

Southern Districts Computer Users Club Inc.

Supporting inexperienced users with local expertise

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SDCUCI NEWS

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Meetings are held monthly on the third Wednesday at 7.30 pm, in the hall at the rear of St Mary's Catholic Church on the Corner of Bains and Main South Roads, Morphett Vale

Cost \$3.00 per person per meeting. This includes a copy of our Newsletter, plus coffee/tea and supper

Visitors are most welcome

After 3 visits, you are requested to become members

Annual Subscription:
Single — \$20.00
Family — \$30.00

Both Novice and Experienced computer users will be most warmly welcomed



The Brownpaddock Chatter



Filling out and returning Pdfs

You receive an email requesting you to return a form with your details.

“Please fill out attached form and return to sender.”

The problem is, it is in a PDF format and you cannot edit the document. There are many programs available to convert PDF to Word Documents.

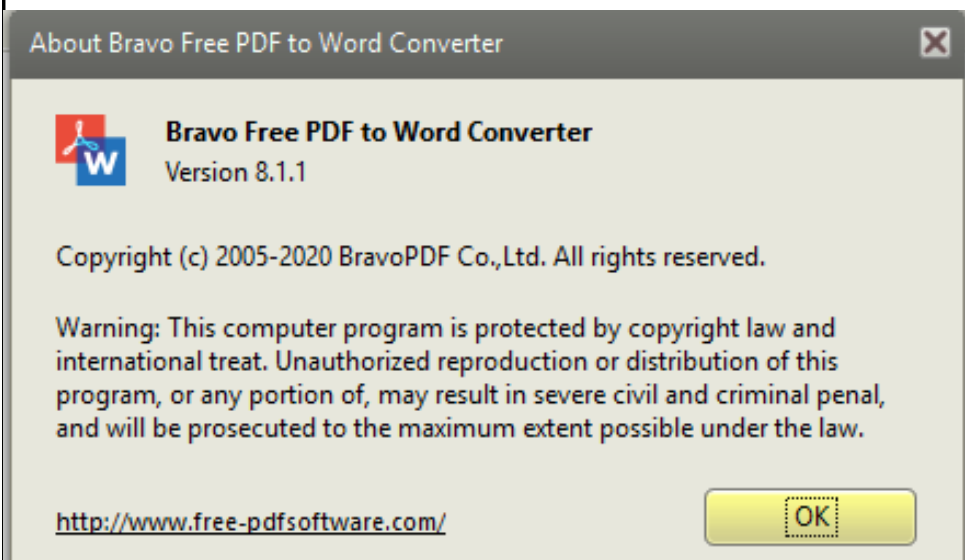
Two **free** programs I use are “Smallpdf”

(<https://smallpdf.com/pdf-to-word>) An on line program with excellent conversion accuracy.

The second program is

“Bravo Free PDF to Word Converter”

<http://.free-pdfsoftware.com/>



James Brownpaddock



VPN Vulnerabilities Found in Popular Offerings

VPNs or Virtual Private Networks are trusted and widely recommended these days to keep a user's internet connection safe and private. However, a recent report by researchers, VPNPro, has shown that at least 4 of the top 20 popular VPNs were highly vulnerable to malware.

VPNPro says that crucial vulnerabilities in **PrivateVPN** and **Betternet** can allow hackers to push fake updates, install malicious programs or steal data.



Popular VPNs vulnerable to malware

The researchers rigged up a fake update and tried to hijack the installation process for multiple VPN programs. They were successful in breaking through Betternet and PrivateVPN defences and tricked programs into downloading the bogus update. Terming the

vulnerability as “Serious”, VPNpro said:

“This is a serious problem with the ability to push users to install fake updates.”

