invite you, and your group, to the IPv6 Summit scheduled for April 29th, and held at the University of Ottawa. The summit will serve as an introduction to IPv6 spe-

cific issues for people that setup, debug, and manage network infrastructure. We are planning a full day event with an intro/business-case stream, a technical stream, and a "demo" room where people can test their portable equipment's IPv6 compatibility.

The conference is still open for speaker submissions and we'd welcome topics that may relate to IPv6 and your groups specialty.

More information can be found on our official website <http://ipv6summit.ca> (available over IPv6).

URL Hunter by Chris Taylor

Very strange...

A game you play entirely in the URL bar of your browser...

When you go to the site <http://probablyinteractive.com/url-hunter> your URL bar will show the page address followed by moving letter "a"s in a field of dashes along with a single letter "O". Your player is the letter "O". Use the arrow keys to move the letter "O" left or right. When your player is directly over an "a", press the space bar to nuke the letter "a". You have 30 seconds to see how many "a"s you can kill.

I guess you could call it a first person shooter but I don't think the folks at Microsoft have to be worried that their Halo franchise is at risk.

But it is pretty cool that someone actually was able to code this!

PRODUCT REVIEW

True Image Home 2011 *by Alan German*

Another year. Another version of Acronis True Image Home. So, what does the 2011 edition of this perennial disk imaging software have to offer?

The first obvious item is a new user interface. Now, there may well be some who are huge fans of the new look and feel (the program development team for instance); however, I regret that I am not a member of this particular fan club. There doesn't appear to be any major new functionality, but there is a fairly steep learning curve as to where all the functions are now located.

For example, let's take a look at the bread-and-butter backup and recover options. The disk backup wizard is gone. Instead, there is a screen showing all the available disks and a whole host of optional entries. You need to check off the partitions that are to be included in the backup, and then make sure that the options are set correctly for your preferences.

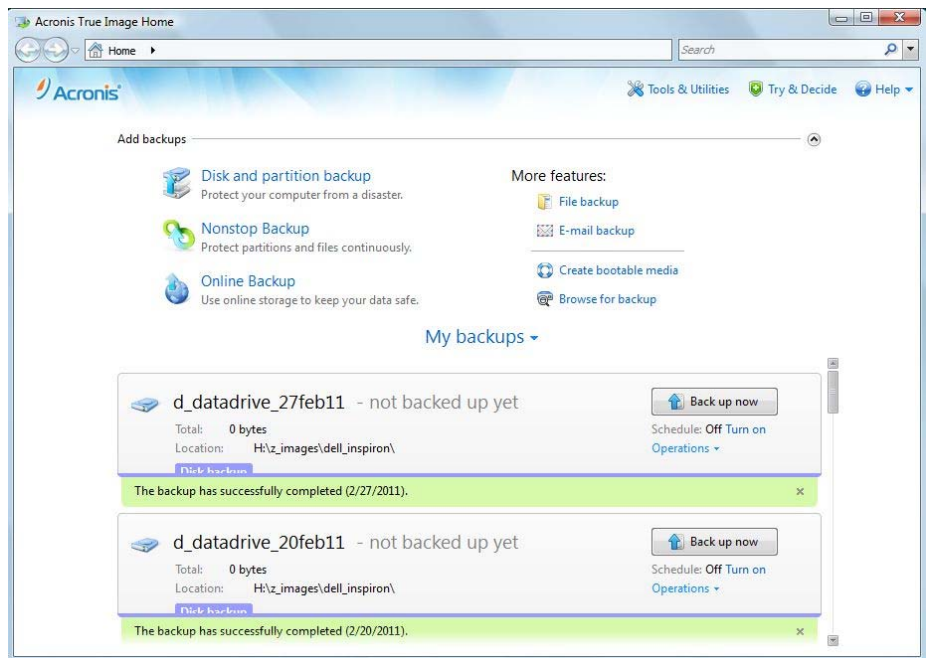
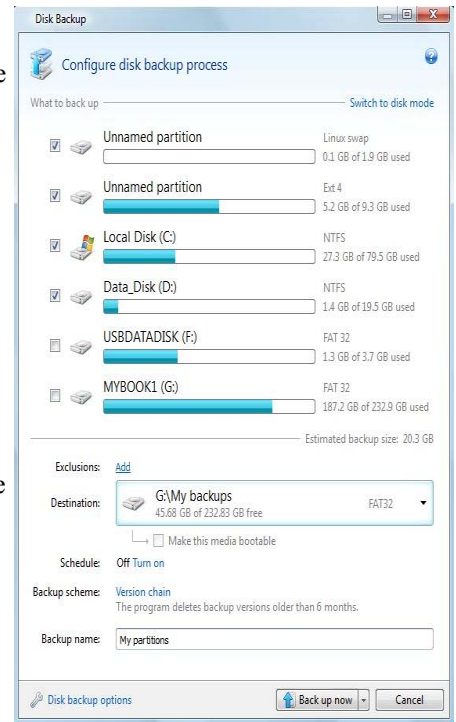
In my case, the program defaults to G:\My backups as a storage location for the disk images. I don't mind using the G: drive, which is an external USB disk, but I certainly don't want to use the default "My backups" directory since I have already set up a directory tree to maintain some degree of order for backups of various hard disks and their associated partitions. So, this is one item that needs to be reset.

