

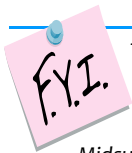


Websites of Interest

www.manncenter.org
plan a summer evening of music

www.wagnerfreemuseum.org
a Victorian museum preserved intact

sketchup.google.com
free 3-D sketching and layout software



The next full moon, on Tuesday July 7, is now called the Midsummer Moon.

Centuries ago, Pagans called the midsummer moon the "Honey Moon" for the mead made from fermented honey that was part of the wedding ceremonies that were so often performed at the Summer Solstice.

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Microsoft
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Specialist

Internet Explorer 8

For website developers, Internet Explorer has been the bane of their existence for years. It has never been standards-compliant, and there are many web features that had to be faked for IE6 and IE7. Clearly, IE7 is head and shoulders better than 6, but it has problems.

Unfortunately, IE6 still accounts for about 20-25% of all browsing on the web. Those computers are usually either older or part of corporate networks. Businesses upgrade software much more slowly than private users because of the effect that changes have on network access, usability, and integration with other software.

IE7 is much more competent, but it is not very standards-compliant. It's both forgiving and dumb. It's easy to design pages for, but those sites don't always display properly on other browsers. That hasn't been much of a problem until recently, since IE was the dominant browser by far. It's still dominant, but its market share is shrinking fast (now about 70%), what with stiff competition from more capable browsers such as Opera,

Firefox, Chrome, etc. And its share will shrink further in Windows 7, since the EU is forcing Microsoft to sell that operating system in Europe without the browser included (*Windows 7-E*).

Microsoft has been pushing IE8 out as an update along with its security patches. Should you accept it? Probably. For your home computer, yes. It's more secure, more web standards-compliant, offers improved tabbed browsing features, and in the chance that you might come across a site that looks weird in IE8, there is a button to turn on the IE7 Compatibility Mode.

For your business use, consider carefully any web-based software or sites you use and check with them for assurance that they work properly with IE8. Compatibility Mode doesn't guarantee that an interactive site (banking, payroll, etc.) will work in that mode, just that it will *look* right. It may prove a huge headache to go back to IE7 if IE8 causes problems. It is not an easy process.

Windows 7

Mark your calendars—October 22 is the official launch date for Windows 7. Or maybe you're not quite that interested in it. Many companies are, though. They need to upgrade their computers but are dissatisfied with Vista. All reports are that Windows 7 is better in every way even though it is an evolutionary product, not revolutionary. It's built on mostly Vista underpinnings, but with a great deal of rethinking and paring down.

Microsoft has made the Windows 7 Release Candidate available for download; it's freely available on their site for anyone who wants to experiment with it and it will continue running normally until March 2010, at which

time it enters a mode in which it must shut down every 2 hours (so people can't use the unsupported, unpatched version forever).

It's faster than Vista, more stable, and in response to the surging popularity of netbook computers, it will run well on a minimalist machine like those. That will allow MS to finally retire Windows XP, which is the OS of choice for netbooks (unless you like to tinker with Linux).

Can't wait for a new computer? No problem. Microsoft will offer free Win 7 upgrades for computers bought in the few months before the new OS is released. Ask about them.

How Do I...

Comp-U-Tech

Work Faster in Excel

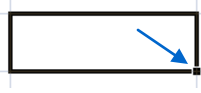
So many times people struggle with software without asking, "Is there a better way?" The answer is often "Yes."

Let's face it—you're not the first person to try to do whatever it is you're doing. And thousands of software engineers are highly paid to get their software to answer your needs (and those of millions of other users).

Take Excel, for instance. If you use it to calculate figures instead of just compile lists, there are a couple of things that you should get to know very well.

First and foremost is the cursor and what it means when it changes shape. See the sidebar at left for an explanation of what the cursor can do.

The *handle* is the little square in the lower right corner of the active cell or group of cells. It's possibly the biggest timesaver in Excel. Hover your cursor carefully over it and watch the cursor change into a black cross. When you see the little cross, you can click and drag to use auto-fill.



One thing to remember when working in Excel: the program doesn't know what you entered in a cell until you save it, which you do by pressing the Enter key (to move down), the Tab key (to move right), an arrow key, or clicking outside the cell with your mouse. (If you go back and edit a cell, the arrow keys won't take you out.)

Now that Excel knows what's in the cell, it's time to let it do its tricks. Type a 1 in a cell, press Enter, click back in the cell, hover over the handle until you see the small black cross, click, hold down the left mouse button and drag sideways or down. It fills in a series of

1s. Boring. Do it again, but hold down the Ctrl key before you click and drag. Now it increments each cell by 1, so you get a series.

Would you like to make a list of all the dates by which you have to have payroll done? Let's say they are every two weeks. You can teach Excel what the interval is by starting it off with two samples as at right:

7/6/2009
7/20/2009

Highlight both (using the normal white cross), then grab the handle, and drag down. Every two weeks' deadline is calculated. Excel knows the days of the year and the days of the week and the months. Type *January* or *Thursday*, grab the handle and drag. You can even make your own custom lists that act like the months and days.


If you are using Excel to keep running totals, you only have to do a calculation once and drag the handle to copy it and adjust it in each of the cells.


	A	B	C
1	Start	\$ 456.25	
2		-26.84	429.41
3		-65.85	363.56
4		350.00	713.56
5			-
6			-
7			-


Adjust the widths of the columns or height of rows with the resize arrow cursors. Hover over the right border of a column header you want to change the width of (B in this illustration), click and drag. Or, to set the width automatically to fit the widest item in the column (even if it's off the screen), just double-click with the resize cursor. To apply this to a group of columns, highlight them all, then do the above.


	A	B	C	D
1				
2		Column Header		
3				
4		Row Header		


The Cursor

 When you put this standard cursor inside a cell and click the left mouse button and drag, you highlight a range of cells.

 The small cross appears when you hover over the *handle*, the small black square in the lower right corner of the active cell(s).

 This appears when you hover over a cell border. Using the left mouse button, you can drag the contents to a new cell.

 These cursors allow you to select the row or column when placed over the letter or number.

 When placed over the border of a row or column, these allow you to re-size it.

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