

The Space Coast PC Journal



Happy New Year!

Another one -----gone

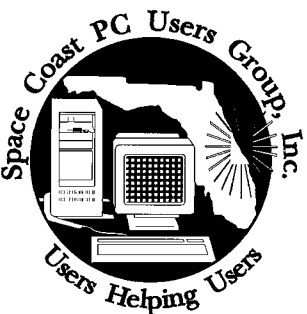
Here's hoping that 2021 will help us
forget the problems experienced
during 2020.

Wishing you and yours
a Healthy, Happy and Prosperous
New Year!!

**The Monthly Publication of the
Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc.**

Visit Our web Site at www.scpcug.com

*From Your
Board of Directors*



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All work on the Journal is performed by unpaid volunteers.

Submitting Articles to the Journal

We encourage all of our members to submit original computer-related articles for publication in *The Space Coast PC Journal*.

Writing a Product Review

It is really not that difficult to write a good review for *The Space Coast PC Journal*. These guidelines will help you get started:

Product information

- List the product name, release level, and manufacturer.

Use

- What does this product do?
- How easy is it to learn and use? Is it for beginners or does it have advanced features?
- List and describe some of the features. If this is an upgrade, what is new to this version?
- What did you like or dislike about it?
- Did you have to call Customer Support? What for? Were they helpful?

Installation

- How much disk space did the product take?
- How long did it take to install?
- Was it difficult to install?
- Specify requirements such as: DOS level, Windows level, Windows type, etc.

Recommendations

- Would you recommend this product?

Remember these are guidelines. They are not meant to be all-inclusive, nor should they limit your creativity. But all of them should be included as part of your article. Then the review will practically write itself!

Preparing Your Articles

To assist us in incorporating articles into the *Journal*, it would be helpful if certain minimum standards were followed. Use this quick-step guide:

Format: The preferred format is ASCII text files. We can also work with other formats, but check with the editor before using them.

Text: Single-space the text—even between paragraphs. Don't indent paragraphs. Use hard returns only at the ends of paragraphs. Use only one space after periods, colons, and question marks. Follow standard capitalization rules.

Use left justification only. Do not right justify or block your text. (Word processors add extra spaces between words to justify the text and each of those extra spaces must then be removed.)

Graphics: The preferred format for graphics accompanying your text is TIFF—in separate files from the text. Embedded graphics are not useable. Most image editing programs have a "resize" option to alter the size of graphics. Please try to keep your graphic file sizes to around 1 meg in size. Call the editor if you have questions.

Be sure to include your name and phone number so we may contact you if we have any questions. Anonymous articles will not be published.

Submit your article by uploading the file to ringram728@earthlink.net or bring your disk and hardcopy to the Monday meeting or mail to:

Editor, SCPCUG Journal
 Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc.
 1360 Mayflower Avenue
 Melbourne, Fl 32940-672

3Articles must be received by the 28th of the month to appear in the next issue, and all are, of course, subject to editing. □

From The Editor

You may not pay much attention to the source information provided at the beginning of each article seen here. The best of them will identify the author and the publication or website from which it was drawn.

When Judy Taylour of APCUG provides me with her PUSH list of articles for publication, each of them typically has the source information included.

When I don't have a PUSH list from which to draw the articles I include here, it's an entirely different ball game. APCUG provides a lot of user group details, frequently with their publications. I look for articles in them to copy.

If I have to scrounge around the Internet to find useful articles I often have no source information. I do my best to give full credit to the source, but at times it may be skimpy.

Ron Ingraham, Editor

The Space Coast PC Journal

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If there is a program not listed that you feel comfortable with, let us list you as one of our helplines contact ringram28@cfl.rr.com

**The SCPCUG Home Page is at:
http://www.scpcug.com
Check it out!!!!**

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Presentation

**Meet in the Auditorium
2 PM
Get together welcome
meeting
Discussion, Q&A**

Bring Some Friends

From Dan's desk..from page 6

as a local hard drive or a network accessible location such as a Network Accessible Storage (NAS) or a cloud storage. This drive can be used for other purposes so even that cost can be split across other activities. An external 5TB USB 3.0 drive can be bought for less than \$130 lately, so that's cheap insurance for not losing all of your data.

Set it once and it's automatic

As we saw in the sections above, once you setup the backup program, it will run automatically as long as the backup location is accessible and the computer is turned on at the scheduled time. Perhaps a repeating calendar reminder note will help make sure that you are always protected!

Restoring from a backup is best suited to situations where your hard drive is damaged and some files can no longer be accessed or the system won't even boot up. I've seen a lot of computers recently, where the owner complains of poor performance and upon investigation, I've been able to determine that it was a hard drive failing that was causing the lack of responsiveness. The hard drive would sometimes retry reading a file hundreds of times before either being successful or unsuccessful. This causes the hard drive to fall behind in any other requests for data and therefore the whole system slows down.

The File History app, which was introduced in Windows 8, is the best program to use for restoring individual files. Every time a file is created, changed or deleted a copy can be written to the file history backup drive. This drive can then be used to restore a previous version if required. This is a great recovery tool if you are ever a victim of a ransomware attack where your personal files are encrypted. You can add additional directories to be backed up in addition to the normal set of personal file folders.

The option of Save copies of files specifies how often File History runs automatic backups. The de-

fault is hourly, but you can set the frequency to 10, 15, 20 or 30 minutes; 3, 6, or 12 hours; or choose to back up files once a day. Please note that a new version is created only when at least one item has changed in the file. The Keep saved versions option specifies how long to keep the backups. By default, these are kept forever, but you can also select 1, 3, 6 or 9 months, or 1 or 2 years. If your backup drives are tight on space, you can select the "Until space is needed" option and risk losing older backups quickly.

The best approach is to use the Backup and Restore program on a regular basis, perhaps just using the System Image backup function, together with File History to fully protect all of your important files and folders. That way you will be protected against both hardware failures of the hard drive as well as accidental deletion or corruption of important documents.

Don't pass up the free cloud storage from Microsoft, Google and others that can supplement what you backup to a local/network drive. Cloud storage is impractical for full drive/image backups due to the extremely long time that it would take to do a full recovery over the internet, but for individual files, it's great. □



"Our internet really is slow."
George W. Bush winning the election is trending."



*From the
Cashier's Cage*

**Financial Report for Month Ending
December 31, 2020**

CHECKING

Beginning Balance	429.87
Ending balancee - includes \$8.41 snack fund	429.87

[ZAP!] Try This Near-Perfect Spam Filter By Bob Rankin, www.askbobrankin.com a Translator for the Technology Impaired According to researchers, it is estimated that about 54 percent of all email traffic is spam. But I rarely see any spam in my inbox. That's because Gmail blocks 99.9 per-

**Club Meeting Minutes
December 15, 2020**

President Dan Douglas called the meeting to order at 2:07 PM. Board Members present were: President Dan Douglas, Webmaster Curt Potsic and Secretary Barb Mead. Absent were Treasurer Irene Nelson, Journal/Learning Center Ron Ingraham, Vice President Larry Bennet and Membership Chairperson Linda Glassburn.

Attendance was 3 officers and 13 members for a total of 16 attendees.

