

# BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Volume 2 Issue 6

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

## Miscellaneous Notes

### *Keeping out the Dust Bunnies*

Does your home or apartment get dusty? Do the tabletops show a fine layer to write your name in? Well, so does the inside of your computer.

Some simple maintenance will keep your machine running more quietly and smoothly for much longer.

There's a fan inside the computer which draws air in through the front of the machine, over the CPU chip to cool it off and out the back. Along with the air it draws dust, pet hair, lint etc. If you look at the back exit you may see dust bunnies. Vacuum the back of the machine.

If you're feeling particularly brave, remove the cover and vacuum inside, being careful not to bang the vacuum cleaner wand against anything.

Usually the cover comes off by removing screws at the back. Some newer models just have a clamp arrangement. DO NOT try opening a laptop, just dust the areas you can see from the outside. Your computer will thank you by lasting much longer.

### *Traveling can still be fun*

Since I just came back from visiting my sister for a week in London, I was



thinking about travel websites and what a wealth of information they offer these days—you can find travel tips, airline schedules, online check-in, seat selection, airplane seating charts. Some airlines even let you pre-select your own seat and print your own boarding pass. Try searching directly for your airline's website. If they don't have one, try [Travelocity.com](http://Travelocity.com) or [Expedia.ca](http://Expedia.ca) or many others I've listed in prior issues.

There are translation sites and language practice sites, subway maps and city guides, articles on safety and health topics, travel insurance sites and more.

### *Sharing your travel photos*

One way to share all those wonderful memories is to use your free webspace to create a page. Both Shaw and Telus provide your very own corner of the web. The web address for more info for Shaw is <http://support.shaw.ca/webspace> and for Telus it's <http://www.mytelus.com/internet/webspace/display.do>

and both of them have tips and tricks on how to make it work.

Look for the webspace help links for more details or call your ISP.

### *Finding Info in a Document*

Whether you're looking on a web page, in an email or in a Word or Wordpad document, there's a Find option in Windows that can help.

Click on **Edit > Find** in Word or any of the Microsoft Office programs. On a web page, click on **Edit > Find on this page**. For all other searches, try **Start > Search** and search on your hard drive.



### *Some web links to try:*

Finding the best seat for your flight:

<http://www.seatguru.com>

Track arrivals and departures at Vancouver International's site:

<http://www.yvr.com>

The Lonely Planet does 'off the beaten path' tour books:

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/>

Trip Advisor will tell you what others thought about your destination:

<http://www.tripadvisor.com/>

Virtual Tourist will give you more reviews of cities—check out what they say about Vancouver to get an idea of how the site works:

<http://www.virtualtourist.com>

*And happy traveling!*

*Gerri*

## Where do you get all these questions?

I love to hear from you folks with questions about your computer issues. If you're having a problem with something, chances are that others are also trying to solve the problem. So do send me an email and let me help. It gives me topics for the newsletter.

On that note, a student called me last week because the phone company was trying to get her to switch from dial-up internet access to high speed and even though she has an older computer, the rep insisted that she would be able to use the high speed. But what the rep didn't mention was that she would need a **network interface card (NIC)** and her older computer didn't have a spot for one. Nor does the company supply it (they do send you the modem), so you'd have to buy an extra piece of equipment even if your computer was new enough. Beware of telephone reps who don't know the full story. She's sending the modem back.

Another perennial problem occurs when you have been allowing the computer to remember your password and now you've had a crash, changed ISPs or bought a new computer and can

no longer remember the password yourself. Before that happens, check with your ISP and get that password written down somewhere. Better yet, pick one you will remember and do so. The brain operates on a "use it or lose it" basis, so don't let a computer do all your remembering for you.



### Updating needed

Some students tell me that they don't understand what's needed when a little box pops up on their system tray so they always click to make the messages go away. Their computer may not be fully protected because of this.

When you get a message saying "Updates are available", read it and go download the updates, or at least write down the message and check it out in Google or ask your tech friends (or me). The bad guys are busy every day creating problems. "Why do the bad guys bother?" I hear you ask. Because if they can take over your system, without your knowledge, they can send spam anonymously and use your machine as a zombie.

### Printing Quality Photos

Each printer manufacturer advises that you use their brand of ink and paper and warns you to steer clear of other brands. In general, they're right. If you match printer and paper and ink, you'll get a superior photo. For draft copies, you can use cheaper paper, but if you want your photos to last a long time, you need to buy the best quality paper from your printer's manufacturer.

You can save on paper costs by using the multiple photo layout in your camera's software. If it doesn't have a multiple layout, check out **Picasa** as a free download from Google. Picasa lets you print up to nine photos on a page, touch up, crop and sort your photos into folders.

Keep in mind that Picasa simply creates a catalog of your pictures where they are on your hard drive, it doesn't move them around while it's cataloging them. You have to do that by hand.

Email me with questions or suggestions of what you'd like to see in the newsletter.

 [teacher@brightwebs.com](mailto:teacher@brightwebs.com)

## Tips from the Tech Newsletters

### More digital photo info

What print size can I get from a particular digital picture? Here's a rule of thumb:

Your maximum print size will equal the image's resolution divided by the colour printer's resolution. So a 2,240 x 1,680 picture divided by 200 dots per inch on the printer will produce a decent 11 x 8.5 print. If you only need small prints, you can take pictures at a lower resolution and get more trip photos on your digital camera. (from Dec 2005 *Smart Computing*)

### Reusing CD-RWs

Wondering why you can't erase files you've put on a CD-RW? These discs are reusable, but when you write data to a CD-RW, it creates a "session" that stores your data and blocks off that portion of the disc. Each time you write to the disc it creates a new session. Eventually when the disc is full you can erase **all** the sessions and then use it as a new disc. There is software out there that will let you treat the disc as if it were a floppy disk. Nero 6 is one such program.

(from Nov 2005 *Smart Computing*)

### My arms are too short

Is it getting harder to read the computer screen? Windows has options to make it easier. Click on **Start > Control Panel > Accessibility Options > Configure Windows to work for your vision, hearing and mobility needs**. Then just follow the Wizard to set your computer to be more user friendly. (from 13-26 October *Computer Active—a British computer magazine*)

**Safety tip from Gerri:** Write down what's already selected before you make a change in case you want to go back.