May Meeting …

BRAD LEFELD: The iPad

Tuesday, May 31ᵗʰ 7:00 P.M.

All DMA General Meetings are <u>free</u> and open to the public — bring a friend!

THINNER — LIGHTER — FASTER … and at the same price as the original iPad! Tablet computers finally became a viable option for the average consumer in 2010. Apple's iPad both established the market and set the bar for performance.

Apple moved the bar even higher this year with the introduction of the iPad 2, thinner, faster, and lighter than the first — and at no increase in price! The iPad features a multi–touch interface, the most extensive catalogue of applications in the industry (far surpassing anything running the Android operating system), and a competitive price.

Brad Lefeld has been with the Mac Depot for three and a half years, working primarily in sales. Six months ago, he took over the training classes. Mac Depot offers free 30–minute training classes every Thursday and Saturday for anyone who signs up. Classes cover anything Mac based, from software packages to the hardware of the machines. Click <u>here</u> to go to the Mac Depot's Web site.

Please join us in greeting BRAD LEFELD at **7 P.M.,** on **Tuesday the 31ˢᵗ,** at the **Miami Valley Regional Service Center,** 4801 Springfield Street, about a mile west of the Air Force Museum. Click <u>here</u> for a map. Parking, as always, is free.

The Dayton Microcomputer Association®, Inc.

Post Office Box 4005
Dayton, Ohio 45401

Established in 1976, DMA is a group of Dayton–area professionals and hobbyists in the field of computing and information technology. General membership meetings are usually on the last Tuesday of each month. DMA has a number of Special Interest Groups (SIGs) in areas ranging from digital photography and geneology to the Linux operating system. Each SIG meets according to its own schedule. DMA is a member of APCUG and ASC. (Click on any of the logos — including our own — to go to that organization's Home Page.)

Officers and Board of Trustees

Submissions …

The Databus welcomes compliments, complaints, suggestions, and especially articles. We can accept articles in ASCII, or as attachments in Microsoft Word or Works, Open Office Writer, Word Perfect, or even WordStar! No PDF files, please. Send e–mails to:

Editor@DMA.org

All articles are subject to editing for spelling, grammar, usage, and space. Always retain a copy of your work, as The Databus cannot be responsible for loss. When articles are of roughly equal quality, those by paid–up DMA members receive preference.

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IN & AROUND DMA

We'll have Minutes of the April Trustees' meeting next month.

DMA Picnic

$3.00 (cheap!)

Saturday, August 27, 2011
(earlier than usual)

Noon to ??

The 1911 DMA Picnic — that's Jim Ullom standing on the left in the straw hat and A–shirt.

Shelter #1, Indian Riffle Park, Kettering
Click *here* for a map — it's convenient to I–675.
Tickets on sale at Tuesday's meeting.

- *We* supply hamburgers, brats, hot dogs, rolls, condiments, & pop.
- *You* supply a covered dish, or soft drinks other than pop.
- No alcohol or glass containers, please.

Microsoft Security Essentials

By Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D., Member, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

Originally published in the April 2011 issue of *The Monitor*

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[Editor's Note: Like that of Professor Lewis, my own experience with Microsoft Security Essentials (MSE) has been a generally positive one. My ISP, like most, supplied me with a free security suite. Though from a well–known company, it was slow and balky. My guess is that the major security outfits do not give their best stuff to the ISPs. When I at last substituted MSE, it picked up a virus that my original security software had not noticed. I had attributed my computer's lack of speed to Windows Vista, when in fact a virus had been responsible! However, MSE is best used with a reputable spyware checker.]

OVER THE YEARS, ever since my first encounter with a computer virus in 1987, I have used a number of anti–virus applications, along with firewall software. As the Internet grew in the late '90s, I had to add anti–parasite software and other anti-malware applications to the protection arsenal. Some of this software was free; others were very expensive both to purchase and to maintain. Some used tremendous amounts of resources, which slowed down the overall operation of the computer. The cost in money or resources wasn't necessarily directly related to the usefulness of the application. However, such protection was probably a necessary evil to prevent problems on my computer from the "invaders" that existed then and now on the Internet.

Most anti–malware applications seem to be growing in size as each manufacturer tries to "cover all the bases." Unfortunately, with the increase in size and coverage comes an increase in complexity. Now, Microsoft has released an improved version of its Security Essentials (MSE) software that is easier for the user to install and operate. This application protects your computer against viruses, spyware, worms, trojans, and other malicious software. In addition it is an easy to install *free* download from Microsoft. The only catch is that you must have a legal copy of Windows on your computer. The installation program does a check for Genuine Windows validation. The software runs on XP, Vista and Win 7

operating systems (OS). However, I have only been using it on Win 7.

MSE does sound as though it must be a resource hog to be able to carry out all of these functions. But the testing results I have seen show minimal effect on overall computer operation. Yes, there is reduction in the speed of processing web pages, e–mail, etc., when using the real–time protection. But compared to other software carrying out the same functions, the difference in speed is insignificant and really wouldn't be noticed by most users. The only place where MSE seems to fall down is on hard disk scans. There I have seen reports of initial complete scanning taking from 8 all the way to 24 hours! I have done both a Quick Scan and a Full scan of my hard drive, about 50 GB of data on a 140 GB partition. The Quick Scan was done in less than 2 minutes. The full scan took about 25 minutes. [My own hard drive, like that of Dr. Lewis, is a relatively small one of 140 GB. MSE takes about 4 hours fully to scan it. A "Quick Scan," however, only takes about 5 minutes. —Editor] So from my perspective, on my system, the scanning time is not excessive. I have used other malware checkers that have taken over an hour to accomplish a complete scan on the same drive.