Dan asked the group for their

input on the upcoming Christmas Party and solicited opinions on prices of park rentals and availability. Various members of the group were going to get locations, prices, and availabilities of surrounding parks with a decision to be made at the November meeting. Dan also reminded the group that due to COVID no one could bring potluck to this year's party and all sandwiches must be wrapped individually and cupcakes instead of sheet cake would be preferable. Barb volunteered to put together a list of items to bring that would be prepackaged to stay inside the lines on COVID recommendations such as individual sized potato chip bags, small bags of nuts, cans of soda, bottled water, etc.

Curt went over his webmaster report and discussed the Special Events page updates on contests and online workshops. He also drew our attention to the best resources for free books, movies and games from Review Geek, part of the How To Geek family of websites.

There was no drawing.

Meeting was adjourned at 3:47 PM

Respectfully submitted

Barbara Mead

Secretary



Dan's Desk

We've discussed the subjects of performing back-ups recently at our meetings, so I thought I would update the article I wrote on the topic back in 2018.

There are really two types of files that are required to be backed up. There are your personal files, normally stored in the following folders under your logon account in Windows: Desktop, Documents, Downloads, Favorites, Music, Pictures, and Videos. Each user that has an account on a PC has their own set of these folders. If the user only uses the programs that come with Windows, or has a standard set of programs that they add to Windows that are can be easily re-installed either from a DVD/CD backup or a download file, then that makes backup and recovery much easier. The other type of files to be backed up would be the Windows System Files. These include the Windows Operating System itself plus all of the programs/apps, files and data used by those programs/apps. If you have all of your personal files backed up and you have the files required to re-install your programs, then you can easily get a replacement PC or hard drive restored completely.

Just about every PC user has heard that they should backup their PC, but based upon what I've seen, only about 20% have an active plan in place. The reasons that I've been told that users do not perform backups regularly are along these lines:

- I don't know how to set it up
- It will slow down my computer too much
- It's too costly
- I forget to do it

None of these are acceptable excuses anymore! Lets go through these one by one and see how to

address the issues.

Setting up your backup

In Control Panel, under every version of Windows since Vista, there is an app named Backup and Restore or Backup and Restore (Windows 7). This app is suitable for 99% of the user community. This app lets you pick a target location for where your backup will be stored either on a local drive or a network storage location, which can include cloud storage. A schedule can be set for what frequency you want to use for creating your backups – daily and what time of day or weekly by day of the week and time of day or monthly by day of the month and at what time of day. You can also determine if you want just your file libraries backed up or the whole disk(s). In both cases a System Image will always be created as well. The System Image can be used by a restore program to exactly duplicate your hard drive onto a new PC or a new hard drive. The retention period can also be set for how long to keep a backup for or you can allow Windows to manage the space and to automatically replace the oldest backup with the newest.

Selecting the best time to perform your backup

When you select the time of day to run the backup as described in the previous section, you must pick a time that will be when your computer will be powered on. The backup program cannot power on a PC that is turned off to perform a backup. So if you use each Sunday at 7pm, make sure you leave your PC on every Sunday evening. A backup that runs when you are using the PC can impact your responsiveness and will take longer to complete than running at a time that no one is using the PC.

Cost of running the backup

Since the backup program is included with every copy of Windows, there is no software cost. In addition, almost all external backup drives include a backup program of some sort. Cloning/backup software from Macrium is also recommended. The only cost is that of providing a backup drive, either

Continued.....page 4



Webmaster Wanderings

Main Monthly Meeting is Jan 21, Face Masks Are Now A Mandatory Requirement to attend our meetings, etc.

Journal Current Issue page updated:

Current Issue page is redesigned. January Journal is posted along with 12 past Issues. All are available for download or reading online.

Journal Description & Staff page updated:

Current Journal Preview link changed to Current Journal Issue.

Main Meeting page updated: Now shows all meeting dates for 2021.

Learning Center page updated: Now shows all meeting dates for 2021.

Jere’s Tech Tips

Windows, Android, Linux tips from Jere Minich, APCUG Advisor, Region 5 (AL, FL, GA, SC).

New items include:

- How to Add Trusted Sites in the Windows 10 Control Panel
- 4 Best Tools to Recover Data from Hard Drives and Memory Cards
- How to Increase Your Laptop Battery Life
- Where Did the System Control Panel Go on Windows 10?
- How to Show All Your Browser Tabs in ALT+Tab on Windows 10
- How to Use the New Android Screen

Recorder
25 Insanely Useful Websites That’ll Come In Handy Someday.
<https://apcug2.org/jerestips/>

APCUG 2020 Contests Results

APCUG 2020 Contest categories were eBulletin, Digital Photography, Newsletter, and Website. Contests ended Sep 30. Winners were announced at the APCUG Annual Meeting on Nov 7

SCPCUG won 2nd Place in the Website Contest!

A PDF with all 2020 Contest Winners is available for download at:

<https://apcug2.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/2020-Contest-Winners-Bill-James.pdf>

APCUG’s Fall Virtual Technology Conference (VTC-38)

VTC-38 was held Nov 7. Topics included: Navigating the Post-COVID Era / Staying Safe and Secure / How Technology Has Changed the Way We Listen to Music / GeeksOnTour. View Presenter Bios and get links to Presentation PDFs and YouTube Videos when available at:

<https://apcug2.org/apcugs-free-2020-fall-virtual-technology-conference-vtc38/>

APCUG 2020 Fall Online Workshops

These 4 workshops “**Home Automation for Seniors**” were on the 2nd Wednesday of the month (Sep-Dec). The Workshops explained why home automation is important to Seniors. **Sep 9** – Why do I need it? Products on the market, costs, security, & some real-world testimonials.

Continued.....page 8

Webmaster Wanderings.....from page 7

Home Automation Workshop #1

Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RoPLaU509HI>

Oct 14 – Where do I start? Plan a home automation project & best practices

Home Automation Workshop #2

Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JKAHw-S5Zx8>

Nov 11 – Lights, doorbells, locks, and cameras. **Completed, No Video available yet.**

Dec 9 – Doing it myself vs. Having it done. **Completed, No Video available yet.**
More info on the Special Events page.

APCUG 2020 Password Workshop Manager

This workshop took place on Sep 29, Oct 1, & Oct 29. Attendees learned how to solve password management problems using an open-source solution called Bitwarden.

Part 1 - Sep 29 Workshop Video at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fE5V_DZHneM

Part 2 - Oct 1 Workshop on Bitwarden Installfest Video at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gCgoO4msXvs>

Part 3 - Oct 29 Tweaking Bitwarden

Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R0gXY1wc12o>

APCUG 2020 Linux Wednesday Workshop

The Linux team introduces you to the world of Linux starting with an introduction to Linux and answer the question “why so many.”

Linux Workshop #1, Oct 28 - “Getting Started” Video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtXeFPOg9>

Linux Workshop #2, Nov 18 - “Getting and Installing Linux” **Completed, No Video**

available yet

Linux Workshop #3, Dec 2 - “Distros and Desktops” **Completed, No Video available yet**

Linux Workshop #4, Dec 16 - “Software, Applications and Package Management”. **Completed,**

No Video

available yet

More info on the Special Events page.

2021 APCUG Virtual Technology Conference Dates

Future VTC dates for next year are: Feb 13, May 1, Aug 21, and Nov 6.

The November Monthly Meeting summary is posted. There was no Christmas Party this year due to Covid-19. The January Monthly Meeting is Jan 21, 2021 and will be another Computer Round Table Q & A session. Guest Speakers do not wish to come during Covid-19 pandemic. Face Masks Are A Mandatory Requirement to attend our meetings.

