

May 2015

Microsoft
REGISTERED
Refurbisher

The Next General Meeting of CCCGC will be **May 5, 2015**



Charlotte Bytes

Editor
A Yvette Pilch

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Official Publication of the Charlotte County Computer Group Corp.
PROMOTING COMPUTER LITERACY AND EDUCATION IN CHARLOTTE COUNTY

VOL. XXVII
No. V

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Since my last news letter, I have had several members bring their computers in with crashed hard drives and no backups. So I thought this might be a good time to harp a bit on creating Image Backups.

I'm not referring to data backup such as music, pictures documents, etc. I am talking about a complete image of everything that is currently on your hard drive. This includes the operating system, all programs, all data, all Microsoft updates, (everything that is lost when your hard drive fails.)

Even when you have all the original installation disks, which few people have, or at least can't find them, it only restores the computer to the original factory install.

A disk image is the only way to go in my opinion, and it is easy and inexpensive. The only thing you have to buy is an external hard drive which are very reasonable.

The programs to do the image backup are free as are the classes we teach on how to use them. For a few bucks and a couple of hours of your time you could save yourself hours of work and frustration and some big dollars.

So do your self a favor and invest in an external hard drive and take the classes.

WHEN your hard drive fails, and it will if you keep your computer long enough, you will be glad you have that all important image.

Dick Evans presentation for the May 7th meeting will be on Google Earth.

Ron

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Computer Drawing

ART GUIDI was all smiles to win this laptop. We didn't even need to use the cart. Off he went, laptop in hand.

50/50 Winner

JEANNETTE BRUNELLE was the happy winner as you can see by the expression on her face. Jeannette will be able to find something to buy with the cash. Thanks to all those members that purchased tickets.



Door Prize Winners



Left To Right

Harold Howard

Bill Marr

Linda Tugman

Bill Bain

Dick Braun

WELCOME

New Members

Marilyn Fite	Arthur Guidi	Ross McLaughlin
Ray Orr	Marti Orr	Naomi Paquette
Ruth Sherman	Emelcia Toney-Nelson	John Witkowski
Betty Hopkins	Marvin Covey	Dawana Cote
Nannette Simmons	Barrie Stebbing	

The Executive Board and Members of CCCGC welcome each of you to the group. We're Here To Help. Membership Has Its Privileges.

If you have any questions, concerns or need computer help, please contact us at the office. We will endeavor to help you any way we can.

Program High-Lights

Speech Recognition started with Windows 7 OS and is included with 8 and 8.1.

The speech recognition program is free but Microsoft didn't provide an icon to let you know it is available.

There is a speech tutorial that leads you through the process of setting up the program for your voice. It doesn't take long and when you respond, you must speak clearly and be sure there isn't any background noise. Get a decent microphone to use with the program.

Go to the Control Panel then to Speech Recognition and open it up. Following the instructions will begin with Start to set the program up. You should not rush this program. The tutorial will be setting up the program to recognize your voice. Speak clearly but don't exaggerate your words and place yourself in a quiet room. You can dictate into the microphone and the words will appear on the screen.

Tell it to start a new paragraph and in most cases, it will fix spelling errors. You can also give the program commands and it will follow them.

There are many options to this program, too many to go over at this time. If there is enough interest, the computer group would consider holding classes on Speech Recognition.

Set some time aside and check this program out.

L ydia





For more information go to www.cccgc.info
View/download Bytes
Please be sure to register online for classes



Classes & Events Calendar

May 2015		CCCGC Events Calendar				
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer	5 <u>General Meeting</u> 7:15 PM Classes 5:00 PM 6:00 PM	6 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	7 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	8	9
10 	11 <u>Tablet Class</u> 2 to 4 PM Yvette Pilch	12 <u>iPad</u> 1 to 3 PM Scott Baty	13	14 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans	15	16
17	18 <u>Libre Office</u> 2 to 4 PM John Palmer	19 <u>Windows 8.1</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	20 <u>Maintenance</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	21 <u>No Class</u>	22	23
24	25 	26 <u>iPad</u> 1 to 3 PM Scott Baty	27 <u>Reflect Backup</u> 2 to 4 PM Ron Wallis	28 <u>Open Forum</u> 2 to 4 PM Dick Evans <u>Board Meeting</u> 6:30 PM	29	30
31		NOTICE All Non Meeting Night Classes will be held in Our CCCGC Office.			Notes: OFFICE HOURS: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM MONDAY -FRIDAY Please sign up for classes ONLINE: http://www.cccgc.info	

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Yes, That Extra Storage is Overpriced, But You Should Pay For it Anyway



the How-To Geek
Computer Help from your Friendly How-To Geek

It's a lesson many of us have learned the hard way. Yes, \$100 is overpriced for a storage upgrade, but it's still worth it. The most inexpensive models of smartphones, tablets, and laptops often have too little storage.

Manufacturers want to make their products appear as inexpensive as possible, hence these low-storage models to get customers in the door. Better to buy more storage now than deal with the frustration and micromanagement over the life of your device.

Almost Every Manufacturer Does This

Practically every company does this to some degree. Thanks to the shift to faster-and-smaller solid-state drives, this is even a concern on laptops.

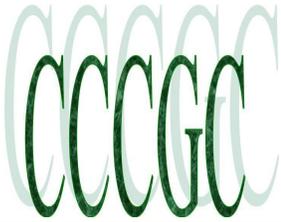
Apple's 16 GB iPhones and iPads are big offenders here. These devices actually have only about 12 GB to play with, and large apps — especially large games — could be 1 GB or more each. Add in downloaded content, music, high-resolution photos, videos, and more — that space can fill up fast. Apple's iOS 8 update required 5 GB of free storage space, which means you could only play with 8 GB of that space on your own or you'd have to update via iTunes or micromanage that storage space. Apple's 8 GB iPhone 5c is even more constrained

Microsoft offers a 64 GB Surface Pro, and that only offers 37 GB of available space. That may sound like quite a bit but between all your personal data files, applications, cache files, and more, it's not very much. The space means you may not be able to use some software. There are PC games over 37 GB in size, after all!

