

News Journal

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

October 2008



Volume 25 Issue 6

What To Do When ...

Your Wireless Connection Drops

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Whether you're on the road or at home, a wireless connection can drop unexpectedly and for no readily apparent reason. Many people depend on wireless networks to work and stay connected with friends and family, so a dropped connection can create serious problems. Consider the following troubleshooting tips as you try to reconnect to your network or the World Wide Web.

Inspect Your Connections

If you've already established a wireless network at home, start by turning your router off by unplugging it and pressing the reset button located on the back. Be sure to reset your cable or DSL modem, as well. To do this, simply leave the power cord unplugged for a minute and then reinsert the cord. If you use a laptop with built-in wireless capabilities, try rebooting and reconnecting to the network. A troublesome Wi-Fi adapter could also be the problem; disconnect and then plug in an external adapter.

Next, check to see if your wireless router cords are plugged in. Your router should be connected to a power supply and have connections to your cable or DSL modem. Don't overlook these basic tips, as they can save you frustration further down the line.

Reposition The Computer

Distance affects the quality of your wireless signal, which can result in periodically dropped connections. Place your wireless router or access point in a centralized location within your wireless network. If your wireless connection seems weak or intermittent, try moving it to various spots around your home. Open your wireless settings to check if your signal has strengthened. This is one way to ensure that you've chosen an ideal spot for an access point.

A network provides the clearest signal in a wide, open space, but homes typically don't come without walls, doors, metal, and floors. Wireless signals are weakened as they pass through aluminum and heavy wood or bounce off reflective surfaces such as windows and mirrors. In an ideal environment, 802.11g routers have a range that can extend up to 300 feet, but the obstructions in your home decrease this range significantly. Keep these points in mind when you arrange your network. You can also reposition your router's an-

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Upcoming

L.C.A.C.E.

Events

Grayslake

Public Library

October 11, 2008

Round Table—Ask the Gurus

November 8, 2008

Computerized Embroidery

December 6, 2008

Holiday Party

(University of Illinois Auditorium (Annex))



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**Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
L.C.A.C.E.**

**c/o Group Ambassador / Founder
Mr. J.J. Johnson**

MEMBERSHIP

Membership for LCACE is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. Associate membership is only \$10.00 (out of state, unable to attend meetings). Membership includes a one year subscription to the LCACE News Journal and access to all club libraries and functions. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club Hotline, and are now available on our WEB site at - <http://www.lcace.org>.

MEETINGS

LCACE meetings are held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

ADVERTISING

Ad rates per issue: Full page - \$25, Half page - \$15, Quarter page - \$10, Business Card - \$5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 21st of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

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tenna to improve the wireless signal. Similarly, it's best to keep your notebook as close as you can to the router to avoid obstacles. If you're still experiencing problems, try extending your network's range by adding a repeater or long-range antenna to your router.

Combat Network Interference

Network interference is a common culprit of diminished wireless signals. For instance, an appliance such as a microwave can interfere with wireless signals. Cordless phones have skyrocketed in popularity and can block a signal, as well. Any devices that operate on the same 2.4GHz frequency as your wireless network will likely weaken the network's signal strength. To avoid these wireless barriers, place your access point at least 3 to 6 feet away from home appliances that could interfere.

Switch Channels

Another common cause of network interference is other wireless networks. It's possible that neighbors using Wi-Fi or other nearby networks are obstructing your signal just as much as any wireless device. If other access points or routers in your area are using the same wireless channel as your network, your signal strength could fade.

Fortunately, Wi-Fi equipment (in the United States) supports up to 11 channels. This range of frequencies is not unlike different radio stations. The solution is to change your wireless router's default channel and then check your wireless settings to see if the signal has increased.

To change the channels on your wireless router, begin by opening your Web browser. Next, type the IP

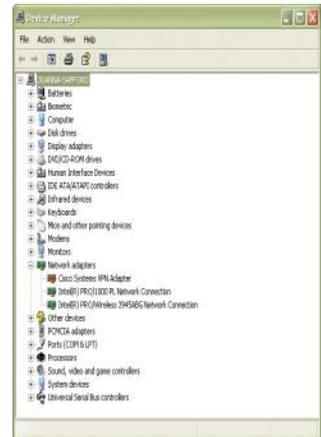
(Internet Protocol) address of your router in your Internet browser's Address bar. (The IP address is often 192.168.1.1, but check your router's users manual to be sure.) Click the Wireless option on the Web page. For instance, in our D-Link router, we clicked the Wireless button in the left-hand menu and then selected the Home tab to access the wireless settings. If an Auto Select box is checked, uncheck it and switch to a new channel by selecting a number from the drop-down menu. Continue to test different channels until you find a frequency that works.