1 New Link

digitaltrends.com - Has Best Products, Product Reviews, Tech News, Deals, Buying Guides, Downloads, and more. <https://www.digitaltrends.com/>

General Information Links page (<http://www.scpcug.com/infolink.html>) - **Miscellaneous Links**

Our mission is to guide our audience through an increasingly complex digital world by humanizing technology and filtering out the noise. Digital Trends, the largest independent premium technology publisher in the world, is an award-winning multimedia brand that guides consumers to the best products and services available today. We cover tech for the way you live: not just gadgets, but the powers they unlock in your life, the story of

the people who made them, and the way they're reshaping the world outside your window.

Misc Items

Edit Office Documents in Gmail

Google is making it easier to work with Office files. You can now directly edit Office attachments in Gmail. No need to export documents to Microsoft Office. It's similar to how Google Docs and Sheets work . These changes will help people working from home. This Gmail update allows for a quick document edit and resend without leaving the Gmail app. Google is also planning to release new updates for Google Sheets and Docs.

Hyundai Acquires \$1.1 billion Interest in Boston Dynamics

Hundai will now control 80% with Softbank (through one of its affiliates) retaining 20% of this robotics company. The deal is expected to be finalized in June 2021. Hyundai decided to purchase a controlling stake because it "possesses multiple key technologies for high-performance robots equipped with perception, navigation, and intelligence." Also, Boston Dynamics has offices in Boston & Silicon Valley. This makes it easier to recruit top talents & collaborate with potential partners. Hyundai also plans on developing humanoid robots for services such as caregiving at hospitals.

Take HDR Photos with Google Camera Go App

The Google Camera Go app is now rolling out to give users the ability to take HDR photos on low-end smartphones. It also gives the ability to take long-exposure Night Mode photos. The HDR photos will have crisper details and richer color when taken at any time of the day. The HDR capability works by taking multiple images at different exposures, which are then combined to reveal much greater detail in shadows and areas with bright highlights. Google Camera

Go lets you toggle this HDR setting. Google only technically supports a small pool of smartphones, meaning that this is a limited rollout of an impressive camera feature.

What's New in Windows 10's 21H1 Update

Windows 10 version 21H1 update comes out in the Spring of 2021. It will be a bigger update with more new features & follows the Fall 2020 version 20H2 update. One of the features I am looking forward to is "Windows Voice Typing" replacing Windows Dictation. Windows Voice Typing is to be new & improved over Windows Dictation. A user can type with his voice anywhere there is a

text box on his Windows 10 PC. A complete list with details of all the new features as presently known for the 21H1 update is available at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/685996/whats-new-in-windows-10s-21h1-update-coming-spring-2021/>. □

A Good Laptop for Spreadsheets ?

*by John Stampfel
BBS TechTalk*

[The following was first posted on the BBS, then submitted by John Stampfel as an article. Fred Kagel posted a reply to the BBS post, so that is included with this article.] The amazing thing about the previously posted answers to the question about a good laptop for spreadsheets is how they ignored the most important factor of all: the Excel installation itself.

Continued.....page 10

Good Laptop.....from page 9

Let's suppose you stick with 32-bit Excel 2013 or the like because you already have a copy. When installing Office, the default is 32-bit. But guess what—32-bit Excel can only ever address 4 GB of memory, no matter how much more you have installed on your computer. And that memory has to be shared between the Excel application, any add-ins you are using, and the open workbooks. Frankly, it isn't enough for heavy use of spreadsheets.

Figure out what you have using the File... Account...About Excel menu item. You may have 64-bit Windows, but likely got stuck with 32-bit Excel because that's the default. Note that all Office apps need to share the same "bitness" so you'll need to uninstall Office (as well as Visio and Project) before re-installing and making sure you choose 64-bit. You won't lose any email or settings when you do this.

Which is the best version of Excel? If you are an Excel power user, you want the version of Excel you get with a Microsoft 365 subscription. That assures you of getting the features that are added almost every month, and which won't be available to perpetual license users until they purchase the next version.

Features like 1000 times faster VLOOKUP, time-delayed stock prices and stock price history, dynamic arrays, cool new functions like TEXTJOIN, UNIQUE and FILTER, and more robust performance (fewer bugs, freezes and hangs).

Are you a heavy user of VBA code? While worksheet formulas support multiple CPU cores, VBA code supports only a single CPU. So a higher clock speed might work out better for you than a 6-core CPU. Although I agree that a fast CPU and 16 GB or more RAM are nice to have, you'll probably get more benefit from using a bigger monitor.

Get a 15" or larger laptop, and make sure your eyes can see the spreadsheet text when using its best resolution. Every Windows computer trackpad has felt like a penalty box. I turned all of them off, and used a mouse instead. If you want to experience a trackpad that works like it ought to, try a MacBook Pro.

I agree with the advice to seek out a keyboard with a numeric keypad. Not the numbers above QWERTY, but rather a separate set of numbers like a telephone. Besides giving you faster data entry, the numeric keypad can be used to access special characters if you know their ASCII key code. For example, ° can be produced in any Windows app using ALT + 0176 on the numeric keypad. The numbers above QWERTY don't work for this purpose. I've memorized the ASCII key codes for a half-dozen special characters I type frequently.

Fred Kagel responded: Actually, I don't know if this would help John's friend or any of us Excel Workshop members, but there are memory limit extenders (patches) for 32-bit Excel. Discussion can be found here: <https://www.excelguru.ca/blog/2016/05/10/32-bit-excel-memory-limit-increase/>

Where today is our source of trusted information?

President's Message By John Stampfel

jstampfel+bcug[at]gmail [dot] com

Television has been common place in our homes for over 70 years. Whether you watch much television or not, it is doubtful that you don't have at least one television in your home. According to Wikipedia, "During the 1950's television was the primary medium for influencing public opinion." And I believe that we did not question the truth and accuracy of what was presented to us on television. Who questioned Edward R. Murrow, or Walter Cronkite, or Dan Rather?

I think that we understood that newspapers often

spouted the editorial positions of their owners or publishers. We didn't, I think, have those types of ideas about the owners of TV stations, or TV news. We didn't expect that, except for sponsors choosing which kinds of shows they sponsored, we didn't think that they controlled content.

A simpler world.

The internet emerged in the U.S. in the 1970's, but did not become viable to the general public until the early 1990's. BCUG participated in this evolution of computers and communications. In the early days the users of the internet were pretty knowledgeable people – one had to be to even get anything working. This lent, I'll suggest, to the content on the internet to be viewed as authoritative. Then the technology became cheaper, much easier to use, and required less scientific knowledge to use.

Look where we are now: computers in our pockets, movie theaters going out of business due to the combined affects of coronavirus pandemic constraints and fast streaming of the latest movies to our cheap TVs and devices. Three year olds are entertained by games on tiny radio connected devices.

We still trust very much of the information available on the internet. The time. Sports scores. A lot of the news. YouTube videos of how to fix our washing machine.

Something called "social media" has come in. Maybe useful or maybe a disease of the internet. Or the internet age. People we do not know, who have no "credentials" to cause them to be credible (did you notice, CREDible and CREDentials have the same root. OK, really credentials comes from credentia, meaning "belief", but that, or both, come from credo, to believe) are "influencers", or getting a lot of views on "social media sites". None of them, whether the "posters", or the website owners, or sponsors, or anyone, seems actually responsible for the truth and accuracy of what is presented.