The same goes for other devices. Laptops with 16 GB of eMMC storage may be tempting because of how inexpensive they are, but that limited storage means you just can't install some applications at all — you're constantly being squeezed for space. Inexpensive Android phones with just a few gigabytes of storage may make fine feature-phone replacements, but you'll quickly run up against the limitations if you want to use anything more.

The same goes for other devices where the more inexpensive model has a paltry amount of storage — take Nintendo's 8 GB Wii U, for example. The 32 GB Wii U Deluxe is a better idea. Even if you don't download any digital games at all, the extra space will give you room to grow for downloading game patches and storing save games.

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The Charlotte County Computer Group Corp.

Is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization as classified by the Internal Revenue Service.

Donations, gifts, bequests, legacies, devices and transfers are deductible under federal laws.

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How To Really Speed Up Your Computer – Common Myths & What To Do Instead



By Joe Keeley on 21st October, 2014

You might have noticed that your computer has never been as fast as it was when you first got it. But do you know why our devices slow down over time? Many of us have a number of misconceptions about sluggish PCs, so let's crack these open and find out how to actually speed things up.

There are myths about slow computers that still get rehashed to this day: keeping too many files slows your machine down; you need to buy as much RAM as possible; viruses are designed to make everything run sluggish. In actuality, these statements aren't true. Although they do have nuggets of truth contained within, it's time to separate the wheat from the chaff.

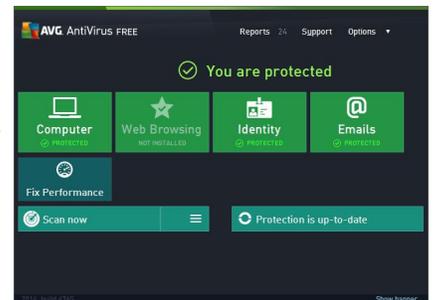
Common Myths

Let's run through some common misconceptions about slow computers. First, however, it's worth pointing out that you shouldn't feel foolish if you've believed or acted upon them. They're "common" for a reason and in the past I've been under the impression that some of these were correct too.

Also bear in mind that the majority of these misconceptions won't have actually harmed anything, although they might have caused you to misuse your time or money. But don't worry about that now: let's dissect them and see what we can learn.

Misconception 1: Malware is the reason for a slow computer

While it's certainly true that being infected with viruses and spyware can slow things down, more often than not you won't notice much of a difference if your system has been infiltrated. These programs are designed so that you won't notice them. The developers don't want you to realise there's something untoward going on, else you might attempt to remove it. Malware is mostly designed to steal your information – for as long as possible.



If you do suspect foul play, the best thing to do is to check your machine's health. In fact, this is something you should be doing regularly; daily is best. We ran a comparison of some free anti-virus tools, checking the performance and interface of products such as AVG and Microsoft Security Essentials. More recently, we also reviewed Avast separately. Be aware, that you should only ever use one anti-virus program; not only do multiple anti-virus programs not make your computer safer, they can also cause software conflicts.

Misconception 2: Clearing personal data from your hard drive will boost performance

Most often, clearing personal data from your hard drive won't speed up your computer. This could mean your photos, videos or music – no matter how huge these files might be, it doesn't matter one bit. Unless...

There is one caveat to this. If your drive is dangerously low on space (like only a couple of GB being free), then your computer will drastically slow down. This is because most programs need room to dynamically grow and decrease in size, usually through the creation of temporary files. If there's no room on the drive to store these, your system will crawl.

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How to Wirelessly Transfer Photos from Your Camera to Your Computer



the How-To Geek
Computer Help from your Friendly How-To Geek



If you're a prolific shutterbug you know what a hassle it is to constantly pull the SD card from your camera, plug it into your computer, and transfer the files to get to the snapshots you just took. Read on as we show you how to add Wi-Fi based photo transfer to your digital camera.

Why Do I Want To Do This?

This is one of those things that, if you're the target audience, you're already nodding your head and saying "Yes, perfect, no more swapping the SD card between the camera and the computer!" but perhaps you're right on the edge of the target audience and not aware how downright convenient a wireless SD card is.

Introduced several years ago, Wi-Fi enabled SD cards take advantage of the constant reduction and refinement of electronic components to pack in both photo storage and a tiny Wi-Fi radio into the form factor of an SD memory card. Aside from the label they look absolutely identical to their non-networked counterparts.

By replacing your standard SD card with a Wi-Fi enabled card you gain a host of functionality like the ability to automatically transfer your photos as they are taken to your computer without removing the SD card from the camera, automatically (or selectively) uploading them to photo sharing and social media sites, and sending them to nearby mobile devices like your iPad for review.

The primary function and the one that will attract the majority of people, however, is definitely the first one we mentioned: wireless photo transfer to your computer. If you're constantly taking photos and transferring them to your computer you'll love the automatic transfer feature—between our work here at HTG and our frequent sharing of family photos on Facebook and the like we easily pop the SD card out of our DSLR a half dozen or more times a day to transfer files and absolutely love how Wi-Fi cards have spared us this routine.

What's the downside to Wi-Fi enabled SD cards? First, the sticker shock. A Wi-Fi SD card will typically run you 3-4 times the price of a similar size premium non-Wi-Fi SD card. Second, you will need to recharge your camera battery more frequently as the Wi-Fi SD card steals power from the battery to run the Wi-Fi radio and associated hardware.

If you're doing heavy shooting and/or transferring large RAW files you'll definitely want to either power tether your camera (if you're working in a home studio setting) or keep a spare battery on hand as continual file transfer and large file transfer are both taxing on battery life.

That said, every generation of Wi-Fi enabled cards has improved upon power management and newer models do an excellent job sipping the battery. Expect to charge your battery more often, but the overall impact on battery life is negligible in the face of the convenience of the speedy wireless transfer.

What Do I Need?



Before all else, you need to check if you even need a Wi-Fi SD card. Although it's still a fairly uncommon feature a number of newer digital cameras have built-in Wi-Fi. If you have a newer camera definitely double check to ensure that's not a feature you've overlooked!

