

BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

June 2006

Voice Recognition Software

I am dictating this because quite by accident I found out that speech recognition is available in Office 2003. To access it click on **Tools > Speech**.



You have to train the software and you need a microphone. Many of you already use a microphone to talk on the phone through the computer. If you don't, you can buy a microphone headset at London Drugs or Circuit City for around \$20-30.

It's a little bit slow and fiddly, but if you have arthritis and typing hurts, or you simply never learned to type, dictation can be a great boon.

Using Skype

While we're on the subject of microphones, **Skype 2.0** now offers video calls as well. **Skype™** is a little program for making free (until the end of the year) calls within the US and Canada to all telephones. So, if you have a web camera, you can plug in your headset (see above), call anybody at their computer

with a Skype address, or use the system to make free long distance calls anywhere in North America to real phones. Skype to Skype calls anywhere in the world are also free. It's easy to download and use, and works with most computers. More details at <http://www.skype.com>

Paste Special

When copying info from the web or an email or wherever, highlight the material, choose **Edit>Copy** from the menu bar then open your destination document and choose **Edit>Paste Special**. Choose **Unformatted text** and your copy will paste without any extra formatting and it will pick up the format of the new location.



Need a basic review?

I'm teaching the **Plus50 Basics** series of four classes again at Langara in **July, on Friday evenings**. These classes are taught at a slower pace so everyone can enjoy them.

Come join me for one or all four sessions-Computer Basics, Internet, Email, and Shopping and Banking Online. See the descriptions at <http://www.langara.bc.ca/cs/programs/STCO.html>

For more information, call Daniel Thorpe at 604-376-9598 or send an email to dthorpe@langara.bc.ca

Classes are held at the 601 W. Broadway campus, the Oak Street bus stops right outside the door, and I promise to teach you some new tricks.

Even if you've already taken the series, come again and see what you missed the first time around.

Wandering Toolbar

Has your title bar moved to the top of the screen or somewhere else? Treat it just like a card in Solitaire—just left click, hold and drag it back.

Next Langara Plus50 series starts July 7-call 604-376-9598 now!

Microsoft OneNote:

I've just taught a seminar at UBC in this relatively new Microsoft program and I really like it.

You can think of it as the computerized equivalent of all those post-it notes you have stuck all over, giving you a place to keep phone numbers, pictures, miscellaneous information and ideas you want to remember.

You can download a 60-day free trial at the Microsoft site: <http://www.microsoft.com/office/onenote/prodinfo/trial.mspx>

Then call me and I'll share my course handout with you, so you can help me improve it.

Computer Clean-up Time?

If you missed doing spring cleaning, it's not too late. Just as you find dust bunnies under the bed, they're gathering around behind your computer. Get a can of compressed air, or the tool brush on the vacuum and clean them out.

On the back of the CPU, pay particular attention to the fan area. On the monitor, check the air vents. And unless you're very virtuous, your keyboard probably has crumbs in it. Turn it over and tap it on the desk and see what falls out.

Oddball Internet sites

A site called "Lighthouse in a Tree" offers a download of a pattern for a pinhole camera.

A pinhole is a camera that uses a very small hole, as if made by a pin instead of a lens, for light to enter and form an image on

the film or other light-sensitive medium. The idea is that you print the camera pattern on heavy paper and then assemble it, put in standard 35mm film and take photos. See more at: <http://www.linatree.com>

Ditch Your Computer, Not Your Data

"Before selling, donating, or recycling an old computer, users should think twice about what's leaving their hands," according to an article in the July '06 issue of Smart Computing. Symantec, the security folks, did a study and found that people got rid of their computers without wiping their hard drives, and left all sorts of information for scavengers to discover. There is software out there that will let you completely erase your hard drive and you should use one before you give that old machine away. Or else have the old hard drive removed and put in your new computer as a second or backup drive.

Tabbed Browsing

When someone first told me about this feature in Firefox, I was not impressed, but it is becoming a favourite because it is really easy to see lots of web pages without losing track of where you started from. Look on your Firefox toolbar and click on the word **File > New Tab**. The browser will open a new tab in the same window, and with the same toolbar on

top. Look immediately below the grey menu bar to see the new tabs. You can jump between web pages and still only have one copy of the browser open.

Backup Time

Of course you make regular backups of important data, don't you? Perhaps you save files to a floppy disk or a USB flash drive. Consider also backing up at least your address book if not your entire mail folder.

In **Outlook Express** click on **File>Export>Address Book** and save it as a text file. It will save it as simple text with each field (name, email address, etc.) separated by a comma.

In **Outlook**, click on **File>Export** and save it as a PST file. Call me and I'll talk you through it.

So much info, so little time

Every time, I think I'll write less and put in more pictures, but then I keep thinking of more stuff I want to tell you. But I've run out of space for now.

So I'm starting a book on **computer tips and tricks**. My goal is to have it done by October. I would be very grateful if you would send me an email telling me which tips in the newsletter have been most helpful for you. Thanks! *Gerri*

***All Materials © 2006 Geraldine Sombke and Brightwebs.com
Please contact me at 604-773-6107 for private lessons, with technical questions or to find out more about my classes.***