Similarly, the default backup scheme enabled is "Version chain". This too is not a preferred option for me since it creates full and differential backups, and deletes versions older than six months. My normal mode of operation is to use the "Single version scheme" to create a brand new, full backup every time I run the software, and keep the resulting images until I decide that they are no longer required.

Now all of the items along these lines are simple changes and the specific preferences, once set, can be retained for future use, so it's really just a question of getting used to how the program now operates.

But, some other odd features show up when you run the program a few days after making one or more backups. The main screen shows some details of the last few images that were created. However, in big letters, it indicates that the disk is "not backed up yet". Of course, this isn't true. The backup was indeed made some time ago. And, to be fair, there is a message in a smaller font indicating that the backup was completed. So, I guess what it's trying to say is that a new image can be created right now, using the previously-specified imaging options.

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True Image... *(Continued from page 4)*

But, there's another odd thing. The option to "Back up now" is quite evident, but where do you go if you want to restore one of the images? Immediately after making the image, the summary information includes a "Recover" button. However, after a few days, the recover option mystically disappears, leaving you to figure out how to accomplish this operation.

And, this process is not very intuitive, nor is it very well described in the help menu. One way that seems to work is to click on the "Browse for backup" link on the main screen's menu. Browse for the image that you wish to recover, and select "add to backup list". The listing for the image will now appear in the lower window pane, together with a "Recover" button.

For images that are already displayed in this list, you can also click on the right-arrow button, immediately to the right of "Home" in the navigation window. A list of the available images will drop down. Clicking on one of these loads a new window that also provides a Recover button.

So, while everything still works, the user interface needs some getting used to. However, no doubt the UI will change again in 2012 - perhaps for the better...

Bottom Line

True Image Home 2011 (US \$25 - user group discount)
Acronis <http://www.acronis.com>

Windows 7 SP 1 *(Continued from page 1)***Arm yourself with info**

A service pack is a big deal. It is worth taking a bit of time to check into it. A good starting point for information about SP1 is <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/976932>. As well, the web site <http://windows.microsoft.com/installwindows7sp1> has lots of details that are worth reading.

Before you install

Once you have decided to go ahead with SP1, there are some additional things you should do.

Google for something like Windows 7 Service Pack 1 problems to see if anyone else has been experiencing problems that might affect your installation.

Make sure you have enough disk space available;

- 32-bit from Windows Update – 750 MB
- 64-bit from Windows Update – 1,050 MB
- 32-bit from downloaded version – 4,100 MB
- 62-bit from downloaded version – 7,400 MB

Back up your computer. While I think the process should go smoothly, I am all too familiar with the refrain, "That wasn't supposed to happen!"

Make sure your anti-virus is up-to-date and consider running a full scan of all your hard drives before beginning. You don't want some piece of malware to interfere with the process.

If you are updating a laptop, make sure you are plugged in. Running out of juice halfway through a service pack update would be a bad thing!

Reboot your computer just before updating. Don't run any other programs prior to updating to Service Pack 1. Probably not really a necessary action, but I like to minimize the chance that anything will interfere with a service pack update.

Microsoft notes, "Some antivirus software might prevent SP1 from installing, or might slow down the installation. You can try temporarily disabling your antivirus software. If you do so, be sure that you're aware of the risks involved, and be sure to re-enable it after the service pack is installed." Personally, I do not recommend disabling anti-virus.