Second, you need to determine if your camera will support a Wi-Fi SD card. As a general rule if your camera supports SDHC memory cards it will support a Wi-Fi SD card without a problem. For the purposes of this tutorial we're using an Eye-Fi brand card; you can use the Eye-Fi camera check tool to see if your camera is compatible. The tool

is quite detailed and not only tells you whether or not a camera is compatible in a broad sense but lists off any issues you might have with a particular model because of hardware or firmware limitations.

Continued on next page



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How to Wirelessly Transfer Photos from Your Camera to Your Computer Continued

Even if you are considering a different brand of Wi-Fi SD card you can still typically get away with using the Eye-Fi camera check tool because the same general parameters apply across brands.

Note: There are last-gen Wi-Fi SD cards that from years back that will work in non SDHC compliant cameras but they are no longer in production and you'll have to find them used or as old stock on places like eBay.

Finally, after checking out your camera's feature list and that it supports SDHC cards, it's time to pick out a Wi-Fi card. As we noted above we're using an Eye-Fi card but there are other popular models based on licensed Eye-Fi technology from Toshiba and Transcend; look for Toshiba FlashAir and Transcend Wi-Fi branded cards. Although the cards from other manufacturer's are well rated, Eye-Fi was the first game in town and to this day still has the most mature hardware and software support.

Aside from selecting your card's storage capacity also keep in mind that other SD card purchasing factors come into play as well such as speed rating. For more information on SD cards beyond the scope of this Wi-Fi SD card article, check out How to Buy an SD Card: Speed Classes, Sizes, and Capacities Explained.

Setting Up Your Wi-Fi SD Card

There are two phases to the setup process. The initialization process that gets your Wi-Fi SD card on your local Wi-Fi network coupled with a simple field test to ensure it is operational and then a more detailed configuration of the SD card's settings.

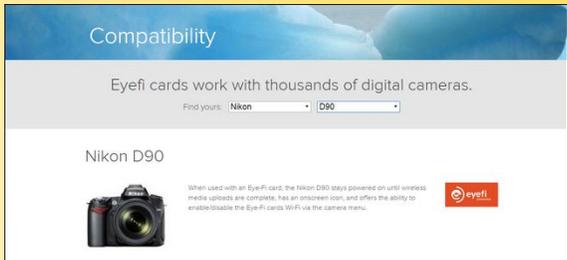
Getting the Wi-Fi Card Online

Although you can configure your Eye-Fi to ship images to an iOS or Android device, the initial configuration requires a Windows or Mac computer. Load the SD card in your card reader and navigate to the root directly. Everything you need to get started is in the "START HERE" folder.

Name	Date modified	Type	Size
.fseventsd	9/21/2011 10:56 PM	File folder	
Autorun	12/22/2008 10:40 ...	File folder	
START HERE	10/14/2007 11:07 ...	File folder	
.metadata_never_index	9/21/2011 10:56 PM	METADATA_NEVE...	0 KB
autorun.inf	10/25/2007 2:06 AM	Setup Information	1 KB

Select the subdirectory based on your operating system and run the installation file. After searching for and downloading software updates, you'll be prompted to run the full installation for the Eye-Fi Center software.

During the installation you'll be prompted to authorize the Eye-Fi software to pass through your computer's firewall and to set up and Eye-Fi account. Even if you don't intend to use the Eye-Fi sharing tools you still need to create an account to complete the installation. After creating your account sit back and wait for your Eye-Fi card, if necessary, to receive a firmware update.





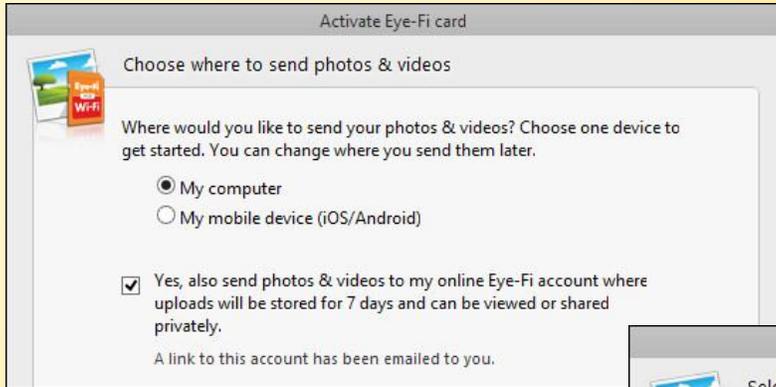
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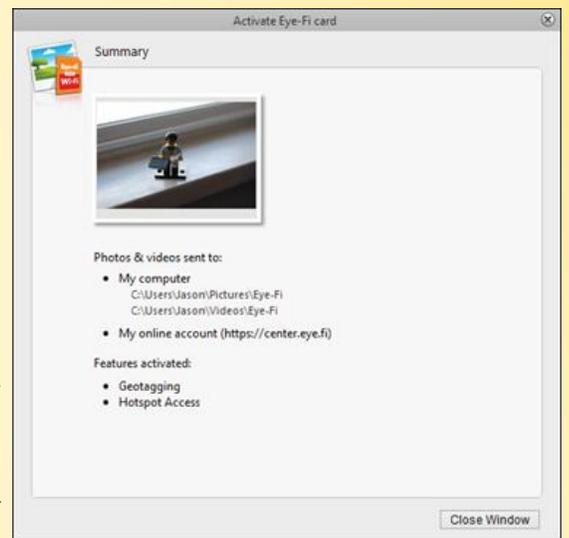
The first important decision you'll make during the setup process is whether or not you want the files to be transferred to your computer or mobile device. Our goal is to get the files to our computer for easy sorting, processing, and archiving; select "My computer".



In the next step, select the SSID of your wireless network and enter the password. The receiving computer and the Eye-Fi card need to be on the same network. It doesn't matter, however, if your computer is connected to your router via Ethernet though, it's still considered part of the same network as the Wi-Fi node attached to it.



The Eye-Fi will prompt you to select a social network you wish to share your images with or you can select them later. We recommend setting this feature up later, if you even want to use it, as there are a host of little tweaks and options you may wish to adjust before enabling it. When you finish the initial configuration process you'll be prompted to eject the SD card, insert it in your camera, and take a photo.