The internet has taken over, supplanting even print media as the "primary medium for influencing public opinion." The pandemic situation, with our children's schools closed to in-person education, has now moved education to the internet.

Perhaps you, as I, have noticed that the communication

channel afforded by Zoom is not as wide as in-person communication. It doesn't really give a classroom experience. With the possibility of several children stretching their hands up at once to offer an answer. I am not a teacher, nor really have personal information about this, but I strongly expect our young students are missing something. And as we, as a society, have questioned the truth of what we are fed over the internet in all its forms, our children are being unconsciously also taught to distrust what society teaches. Or worse, believing the inaccurate, non-truths they get from this most pervasive medium.

There was a time — once we got past adolescence — when adults, especially our parents knew nothing at all, when experience was valued as a source of accurate, useful information. Today, I think things change so quickly and the breadth of an area of knowledge so wide that it is hard, if not impossible, to gather sufficient "experience". We must struggle to get the current information.

We recently had a talk by Lee Maxwell about "right to repair". He pointed out that we cannot get accurate, up-to-date information about the products we have purchased, making it very difficult to repair them ourselves. Software has the "benefit" that it is easy to change, but we hate the continual updates. It is so attractive to be able to "take control" of our lives, our environment, our things. □



Controlling Win10's sometimes hyperactive security apps

By Fred Langa

Win10's built-in security tools offer excellent protection but can be annoying with frequent update cycles and tons of notifications.

In fact, the amount of activity made one reader wonder whether his security setup was actually broken! Here's how to tell, and how to make it behave better.

Plus: More on Win10's 30 built-in Troubleshooters.

Continued.....page 12

Fred Langa.....from page 11

Microsoft Defender is way too intrusive for his tastes

Like many of us, AskWoody Plus subscriber Andy Lamarre finds some of Win10's default behaviors a wee bit annoying; in this case, it's the Defender anti-malware/security suite.

- “Hi! Is it normal that my Windows 10 requires that I update Defender's Security intelligence almost every day?

“Is Windows the only antivirus that requires an update almost every day?”

If Defender's activities are getting in your way, it's a problem that definitely needs fixing.

But the root cause likely isn't the need for regular updates. It's a hostile world out there, with new threats arriving every day. All the best security apps and suites — including Win10's — need frequent updates to stay current with evolving threats.

Rather, I think Andy's problem is that these updates aren't the unobtrusive background tasks they're supposed to be. That suggests that something's malfunctioning or misconfigured in his setup.

So, let's see how Windows security updating is supposed to work; how to troubleshoot problems; how to manually update, if needed; and how to lessen any lingering operational annoyances (e.g., too many updates, scans, or notifications).

Normally, Microsoft Defender (a.k.a. Windows Defender — Microsoft is changing the name again) checks for new Security intelligence updates (i.e., malware definitions/signatures) about 15 minutes before any scheduled anti-malware scans of your PC.. This ensures that your scans will always use the very latest definitions.

If you have Defender set for daily scans (we'll come back to this later), then Windows will indeed check for security updates every day. And most days, there are a

t least several security updates available for download and installation. The updates are released on an ongoing basis throughout the day; Windows simply grabs the latest-available definitions whenever it checks in.

There can be a lot of updates. For example, one recent random day — January 3, 2021 — Microsoft released 10 incremental Security intelligence updates throughout the day, most of which included multiple items. All totaled, these 10 updates contained new and updated data for almost 200 malware variants, including many rated as «severe» threats.

That's just one day's activity!

So, some degree of daily Defender updating activity is actually a good and necessary thing, as long as it's neither unduly intrusive nor a symptom of an error.

The intrusiveness is easy to manage — you'll see in a sec — but the more serious matter is ensuring that any seemingly excessive Defender activity isn't the result of an error. For example, a glitch might cause Defender to try to download and install the same definitions over and over, leading to unending activity and tons of notifications.

Fortunately, it's easy to check whether Windows Security intelligence is properly updating. (Note: Microsoft is still moving things around in Win10's Settings. The following instructions are for Win10 20H2; previous versions may have minor differences.)

Open Win10's Virus & threat protection. (e.g., type virus in the Win10 search box, and select Virus & threat protection when it's offered; or navigate to Settings/ Update & Security/ Windows Security and click on Virus & threat protection.

On the Virus & threat protection page, find the Virus & threat protection updates item. The summary text there will indicate whether Windows thinks you're up to date, and when the last update check was performed. (Figure 1)

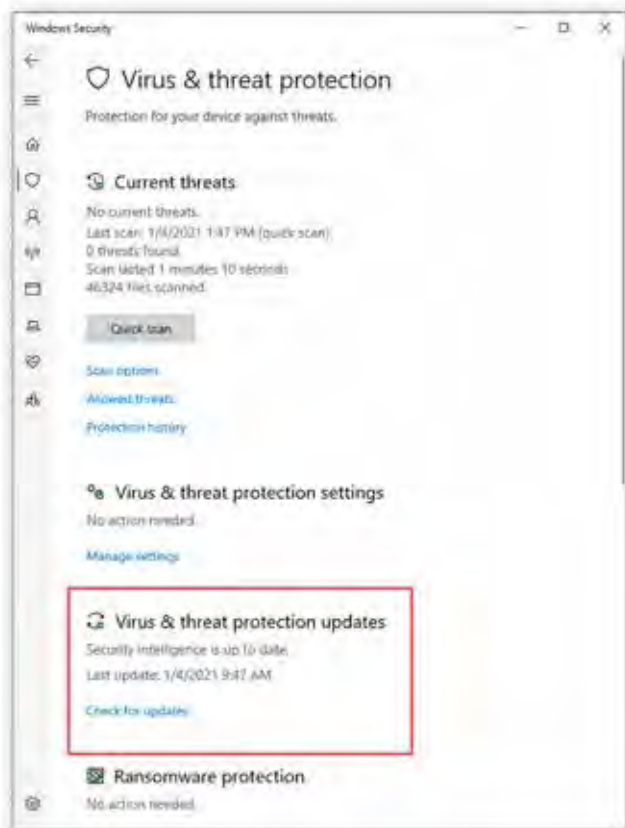


Figure 1. The summary information is sufficient for a cursory check.

That summary might be enough by itself, but if you're checking because you suspect something's wrong with Defender, dig a little deeper: click the Check for updates link. A Protection updates window will open.

There, under Security intelligence, you'll also see the exact version number of the Security intelligence update your PC is currently using. (Figure 2)

To see whether the installed version is indeed the latest version, leave that dialog open and use your browser to navigate to the [support page](#) («Security intelligence updates for Microsoft Defender Antivirus and other Microsoft anti-malware»). There, in the middle of the page under Latest Security intelligence update, you'll see the version number of the latest available update on the Microsoft servers.

