

BRIGHTWEBS TIPS

Gerri's Computer Newsletter

January 2008

Big changes in my life:

Shortly after the last newsletter, I received a call from Kwantlen to teach Computer Competency for them, on 2 mornings in Langley and 2 mornings in Surrey, in the Legal Administrative Assistant program.

Sounded like an easy schedule so I said "Sure!" and I've been busy as a beaver ever since, with lots of commuting thrown in. It's been a real learning experience to teach young students. If you see me in person, ask me which I prefer. 😊

So until April 15th I'll be a little harder to reach, but send me emails with questions and I'll still try to answer.

Keeping your computer safe:

When an error message pops up and you're not sure what it means, write it down and ask someone. Try Google first - go to the search page and type in the error message or part of it. There will usually be a number of links to postings from others who have run into the same problem.

Send me a note and I'll try to find out what it is for you (but see note above - this might not be

the fastest response). Or call your ISP or the store where you bought your computer and see if they can help. **Don't just ignore it and go on with your work.**

Making a list - what's on top?

CNNMoney has an interesting, free tool (cgi.money.cnn.com/tools/prioritize/prioritize_101.jsp) that aides you in sorting and organizing a list. It's simple: You enter all of your items, and then the site presents you with a series of two items from your list. You pick which of those two are more important. Once you go through a bunch of these pairs, your list is organized.

Finding Contact Information:

I had occasion to use Canada411 recently and it reminded me again of how easy it is to find information these days on the web - phone numbers and home addresses, if they are in the phone book, are accessible through canada411.com which will even let you search for neighbours of the listing you're looking up. Go ahead, try it on your own name.

Read me a story, Grandma

A newsletter recently pointed me to Story Online, a Web site where interesting children's books are read by SAG (Screen Actor's Guild) members.

If you've been babysitting a lot lately and you're looking for a new way to amuse the little ones, or you're simply suffering from cabin fever, check it out. To get started, simply choose a story. On the story's page, you will have several navigation options. You can select the Read By button and learn all about the actor reading the story or you can click the Let's Read It button and

Learn Now For Spring:

Plus50 classes start again February 7 at Langara - four Thursday afternoons to learn the Basics at a pace you can be comfortable with - the first day is a complete refresher of how Windows works. Day 2 is an overview and lots of tips to get the most out of the internet. Day 3 covers email including getting the most out of Hotmail or Yahoo mail or Gmail or good old Outlook Express. Day 4 is all about how to window shop online and protect your information against identity theft. Come join me for one or all four of the classes. Call Dan Thorpe at Langara, 604.323.5266 to register or for more information.

choose your connection speed to see the video.

The video will be of the actor reading the story with the story captioned as well. The video will show both the actor reading and the illustrations from the pages of the book. You also have the options of full screen, turning the captions on/off or changing the video's size.

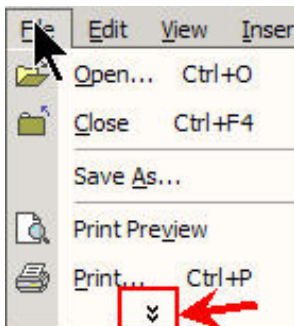
You can find it at:
<http://www.storylineonline.net/>

Current Road Conditions:

<http://www.drivebc.ca> is another good example of the usefulness of the web - it has links to all the highway cameras, road work schedules and closures. It's put on by the Ministry of Transportation so check out your tax dollars at work before you head out across the region, or to plan a route. Also Google Maps now has a link to Translink so that when you ask it for an address it can also tell you how to get there by transit.

Short menus in Office 2003

In its ever helpful way, Microsoft Office, by default, displays only partial menus when you first click on a menu item. The two



little down arrows show you that it's a short menu and that more is there to be clicked on. You can

change this behaviour by either double clicking on the menu, choice, or clicking once and then holding the pointer over the

arrows.

You can change it permanently by clicking on Tools >Customize >Options and putting a check mark beside "Always show full menus."

Viewing Toolbars

If your favourite toolbar has gone missing, try clicking on the View Menu. You may have accidentally turned it off. Also turn on a new toolbar and see if you find it useful. If you click on one and can't even see where it went, try doing it again while watching the screen to see what appears or disappears.

You can even right click on your Taskbar and see the toolbars available to you from there. Don't be afraid to experiment. As always, before you make drastic changes, write down the existing settings.

Printers update

I did talk myself into the little colour laser printer - this newsletter is printed with it, so you can see the print quality. I got the multi-function (print, scan, copy) from Samsung - CLX 2160N because it was on sale at Staples and they deliver for free over \$50. I'm happy with it, although I do miss the double-sided copying that my little inkjet managed so nicely. It also is a network printer so I can plug my Macintosh into it as soon as I figure out how, or my son visits and does it for me, whichever comes first. He's in line to get my old printer, so he has an incentive. There is a printer one step down from the model I bought, the CLP300, which would be smaller and take up less space on your desk but which has the same workings, without the scanner copier feature.

Upgraded Internet Explorer 7

Microsoft announced last week that with its February 12, 2008 Windows updates, an upgrade for Internet Explorer 7 will be included whether you like it or not. So, basically, if you've been putting off the upgrade, you will soon be forced to install the new version of the IE Web browser. Microsoft is going to be pushing this on just about everyone (businesses included) who has not yet installed IE 7.



It's not as bad as it sounds, because IE7 is a more secure program, and has more features, but the look is a little different. If you are confused about where some of the settings went, click on Tools and turn on the Menu Bar, then click on Tools again, and choose Toolbars, Customize and you can put back your favourite buttons. Send me an email if you get stuck.

Or you can just choose to use Firefox instead. Let me know if you'd like an article about different browsers.



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Thanks!

See you next time.

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