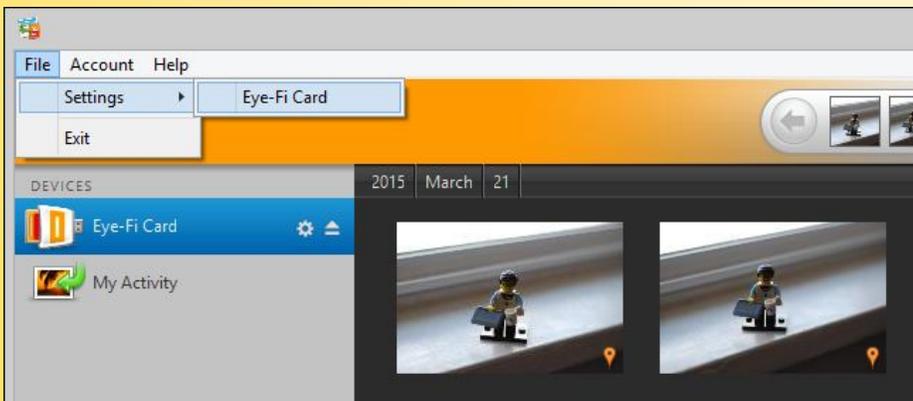


This photo is your test shot that should be, assuming the configuration went smoothly, be automatically transferred to your computer. In the screenshot above you can see that our snapshot of a little LEGO office worker placed on our office windowsill transferred without a hitch.

The most common cause of transfer errors is aggressive power management on behalf of the camera. Many cameras will immediately begin conserving power within seconds of taking a photo; this doesn't give the SD card enough sustained power to finish transferring the files over Wi-Fi. You can alleviate this issue with most cameras by adjusting the timeout on the autometring or other features. Check out the Eye-Fi power settings management tutorial for your camera if you run into this problem.

Configuring the Eye-Fi Card

Once you've completed the simple test to ensure your card can communication with your home network, pop it back in your computer and open up the Eye-Fi Center software. You can take a moment to look around the software and familiarize yourself with the layout.





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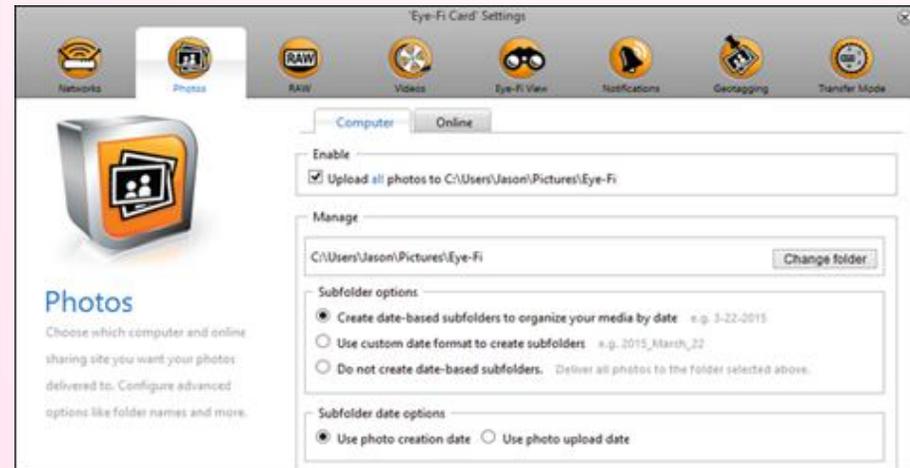
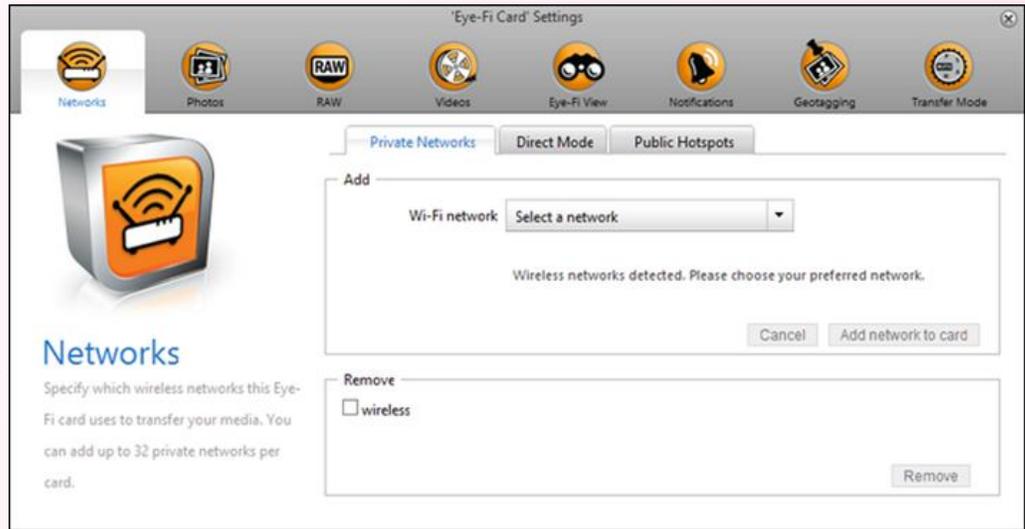
Before you continue using the Eye-Fi card, however, you'll want to take a close look at the settings. Do so by navigating to **File -> Settings -> Eye-Fi Card**.

Fi Card.

There is a lot going on in the configuration menu here that you should really take the time to look over. Let's take a look at each section and the settings found therein. Although the primary focus of this tutorial is simply transferring files between your camera and computer, the Eye-Fi is mature product that offers a range of tools that are worth taking a peek at. Further, there are options you may wish to toggle for privacy purposes (like the geotagging feature) so we'll give a quick overview of all the available configuration options.

Under the **"Networks"** tab you'll find everything related to connecting the Eye-Fi to the outside world. You can add and remove Wi-Fi networks under the **"Private Networks"** tab, enable direct ad-hoc networks for connections between devices on the camera (if your Eye-Fi model supports this feature), and configure your Eye-Fi card to use public hotspots so it will upload photos using public Wi-Fi connections while you're out and about.