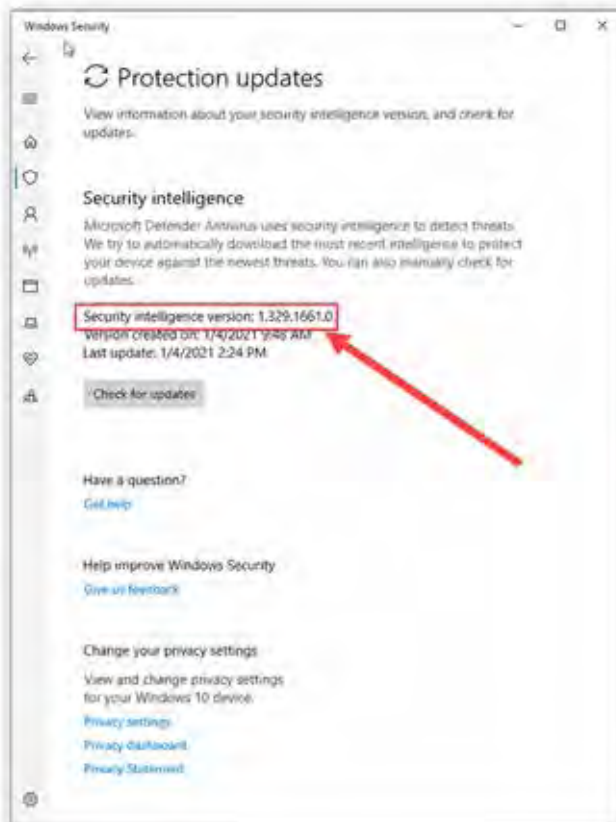


Figure 2. The Protection updates page shows Security intelligence's installed version number.

If your installed version matches or is very close to the version posted by Microsoft, your system is updating correctly. For example, if the version number's leftmost digits are identical and the rightmost digits are close (say, something like version X.X.1571 versus X.X.1565), you're OK. Don't sweat minor differences: PCs that update security once a day will always grab the latest-available Security intelligence rollup; updates released later that day will be picked up on the next day's sweep.

If any of this is unclear and you're not sure how old your installed version really is, one more click will give you the answer. Go to the Security intelligence change logs [page](#). Use the pull-down menu in the middle of the page to select any version of interest (e.g., the version installed on your PC); you'll see its exact release date

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and time, plus the complete contents of that update.

If your system's version is out of date, return to the [previous support page](#). Toward the bottom of that page, you'll find download links to manually update

Defender and all of Microsoft's main security offerings. The downloaded files are plain-vanilla, click-to-run EXEs that bypass some of the potential pitfalls of Defender's on-the-fly automated updates and so may work better for some PCs.

Still no luck? Toward the top of that same page, under Automatic updates, you'll find a link to the semi-automated [Windows Update troubleshooter](#) («Fix Windows Update errors») plus explanations for manually activating Defender if it's off; and force-triggering manual security updates either by GUI or command line.

But what if everything's up to date and checks out OK, and Defender's still annoying?

The main complaint about Defender's normal operation is that it generates too many popup notifications. They can be controlled in two ways: by simply turning off most of the notifications and/or by adjusting the scanning schedule.

To control the notifications, open Win10's Virus & threat protection as described earlier. On the Virus & threat protection page, find the Virus & threat protection settings item, and click Manage Settings. The Virus & threat protection settings dialog will open.

Scroll down to Notifications and click Change notification settings. The Windows Security Notifications page will open; make whatever adjustments you wish. (Figure 3.)

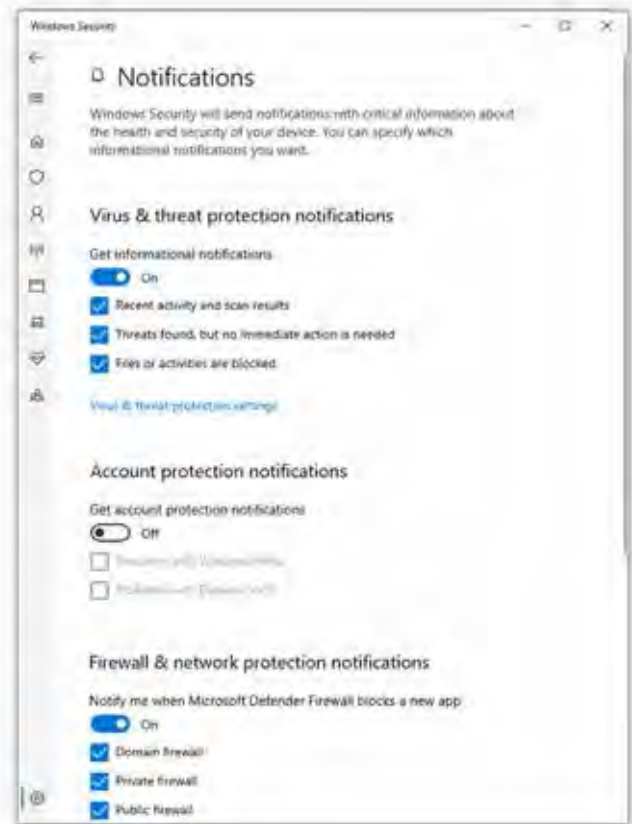


Figure 3. The Windows Security Notifications page lets you manage security popups.

For more detail on managing Win10 security notifications, including Group Policy settings, see the Microsoft support article, "Configure the notifications that appear on endpoints."

To adjust Defender's scheduling, including scan type, run dates and times of day, launch triggers, and overall frequency, use Windows' standard Task Scheduler. There's no special sauce needed: adjusting Defender via Task Scheduler works the same as with any other app. If you'd like a refresher, see the Microsoft support article "Schedule a scan in Microsoft Defender Antivirus."

With successfully updated files and a normal frequency of scans, perhaps with some or all of Defender's notifications turned off, your PC's anti-malware activities should recede into the background, effectively protecting you without undue annoyance! ☐

Got Malware? Here's How To Check and What To Do

*by Scambuster Keith,
Scambusters Newsletter,
January 13, 2021*

Every week, an estimated 2,500 websites become newly compromised either with malware or links that lead to them. Every week. That means 130,000 new threats in a year. Every year.

You'd be an unusually lucky person never to land on one of these danger sites. Worse, today's malware is better than ever at doing its job of stealing or freezing data, or of finding its way onto other network-connected devices.

Last week, we told you about the different types of malware and how they get onto your device. (If you missed it, see <https://scambusters.org/malware1.html>). So, now, let's give you the keys you need to spot it, lock it out, or remove it if it breaks through your security.

How to Avoid a Malware Threat

Here are the top five things you must do if you want to minimize the

chances of a malware infection:

Install security software and keep it up to date. This is a no-brainer. It's your most powerful defense. The best security programs and apps not only monitor your email, they also warn you if you're visiting a known dangerous website and they let you inspect individual files before opening them. Some offer deep scanning, which identifies malware like root kits, which we discussed last week.

In addition, keep all other software up to date. New threats emerge every day. Good programs and app developers monitor these and modify their software to beat the crooks. Unless you have good reasons not to, you should allow these programs to update automatically. Also, make sure your hardware/firmware is up to date. Three quarters of all hardware-driven malware is found on compromised routers. Check with manufacturers to learn how to update.

Avoid risky websites. These include so-called "adult" websites, foreign sites, especially in eastern Europe and China, and those offering free stuff that would normally cost a lot. Always check your browser address bar to make sure you're in the right place. If you mistyped or clicked a bad link, the page you're on may look like the real thing, so re-read the website address carefully.

Think before you click. If you never click an attachment or a link in an email or website, it's highly likely that you'll never get infected. Of course, that's impractical for most of us, but caution should be your watchword. Email is the most common starting point for malware infection. Look out for attachments with vague one-word titles like "letter," "invoice," "warning." And never

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believe or take for granted that a message from a name you recognize actually came from them.

Limit or ban access by others to your device. As soon as you hand it, or your keyboard, to someone else, you've lost control. Just say "no."

See also our note below about keeping track of emerging threats.

Do I Already Have Malware on My Device?

