

# DO'INS FROM DOWN IN THE DELL

<http://www.thefarmerinyourdell.com>  
<http://www.mcgowencomputers.com>

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- Web sites
- PC Computer repair
- Individual training
- Interactive marketing aids
- Custom sales training
- Leadership training
- Technical writing
- Diet and exercise advice

#### Special points of interest:

- What to Update?
- Stalking the elusive McGowen Computer Services

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## So What Should I Update and When...

Somebody asked me the other day how long I have been working on computers. I had to take my socks off to get around the numbers, but it looks like I have been fiddling with computers since about 1978, the year I got out of the Army. That's getting close to 33 years. I guess I have picked up a few tricks over those years, and now I want to share some of that knowledge with my customers. This newsletter will be my vehicle.

One of the most common questions I get these days is about updates. With all the junk floating around the Internet these days it is easy to see why folks get confused about this, so here are some simple rules to follow.

1. Always keep your anti-virus and malware programs up-to-date. Most of them have auto-updates, but I have taken to not turning

that on, so I have to take an active role in making sure that my computer is protected.

2. Always keep your Microsoft operating system software up-to-date. Windows has a sometimes finicky auto-update program built in. If it stops working call me, or bring me your system and I'll get it straightened out. This is critical because Microsoft patches "Holes" hackers find in the OS.
3. Acrobat and Java updates are also critical. Acrobat because of Flash and PDF files, which most users use a lot, and Java because that is the underpinning of a lot of the things that the Internet Browsers (Firefox and Internet Explorer) do.



IBM 5110 "Personal Computer" circa 1978

4. Any system software. Dell and HP both have utilities to go out and check for driver updates. While I'm not a big believer in constantly updating drivers, (if it ain't broke, don't fix it), some drivers, especially video drivers can make a huge difference in system performance. When in doubt, just call me and we can chat about it. I usually don't charge for this kind of support.

## How To Find The Elusive McGowen Computer Services

During the winter months, I plan to operate out of my home, located at 412 South Chestnut Street in friendly Friend, Nebraska. That is about three and one half blocks south of US Highway 6. Chestnut Street runs north and south, one block east of the massive law enforcement center in Friend.

Starting in the spring, I will relocate to the World Headquar-

ters building, housing McGowen Crop Protection Service, Big Cob Hybrids, and McGowen Computer Services. The office is the smaller building on the south end of the complex located at 915—448th Road. The complex is located three miles north, and two miles west of Beaver Crossing, Nebraska. During harvest I will continue to operate from the World Headquarters, how-

ever I will seldom be available, so if you have computer troubles, just call me and if I can't fix it over the phone, (646-5012) I will recommend an alternative.

You can always reach me by phone, any time between 6:00 am and 9:00 pm, any day but Sunday. Please don't call me during Sunday morning.

There you go.

## Free Anti-Virus and Malware Program from Microsoft

Usually, when something is given away on the Internet it is because it is too funky to sell.

Well, that's not the case with Microsoft's free anti-virus program, Security Essentials.

This FREE program works very well. It does require you to periodically update it and run a scan from time to time, but it doesn't seem to slow down the

system and it DOES do a good job with protecting the system. I have been using it for nearly a year now and really haven't had a single problem.

If your old anti-virus is close to or has expired, uninstall it, download MSE and give it a try. Please. Way over ninety percent of the work I do here is the direct result of out of date anti-virus (or worse, no anti-virus

software).

It usually takes me hours to fix a virus'ed up system. If I charged for all my time needed to get them back to shape, it would often cost you more than the system is worth!

Do us both a favor. Keep current anti-virus and anti-spyware software on your system and use it!

Go here: [www.microsoft.com/security\\_essentials](http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials) - others may be a scam!



The Radio Shack Color Computer was one of the first truly "personal" computers on the market. It came with 4K of RAM, stored data on a cassette and cost \$399.00!

Source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TRS-80\\_Color\\_Computer](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/TRS-80_Color_Computer)

## Shortcut Keys for the PC—Mash instead of clicking...

Using keystroke shortcuts has been around since the first days of DOS, but many of us have forgotten they are there. Here is a brief list of the most popular shortcut keys and what they do.