Under the **"Photos"** tab you



can change both the local and online destinations for your photos. Under the **"Computer"** sub-tab you can switch where the files are saved on your local computer as well as how they are sorted and stored. Under the **"Online"** tab you can enable and configure online sharing through services like Flickr, Facebook, and the like.

The **"RAW"** tab is effectively identical to the **"Photos"** tab but is concerned with how RAW camera files are transferred and stored. If you work with RAW it's really nice that you can decide how to deal with your JPEG images separately from your

RAW images. If, for example, you were shooting an event where you wanted both the RAW images to work with at a later date but you wanted to immediately upload the photos you were taking to the event's Facebook page or the like you could do so using this dual workflow setup (send the RAW to your computer, send the JPEGs to the social media platform).

"Videos", if your camera can record video, allows for the same kind of configuration outlined above but for videos instead of images.



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Ninite is a safe place to get Windows software

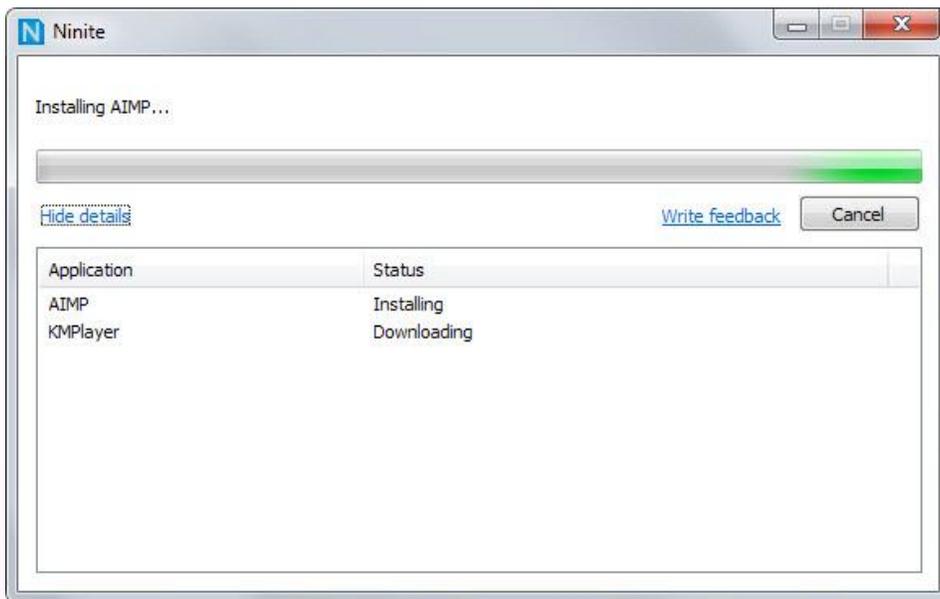
Whenever you download software for Windows on the Internet there is a chance that you get more than you hoped for.

I'm talking about adware that developers but also download portals add to programs to earn revenue.

While you could distinguish between adware added by software developers and adware added by download portals, the end result is the same as users who install these programs on their systems will receive third-party offers unrelated to the program they are trying to install.

That in itself would not be problematic but the way these offers are presented often is. Most of the time, these offers are selected by default which means that any user clicking next next during installation may end up with toolbars, replaced search providers, a new homepage or software running in the background.

Safe havens are available. Some download portals, Softpedia for instance, don't use download wrappers. That does not mean that you should trust software blindly downloaded from those portals as applications may still ship with adware.



Ninite is a safe solution, at least for the more than 100 programs that you can download from the site. All programs offered on the site are free of adware.

When you first visit the website, a list of all supported programs is displayed to you. Select the programs that you want to install on your computer and click get installer to download it to your system. The installer itself is a stub which means that the programs that you have selected are downloaded by it once you run it on a PC.

The installation itself happens silently in the background. Considering that you can install multiple programs this way in one go, you may also save some time using Ninite because of this. Programs are installed to their default locations and if the target system is 64-bit, 64-bit versions are installed if available.

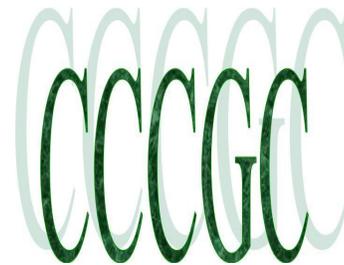
The two main advantages of Ninite are that the company guarantees adware free installation of software and that you can install multiple programs without user interaction on the system.

As far as program support is concerned, you find lots of popular programs supported by Ninite. From Chrome and Firefox over Steam and KeePass 2 to Sumatra PDF, 7-Zip and Dropbox.

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Ninite is a safe place to get Windows software

The software is sorted in categories and you will notice that alternatives are provided. While the selection is quite good, you may notice that popular programs are not listed. Bandizip, an excellent archiver, SMPlayer, one of my favorite media players, or the Opera web browser are not offered currently.

1. Click all the apps you want

You can learn more about a program by hovering over it.

Web Browsers	Messaging
<input type="checkbox"/> Chrome	<input type="checkbox"/> Skype
<input type="checkbox"/> Opera Chromium	<input type="checkbox"/> Pidgin
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Firefox	<input type="checkbox"/> Thunderbird
	<input type="checkbox"/> Trillian
Security	<input type="checkbox"/> AIM
<input type="checkbox"/> Essentials	<input type="checkbox"/> Yahoo!
<input type="checkbox"/> Avast	
<input type="checkbox"/> AVG	Online Storage
<input type="checkbox"/> Malwarebytes	<input type="checkbox"/> Dropbox
<input type="checkbox"/> Ad-Aware	<input type="checkbox"/> Google Drive
<input type="checkbox"/> Spybot 2	<input type="checkbox"/> Mozy
<input type="checkbox"/> Avira	<input type="checkbox"/> OneDrive
<input type="checkbox"/> Super	<input type="checkbox"/> SugarSync
	<input type="checkbox"/> BitTorrent Sync
Developer Tools	
<input type="checkbox"/> Python	

2. Click Get Installer and run it

Ninite installs apps for you in the background. No clicking next. We say NO to toolbars or other junk.