Maybe it's too late and you already have malware on your device. How can you tell? Here are some useful ways of finding out.

Run your security software regularly. Most anti-virus programs and apps check for malware automatically but, by default, they usually run a "quick scan," which only checks the most likely places to find malware. Crooks know this and try to hide their malicious code elsewhere. So, either change the default setting to schedule a "full scan" or run this manually. Include occasional deep scans if they're available.

Some of the big security software firms offer free online scans. But they're a less-than-satisfactory substitute for device-based security.

A dramatic slowdown in the device's operating speed. All computers slow down with age, but if things take abnormally longer than they used to, this could be a sign that malware is at work behind the scenes -- perhaps either searching for data or using the machine as part of a botnet (as described last week).

If your computer's hard drive is running all the time or the amount of free space on the hard drive is less than it should be, you may be infected. If you don't know how to check your

hard drive, search online for instructions or install a program that will check disk speed and capacity for you (search for "hard drive activity tracker"). If your computer fans are running faster and more often than normal, this is a good indicator of increased processing activity.

Certain programs start misbehaving or your entire system keeps crashing. Perhaps your browser home page has suddenly changed or new page tabs or extensions appear.

You start getting pop-ups (other than from your security software) warning of problems with your device and inviting you to click a link, visit a particular website, or phone a 1-800 number. Or you start seeing lots of pop-up ads on your screen.

Your security software either won't run or can't update.

Keep yourself informed of latest threats so you know what to look for. Sites like Scambusters and many more regularly run alerts of new dangers. All the big Internet security firms produce regularly updated lists online. For example: Norton (<https://tinyurl.com/Scambusters-2101021>), McAfee (<https://tinyurl.com/Scambusters-2101022>) and Kaspersky (<https://tinyurl.com/Scambusters-2101023>). You can also subscribe for regular email bulletins from many of these sites.

How to Remove Malware

This is a topic suitable for an entire book -- because it depends on the type of malware and, often, the particular program or app that's hosting the infection.

In each case, there's likely a specific set of instructions for removing the software. You can usually find these online. In some cases, you may need

to call in a tech professional to undo the damage.

However, here are three main routes for dealing with a malware infection yourself

1. Identification and removal by your security software. This might be done automatically (though the program should still tell you what's happening). Or you might discover the infection from a manual scan and receive removal options from the software.

If you use Windows, Microsoft often regularly produces and updates a "Malicious Software Removal Tool." For details on how to use this, visit <https://tinyurl.com/Scambusters-2101024>

Note that, occasionally, security programs can make mistakes, flagging an item that isn't malware. Usually, you'll get the option to "quarantine" the item until you know for sure.

2. Try simply restarting your device. Disconnect it from the Internet. Then, if you know how to restart in safe mode, this might give you an opportunity to remove and/or reinstall the program or app you suspect is hosting the malware. Otherwise, you must do this manually.

3. Reset your device. This is the most radical, catch-all response -- effectively restoring to factory settings or reinstalling the operating system.

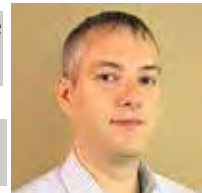
If you've been wise enough to back up your system and data before the infection, you can restore from that. Or you can use "system restore" to switch your device back to an earlier date.

If this doesn't work, the only way to be sure you remove the malware is to do a total reset, not a partial one.

Malware is a continually evolving threat. In this issue, we've been able to cover only the bare bones of dealing with malware. Defeating it can be a complicated, time-consuming process. Save yourself the anguish by running a no-clicks policy backed by the best security software you can afford. □

Chrome Defaults to Secure Website Version

by John Lister on January, 8 2021



Google Chrome will now look for a secure version of a website first by default. It could mean a tiny delay accessing some sites, but should nudge more sites to increase security.

The change to the browser involves how it handles cases where users simply type in the domain (such as infopackets.com) rather than the full website address (such as <http://www.infopackets.com> or <https://www.infopackets.com>). The browser being able to convert one to the other makes it much quicker to type website addresses and allows browsers to use a single space for users to input both website addresses and search terms.

Until now Chrome's default when making this conversion was to try the <http://> version of the address, thus connecting to the insecure version of a site if one exists. This means data goes back and forth between the user and the site in an unencrypted form that could potentially be intercepted and read, sometimes without anyone's knowledge.

HTTP On Way Out

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From the start of 2021 Chrome will instead try the https:// version of the address, thus connecting to the secure version of the site, again if one exists. In this case the data to and from the site is encrypted, greatly reducing the chances of anyone who intercepts the data being able to read it. (Source: sophos.com)

Https has always been the recommended option for pages which inherently involve transferring sensitive data, for example when submitting a form or accessing an online account. Many online players, including Google, would eventually like all sites to only use https and ditch http altogether.

Secure Becomes Faster

It's always been a bit of a chicken-and-egg situation as whichever version of an address (http or https) Google tries first. Google now believes https is becoming the norm and it makes more sense to have http-only sites be the ones that are potentially slower to load. (Source: ghacks.net)

This could mean site owners which pay close attention to their site analytics will be inspired to finally make the change. It also means sites which currently offer both http and https versions will start to see a much higher proportion of users connecting through https, making them more comfortable in ditching the http version.

What's Your Opinion?

Is this a smart move by Google? Do you pay much attention to whether a website uses an https connection? Do you type website addresses in full or just the domain name?

Whenever you find yourself on the side of the majority, it is time to pause and reflect.

Mark Twain



Why Do Pictures in Email Sometimes Show as Attachments, and Sometimes in the Message?

Pictures in email don't always display. The reasons are varied and confusing, but I'll review the three most common causes of problems and what you need to do.

I often get pictures sent to me. Sometimes when I open the mail, I see the pictures automatically, other times instead of the picture all I see is something like pic123.jpg, and I have to click on each attachment separately to see them. This thing kind of comes and goes on its own. Can you please solve the mystery?

It is a bit of a mystery, involving a complex mix of email formats, email programs, and email security settings.

It may look like it comes and goes, but there's method behind the apparent madness.

Email formats (rich or plain), as well as choices made by the sender (to attach or place in-line), and security settings on your machine protecting you from spammers all impact where, how, or even if pictures in email are displayed.

Email format

Part of what determines how the email is displayed to you is the format the sender used when they wrote their email. Email can be formatted to display images in-line (in the body of the message) or as attachments.

HTML, or Rich Text formatted email, allow images to be embedded

within the message body. There are different ways to do this. The image can be included within the email as a hidden attachment, or the image can be fetched from a website. In either case, the image appears within the body of the message.

HTML email also allow images to be included as regular attachments, without any relationship to the message body.

Plain text email, on the other hand, only allows for images as attachments.

If your sender chose HTML format (the default these days), it's their choice as to whether to display the images in-line or include them as attachments.

Email programs

Some email programs try to be helpful.

When they receive an email with images as attachments, they automatically display the attachments after the message. This means you don't have to open each attachment by hand; you just scroll down below the message, and there they are.

This can be confusing because you see the attachments as part of the message body — albeit at the end — when they are not. When you switch to a different email program that behaves differently, you may think it is broken. Neither approach is right or wrong; they're simply different.

Yet another possibility is that some email programs display in-line images as "normal" attachments in addition to displaying them in the message body.

Remember I said one of the ways images can be shown in the message body is as hidden attachments referenced from within the body?

Some email programs simply ignore the "hidden" part and do both: display the image in-line, and then also as attachments, to be listed like any other after the body.

