An Overview of the Windows Secrets website with examples of some typical articles

compiled by Gary Patrick, for
presentation to
The Lexington Seniors' Computer & Technology Group
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(with amendments October 22, 2015)

Table of Contents:

Overview of Windows Secrets Newsletter

• email by subscription, and subscription policies

• examples of article titles and website content

Synopsis of Article "Confusion between Windows Defender and Microsoft Security Essentials." (9/17/15)

Synopsis of Article "Ways to Encrypt Data in Windows," (appeared as paid subscription content, 6/11/15)

• Warning about a security vulnerability in TrueCrypt,

• Use VeraCrypt instead.

Synopsis of Article "Making Windows 10 more private and secure (paid content, 8/06/15)
is located in an accompanying file (because of file size).

Windows Secrets: a website windowssecrets.com; also offers a weekly email newsletter by subscription.

The content is latest news, perspectives, in-depth articles and comments on Microsoft Windows, software for Windows computers, personal computing, and the Web.

7 primary technology writers, plus additional contributors;
• clear, understandable writing;
• frequent inclusion of screenshots from Windows to help make features and procedures clear.

Access to article archives, by index or search.

Access to the "Lounge," a Windows users' blog.

Ultimate Utilities List – many that are familiar to us.

(a screenshot of the main page is on the next slide)

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Subscribers: **Sign in**

Windows Secrets
Everything Microsoft forgot to mention.

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that I want to subscribe to the weekly newsletter. **Privacy policy**

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Current   LangaList Plus   Patch Watch   Wacky Web Week   Security Baseline   **Ultimate Utilities List**

Windows Secrets > Newsletter

Note "Ultimate Utilities List" link

Browse all Windows Secrets content

Content is listed below in reverse chronological order. Clicking on any title will take you to summaries of the
articles for each newsletter, with links to the full article pages.

Free subscribers: How to access all paid content

Looking for a topic? Search all content

Search by category: Best Hardware · Best Practices · Best Software · Best Utilities ·
Briefing Session · Digital Entertainment · Field Notes ·
Insider Tricks · Known Issues · Mobility · On Security · Top Story ·
Windows 8 · Windows 10 · Woody's Windows

2015 2014 2013 2012 2011 2010 2009 2008 2007 2006 2005 2004

Date	Issue	Summaries
2015-09-24	499	⊞ Win10 tweaks to improve computing work and play
2015-09-17	498	⊞ Learn to use the Windows 10 Recovery Drive
2015-09-10	497	⊞ How to clean-install a Windows 10 upgrade
2015-09-03	496	⊞ Sorting through the changes in Windows licensing
2015-08-27	495	⊞ Thirty-day Win10 experiment lasts only a week
2015-08-20	494	⊞ Why is the Internet slow and costly in the U.S.?
2015-08-13	493	⊞ How to make lithium-ion batteries last for years

Top-scoring articles in the past 12 months

Are system/Registry cleaners worthwhile?	4.46
How to clean-install a Windows 10 upgrade	4.45
How to solve UEFI boot and startup problems	4.44
How to make lithium-ion batteries last for years	4.42
Protecting yourself from POODLE attacks	4.39
Activate Windows' hidden, master admin account	4.38
Start the new year with a clean Windows PC	4.37
Free first aid for a wide range of Windows ills	4.36
Hacker takes over reader's PC by remote control	● 4.34
Making Windows 10 a bit more private and secure	● 4.33

The first section of the Ultimate Utilities List is shown here; go to the website to get the download links, and see the additional categories of recommended software.

- Windows Secrets contributors regularly recommend useful utilities in their columns. Here's our occasionally updated list of essential and interesting apps.

When we set up a new PC, here are the first 10 utilities we install:

- Malwarebytes Anti-Malware (free/paid)
- Secunia Personal Software Inspector (free; application updating service)
- Piriform CCleaner (free/paid; diagnostics and repair)
- 7-Zip (free; file compression/encryption)
- KeePass Password Safe (free; see excellent alternatives below)
- Foxit Reader (free/paid; PDF reader/creator)
- VideoLAN VLC media player (free)
- IObit Start Menu 8 (free; start-menu replacement for Windows 8)
- IrfanView (free; image editor)
- Skype (free/paid; Web-based communications)

Beginning mid-November the subscription model will be changing.

Up to now, each newsletter has consisted of
- some articles that are free,
- a featured blog article from the users' "Lounge."
- but access to the second half of the newsletter, with additional feature articles of the week, has required a paid subscription
- subscription fee has been voluntary, $10/yr. for example

The newsletter will become twice-weekly
- by paid subscription only
- free subscription to the website instead, will give access to all the archived content available as of now.

