East SIG Report – April 2019

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

Q: In Windows 7 File Explorer, if I right click on Computer and left click on Properties nothing happens.
A: When you click on Computer it will show you a list of drives. You then right click on the drive and select Properties for information on that drive.

Q: Since updating to Win 10 version 1809, when I right click to bring up the Context menu and select New Folder, Windows thinks for a moment and then the menu disappears. The same thing happens when I try again a second time. When I repeat this a third time the Context menu opens and I'm able to create the new folder.
A: I've not heard of this activity before. These intermittent faults are very hard to track down so I'd suggest you consult Google for help.

Q: I bought a new mouse after my old one broke and even when I'm not using the mouse the cursor wanders about the screen. Does that mean the mouse is faulty?
A: You could try a different mouse mat but it's highly likely that the mouse is faulty.

Q: In Outlook does the Address Book reside in the .psd file?
A: We need to be clear what you call the Address Book. The .pst file is a huge database part of which contains the email Address Book. However the .psd file also contains part of the recently used email addresses. For example if you start typing a name in the Send panel the name will autofill. That name may or may not be in the Address Book. Some people don't even know they have an Address Book because they automatically look at the recently used ones and Outlook will autofill the email address. The file that holds the recent email addresses is a separate file that needs to be copied over when updating to a new computer. Open the Address Book and select Export to Excel csv and you can import from that.
Audience member: The file that holds your most recent emails can be viewed and edited by downloading a file called *nk2edit.exe*. This program lets you view the complete list of email addresses or contact details you've sent emails to. Because Outlook does not provide any ability to edit the 'AutoComplete' list, NK2Edit is a useful program to have.
George: The file storing recent email addresses is usually called outlook.nk2, although it can have other names but with a .nk2 extension. If you're transferring emails to a new computer that's the file you need to copy over in addition to the .pst file.

Q: I've been on the ABC site a couple of times and wanted to download some audio files. Each time when I click on the recommended location I get an error message that the file cannot be found. Am I missing some software that I need to download the audio?
A: It's most likely a proprietary file format or DRM that is preventing you from downloading the audio file.
Audience member: If you right click on the file and select Save As that sometimes works.

Q: Do you know of any free programs that will edit pdf files?
A: I'm not aware of any free programs.
Audience member: If you can find a copy of Acrobat Reader, I think version 10, that version was the last version before it became a subscription service and you will find that will work.
Audience member: There are a number of free programs that will convert a pdf file to Word docx format. You can then edit the docx file in Word then save it back to a pdf.
George: I've tried a couple of those programs and some do a very good job.

Q: I understand MicroSoft have recently released a version of the Edge browser built on the Chromium base. I'd be interested to know how it compares to existing browsers and will it work with earlier versions of Windows?

A: This is a pre-release version of the new Edge browser and only came out a month ago. As I don't have any pressing need I haven't tried it yet, but I will look at it shortly.

Dave Botherway: The pre-release version has a lighter footprint than Edge with less "bells and whistles".

(The Edge browser referred to above is an entirely new build based on the same Chromium code base as used by Google Chrome. A review of the new Edge browser can be viewed on the YouTube link shown here https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H61jOPS0IJ8)

Following Q&A **Paul Woolard** looked at "Smart Ways to Use Your Mouse". Below is a direct copy of Paul's presentation with a few additions and graphics from Windows 10 V1809 inserted by this writer.

Smart Ways to Use your Mouse

One of the first things to do when attempting to improve your skill with the mouse is to go to *Settings → Devices → Mouse* and ensure that the default settings are appropriate for your purposes.