If you want to install this application, the first step is to download MSE from Microsoft's Web site (http://www.microsoft.com/security_essentials/?mkt=en-us). This page has the download link for the MSI file which can be run automatically after downloading by selecting "Run" instead of "Save." If you have questions about the installation, Microsoft has a video showing all the steps involved. Once the installation is complete, the opening screen shows the current status of your protection and the date of the last update for the malware definitions. It also shows you the settings related to scanning your hard drive. From this page you can do a manual scan of your drive. The Update tab on the top of the page takes you to a page where you can manually update the malware definitions. MSE will automatically download updates when you are running Windows and are connected to the Internet. However, it may not occur immediately on connection. So if it has been some time since you connected to the Internet you may want to manually download the definitions.

The Settings page, shown (see Figure 1, next page), is one where you can mostly accept the default values. One you will probably want to change is the timing of the automatic scan. MSE defaults to midnight on on

day, Sunday I think. You will probably want to change this to a time when you know that your computer will be turned on.

The list on the left of the window shows the additional settings categories for MSE. The "default actions" relate to what should be done with any malware detected. The various

Figure 1: Recommended MSE Settings

categories of default actions run from low threat to severe. In all cases I have set mine to remove the malware. If in doubt as to the effect on your computer you can set the lower threat levels to be quarantined. If you wish to remove a quarantined item later, you can do so from the history page. Select "Quarantined items" and you will then be allowed to remove all or individual items. You can also opt to restore an item, but this is not likely to be a good idea. Read the description of the what the malware's actions are carefully before deciding to restore it.

This next figure (see Figure 2, next page) shows you the protection being provided by MSE. In most cases it is best to leave the default settings so you will get the best protection. You will note the category for behavior monitoring. This allows MSE scan for possible malware that is not in its definitions list. This is referred to as the "heuristic" programming of the software. Any application that seems to be altering the functioning of the operating system, such as a root kit, should be flagged by this function. This is the only way that any anti-malware application can attempt to stay ahead of the malware writers who are always coming up with new, more complex schemes for infiltrating your computer.

I hope you can see from this quick review of MSE that it is designed to provide a simple user interface for a complete protection package. Now more tech–savvy computer users might want more control over their anti–malware protection, but for most users, I think this is a good fit — and the price is right.

As I mentioned earlier, I have been running MSE under Windows 7. This is Microsoft's best operating system yet. I think this is demonstrated by the fact that the Win 7 Service Pack 1 has no really significant changes to the basic OS. Also, Win 7
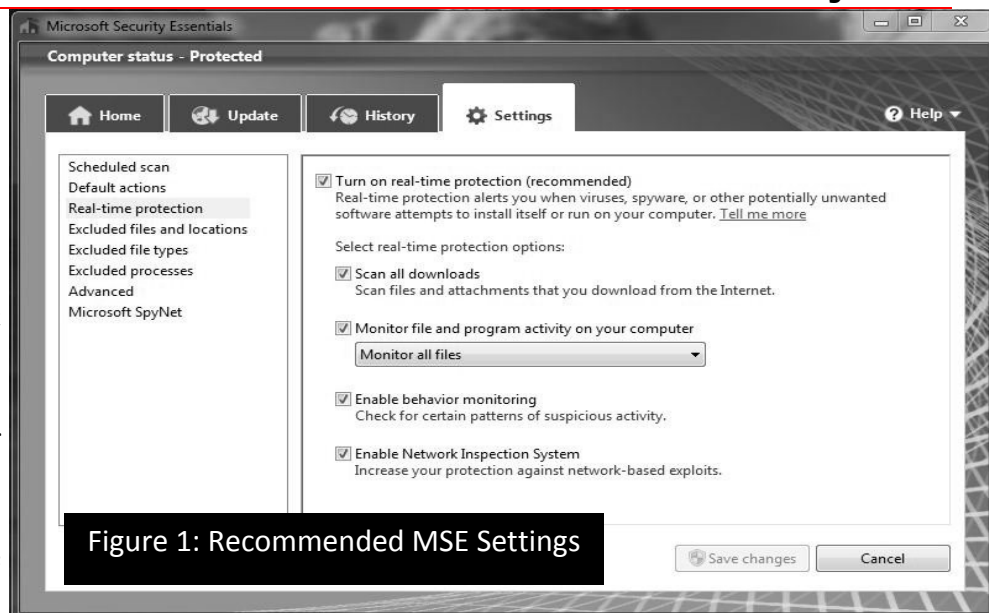
does seem to be more secure than earlier versions. So if you are still running Vista or WinXP, in my opinion, you should be seriously considering a change to Win 7. At the very least, whatever OS

Figure 2: MSE Protection

you are running, be sure to practice "safe computing" by installing MSE.

[EDITOR'S NOTE: At the risk of being redundant, let me repeat that MSE is best used in conjunction with a good anti–spyware program. While preparing this issue of THE DATABUS, my own machine was corrupted by malware that apparently came as a "toolbar" with a popular free file compression program. MSE could not clean it out, but Spybot, which I use in addition to MSE, did so.]

This article is copyright © 2011 by Brian K. Lewis, Ph.D. All rights reserved. It is also published as PDF file on the *Lewisfamilypubs.net* website.

Dr. Lewis is a former professor of physiology and has been working with personal computers for over 40 years. He may be contacted at bwsail at yahoo.com.

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City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (Home) (_____) _____-_____ (Work) (_____) _____–_____**x**_____

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