- CTRL+C-COPY HIGHLIGHTED TEXT
- CTRL+V-PASTE COPIED TEXT
- CTRL+N-OPEN A DUPLICATE WINDOW
- CTRL+Z-UNDO LAST
- CTRL+X-DELETE HIGHLIGHTED TEXT OR IMAGES
- ALT+TAB-SWITCH BETWEEN RUNNING PROGRAMS
- CTRL+P-PRINT CURRENT DOCUMENT
- CTRL+S-SAVE CURRENT DOCUMENT
- CTRL+PrtScrn-COPY ENTIRE SCREEN TO IMAGE
- ALT+PrtScrn-COPY WINDOW WITH FOCUS TO IMAGE
- ALT+F4- CLOSE CURRENT WINDOW
- CTRL+ESC-WINDOWS MENU
- TAB-MOVES BETWEEN FIELDS
- SHIFT+TAB-BACKUP TO LAST FIELD
- Go to this web site for more keystrokes:

<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/126449>

*"Shortcut keys  
can save you a  
lot of mouse  
clicks..."*

## Five Things You Can Do To Speed Up Your System

Many of you have told me your once speedy computer has really slowed down over time.

Since computers don't slow down with age like I have, there must be something else affecting them, and if so, why can't we fix it?

Well...sometimes you can!

Try these steps...

- Update your anti-virus software and run a full system scan
- Do a disk defragmentation.
- Make sure your Windows OS has the most current updates by going to the control panel and selecting windows update.
- Reduce the number of processes running in the program tray at the bottom right of your system tray. Either click on them and select end or exit, or remove them from startup by editing your msconfig file. Call me for a how-to.
- Consider adding more RAM. 32 bit operating systems (OS) can usually only handle 2 gigs of RAM (3 gigs if video RAM is included). 64 bit systems can handle lots more although 4 gigs is generally enough for most folks. Ram is cheap right now, so load up.
- Or, just bring it to me. :)



System RAM is simple to install, but be careful that you don't crack your motherboard when installing it. Don't let static electricity zap it either!

## Cool Stuff From The Internet

Winter is on the way. With snow piling up outside and cold weather keeping us inside, wouldn't be nice to have hundreds of movies, documentaries, and History Channel series at your finger tips?

Well, now you can.

### NETFLIX!

For eight bucks a month I have unlimited access to tons of movies, documentaries, and network TV show series, all available instantly for streaming over the internet right into

my computer. Sound good?

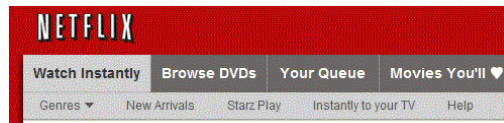
Here is what you need. . .

First, get a subscription to NETFLIX. There are lots of choices and prices available. Next, you need a fast Internet connection. The faster your connection the better the quality of the picture. Get the fastest one you can afford.

Watch it on your laptop or desktop, or better yet, get an HDMI cable and hook it up to your flatscreen and really have some fun!

If you have an older system without a video out port, no problem! Decent video cards are available these days for less than \$100.00, so as long as there is an expansion slot available in your system, we can even make an old system into a rockin' home theater component in no time flat.

I have some used Dell systems set up specifically for this. Call me for details, and get the popcorn popper going!



## Google Earth

Holy Smokes what a program and it's FREE!

Deb and I recently took an extended trip into the vast unknown of liberal-land (California). Talk about a whole different universe! But that is off-topic.

We travelled from the World Headquarters through Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Boise, Idaho, Portland, Oregon and then down the coast to Los Angeles,

California, over to the Grand Canyon, and finally, back to Friend, and we planned the entire trip with the help of Google Earth!

Sometime when you have a few minutes, download the Google Earth program and just mess around with it. It is simply amazing.

Using Street View, you can actually see where you are from ground level. Take an

entire trip and never leave your computer desk!

Farmers will love it too. What a great tool for planning. Most of the aerial photos are from US government files, so they are close to, or exactly the ones the FSA uses, without the boundaries of course.

Save your work on one computer and pull it up on another with mygoogle too. It's just a great tool.

***“Google Earth and Google Maps are invaluable aids to planning a trip to Lincoln or across the country!”***

## “THE CLOUD”...Oooooowwww

Ok, what's THE CLOUD?

Well, in simple terms it refers to using remote servers on the Internet as a platform to run programs, store files and interact with other users.

Yikes! Sounds complicated and not too secure. Well, yes and no.

The big boys have been using the cloud for a long time. It is becoming more mainstream all

the time. It really works well for the user who has multiple offices or locations to work out of and is sick of dragging external drives around, or for the TEAM that wants access to a file or set of files from multiple locations.