Email security settings

Your email program's security settings have a major role in determining how in-line images are displayed.

If those images were included as hidden attachments with the email, most email programs automatically show images in the body of an HTML message. No external reference is required; everything is in the message.

If, instead, the images are fetched

from an external website, then most programs will not display them until you specifically indicate they should be. Even then, you'll need to be connected to the internet in order to fetch the images. This fetching from a website can act as a flag to the sender that you've opened the email. If that email was spam, then the spammer knows the email they sent to was valid. The result? You get more spam.

Some programs allow you to indicate certain senders are "safe", and images in email coming from those addresses can be displayed immediately. Other programs assume the same thing if a sender is in your contacts or address book.

Occasionally, security software outside of your email program can also prevent images from being displayed properly.

Three rules of thumb

You can't control how your sender

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formats the email you're getting, but there are some steps you can take to maximize the chances you'll see images. Exactly how you do these, and perhaps even whether you need to, depends on what email program (and possibly what security software) you use.

Understand how your email program handles images as attachments, and whether or not you should expect to see them below the body. If it's important to you, see if there's a setting to enable it. If not, and it's very important to you, consider using a different mail program.

Add the addresses of people you know and/or expect email from to your address book, your contacts, and/or your "safe senders" list.

Make sure your security software doesn't get in the way of your email program. For example, if your email program is blocking and allowing images from the right sets of senders, there's no reason to have a firewall try to do the same thing.

Understanding how pictures are created and handled in email will make dealing with it all much less frustrating. □

How to use Microsoft's new emoji keyboard

By Nancy DeMarte, Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL www.thestug.org

If you are an Apple user, you probably know about emojis. These little head icons express moods by the looks on their faces. They can be part of emails or text messages or any place where text can be typed.

The emoji collection on my iPhone has over 100 faces, each with a recognizable facial expression, but the gallery goes way beyond faces. You can send emoji animals, objects, groups of people, plants and flowers, phases of the moon, food and drinks, sports, and many more.

The emoji was created by the Japanese. The term was formed from the combination of the Japanese words for "picture" and "character". In Western countries, Emoji was originally called Pictograph. Emojis became so popular that a reference site, Emojipedia.org, was created in 2013. It is a search engine for emojis and is worth a visit.

Emojis can be used in all the big social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, as well as email programs and other Internet places where you can type. Microsoft has included a traditional on-screen keyboard (OSK) without emojis since the debut of Windows 7. Perhaps noticing the popularity of emojis, Microsoft created its own gallery of emojis and put them in an emoji on-screen keyboard. This keyboard was one of the feature updates Microsoft included with the Windows 10's Fall 2017 Creator Update. It was improved in April 2018 and is now featured among the Ease of Access group of tools in Settings.

To use this keyboard, you are encouraged to enable it, but if you are current with Windows updates, you may be able to skip these steps. The enabling steps begin by clicking the Start button > Settings > Ease of Access. Then scroll down to Keyboard and drag the Off dot to the right under the heading, "Use your device without a physical keyboard."

Today, most users can easily open the emoji keyboard on their screens by pressing the Windows key while clicking the period or semi-colon key. This works for touch screens, too.

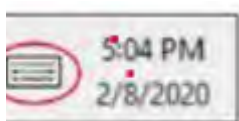


The keyboard contains three major categories along the top: Emoji, Kaomoji, and Symbols. The Emoji category includes the smiley faces and other objects like those seen in Apple products. Kaomoji includes facial expressions made of punctuation marks and other odd lines, some of which are Japanese. The Symbols category includes Latin symbols, international currency, the copyright mark, and others.



Each category can be scrolled down for more choices. Below are a few tips for using the Windows emoji keyboard:

1. To open the keyboard, click or touch the Windows key and the period or semi-colon.
2. Drag the emoji keyboard anywhere within the window.
3. To close the keyboard, click the X or the ESC key.
4. The magnifying glass symbol is a search engine for emojis. . The clock with hands set at 3:00 shows the most recently used emojis.
6. Emoji categories are pictured across the bottom of the keyboard.
7. There is a scroll bar on the Emoji keyboard, but it isn't obvious. It is a short, thin vertical line on the right edge of the keyboard. See the red box around the scroll line in the illustration. Move your mouse over the line to enlarge the scrollbar and scroll for more emojis.



You can pin the emoji keyboard to the taskbar to make it larger and easier to see. First, rightclick the taskbar and left-click the "Show touch keyboard" button. That will add a small keyboard next to the time and date at the right end of the taskbar, as shown.

Click this keyboard to open the traditional on-screen keyboard which now includes the emoji icon. (Shown below) Click the face and scroll horizontally to see large versions of all the emojis for each category. (It too is a fine horizontal line below the emojis.)



Then try out a few emojis on friends. They usually bring on a smile.☑



Windows FREE Snip and Sketch Tool is new

by Jim Cerny, Forums Coordinator

From the December 2019 issue, STUG Monitor,

www.thestug.org
imcerny123@gmail.com.

The new Windows “Snip and Sketch” tool was part of the Windows 10 October 2018 update. This tool is intended to REPLACE the old “Snipping Tool” of previous Windows editions.

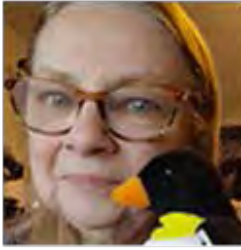
But they (Microsoft) did something to actually help us users this time – they kept the old tool! So you can play and learn the new Snip and Sketch and keep the old Snipping Tool too! Maybe they learned not to force users into using updates or changed apps right away - we need time to adjust and learn, right?

Everything you could do in the old Snipping tool you can do in Snip and sketch, plus you get a few more tools and options. Thankfully these new additions are easy to see and use, and they can be ignored if you do not want to use them. Microsoft promises more options to come. Be sure to search Google for videos on how to use Windows Snip and Sketch!

I am including here only the basic options. Click on the Windows logo in the lower left corner of your desktop and you will find Snip and Sketch in the alphabetical list of apps that appear. It is not inside the Windows Accessories folder of apps (where the Snipping Tool still remains) I recommend dragging this app to your desktop screen to always keep it handy. But you can also open it anytime by holding down the Windows key + shift key + S on your keyboard.

Upon opening the app, your whole screen goes gray and you will see the small controls rectangle at the top. Here you select HOW you want to select what you want to snip or capture. From left to right you can select a rectangular area, free-form selection, the entire window, or your full screen. If you select the rectangle, you drag your mouse on the screen to select whatever you want. As soon as you release your mouse – presto, your selected image has been captured and saved on the clipboard to do with whatever you want! You can open a Word document for example, place your cursor where you want, and “paste” your clip right into your document. Or you can open the Windows Paint app and you can “paste” it there if you want to do more editing.

At the same time that your snip is placed on the clipboard, you will also see a message stating that you can edit, draw, or markup your selection. Click to do that and Snip and sketch opens in its own window with its own menu of options. Various easy marking tools are available for you to play with and try,. There are highlighters and markers, and clicking on the down arrows will open things like color choices, etc. Once you have “sketched” on your “snip” you can save it as a “jpg”, “png” or “gif” format by clicking on the old floppy disk save icon and selecting the file type you want. The new Snip and Sketch is easy to use and very helpful for saving and sketching on any image on your screen for any purpose. Why not give it a try? ☐



What Linux is and why it has persisted

By Sandra Henry-Stocker

When all your friends are using Windows and the desktops at work are all running Windows, Linux might be one of the last things you'd even think about.