Exploiting the vulnerability, hackers can install any program on a user's computer or do a variety of other malicious things such as:

- Steal personal data and sell it on the black market
- Make bank payments using the victim's PC
- Secretly mine Cryptos
- Add the device to a botnet
- Lock the PC demanding ransomware
- Steal victim's pictures, videos, recordings, and messages

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How VPNPro Intercepted the connection

VPNPro said it was possible to intercept the communications between the VPN program and the app's backend infrastructure. **PrivateVPN** downloaded the **VPNPro** fake update and automatically executed it without needing the user's approval. **Betternet** downloaded the fake update but did not automatically execute the update but instead, popped a notification for the user to update the app (which most users will do).

VPNPro also tested, **Torguard** and **CyberGhost**. Both allowed interception of communications and connected while being intercepted.

Hotspot Shield and **Hide Me** also allowed for easy interception of communications but did not connect while being intercepted.

Public Wi-Fi

According to VPNPro, The vulnerabilities work only on Public Wi-Fi. In order for hackers to carry out the attack, they need one of two things: to be on the same network as yours (think public Wi-Fi) or they will try to dupe the user into connecting to a fake Wi-Fi hotspot (such as "Cofeeshop") rather than the shop's real Wi-Fi ("Coffeeshop").

Alternatively, the hacker would have to have access to your router, but you should be using the DNS server from the router's DHCP service.


Betternet and PrivateVPN issue updates

VPNPro verified that Betternet and PrivateVPN were both able to provide a patch, even sending a version to test. PrivateVPN rolled out the patch on March 26 while Betternet released their patched version on April 14.

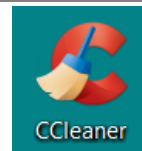
How to stay protected

To stay protected, it is strongly advised against downloading anything, including updates, on free public Wi-Fi. Also, ensure you have an effective antivirus program that can help stop malicious updates.

Safe VPNs

The other VPNs tested were: PureVPN, SurfShark, NordVPN, ExpressVPN, TunnelBear, IPVanish, PIA, Windscribe, Ivacy, HMA, VyprVPN, ProtonVPN, TurboVPN, and Hola VPN, all of which passed the initial test. To these you can now add Betternet and PrivateVPN as they have now patched their respective vulnerabilities. If you are a user of any one of these, you can sleep easy knowing you are safe. On the other hand, there are many hundreds of VPNs out there that may or may not be safe. It would be prudent to check with the VPN provider that you use that it uses the appropriate protocol. 

CCleaner — Should You Continue with it?



If you use CCleaner, you might want to have a rethink. Most computer shops discourage using CCleaner (including IT Computers).

The reason not to still use CCleaner, the once go-to and essential piece of maintenance software for Windows, was that many of its core features have been rendered useless or ineffective due to Windows changes, or have been incorporated into Windows itself (or other third-party apps).

Also, CCleaner suffered an unfortunate incident in 2017, when a malware-injected version of the CCleaner installer was uploaded and installed by millions of users. For most users, the trust is gone and the message is clear.

For those who continue to use CCleaner be aware that the default options for CCleaner to “scan/clean” will include parts of the registry. Unless you know what you are doing, do not leave these registry options open to be scanned.

Untick these options before proceeding and carefully check the others. **If unsure what they do, untick them.**


If you must use a third party program, there is a plethora available via the net, promoting increased speed by removing all sorts of files from your computer (including emptying the Recycle Bin) or undertaking other actions to improve the overall performance of your computer. Beware of these programs as they often have a sting in their tail. Also in most, if not all, cases you have no control over what files they are about to delete or change. An additional word of caution here; always carefully check the files you or a third party propose emptying from the **Recycle Bin** BEFORE doing so (or having a third party do so) **to ensure you no longer require them! Once deleted — they are gone!**

One of the safest ways to clean up and remove unwanted or superfluous files is to use the tried, tested and inbuilt Microsoft “*Disc Cleaner*”.

Likewise if you need to speed up your computer, again use the already installed Microsoft “*Defrag and Optimize Drive*” option. Even here one must exercise some degree of caution as over the last few years manufacturers have been installing Solid State Drives (SSD’s) into their computers and laptops. One should NEVER, EVER try and defrag an SSD Drive.