The big boys, Microsoft and Google primarily, have even developed office suites that run off “THE CLOUD”. This is cool because you don't have to have

a copy of Office say, on every computer you own anymore, just an Internet hookup and away you go. Pricing is all over the place, from free to several hundred a year (subscription).

I'll write more on this next month while I get a handle on it. The potential is tremendous but is it secure?

Stay tuned next month for more on “THE CLOUD”

***Psst! Want a nice web site for a reasonable price? Call me. I make websites to your specs not mine. It might take a while, but when we are done it is exactly the way you want it. For one price fixed in advance (within reason of course). Not only that, but I will build it so you can change it yourself if you wish. Just give me a call and lets do some business!***

## MCGOWEN COMPUTER SERVICE

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### Watch out on the Internet

- Watch out for free stuff
- Never open an email from somebody you don't know unless you expect it.
- US Government agencies do not contact you via email.
- If a window pops up telling you that your computer is infected with XX number of viruses and or spy-wares, and it doesn't come from your anti-virus software immediately **CLOSE YOUR BROWSER ! (ALT+F4) DO NOT CLICK ANY BUTTONS!!!**

## *Saving the world, one computer at a time.*

### SPECIAL INTERNET ONLY CONTENT

Google gets nose...y...

A few months ago, I decided to try Google Voice. I had a less than satisfying experience.

Google Voice is essentially a free phone accumulator. All your phone numbers are funneled to a single phone number assigned by Google to your account. Based upon your configuration you can have the Google phone collect any and all incoming calls (cell, home, business) and port them to whatever number you desire. In addition, it also offers to send your voice mail to your cell phone via text messages.

The process was confusing and it didn't seem to work too well for me. Our home phone, which Deb used for nursing stuff, was initially being intercepted by Google Voice, and the messages were going there instead of to her answering machine. Not a good deal. Then the voice to text thing turned out to be "not ready for prime time" IMHO. (In My Humble Opinon). When I decided I'd had enough, I navigated to the Google account settings page, only to find out that I cannot delete that number without deleting my entire Google account. As I read more about the thing, I discovered just how intrusive Google had gotten into my life. It turns out that even my Android (Google's phone operating system) is tracking me. It is really kind of scary to think that somebody somewhere in bit land is tracking your every move, without your specific permission. I guess they have my permission via the permissions I allowed on my phone when I set up my software, but it still gives me the willies when I think about it.

Google is sort of like a drug I think and we all need to be aware of it. While I love Google Maps and Google Earth, and the utility they offer, it comes at a price. If you want to live "off the grid", then I strongly advise you to dump your Google stuff right now, get rid of your Android phone, and then head for China, as I think they are one of the few places that Google is having any trouble penetrating. Or, sit back, enjoy the perks Google offers, smile and wave when the satellite flies by.

## Refurbished vs. Off Lease and Warranty Issues in General

Many of you have purchased refurbished computers from me over the years, and I can't think of but one or two that actually gave us any trouble at all. I still like the refurb route because of the money it saves you, but in the past year or two, more companies have been hawking "off-lease" systems as well as factory refurbished systems. There is a HUGE difference.

A factory refurbished system is one that has been refurbished to factory new standards by the factory or by their designated fixer upper, while an "Off lease" system is likely jammed in a box and sent to you as is.

I bought a couple of "off-lease" systems because the price was too good to pass up. I should

have passed them up. TigerDirect, the company I bought them from, didn't even take time to wipe the dust off the keyboards. I don't buy "off lease" stuff any more.

### Warranty Issues

Recently I have had a spat of warranty issues that I have had a hard time getting resolved. It seems like a lot of computer manufacturers have gone overseas for their tech support. Frankly, most of the folks that I have talked to are simply reading from a screen and not thinking through the problem. Here are some tips to remember when dealing with tech support.

1. Write down the date time and with whom you speak. Get names and or badge

numbers.

2. Be prepared to be patient. One of their tactics must be to put you on hold for a very long time to see if you will just give up. Don't hang up. Hang in there!
3. If you are not satisfied with the answer you are getting DEMAND to talk to a supervisor, and be prepared to continue to escalate the problem until you are happy.
4. Be reasonable in your expectations, but be firm with your resolve. If it is under warranty and it's their fault then they should fix it.
5. Need help with it? Call me, I'll wear them down!