Don't overlook the *Related settings* option for setting Buttons, Pointers, Pointer Options, Wheel and Hardware as shown in the graphic below.
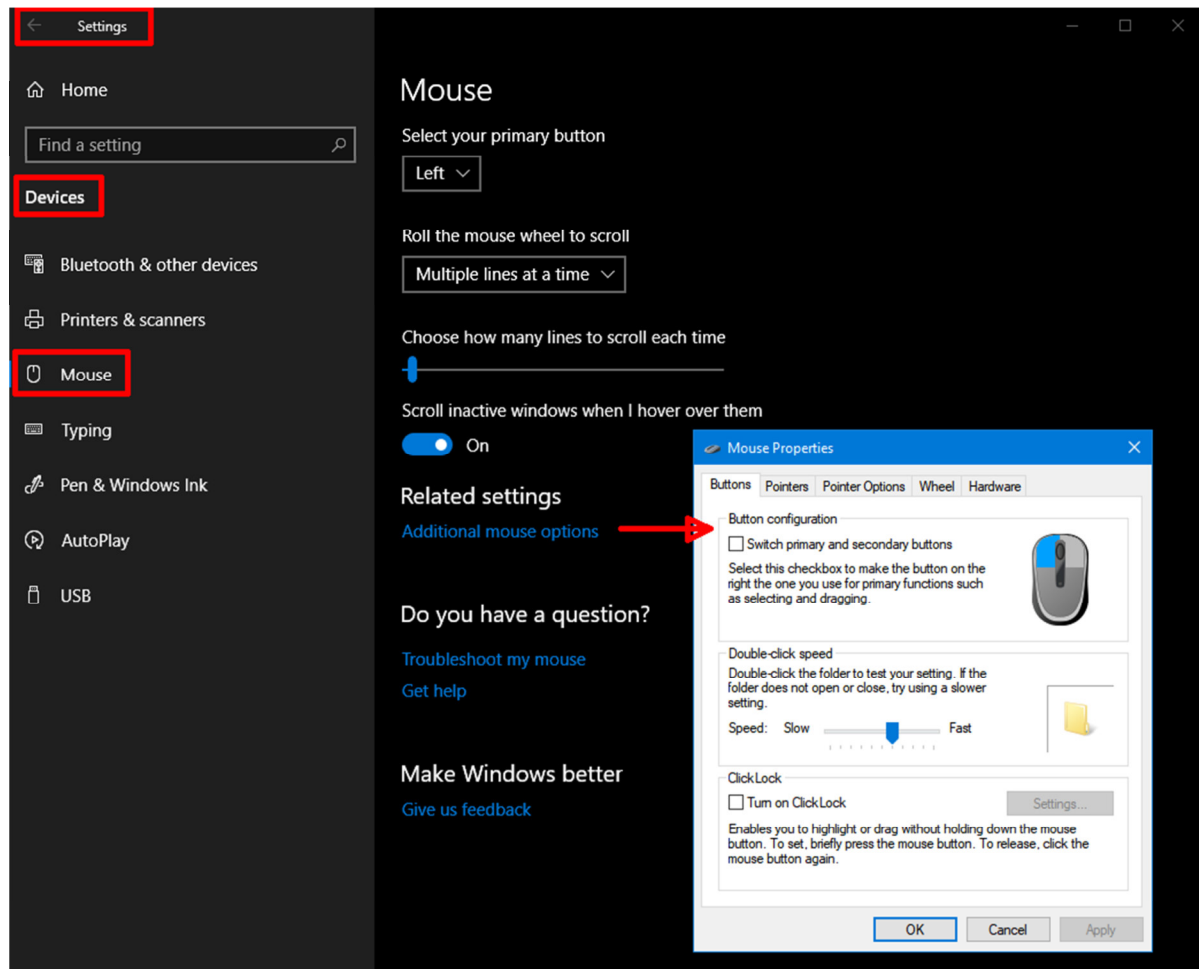
Once you have the defaults set appropriately you can look at further ways to improve your productivity such as the following. Please be aware that all tips or tricks may not work in all circumstances. For example some may work in browsers but not in documents and some may not work in all browsers.

Left Mouse Button Tricks

Selecting multiple items
You can use the [SHIFT] key to select multiple items in a folder, for text on a website or in a document.

- Click the start point, use the scroll bar to scroll down to the end and hold the [SHIFT] key, while you click at the end point. With the text highlighted, it can be copied or edited.

- To select text, left-click first character, then hold [SHIFT] key and select last character.

Selecting random items
Select random items by holding down the [CTRL] key as you select the items.

- To select pieces of text, hold [CTRL] key as you make your selection using the left mouse button.

Vertical selection
As per the previous trick, this will not work everywhere, but does work inside Word. Simply press the [ALT] key and select text using the left mouse button.

- Vertically select text by pressing [ALT] key while selecting text with left-mouse button.

Drag and Drop items
We all know that we can use the mouse to drag and drop items, even multiple ones

- Using Drag & Drop to copy items
  [CTRL] + left mouse button to drag&drop item/s = copy item/s
  (C as in CTRL, C as in Copy)

- Using Drag & Drop to move items
  [SHIFT] + left mouse button to drag&drop item/s = move item/s
  (SHIFT as in Move)

Double-clicking on the Title Bar
- Double-click title bar of any window to maximize it.
- Double-click top left corner in title bar of any window to close it.