One of the biggest myths that has pervaded through the decades and still deludes people today is that you need to clean the Windows Registry.

You do not need to clean the Registry.

It is true that, over time, unnecessary Registry entries will stick around due to uninstalling software and other actions, but these rarely, if ever, impact on your computer’s performance. You will never notice a difference even if you remove thousands of these “problem” entries. 

TV REMOTE — Cleaning and Sanitizing by **Jim Greenfield**

The TV remote is one of the most prized possessions in the home, often by your side each time you sit down to enjoy your favourite movie, TV show or sporting action. This means you keep pressing its controls and tossing it around, depending on who wants to watch what, sometimes chewed on if you have little ones around, and who knows what else. It is a gnarly mess and a potential home to germs, allergens, and mould besides the visible dust, dirt and grime. It is important to learn how to clean and sanitize your TV remote as a preventative measure against health hazards.

How Dirty Are TV Remotes?

Whether at home or in a hotel room, the TV remote control is one of the filthiest items. One study found that TV remotes get **really** dirty and can contain harmful bacteria, grime, sweat, and even faecal matter in some cases.

With COVID-19 and other diseases spreading at high rates, the best way to protect you in every way possible is by keeping all surfaces and items in the home clean.

TV remotes are not easy to clean, though. They are full of little nooks and crannies around the buttons, which when combined with the dirt, grime and other matter could expose you to health risks.

Though there is a simple way to clean and sanitize your TV remote whether at home or in a hotel room, provided you have the right materials.

What You'll Need

Rubbing alcohol (70% isopropyl alcohol) Pair of disposable gloves (optional) cotton cloth, cotton swabs, lint free cloth, toothpick (optional).

Clean and Sanitize a TV Remote

Your TV's remote control needs to be disinfected often, as it's constantly being exposed to germs and other microbes. Follow the simple steps below to learn how to clean and sanitize your TV remote.

Instructions

1. Open the battery compartment of your remote and remove the batteries. If you prefer to handle your TV remote using a pair of disposable gloves, you can do so, but it's not a must, as you can always sanitize or wash your hands thoroughly, once you are done with this exercise.
2. Turn the remote upside down and tap it against your palm or shake it to dislodge any debris between the keys. You can use a compressed air canister to blast and shake free any stubborn matter.

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3. Dip the cotton cloth into the rubbing alcohol and wipe gently to clean the outer shell. Do not spray directly onto the device. Use a cotton swab dampened with the rubbing alcohol to clean hard-to-reach areas around and within the buttons. If you have more stubborn debris, you can dislodge it using a wooden toothpick or dry toothbrush to remove anything that is deep within the keys.
4. Once the remote is thoroughly cleaned, set it aside to air dry, and re-install the batteries when dry.
5. Remove your gloves and wash your hands and wrists thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds before using the TV remote again.

With the above tips, you now know how to keep your TV remote cleaned and disinfected while maintaining other recommended cleanliness habits.

Don't forget to clean and sanitize your laptop, too.



Windows Defender 2020, is it Good Enough?

By James Brownpaddock

We have addressed various aspects of Anti Virus software in past issues of SDCUCI NEWS, here we look at whether we need additional software at all.

It is slowly becoming less necessary to pack your Windows 10 PC with extra antivirus software, firewalls and other security software to keep it safe from malware and other threats. Many people now just stick with Microsoft's integrated security package, Windows Defender, but does it do a comparable job to third-party software? Is it good enough in 2020?

For a couple of years now, we have gathered data from a few of the most rigorous antivirus testing sites to test how Windows Defender compares to the most popular third-party antivirus software and so we can compare Windows Defender's performance with how it did the previous year.

How Does Windows Defender Compare?