Changes in the emailed newsletter format:
- first part of each article will be included,
- with a link to the website to read the remainder,
- additionally, links to articles in sister website, Supersite for Windows.
- not yet indicated what a subscription will cost.

(Eventually, Windows Secrets will become the paid section of Supersite for Windows. (www.winsupersite.com)

Both are now owned by Penton Media, Inc.)

Examples of recent articles available free:

(these will presumably remain in archived content still available free on the Windows Secrets website)

- Best of Breed: Windows 10 Backup System (10/15/15) (improved over both Windows 7 and Windows 8)
- A Few Good Reasons to Upgrade from Windows 7 to Windows 10 (10/08/15)

  (A number of "Top Story" articles from mid-August through September are on Windows 10 subjects – suggest you just browse through.)
- Attempting to Answer if Microsoft is Snooping – even in Windows 7, and how to disable it (disable "telemetry.") (10/01/15)

More of the Windows Secrets' free content:

- Are System/Registry Cleaners worthwhile? - a comparison of 3rd party vs. built-into-Windows facility. (7/16/15) Conclusion: Windows' own is good enough.

- How to make Lithium Ion Batteries last for years (8/13/2015) – conclusions: mainly, keep them cool.

- Updating to Win 10 – a mixed experience for five editors (7/30/2015)

- Advice managing a change to a new email address (7/02/2015)

- Best techniques for safe (secure) disposal of solid state drives (6/25/2015) – conclusions: encrypt or crush 'em.

Examples of Paid Subscription Content
(in the 2nd half of the email newsletter)

1) Best Hardware, Best Software, Best Practices:

- enhanced mice & keyboards for power users (7/02/15)
- ways to encrypt sensitive data in Windows, (6/11/15)
- Microsoft OneNote: more than a simple note taker, (6/18/15)
- Making Windows 10 more private and secure, 8/06/15

2) LangaList Plus – technical articles by Fred Langa, a long-time computer geek.

- often problem-solving,
- or answering subscribers' mailed-in questions.
- example, explaining "Confusion between Windows Defender and Microsoft Security Essentials" - Microsoft's built-in anti-malware (9/17/15).

Paid subscription content, continued:

Patch Watch, a briefing about the latest Microsoft Windows updates

- appears the 2nd Thursday of each month, after Microsoft's regular "Windows updates" Tuesday.
- reports any "bugs" found, and sometimes recommends waiting to install a particular update, identified by its "KB...." number.
- You can follow this "wait" advice by configuring Windows not to install updates automatically; rather "notify me and let me install updates."

The next slides are synopses of two articles,

"Confusion between Windows Defender and MSE (Microsoft Security Essentials)" and

"Ways to Encrypt Sensitive Data in Windows,"

that appeared in the paid-content sections of the 9/17/15 and 6/11/15 issues, respectively.

Note: There is a warning in the October 1st issue that a security vulnerability has been discovered in the TrueCrypt program.

This flaw is unlikely ever to be fixed, because the developer ended support for TrueCrypt.

It is recommended to use VeraCrypt instead, also a free download.

Confusion between Windows Defender and
MSE (Microsoft Security Essentials) explained:

Windows Defender that's built into Windows 8 and 10
is virtually the same as MSE that was an optional
download for Windows Vista and Windows 7.

In Vista and Windows 7, "Windows Defender" was
• a lightweight anti-malware tool
• built into the operating system
• disabled automatically if MSE was installed.

Starting with Windows 8,

• Defender software was discontinued,
• but MSE was built-in, and re-badged "Defender."

(additional reference: "Top Story," 4/04/2013,
http://windowssecrets.com/top-story/microsofts-six-free-desktop-security-tools/)

Ways to Encrypt Sensitive Data in Windows

A) Tools for encrypting a small number of files

   1) Windows built-in Encrypting File System
- recommended to encrypt the enclosing folder or folders
- your Windows user password is access
- back up the certificate (or create a recovery certificate)

   2) free third-party program 7-zip
- creates ".7z" files, AES-256 encryption
- recommended to use 7-zip File Manager
- rec. to use a temp-file cleaner to be sure the unencrypted temp file(s) are overwritten

B) Encryption Vaults:
   TrueCrypt and successors
• TrueCrypt is defunct, unsupported
• successor is VeraCrypt, from France
• probably more secure than Truecrypt
• creates an encrypted container identified and accessed by a Windows drive-partition letter.

C) Create an encrypted Data Partition:
• it's one of the VeraCrypt choices
• in Wizard, select "encrypt partition in place"
• after it's done, open VeraCrypt and click "Auto-Mount devices;" gives it an unused drive letter.

D) Encrypt your entire Windows System
- sometimes issues with boot problems and data-recovery complications.
- recommendation: Windows BitLocker (rather than using VeraCrypt for this).

(WindowsSecrets, 6/11/15, paid content)