Check Your Wireless Adapter

If you're a frequent traveler who relies on Wi-Fi hotspots, wireless network adapters are indispensable. An adapter communicates with the router. If you're having difficulties connecting to a hotspot, your adapter may not be working properly. To remedy this problem, you'll need to either reinsert the wireless adapter into the PC card slot in your notebook or replace the adapter altogether. In order to improve the communication between your router and laptop, consider using a USB network adapter, which adds the option of a hi-gain antenna and ultimately enhances your signal range.

Once you've ensured that your adapter is correctly connected, you should determine if Windows has recognized the adapter and if it is working normally. To do this in WinXP, click the Start menu, Control Panel, Performance And Maintenance, and System. In the System Properties window, select the Hardware tab and click the Device Manager button. Click to expand Net-

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Another common cause of network interference is other wireless networks.

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work Adapters in the Device Manager and see if the name of your wireless adapter is there. Right-click the wireless adapter and select Properties—the Properties window will inform you whether the adapter is working. Another troubleshooting option is to select the Driver tab and update your driver.

Vista users should click Start, Control Panel, Hardware And Sound, and Device Manager. From this point on, follow the steps outlined for WinXP in order to check the status of the wireless adapter.

With a little tweaking and troubleshooting, you should be able to reconnect to your wireless network.

by Joanna Safford



Email Etiquette

John Roy, President
(johnroy1(at)comcast.net), The PC Users Group of Connecticut,
www.tpcug-ct.org/

Do you really know how to forward an e-mail? It is estimated that over fifty percent of email users do not know how to do it properly. Do you wonder why you get viruses or junk mail?

Email messages get forwarded countless times without concern for the security of the previous sender's addresses. Every time you forward an e-mail there is information left

over from the people who got the message before you, namely their e-mail addresses and names. As the messages get forwarded along the list of addresses builds and builds creating a huge resource for spammers. All it takes is for someone to get a virus and the infected computer can send that virus to every e-mail address that has come across that computer. Even if the address collection doesn't result in a virus it surely will be harvested by spammers or someone looking to make a couple of cents for a listing of good email addresses. How do you stop or at least minimize the propagation of email addresses?

There are several easy steps that we should all practice.

(1) Before you send out a forwarded e-mail, DELETE all of

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Robin's RAMblings

Hi, everyone! By now you know the fantastic prizes some lucky people will win during our annual holiday party: first prize is a **17"** Compaq laptop with **3GB** of RAM, 200GB hard drive, built in **webcam** and microphone, etc.; second prize is an 8 megapixel Nikon L18 digital camera with 3X optical zoom and a 3" LCD screen; third prize is a Maxtor 320GB One touch 4 mini external hard drive. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 or \$5. You can't win unless you buy tickets! Sell them to family, friends, work buddies... This year because of the tough economy we will need to work extra hard to sell raffle tickets.

Our holiday party is Saturday, December 6th. Treasurer Winnie Frost is the party chair, assisted by vice president Mike McEnery and membership chair Linda Busch. We always need extra help, so please volunteer. Start thinking now about what healthy dish you will bring to pass. The club will provide ham, rolls, condiments, pop, and ice cream. As always, family and friends are welcome to attend.



J.J. wins \$11.50 from the September 50/50 raffle.

LCACE vice president Mike McEnery discussed Windows Live *One Care* on September 13th. J.J. was the winner of our 50/50 raffle, and Terri Hanlon won the door prize, McAfee Anti-Virus software. We also had "Show and Tell". New member Shari Florian showed us her Kindle. An avid reader, she enjoys downloading many books to her new "toy". Shari- Welcome to LCACE! Keep up the good work.