What we need to know is how Defender stacks up to the biggest antivirus programs that you've used over the years – the McAfees, AVGs and Bitdefenders of the world. There are several sites dedicated to comparing antivirus software on a monthly basis. These tests are based on the earliest results available in 2020, which date back to December 2019.

AV Test

AV Test helps users make educated decisions about what antivirus they should use. They rank each antivirus on protection, performance, and usability using

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a scale from 0 to 6, where 6 is the best. How did Windows Defender fare?

In December 2018, Defender scored 6 for security and 5.5 for performance and usability. In December 2019, it held its 6 score for security, and bumped usability to 6 too — a marked improvement, especially as only 3 out of the 18 AV apps tested, only Norton, Kaspersky and BullGuard got full marks.

According to AV-Test, Defender now offers 100% protection against zero-day malware attacks. Its false flags confusing only two bits of legitimate software for malware. The industry average is three, and this time last year Defender detected seven. With little room for improvement from last year, Defender managed it, now ranking among the best of the best antiviruses on this site.

AV Comparatives

As criteria differs slightly from site to site, you need to check more than one. AV Comparatives is another good site. Based on their real world protection tests, the results are an improvement over last year, Defender and Avira being the only AV software not to be compromised based on 703 test cases.

Defender has further improved, blocking “user-dependent” malware – which warns the user but still gives the option to execute it. In April 2018, the rate of user-dependent malware was 3.6%. By July through November 2018, this dropped down to an average of 0.8%, but now is down to 0.7%

In compliance with AV Tests, Defender has registered vast improvement but is still behind the rest. Its 58 false positives are an improvement on last year’s 106, but is more than double the amount of the second-worst in this area.

Much Better than It Used to Be

Historical data on both AV Test and AV Comparatives show the improvement in Defender’s recent performance. In October 2015, Defender was badly trailing, receiving the joint-lowest rating for Protection (3.5/6), amounting to 95% protection against Zero-day malware attacks (a very poor 80.5% in September 2015.). The then industry average was 97.2%.

At AV Comparatives, Defender had a 3% compromise rate from July through November 2016. Now it has achieved not being compromised at all.

The Verdict: It’s All You Need

Whilst a few years ago, you would never have not installed third-party AV software and let Windows defend your PC on its own, Defender is now a viable sole antivirus option.

The cautious can always add third party A V software, but Windows Defender is currently all you really need. However, the malware landscape continually shifts, so we’ll keep an eye out for developments that suggest otherwise.



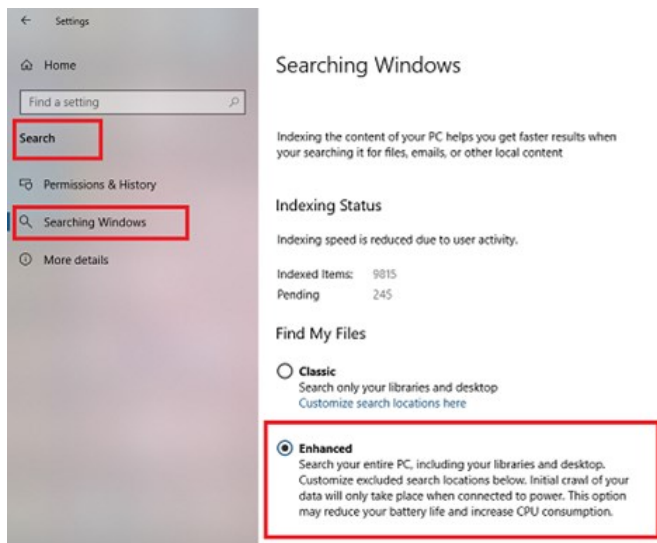
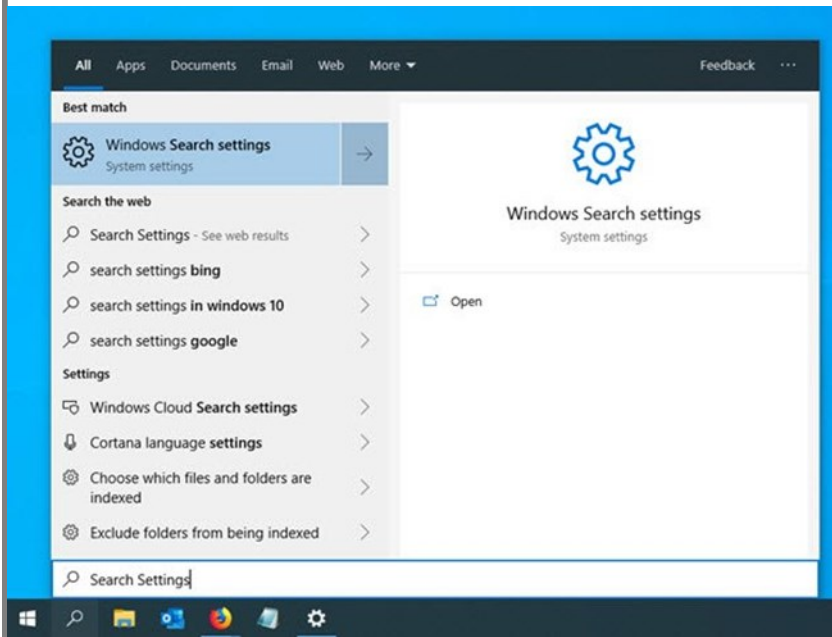
Enhanced Search Mode in Windows 10