Count on the process taking at least 30 minutes.

OPCUG Free Software Guide – Part 21

Compiled by
Alan German and
Bill Bradwin

This guide features an annotated list of free computer programs. The software mentioned has not been reviewed (except where noted) nor have any tests necessarily been conducted. Consequently, no guarantees are provided that the individual programs will perform as described. Rather the list of available software is provided for the information of our members who may find one or more of the programs useful. If you try one of the listed items, you are encouraged to share your experience, good or bad, by providing a brief review of the program for a future issue of the newsletter.

HandBrake

This program is an open-source, GPL-licensed, multi-platform, multi-threaded, video transcoder, available for MacOS X, Linux and Windows. It isn't a ripper. It doesn't crack the latest DVD copy protection schemes. What it does is convert video from nearly any format to a handful of modern ones.

Current Release: Version 0.9.4

Web Site: <http://handbrake.fr/>

Tyre

Google Maps is a nice application. You can view any place on earth you like. A TomTom is a very nice device. You can go any place on earth you like. Wouldn't it be nice if these tools would cooperate? Enter Tyre - Trace Your Route Everywhere. You can use this free program to create itineraries (route files) and files with points of interest.



Current Release: Version 5.70 (build 17)

Web Site: <http://www.janboersma.nl/gett/>

Xinorbis

This simple but powerful hard disk analyser uses a sophisticated mix of graphs, tables and tree displays to give a complete overview of the contents of a disk or a folder. It makes it easy to see the contents, structure, distribution and file composition of a hard disk, directory, or mapped network drive, and includes full report creation.

Current Release: Version 5.0

Web Site: <http://freshney.org/xinorbis>

StudioTax

Canadian personal income tax preparation software from BHOK IT Consulting in Ottawa. StudioTax is made available free for personal use. It installs and saves your return on your local hard drive. StudioTax is CRA certified for both NET-FILE and printed returns.

Web Site: <http://www.studiotax.com/>

Taxman

G. Thompson of Victoria, BC has produced this free tax preparation software for many years. Taxman is a full-featured database. It does not support Netfile and - according to Mr. Thompson - that's a good thing, so that Taxman can be "as simple and as flexible as it gets".



Previously Reviewed: The tax man cometh... and here comes the Taxman, Alan German,

<http://opcug.ca/public/Reviews/taxman.htm>

Web Site: <http://pages.pacificcoast.net/~gthompson/>

LAlarm

This little utility emits a loud siren sound should a thief try to steal your unattended laptop. Connect the machine to a power outlet, or anchor it using a USB flash drive strap, and press the Windows-L key combination. An alarm will be triggered if the laptop is disconnected from the power outlet or USB drive is pulled out. Cancel the alarm by logging back onto Windows with your password.

Current Release: Version 5.7

Web Site: <http://www.lalarm.com>

PDFCrowd



Do you need a simple way to turn a web page into a PDF file? This web-based utility is the answer. Cut and paste a web site's URL into PDFCrowd's address box, hit the "Convert to PDF" button, and the package returns a PDF version of the selected web page.

Web Site: <http://pdfcrowd.com/>

OTTAWA PC NEWS

Ottawa PC News is the newsletter of the Ottawa PC Users' Group (OPCUG), and is published monthly except in July and August. The opinions expressed in this newsletter may not necessarily represent the views of the club or its members.

Member participation is encouraged. If you would like to contribute an article to Ottawa PC News, please submit it to the newsletter editor (contact info below). Deadline for submissions is three Sundays before the next General Meeting.

Group Meetings

OPCUG meets on the second Wednesday in the month, except July and August, at the Canada Museum of Science and Technology, 1867 St. Laurent Blvd, Ottawa. Meetings are 7:30–9:00 p.m. and Special Interest Groups (SIGs) go until 10 p.m.

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OPCUG



Users helping users

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle

Bring your old computer books, software, hardware, and paraphernalia you want to GIVE AWAY to the General Meetings, and leave them at the table near the auditorium's entrance. Please limit magazines to publication dates of less than two years old.

You may TAKE AWAY any items of use to you.

Any items left over at the end of the meeting have to be taken back home by those who brought them in.