Right Mouse Button Tricks

If you ever forget which key to hold to copy or move, try to drag&drop items with the right mouse button instead. When you release the mouse button it will bring up a context menu that asks you what you want to do, i.e. copy here, move here, or create a shortcut. Refer graphic opposite.
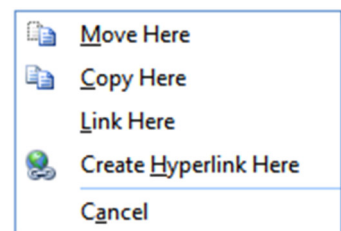
Everyone knows that the right-mouse button is used to open context menus for files and folders. Holding the [SHIFT] key as you do so will show hidden options if they exist.

- To open extended right-click context menu, hold [SHIFT] key as you right-click. (This operation only worked intermittently on my computer)

Scroll Wheel or Middle Mouse Button Tricks
Browser Tricks with the Middle Mouse Button
The middle mouse button can be used to open links in a new tab in your browser. So instead of left- or right-clicking a link, try to middle-click it.

- Open links in new tab by clicking them with middle mouse button.

The second middle mouse button trick is also done in your browser. Open a new tab. And now to close it, simply click it with the middle mouse button.

- Close open tabs by clicking them using the middle mouse button.

Scroll wheel with Windows applications
Now here is a trick for the scroll wheel. Did you know that in many Windows applications, including your browser, you can use this awesome button, to zoom in and out? This even works in Windows Explorer, i.e. folders? Open a folder and hold the [CTRL] button while scrolling. Inside folders, it actually scrolls through the various view options, but at some point it also zooms in, until you have giant icons. More importantly, however, this trick can help you read better, when the font on a website or in a document is too small.

- Hold [CTRL] button and scroll up to zoom in (enlarge text size) or scroll down to zoom out (reduce text size).
- Hold the [SHIFT] button and scroll to see the various view options available.

For more information Google 'Mouse tricks' or 'mouse tips', or go to one of these webpages:-

https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-handy-mouse-tricks-youve-probably-never-heard-of-windows/

http://www.ba-bamail.com/content.aspx?emailid=23553

https://www.computerhope.com/tips/tip32.htm

George Skarbek followed Paul with a presentation on "RAM Drives". A RAM drive stores data on a portion of your computers RAM and appears to the operating system as an amazingly fast hard drive. A RAM drive is faster than an SSD drive and will save files almost instantly.

George uses a RAM drive to store Temp files and cached files from IE, Firefox and Chrome browsers. Because RAM is volatile memory, all data in your RAM, and hence the RAM drive is erased when your computer power is turned off, making it perfect for storing unimportant files like those mentioned above.

George outlined the following benefits of a RAM drive for storing temp files:
- Reduces the amount of data written, thus extending the life of an SSD.
- Saves space
- Saves wear on drive C
- Reduces noise of a mechanical HDD.
- There is no contention on the read/write heads when temp files are created. E.g. such as when opening Word.
- Provides very much faster file access.
- No cleaning up required of temp files as all contents are lost on a reboot.
- Reduces fragmentation on drive C.
- Saves time and disk space when doing an image backup as junk files are not backed up.

Other uses of a RAM drive are:
- Storing cached files for IE, Firefox and Chrome browsers.
- For testing software. No cleaning up afterwards.
- When sharing folders with other users, using a RAM drive is more secure. If a hacker gets in, drive C will not be accessible.
- Use it for timing HD & USB performance

There are many free RAM drive programs for both 32 and 64 bit operating systems. The free versions are generally limited to a maximum RAM drive of 4 GB.

Programs such as *SoftPerfect RAM Disk* make creating a RAM drive relatively easy. *SoftPerfect RAM Disk* is free, unrestricted and very fast. It will create a temp folder, set the environment and a drive letter, say drive Z. Refer www.softperfect.com/products/ramdisk