Microsoft has included an **Enhanced Search Mode** in Windows 10 v1903. Compared to the *Classic Mode*, Enhanced Search Mode indexes everything on

your Windows 10 PC. See below to enable Enhanced Search Mode in Windows 10, and to understand how it is different from Classic search.

The old Windows 10 Start > Search has changed. Now when you press the Start button, and type, the results appear categorized into Apps, Documents, Email, Web, Folders, Music, People, Photos, Settings, Videos, and

more (see above). It is the primary reason why Enhanced Search Mode came into the picture. Unless everything is indexed, Search was not always useful.



What is Classic Windows Search

Windows 10 refers to the old search technique as Classic search. The Classic search mode is restricted to Libraries and Desktop. End users can choose to customize the search locations by manually adding them to the indexer. Simply, it would index files and folders that the user wanted to be indexed. If the search term were not in the index, it would initiate the

regular search which takes quite a bit longer.

Windows Enhanced Search Mode

Enhanced Search Mode indexes everything. Its default nature is fundamentally the opposite of the Classic search. Users can now exclude folders where the Search will not look, and will not index anything that could be personal to the user. It also means that it can impact life on the battery for laptops. The initial crawl of your data will only take place when connected to power.

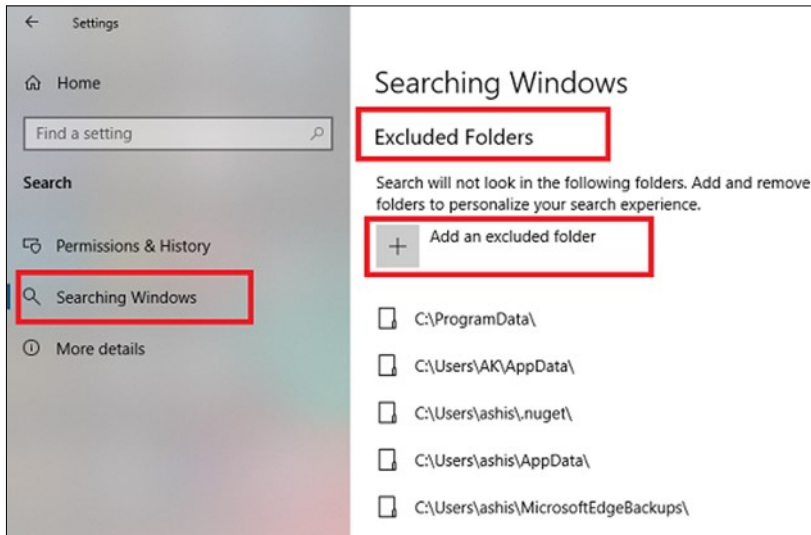
During that period, both the CPU usage and battery will take a bit of a hit until the indexing is finished.