Our October 11th program will feature one of our most popular programs, "Ask the Gurus". Plan to bring your questions, and our gurus will answer them. On Saturday, November 8th, LCACE and the Grayslake Area Public Library will co-sponsor Sue Walter's program, "Computerized Embroidery". Sue will show us a design, then digitize it on her laptop, and use her computerized embroidery machine to stitch it. She will also discuss websites where one can download beautiful designs-often at no charge.

I recently read some interesting "Black Friday predictions" on dealnews.com:

UMPC for **\$199** [UMPC=ultra mobile pc or netbook]

15" Intel or AMD Dual Core laptop for **\$299**

well-equipped 15.4" Intel Core 2 Duo laptop for **\$399**



Terri Hanlon wins the September Door Prize. She won McAfee Anti-Virus.

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Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

Holiday Raffle 2008

1st Prize:

Compaq Presario Notebook Computer



- 17.0" WXGA BrightView Widescreen
- 3072 MB - DDR2 SDRAM
- 200GB (5400 RPM) hard drive
- Intel Pentium Dual-Core processor T2390
- Built-in webcam with integrated microphone
- LightScribe Super Multi 8X DVD±R/RW with Double Layer Support
- Windows Vista Home Premium-Service Pack 1

2nd Prize:

Nikon Coolpix L18 8MP Digital Camera

- 3X Optical Zoom
- 3" LCD screen



3rd Prize:

Maxtor OneTouch 4 Mini 320GB Portable Hard Drive

- 5400 RPM, up to 8MB cache buffer

4th Prize:

1-Year's Membership LCACE



Tickets: 6 for \$5 or \$1 each

Drawing December 6, 2008

Winner need not be present

Need raffle tickets to sell

Contact Mike McEnergy at vp@lcace.org (847) 872-1314

Digital Photography Mom

By Dorothy Sutherland

In August, I had a wonderful time and the pleasure of accompany my son (J.J.) on a two day photography workshop. The workshop was present by Nikon and specifically designed for his new Nikon D300 sSLR camera. The second day was all about Creative Lighting Systems (CLS) and the Nikon SB800 flash.

We stayed at the Hilton Garden Inn in Fisher Indianan and although I was not able to attend the workshops, the hotel had a fantastic breakfast menu and I enjoyed the two days of shopping and relaxation. I couldn't believe there was a Wal-Mart out the side door of the hotel and less than one-hundred yards away?

After a full eight-hour day of class, J.J. would return to the room and expressed his exhaustion, but yet I could see he was excited about the knowledge he had gained.

After settling down we would let Amy (his GPS) map out a nice restaurant in the area for dinner. I have to admit that this suburb of Indianapolis was at no loss of restaurants to enjoy.

I guess this adventure make me a "Digital Camera Mom".



"Digital Camera Mom"

Join Us For Our Annual Holiday Party

December 6, 2008

11:00 am to 3:00 pm

University of Illinois

Auditorium (Annex)

100 Rte. 45 (Grayslake Fairgrounds)

(Rt. 45 & Rt. 120)

Grayslake, Illinois

Door Prizes

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and cash.*

Movies - Games - Fun

Food-Food-Food

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(Continued from page 5)

moderately-equipped PC (dual-core, 250GB HDD, DVD burner) bundled with a 19" LCD for **\$299**

22" LCD monitors for **\$99**

500GB USB 2.0 external hard drives for **\$49**

1TB models for **\$99**

7" digital picture frame for **\$25**

9" digital picture frame for **\$49**

Canon PowerShot SD1100 8MP Digital

ELPH for **\$139**

HD camcorder for **\$99**

entry-level GPS units should hit **\$49**

widescreen GPS with Bluetooth for **\$99**

Hope we don't have to stand out in the cold at 3 a.m. to shop for these bargains! They do go on to say that there will likely be good prices from Halloween to Black Friday, and from Cyber Monday to Christmas. The author suggested that people be choosy about when to buy. "When it comes to tech products during the holiday season, there's often a better deal just around the corner." With this year's challenging economy, merchants will have to offer *very* enticing prices before many of us will shop. Happy computing!

Robin

(Continued from page 4)

the other addresses that appear in the body of the message (at the top). That's right, DELETE them. Highlight them and delete them, backspace them, cut them, whatever it is you know

how to do. It only takes a second You MUST click the 'Forward' button first and then you will have full editing capabilities against the body and headers of the message. If you don't click on 'Forward' first, you won't be able to edit the message at all.