Media	Runtimes
<input type="checkbox"/> iTunes	<input type="checkbox"/> Java 8
<input type="checkbox"/> VLC	<input type="checkbox"/> .NET 4.5.2
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KMPlayer	<input type="checkbox"/> Silverlight
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> AIMP	<input type="checkbox"/> Air
<input type="checkbox"/> foobar2000	<input type="checkbox"/> Shockwave
<input type="checkbox"/> Winamp	
<input type="checkbox"/> Audacity	File Sharing
<input type="checkbox"/> K-Lite Codec	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> qBittorrent
<input type="checkbox"/> GOM	<input type="checkbox"/> eMule
<input type="checkbox"/> Spotify	
<input type="checkbox"/> CCCP	Compression
<input type="checkbox"/> MediaMonkey	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 7-Zip
<input type="checkbox"/> QuickTime	<input type="checkbox"/> PeaZip
	<input type="checkbox"/> WinRAR

Conclusion

3. Run it again later

Your installer will update apps to the latest versions. If something is up-to-date we'll skip it.

Imaging	Documents
<input type="checkbox"/> Paint.NET	<input type="checkbox"/> OpenOffice
<input type="checkbox"/> Picasa	<input type="checkbox"/> Reader
<input type="checkbox"/> GIMP	<input type="checkbox"/> SumatraPDF
<input type="checkbox"/> IrfanView	<input type="checkbox"/> Foxit Reader
<input type="checkbox"/> XnView	<input type="checkbox"/> CutePDF
<input type="checkbox"/> Inkscape	<input type="checkbox"/> LibreOffice
<input type="checkbox"/> FastStone	<input type="checkbox"/> PDFCreator
<input type="checkbox"/> Greenshot	
Utilities	Other
<input type="checkbox"/> TeamViewer	<input type="checkbox"/> Evemote
<input type="checkbox"/> ImgBurn	<input type="checkbox"/> Google Earth
<input type="checkbox"/> Auslogics	<input type="checkbox"/> Steam
<input type="checkbox"/> RealVNC	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> KeePass 2
<input type="checkbox"/> TeraCopy	<input type="checkbox"/> Everything
	<input type="checkbox"/> NVDA

This does not necessarily have to be Ninite's fault as developers or companies may forbid the inclusion of their programs on the site.

It does mean however that you may not find all programs that you want to install supported by Ninite.

Tip: Run the installer again at a later point in time to install program updates. You could create a new Task using the Windows Task Scheduler to run the installer regularly on the system to install updates automatically. The installer window will pop up each time it is run.

Ninite Pro and Updater

The company behind Ninite offers two paid programs. Ninite Pro is designed for businesses. It starts at \$20 per month for up to 100 machines and comes with a business license. It offers PC management, disables update notifications from installed programs, allows you to download once only to distribute to PCs locally, offline installer support, support for additional programs (Microsoft .NET for instance), or software audits to display all machines and whether programs on them are up to date.

Find out more about Ninite Pro on this page on the official website. <https://ninite.com/pro>

Ninite Updater on the other hand is a background program available for \$9.99 per year that monitors installed programs and checks for updates regularly. When updates are found, they are downloaded and installed.

Closing Words

Ninite is an excellent program especially if you run it on new machines as it is likely that you will install multiple of the supported programs on it anyway.

Not only do you save time in the process, you can also be sure that adware won't end up on your system after running the Ninite installer.

Probably the biggest issue of Ninite is the low number of applications it supports. The selection has not changed that much since our initial review of the service back in 2009 when it was still called Volery.

Another issue that some users may have with Ninite is that it gives you no control over the installation. You cannot change the installation directory or pick from a list of setup options if provided by the program itself.

Ninite is an excellent solution if you plan to install one or multiple of the supported programs on a machine running the Windows operating system.



Why (and When) You Need to Replace Your Surge Protector

Surge protectors aren't like diamonds. They have a definite lifespan. At some point, your surge protector will stop protecting your gear from power surges and become a dumb power strip.

It's difficult to tell exactly when a surge protector loses those protective powers and just functions as a power strip. But, if you're still using an old surge protector you purchased ten years ago, it's probably long past time to replace it.

Surge Protectors 101

RELATED ARTICLE

Protect Your Gadgets: Why You Need a Surge Protector

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We've already outlined why you want a surge protector. These devices sit between the electrical socket and your gadgets, protecting them from any power surges and ensuring they receive a consistent voltage of electricity. It's possible for a voltage spike caused by an issue in the power grid to damage your expensive electrical equipment, and that's what surge protectors are designed to stop.

Typical surge protectors also function as a power strip, providing additional electrical outlets for you. If you're connecting your computing equipment or home theater system, there's a good chance you'll want some electrical outlets anyway — so just pick up a power strip that's also a surge protector, not a simple power strip that only provides additional outlets without providing any protection.

Surge protectors are inexpensive, so they're a no-brainer when it comes to your expensive computing equipment and other electronic gadgets.

Surge Protectors Aren't Forever

Surge protectors aren't magic. When they receive a power surge from the electrical outlet they're plugged into, they have to do something with that extra voltage to get rid of it and shield the connected devices from it.

A typical surge protector uses a component called a metal oxide varistor (MOV). When the voltage spikes, the surge protector effectively diverts that extra voltage to the MOV component. This component degrades when it's exposed to either a small number of large surges or a larger number of smaller surges. The additional energy doesn't damage your devices — it stays in the surge protector, where it degrades the MOV.

In other words, your surge protector can only absorb so many surges before it stops functioning as a surge protector and starts functioning as a dumb power strip that'll let everything through to your devices.

Their Lifespans Are Measured in Joules

Surge protectors are rated in joules, and this tells you how much protection they're designed to provide. For example, you might get a 1000 joule surge protector. This is a measure of a total amount of energy a surge protector can absorb before the protection wears out and it stops absorbing any extra voltage.

Every power surge your surge protector absorbs decreases the amount of future joules it absorbs. If that 1000 joule surge protector takes an 1000 joule hit, it's done for. But it's also done for if it takes ten 100 joule hits — or if it takes a thousand one joule hits. It's all cumulative.

