East SIG Report – April 2018

The April meeting opened with **Paul Woolard** welcoming members, followed by Q&A conducted by **George Skarbek**.

Q: I downloaded a trial version of "Paintshop Pro", decided not to keep it and then tried to uninstall it. When using both the Corel and Windows uninstaller the computer just sat there and did nothing. I then tried "cCleaner" and it did exactly the same. After that I tried "Revo Uninstaller" and it did exactly the same. Can you help?

A: That's unusual as "cCleaner" is usually quite good at removing programs. Another program that's a little bit better is called "iobit uninstaller". It's free and sometimes does a better job than the programs built in uninstaller. As it's free give "iobit uninstaller" a go.

As a last resort if you still can't delete the program, right click on the programs shortcut and select "*Properties*" to find where the program is installed. Next go to that folder and delete it. That will still leave lots of Registry entries, but you can clean those out with "cCleaner". "CCleaner" is surprisingly good at that and will likely show numerous erroneous Registry entries. To run cCleaner's Registry cleaner, click on "*Scan for issues*" then after scanning is complete, click "*Fix All Selected Issues*". This won't speed up your computer but it will get rid of all that garbage. Some people say Registry cleaners will make your computer go faster, but I believe they are as good as "snake oil" that you rub on the case. Both will give you the same performance improvement.

Q: Recently I've tried to recover files for a friend from a hard drive that's in the process of dying. I connected the hard drive to my computer via a USB connection. When trying to copy files from the dying hard drive I'm getting an "*Access denied*" message. Next I used "Total Commander" as it shows 2 screens (i.e. source folder in one panel and the target in the other) and I can now see both drives. How can I take control of everything on that faulty drive?

A: Boot from a Live Linux disk or run "Hirens boot disk" to give access to the faulty hard drive. This will get rid of all the Windows protection because you're not using Windows to access the files. You can then copy whatever you like from the working drive.

If that doesn't work there's a DOS command (Cacls) you can run, but it's very complex. Its help file runs to 3 or 4 pages long and talks about relationships etc. One of the commands switches will allow you to take ownership and get rid of all protection. This is a powerful command but is a last gasp solution.

Q: When I tried to run "Macrium Reflect" to back up a faulty hard drive, it refused to work telling me to try again.

A: In Windows select the faulty disk and select "*Properties*". Click on the "*Tools*" tab and click "*Check*". This should get rid of any faulty sectors that are preventing the backup and should allow "Macrium Reflect" to finish running.

Q: I run a program called "DraftSight" and save my drawings to a folder I created and not the programs default folder. However "File Explorer" won't open the files in the folder I created. When I right click on one of my files and select *"Open with"*, "DraftSight" does not appear in the list. How can I open these files from "File Explorer"?

A: "DraftSight" should have setup the correct file association when it was installed. What you need to do is go to the bottom of the "*Open with*" list and select "*choose another app*". This opens another Window where you can select "DraftSight" to open that file. If "DraftSight" is not listed, scroll to the bottom of the list and select "*Look for another app on this PC*". This opens a "File Explorer" window. Navigates to the DraftSight folder, highlight the exe file that

runs DraftSight and click "*Open*". Next select the check box labelled "*Always use this app to open .dwg files*". This will now associate all dwg files with your DraftSight software.

Following Q&A **Neil Muller** showed how he reorganised the alphabetical list of programs or "Apps list" in the default Windows 10 Start menu. Neil displayed how many of the programs he's installed added folders to the start menu's "Apps list". These folders contain the shortcut to the installed program, but most also included other unnecessary entries such as links to the programs website or other websites, links to the programs manual, links to uninstall the program etc. In addition, some of the default names of these folders made it difficult to know what program they contain.

When accessing programs contained in these folders, the folders have to be opened first before being able to click on the link to the program. Neil found this frustrating and annoying. In addition to taking up space in the "Apps List", most of these folders are unnecessary apart from the program shortcut they contain. For the reasons described above, Neil felt it was now time to reorganise his "Apps list".