(2) Whenever you send an e-mail to more than one person, do NOT use the To: or Cc: fields for adding e-mail addresses. Always use the BCC: (blind carbon copy) field for listing the e-mail addresses. This is the way the people

you send to will only see their own e-mail address. If you don't see your BCC: option click on where it says To: and your address list will appear. Highlight the address and choose BCC: and that's it, it's that easy. When you send to BCC: your message will automatically say 'Undisclosed Recipients' in the 'TO:' field of the people who receive it.

(3) Remove any 'FW:' in the subject line. You can re-name the subject if you wish or even fix spelling.

(4) ALWAYS hit your Forward button from the actual e-mail you are reading. Ever get those e-mails that you have to open 10 pages to read the one page with the



DELETE all of the other addresses that appear in the body of the message.

(Continued on page 9)

information on it? By forwarding from the actual page you wish someone to view, you stop them from having to open many e-mails just to see what you sent.

(5) Have you ever gotten an email that is a petition? It states a position and asks you to add your name and address and to forward it to 10 or 15 people or your entire address book. The email can be forwarded on and on and can collect thousands of names and email addresses. A FACT: The completed petition is actually worth a couple of bucks to a professional spammer because of the wealth of valid names and email addresses contained therein. If you want to support the petition, send it as your own personal letter to the intended recipient. Your position may carry more weight as a personal letter than a laundry list of names and email address on a petition. (Actually, if you think about it, who's supposed to send the petition in to whatever cause it supports? And don't believe the ones that say that the email is being traced, it just isn't so!)

(6) One of the main ones I hate is the ones that say that something like, 'Send this email to 10 people and you'll see something great run across your screen.' Or, sometimes they'll just tease you by saying something really cute will happen IT AIN'TGON-NAHAPPEN!!!! (Trust me; I'm still seeing some of the same ones that I waited on 10 years ago!) I don't let the bad luck ones scare me either, they get trashed.

(Could that be why I haven't won the lottery?)

(7) Before you forward an Amber Alert, or a Virus Alert, or some of the other ones floating around nowadays, check them out before you forward them. Most of them are junk mail

that's been circling the net for Years! Just about everything you receive in an email that is in question can be checked out at Snopes. Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/> It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

So please, in the future, let's stop or at least minimize the junk mail and the viruses by taking the steps outlined above.

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Just go to <http://www.snopes.com/> It's really easy to find out if it's real or not. If it's not, please don't pass it on.

L.C.A.C.E.
Annual
Holiday Party
December 6
Bring a Friend
&
A dish to pass



See Details
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e-mail

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@ <http://lcace.org/PhotoAlbums.htm>

TIME TO RENEW

All memberships will now be renewable annually on April 1st. This change in the paying of annual dues will allow the Treasurer to budget our money more closely. If you haven't already renewed your membership, see Linda or Winnie to find out your pro-rated amount.



Introducing ZoomWare by Ai Squared

Ai Squared is pleased to introduce ZoomWare, revolutionary new software that magnifies and enhances everything on your computer screen. It's perfect for those who squint at the computer screen and lean in to read the fine print.

Special APCUG Discount!

ZoomWare is affordably priced at \$149 (download version), but as a member of APCUG you can **purchase ZoomWare now for just \$119**—a 20% discount.

To take advantage of your special APCUG member discount, simply purchase ZoomWare online at www.GetZoomWare.com and enter the following code at checkout: **APCUG08**. If you prefer to receive a CD version, it can be purchased for \$140 (a \$35 savings) and we will ship the product to you within 3 to 5 business days.

“ZoomWare is something I think almost all of us need to relieve our eye strain,” states June Koppang, a ZoomWare user. “I believe that once you use it you will love it and never want to use a computer without ZoomWare again. Your eyes are too important not to protect.”



In case you have missed out on our seminars and press releases, we have put together a short informational video to give you an overview of how to use ZoomWare. We invite you to share this video with your computer group, friends, family, local library—anyone you think can benefit from ZoomWare.

To download a free trial or to learn more about ZoomWare, visit www.GetZoomWare.com.

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NEXT MEETING
October 11, 2008
Grayslake Public Library
@ 12:30 pm.

Round Table—Ask the Gurus

Presented by

The Gurus

***Bring your questions and we will do our best
to answer them.***

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