

Looking back at technical topics of 2008



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When it started to warm up again in March we discussed how to get the young ones off the computer and back to doing real kid stuff. Since then the wife and I came up with a great solution.

We set the password on our daughter's PCs to one only we know and not the kids. When we say they have had enough computer time,

we lock up the computers for the day by hitting the Window Key (below the Z) and the letter L at the same time.

April brought us a small crop of blue-bonnets but an important column on managing the databases of Outlook and Quickbooks. Those are still the two most important files on most computers.

My new solution to managing those critical files is to sign up with the backup service Carbonite.com for \$50 a year. During the start up procedure select the Outlook data along with Quickbooks databases or any other financial files to be backed up.

With the kids out of school in May we all had to make sure the Internet access was flowing quickly. The throughput testing Web site SpeedTest.net is still my favorite online ISP (Internet Service Provider) speed verification tool.

Since it samples both upstream as well as downstream, SpeedTest.net lets

you know if you are getting the data rates you are paying for. Basically all broadband connections should be getting at least 1Mb/s speeds for snapping Internet surfing.

As the year hit the halfway mark in June, the scumbag criminals kicked into high gear and hit even more homes and businesses with thefts and burglaries. It is critical to have a good inventory of everything you have which will aid the law enforcement authorities to track them down if stolen.

The software Collectivity from www.Collectify.com is well worth the \$49 to help you organize and digitize a comprehensive property inventory of your home or office.

Some of us were sweating in July standing in line at the AT&T storing for the new iPhone 3G but it was worth it. Mine has worked flawlessly and my wife is also happy with the original iPhone that I passed on to her after I bought the new one.

Both the original and 3G should now be on version 2.2 of the code which has helped the battery life problem, mostly eliminated dropped calls, and has a great new search ability in the contacts application.

School started back up at the end of August and we were alerted about the dangers of text messaging while driving. Numerous other studies and events

like the terrible train accident have come to light defining just how hazardous it is to type on a tiny keyboard of a phone while operating a motor vehicle.

Both adults and young drivers should NOT attempt this type of multitasking which could easily cost you and others their lives.

September brought in one of the most destructive hurricanes to hit the Texas coastline and IKE caused all sorts of technical problems. One thing our Harris County neighbors to the southeast learned was the importance of electricity.

Since then thousands of homeowners and business people have purchased portable and larger standby electrical generators to aid their existence the next time falling trees take the power out for weeks.

The leaves started falling in October but my new little jewel of a software program Drive Health was notifying me of hard drives having problems before the client knew about it. Utilizing the SMART technology now built into newer drives, the Drive Health program actually told me when a drive was about to fail enabling me to copy the data and swap it out before it became a problem. It has saved me half a dozen times in 2008.

By the time it started cooling off in November, I along with many others

were fretting about the pending economic collapse and beginning of the socialistic government bailouts of previously free enterprise entities.

Google Finance provided me numerous tools and news that is still helping us weather the financial storm that still is brewing and could be erupting in 2009.

Finally at the year grows to a close here in December, I am ordering some more business cards from my favorite marketing materials site VistaPrint.com. While there I was also able to upload one of my favorite conservative images and political slogans up to VistaPrint enabling me to create my own custom T-shirts.

It is one of those shirts I cannot wear to my in-law's house but most of my clients would really like it.

Bottom line: As I said 2009 will not be boring and I'll continue to keep you all informed on the technology and hopefully a bit entertained with my edgy views on it.

Thanks for reading and have a happy and safe new year!

Next week's column: Playing DVDs on laptops.

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