Once the RAM drive has been created you need to tell Windows where to store the temp files. *SoftPerfect RAM Disk* will set the environmental variables for you. However if you need to check or do this manually, go to *Control Panel* → *System* → *Advanced System Settings* then alter variables as shown in George's graphic below.
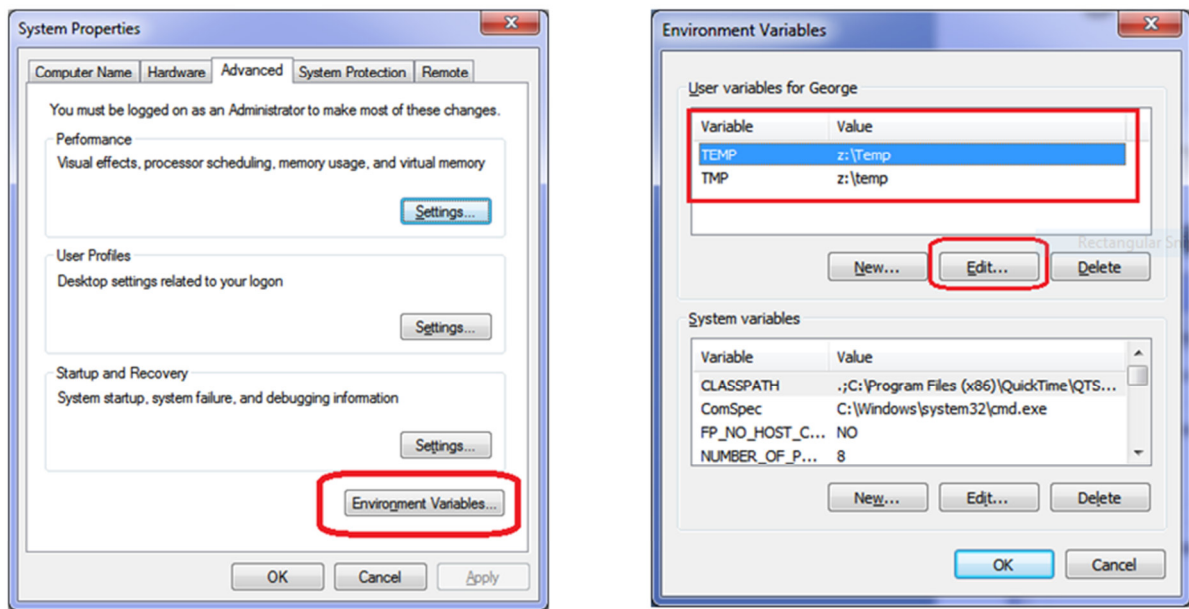
The final step is to ensure your browser stores its cache files in the RAM drive:

- **For Internet Explorer:** click on Tools → Internet Options → Browsing History → Settings → (On the Website Data Settings window) select Move folder
- **For MS Edge:** To defeat Windows security a lot of in-depth knowledge is required so for Edge it may not be worth the effort.
- **For Firefox:**
  - type *about:config* into the Firefox navigation bar and hit enter.
  - Next find the ***browser.cache.disk.parent_directory***.
  - If it doesn't exist right click anywhere and select New, String.
  - Enter ***browser.cache.disk.parent_directory*** in the first popup box and then the location in the 2nd popup box e.g. Z:\temp.
  - If the entry already existed simply right click and modify it.
- **For Chrome:** Google Chrome requires the use of Windows File Explorer followed by the user creating a directory symbolic link from a DOS box with admin rights. George's instructions are shown below:
  - cd "C:\Users\George\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Profile 1\Cache"
  - Dir   (This command is to confirm the folder)
  - del *.*   (Delete everything)
  - cd..   (Go up one level)
  - rd cache   (Remove the folder)
  - *All of the above can be done using Windows Explorer. The next step can only be done from the admin DOS box.*
  - mklink /d "C:\Users\George\AppData\Local\Google\Chrome\User Data\Profile 1\Cache" z:\Temp

For users who never re-boot their computers or install massive programs there is potential for the RAM drive to fill. This problem can be fixed by temporarily using the hard drive for temp files or re-booting.

In conclusion George issued the following warnings.
- Do **NOT** put the Swap file onto the RAM drive if you use a 64 bit operating system.
- With a 32 bit operating system and 8+ GB of RAM the swap file can be placed on the RAM drive.
- Do **NOT** set Readyboost to the RAM drive as this will not be active until Windows starts, defeating is purpose.

(I wish to thank George for allowing the use of his presentation for compiling this section of the report.)

After a break, **Dave Botherway** gave a presentation outlining his long journey from Optus cable internet to NBN HFC with Optus. Over the past year or more Dave's path to NBN internet is one we at EAST have followed with interest through a number of previous presentations. However one week ago the saga was complete with a "successful" working connection. Although download speed and costs are favourable, Dave is still holding his breath as he believes it's still early days.

Dave outlined his internet path from dial-up in 1996 to Optus cable in 2003. Problems along the way to NBN included where to connect the cable to the house (lucky Dave was home when the unannounced cableman arrived), delays when HFC was put on hold due to technical issues, to the final negotiation on speed and price. Many phone calls and requests to Optus's Retention Department were necessary to achieve offers advertised for new users. It did no harm to announce "I'm an existing loyal customer" and delaying his acceptance until a better offer could be achieved.

Dave recommends getting the offers in writing before signing, something he would have liked to have done better and don't be afraid to ask to speak to the Retention Department (usually an operator in Australia). Dave is now eagerly awaiting the first invoice before he is confident he can put the phone down.

Neil Muller