Neil showed how he moved the shortcuts from the offending folders into the "Apps list" and then deleted the folder. The result made the "Apps list" easier to navigate and easier to find programs. This process although simple is made more challenging because the Start menu's "Apps list" is located in two separate locations in Windows 10, one of which is a hidden folder by default. "ProgramData" is the hidden folder and the "Users" folder the other. The final "Apps list" one sees when starting Windows 10 is the combination of the two lists. Neil showed the path required to locate the two Start menu's "Apps list" under these folders. These are buried 3 and 6 levels down in the folder tree respectively.

The final optional step is to create folders containing like programs. Neil demonstrated how he created a folder called "pdf", which contained all the various shortcuts to his pdf utilities, printers, viewers & editors contained elsewhere in his "Apps List". This new folder needed to be located under the "Users" Start Menu in order for it to appear in the "Apps List". The same process can then be used to group other similar programs such as Graphics, Audio, Video, Office, Utilities etc.

Following on **George Skarbek** gave a presentation titled "How to Speed up Your Computer". George detailed where speed improvements can be achieved in both software and hardware.

Software speed enhancements:
- George believes the single greatest speed improvement in this category is to set the mouse to "*snap to*" the default button in an open dialogue box. Here time is saved by simply clicking the mouse button rather than dragging the mouse across the screen and then left clicking.
- Slight speed improvements are gained by disable unnecessary programs that load at Start-up,
- Delete unwanted programs,
- Learn keyboard shortcuts
- Run cCleaner every few months to clear out junk files.

Hardware speed enhancements:
- Replacing a mechanical hard drive with a Solid State Drive (SSD) or M.2 drive gives the greatest speed improvement in this category.

- A faster CPU gives a speed improvement only up to a point. It is very dependent on what the computer is used for.
- The second generation AMD Ryzen 5 2400G CPU available soon is George's current CPU recommendation. It's a standout with excellent graphic, 3.6GHz clock speed, 4 cores, 8 with hyperthreading, overclocking options and its cost is hard to beat at $225 compared to equivalent Intel CPU's.
- More RAM also only gives a speed improvement up to a point. 4GB is often adequate but 8GB of RAM is better. George noted that sometimes a computer with 16 or 32GB of RAM can actually have a small negative speed impact.
- RAM speed is irrelevant and one should look at the length of the warranty instead. Faster RAM will only give a 2% speed improvement and this won't be noticeable for most users.
- A RAM drive will give a speed boost but that's a separate topic in itself for another time.

After a short break **Stewart Bedford** showed one method of recovering data from a Windows, Linux or Mac computer when the operating system refuses to boot. Requirements for this are an 8GB flash drive, a Linux distro ISO file (Stewart used Linux Mint 18.3 Sylvia) and software to write the ISO file to the flashdrive (Stuart used Etcher).

To prepare for the day your computer refuses to boot you need to ensure your computer will first boot from a USB flashdrive. This can be checked and if necessary set by going into your computers BIOS. Stuart noted that most computers used today will be able to boot from a USB flashdrive. The next step is to download the Etcher software (Windows, Mac & Linux versions are available) and a Linux ISO file. Use "Etcher" write the Linux ISO file to the flashdrive then check the computer will boot from the flashdrive. You should now be able to see all the files on your Windows operating system with this Linus boot disk.

One of the programs you'll find on the Live Linux O.S. is "Gnome Disk Utility" or "Gnome Disks" as it is also called. This is a very powerful utility and one Stuart would use when his computer refuses to boot. "Gnome Disks" can be used to:
- Mount ISO images as bootable drives, including USB flashdrives.
- Add or remove partitions. It can also be used to unmount partitions
- Provide information on the hard disk via the drives SMART (Self-Monitoring Analysis and Reporting Technology) system. This includes the disks name, storage capacity, how it is partitioned, an indication of its reliability including any irregularities and the age of the drive.
- Create and restore disk images which can be used as backups

For the cost of a USB flashdrive Stuart now has an emergency plan and image backup.

Neil Muller