Enabling Enhanced Search Mode in Windows 10

Now that the concept of Enhanced Search Mode is clear; here is how you can enable it in Windows 10 Search:

1. Go to Settings > Search > Searching Windows
2. Choose the radio button for Enhanced.
3. Next, choose any folders that Windows Indexer should exclude from the Enhanced Search mode.



The next time you search, Windows will look at all the places, and since they are in the index, the results will be much faster.


Apart from these, there are two more settings which you should look at.

1] Advanced Search Indexer Settings

- 2] Advanced Search Indexing Options allows you to fine tune how or where Windows will search or which files types Windows will search. It will open the same setting available under Classic search.

2] Run the Indexing Troubleshooter

When you click on it, Windows will start the troubleshooter to fix any Search and Indexing issue in Windows 10.

Overall, Enhanced Search Mode makes a lot of sense, especially with the availability of an option to exclude folders. You can make quite sure your privacy is in place and, at the same time, you can still find what is on your computer. 

Why not register for

Be Connected

<https://beconnected.esafety.gov.au/>



The article about VPNs is quite interesting. I don't know if you use one or not, but I do (not one of those mentioned). The only problem, I find, is that they do slow response times down somewhat. This is a well-known problem that, to date, has not been solved, if even addressed!

I have been trying out the "Enhanced Search Mode and, personally find it much quicker than the old version. It is very much worth giving it a try to see if you like it too. Incidentally, the initial indexing is probably best done over night as it can take a while. Don't forget to set up the folders **not to index** (in my case none).

DHCP or Dynamic Host Configuration Profile and DNS or Domain Name System. In a nutshell, DHCP is a service that automatically assigns your computer or devices an IP address on a network, while DNS is a service that translates website names into the website's IP address. The operative word in DHCP is "Dynamic" — the relevant item's internet name regularly changes making it hard for malware to track.



Jest a Minute

Do you remember all the fuss of the potential Y2K virus shortly before the year 2000? Then read on.

Dear Boss, I hope I haven't misunderstood your instructions. To be honest, boss, none of this Y to K dates problem makes any sense to me.

At any rate I have finished converting all the months on all the company calendars so that the year 2000 is ready to go with the following improved months: Januark, Februark, Mak, Julk. In addition, I have changed the days of the week, and they are now: Sundak, Mondak, Tuesdak, Wednesdak, Thursdak, Fridak and Saturdak.

Is that enough, or should I change any other Y to K? I am a fan of the New York Yankees. Should I call them New Kork Kankees in order to be Y2K ready?




~ Tonight's Topic ~

**Online Shopping using E-Bay, Amazon and PayPal
PRESENTER — TREVOR FRANCIS**

— *For Your Notes* —


Our July Members' Meeting

A reminder and an update on doing something with those old holiday photos you took years ago (and more recently) using MovieMaker.

The presenter will be Anne Leddra. 

MEETING RULES

We are allowed to use the facilities at the Hall at the rear of St Mary's Catholic Church, on the corner of Bains and Main South Roads, Morphet Vale in return for a small fee plus respect for their property. We ask for your co-operation in respect to the above.

Whilst we have no control over what our members do away from our Club meetings, piracy of copyright material cannot be condoned at our meetings. Please respect copyright laws at all times. 

Disclaimer: The information herein is of a general nature. Always do your own research and seek advice before proceeding on information you don't understand.

IT & COMPUTERS

Shop 6, 76 Beach Road
Christies Beach 8186 2736

(Same block as Woolies on Beach Road)

Contact: Jamle or Ash

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