Surge protector lifespans aren't measured in years — they're measured in joules. It's all about how many joules your surge protector has absorbed. But, the older your surge protector is, the more it's likely degraded.

Conclusion on page 14





Charlotte Bytes



the How-To Geek
Computer Help from your Friendly How-To Geek

How to Wirelessly Transfer Photos from Your Camera to Your Computer

Eye-Fi View is a service that's easy to overlook as many people assume it's premium only and, as they don't want to pay for a premium service, they don't use it. Eye-Fi View actually has two tiers, however, the free (which allows you to store your photos for 7 days in the cloud for easy sharing and temporary backup if your card is lost while traveling or the like) and the premium (which give you unlimited storage for \$49.99 a year).

The **"Notifications"** tab allows you to toggle email, SMS, Facebook, and Twitter notification alerts that tell you when your Eye-Fi card has shared media on your social network accounts.

Geotagging is an option the privacy conscious will surely want to toggle off; every Eye-Fi photo is, by default, tagged with the location the photo is taken. There's only one option under the "Geotagging" tab: it's either on or off.

The final configuration tab, **"Transfer Mode"** two really useful features. Under the **"Selective Transfer"** tab you can toggle between different transfer modes. By default the Eye-Fi will transfer and/or upload every photo you take. If you're firing off a bunch of photos to get the perfect shot this creates a lot of waste power use and transfer. You can switch from automatic uploading to selective uploading using the "protect" function on your camera. Any photo you protect will be flagged and uploaded. Everything else will remain on the camera for manual transfer or deletion at a later date.

Under the **"Endless Memory"** tab you'll find a rather novel (but useful) feature. When "Endless Memory" is active the Eye-Fi will slowly delete old files (that have been safely transferred to your computer or online service). In this fashion you can essentially shoot forever on a single SD card as it will perpetually make new room for new files.

With a little upfront investment and few minutes spent configuring your settings you can easily convert your stand-alone digital camera into a networked camera capable of wireless file transfer and sharing.



Why (and When) You Need to Replace Your Surge Protector

How Can You Tell?

Image Credit: Pelegs on Wikipedia, lungstruck on Flickr

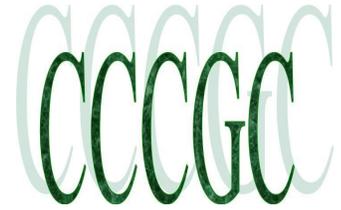
It's practically impossible to tell exactly when a surge protector stops functioning as intended. Some surge protectors have built-in lights that are designed to alert you to this problem and inform you when the protector needs to be replaced. However, you can't necessarily rely on these lights. It's not a foolproof system

If your surge protector is warning you that it's no longer protecting you or asking you to replace it, you should probably get a new surge protector. But don't assume your decade-old surge protector is still working properly because the warning light hasn't come on yet.

So when is it time to replace that surge protector? Well, the longer it's been, the more at risk you are. If you know your surge protector has absorbed a serious power surge, you should probably replace it immediately

There's no exact lifespan we can give you, and it varies from area to area — it depends how many surges occur in your area as well as how many joules your protector can absorb. Many people recommend replacing a surge protector every two years or so, but any recommendation like this one can only be a rule of thumb.





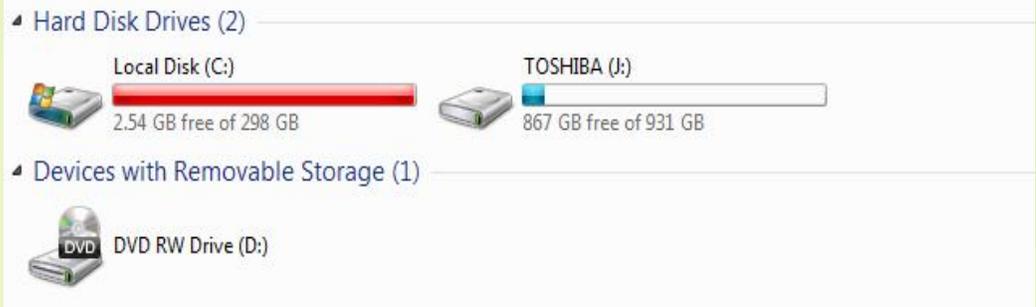
See us on the Web
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makeuseof

How To Really Speed Up Your Computer – Common Myths & What To Do Instead

Continued from page 6

To overcome this, you can delete some of your files or invest in a new drive. You don't even have to ditch your current drive if you don't want to. Just get an external drive, attach it to your system and offload some of your less-often accessed data on there.



Misconception 3: Replacing and upgrading components is guaranteed speed

While you might think buying a new hard drive or investing in more RAM is going to get silky smooth performance, this isn't strictly true. It actually depends on your system and the specific component that you're buying.

Hard disk drives (HDD) are mechanical devices, meaning they have moving components inside. When you ask your computer to load up some data your hard drive has to physically work; it spins a platter and scans it with a magnetic head to find the data. Hard drives are commonly classed by revolutions per minute (RPM). Simply put, the higher this figure, the quicker your data can be accessed. You'll notice improvement the greater the RPM, but eventually this becomes negligible for common use.



The real upgrade is going to come from moving from a HDD to a solid state drive (SSD). SSDs use flash memory, like a USB stick or SD card, and don't have any moving parts, thus can access data quicker. SSDs are currently much more expensive than HDDs, so it can make sense to split your system into two drives. The SSD can hold the operating system (the data that powers your system and is constantly accessed), while the HDD can contain all other files.

RAM is another component that is commonly thought of as providing buttery speeds. RAM is essentially where data in use is stored, so that the system can access it quickly. As you might expect, the more RAM you have, the more temporary data can be stored on it.

The idea that RAM offers greater speeds for your computer is true – for the most part. As you've probably expected, this comes with some pitfalls. 32-bit versions of Windows are only capable of using up to 4GB of RAM. You can have as much as you want inside your system, but it'll never use anything over the limit. Handily, Microsoft provides a list of the memory limits for all versions of Windows.

Misconception 4: Cleaning your registry speeds up your system

This is perhaps one of the grandest myths of all. All over the Internet you'll find programs advertising the fact they can provide massive performance improvements to your computer by cleaning out your registry. This is utter nonsense. Registry cleaners provide no good use.

The registry is a database that Windows and other programs use to store settings. Your registry may have some outdated files in it, perhaps from software you've used in the past and have since uninstalled. You might think that you need to get rid of these, but fact is they're kilobytes in size and you'd never notice a difference even if they got removed.

The problem with registry cleaners is that they can end up removing things that are needed. Messing with the registry is not to be done lightly. You can severely break your system and it isn't worth the risk.

Misconception 5: A fresh install of the operating system is the ultimate way to gain speed



How To Really Speed Up Your Computer Conclusion from page 15

It's entirely possible to just wipe everything on your system and do a completely fresh install of your operating system. Some computer manufacturers will have this function built in as a recovery partition, allowing for a few simple button presses and reverting everything back to how it was when it left the factory. You can factory reset your Windows PC in a few different ways.

Naturally, this is going to help speed up your system because it'll remove everything you've ever stored or installed on the computer since you got it. While you might fancy the idea of nuking your system and going back to day one, it's not entirely advisable for a number of reasons.

First of all, perhaps most obviously, you'll have to go through the effort of putting data back on and reinstalling programs you need. It goes beyond that, though – think about any tweaks you've made to your system in getting it set up just how you like it.

Following on from this, unless you actually change the way you use your computer then it's eventually just going to slow down again anyway. All those programs will build up once more and you'll be left in the same position as before the wipe. While a fresh install can be advisable when nothing else speeds up your system, it shouldn't be the go-to choice.

A more advisable approach to take is to create regular images of your system. Lots of programs will let you do this. **Creating an image of your system** <http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/how-to-clone-your-hard-drive/> essentially means making a mirror copy of absolutely everything. Unlike data backup, which usually just copies your personal files, a system image will replicate every single bit of data stored on the drive. You can choose how often you want it to take an image, but every month is a good place to start. That way, if you experience severe system slowdown, you can revert back to a former copy of your system.

The Best Ways To Speed Up Your System

We've covered misconceptions on how to provide speed, so let's now turn to methods that actually will provide enhancement. Handily, we've already published lots of content on how to accelerate your Windows machine.

Windows 7

Most of these tips are ones that any user can carry out, regardless of their technology proficiency. For example, you might not be aware that some programs have been given permission to start automatically and constantly run in the background. Some of these you might not even use that often, if at all (in which case uninstall them), so keep your eye on start-up programs.

Additionally, some of the more fancy visual elements of Windows 7 can be disabled to offer greater performance. If you can forgo things like animations and Aero Peek, get turning them off. Besides, there's no use in something looking good if it doesn't work as well as it could. You'll especially notice a benefit if you're on an older system.

Windows 8

The Task Manager in Windows 8 is great for determining what programs are using up the most of your system's resources. It'll break every program down to show how much CPU, memory, disk and network juice they drain. The old processes list is still available for those who prefer it, but the new task manager allows you to see at a glance what might be causing issues.

Another great benefit about Windows 8 is that it includes its own security applications, meaning you don't have to bog your system down with third-party suites. Not only will it check for viruses and spyware, but it'll also analyse how trustworthy the programs you download are.

The Windows Speed Up Guide

This is the top dog of speed up guides. Everything you could ever want to know about the speed performance of Windows is comprehensively detailed here: why it slows down, how to maintain peak power, troubleshooting steps, and more.

If you're serious about wanting to get the quickest computer you can, look no further than our Speed Up manual.

How Do You Ensure Your Computer Runs Smoothly?

We all love having speedy computers, right? Although it can sometimes be difficult to find the root cause of system slowdown, it's always worth hunting down what the problem is. Life's too short to be sitting around waiting for Windows to slowly decide its next step.

Just remember not to get caught up with some of the misconceptions discussed. There certainly are ways to make your computer faster, but things like registry cleaning and personal data deletion aren't usually the way to go.



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Conclusion from page 5

Capacity and Price ¹	16GB
	\$499
	64GB
	\$599
	128GB
	\$699

Yes, That Extra Storage is Overpriced, But You

Should Pay For it Anyway And You Can't Upgrade Later



The worst thing is just that you can't upgrade later. That \$100 for more storage space may seem like a pricy jump — and it is — but it's worth it. Paying another \$100 to upgrade an iPhone or iPad's storage from 16 GB to 64 GB means you'll have space for practically everything you want to do, and you won't have to micromanage it.

Getting a laptop with 128 GB of storage instead of 64 GB will give you a lot of room to grow, too. Heck, even 128 GB may be too little for some people.. perhaps you should seriously consider 256 GB or more. Give it some time, and you'll be wishing you could

spend \$100 to upgrade your device's storage. That'll result in more flexibility and less hassle.

RELATED ARTICLE

How to Quickly and Cheaply Upgrade a Laptop or Tablet's Storage

Many new laptops, tablets, and devices in between are coming with an ever-smaller amount of storage. But you can expand... [Read Article] <http://www.howtogeek.com/196015/how-to-quickly-and-cheaply-upgrade-a-laptop-or-tablets-storage/>

On some devices, you can expand the built-in storage by purchasing an SD card and popping it in. This is absolutely helpful — although it's limited, as Apple's iPhones and iPads don't offer SD card expansion. Many Android devices don't either, including Samsung's new Galaxy S6 line of phones. You can't always rely on this.

Even if you can get an SD card expansion for your device, this is most helpful for storing files. SD cards aren't generally as fast as the built-in storage, so you ideally wouldn't want to install applications to an SD card and run them from there. You'll also have to micromanage which applications, files, and data goes where.

Yes, it's easy to balk at the \$100 cost for a bit more storage, but that's not what matters. What matters is that that big jump in storage is a huge quality of life improvement, and you can't simply spend \$100 for more storage later when you want it. It's better to bite the bullet and save yourself the trouble later.

This jump is mostly extra profit margin for the manufacturer — they like keeping the base model price low so they can compete and lure people in.

Image Credit: LWYang on Flickr, K.G.23 on Flickr