Anyone who has never taken a dive into Linux may wonder why anyone would bother using what might appear to be a nonstandard, aberrant, fragmented operating system with hundreds of different builds. There are, however, many reasons why Linux has become a successful OS, why hundreds of Linux distributions have come into being, and why Linux enthusiasts are so enamored with it.

So, what is it?

The first prototype of which was released September 17, 1991, by Finnish student Linus Torvalds. As you've probably noticed, the names "Linux" and "Linus" have something in common. Other names were considered, but this one stuck. Torvalds had previously been exposed to Unix but, frustrated by licensing issues, decided to move out on his own. Linux was his creation, but since 2005, well over 14,000 individuals from more than 1,300 companies have contributed code.

To be more precise, the name "Linux" refers to just the Linux kernel. The kernel is the core of an operating system and thus all distributions of Linux. The rest of what most Linux enthusiasts refer to as "Linux" includes such things as the package manager, tools and libraries, desktop environment, windowing system, and any other components that provide a user-friendly operating system.

One of the most important things to understand about Linux is that it is "open-source." This term means that its source code -- the code written by programmers and compiled into runnable programs -- can be obtained by anyone. In fact, if you were motivated, you could contribute to Linux yourself. A good place to start would be to visit [Where do I begin?](#)

In addition, Linux abides by the GNU general public license (GPL). Unlike most licensing agreements, the GPL prevents GNU software from not just being grabbed and used for other projects, but also from ever becoming proprietary. This novel licensing arrangement says a lot about the intentions of Linux from the start. Unlike code that is "protected" by copyright, GPL components are released under something referred to as "copyleft." The idea is that anyone is entitled to use, modify, and share code — as long as any software they derive from it is released under the same agreement. This dramatic reversal of how source code is handled by more traditional companies

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has been the impetus for the continued growth and the ultimate success of Linux.

Why so many distributions?

There may be as many as a thousand Linux distributions today. This number may seem quite staggering, but it includes many different forms of Linux, not just those used on corporate servers and PCs. For many years, anyone who wanted to provide a custom operating system for some particular environment or device would be smart to start with Linux. After all, it's free, fully customizable, and clearly reliable. These days, some variety of Linux runs on everything from embedded devices to supercomputers. There is even an automotive grade Linux, used by companies such as Toyota, Subaru, and many others for their "infotainment" (communication and entertainment) features in newer vehicles.

Linux distributions may use different desktop environments, different package managers, and different updating tools. They may include different sets of packages to suit their user needs. Yet they all use the Linux kernel, though not necessarily the same version. Source code is free, and nearly all Linux distributions can be downloaded and used for free. Some rare exceptions, such as Red Hat Enterprise Linux, have significant price tags but also come with extensive support.

Maybe you're already using Linux

You could well be using some variety of Linux without being aware of it. Even if your computer is running Windows, your phone or tablet might be using Linux through Android — a mobile operating system based on a modified version of the Linux kernel. Along with some additional open source software, it supports touchscreen mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets. Fairly recent statistics suggest that Android now powers over 2.5 billion devices.

What's with the penguin?

A plump penguin known as "Tux" has been the Linux mascot since 1996, when it was first drawn by Larry Ewing. For a while, Linus Torvalds claimed to have been bitten by a penguin and contracted "penguinitis," but this was not exactly true. Even so, Tux symbolizes Linux in a lighthearted way, and most computer enthusiasts recognize its connection to Linux.

What else has Linux got to offer?

For many Linux users, it isn't the adorable penguin or the novel desktop that evokes their loyalty and enthusiasm. It's what they can do on the command line. When you open a terminal window on a Linux system — not completely unlike the window that appears when you open the command shell (cmd) or use PowerShell on Windows — you get access to thousands of commands that allow you to view and manipulate data. You can select, sort, connect, and change values. You can calculate results. You can create new accounts, update settings, send messages to other users, examine log

files, look for potential problems, and run backups. You can create scripts that perform complex processing, and you can automate tasks to run when you're asleep or on vacation. You can shut down or reboot the system. You can change your password and, if properly authorized, change the administrative (root) password, too. Many, if not all, of these things can be done using tools available on the desktop, but using the command line is fast, flexible and powerful.

Linux systems also offer tools that help new users get comfortable on the command line. For example, man (i.e., manual) pages detail command syntax and options. Commands such as apropos help users identify commands that are available to help with whatever work they're performing.

Even though the Windows command shell and PowerShell provide Windows users with command-line capabilities and allow users to run batch (.bat) files, they don't offer anything close to the capabilities of the Linux shells.

Are there any downsides to Linux?

As a long-time Linux user, I would say "no" — but I guess that wouldn't be completely honest. Learning to use a new interface takes a little time and patience, even if it suits your needs. In addition, some of your favorite games might not be available to run on Linux or might be more trouble to install. Beyond that? Well, it might take you a while to decide which distribution you're going to love best.

What else is wonderful about Linux?

One of the great things about Linux is its reliability and flexibility. Linux updates are provided through the collaboration of its world-wide development community. No single company going bankrupt or being bought out by a competitor is going to shut it down. It's obviously highly customizable and, given the range of industries and products it supports, those who contribute to it and support it are not going away.

And did I mention that it's free? ☐



"I don't wake up at night to check my e-mail. I automatically have it forwarded to the people in my dreams and they read it to me."



"I can't get on Facebook anymore. My computer unfriended me!"

How the Internet Has Changed the Real Estate Industry

Speaker: Wade Huie, LACS, Realtor

Meeting review by Leah Clark Los Angeles Computer Society Editor and President

Wade has been a real estate agent in Los Angeles since 2003. He talked about the days of face-to-face contacts, door knocking, sending out cards, etc. Those who wanted to buy a house would look through newspaper ads, drive through a neighborhood looking for "For Sale" signs, then they would call the agents listed on them. The agents had all the information on properties for sale in Multiple Listings Services (MLS) books. Some of the listings would be obsolete by the time the books were printed. Before the Internet, the system was not very efficient

There has been a tremendous cosmic shift in the real estate business, as in other companies, due to the Internet. It has mostly been for the better. Realtors are no longer the information the gatekeepers to all. MLS became automated with listings on the computer rather than in the out-of-date books

The clients are now in charge. The Internet's connection with Real Estate is here to stay. No one misses the old school way of buying and selling property. Most home buyers now begin their search on the Internet, which is mostly kept up to date. Much can now be done on a smartphone.

Most documents and contracts can now be made online with electronic signatures. Pricing a house is still an art, not a science. The estimated value of a home can vary on different sites. Improvements or defects may not be considered in the estimates.

Wade said the best thing the Internet has done for real estate has been what it has done with pictures.

Without going to a home, a buyer can get a feeling about it from images. Visuals are the most important, but photos can make or break a sale. Wade showed posted images of homes with much clutter and untidiness visible.

Wade then talked about "staging" a home by putting in cool furniture, a few paintings, rugs, etc., enabling it to be sold for more money. The buyer can imagine what a house may look like. Staging may raise the price of a home; it does cost to bring in all that stuff.

Thanks to the Internet and software, a seller may provide "virtual staging" which costs much less

The use of video has become common in real estate. Cameras pan around each room to give a sense of what's there.

Using drones to depict the home and surrounding neighborhood makes it like walking around in a house. Agents must now become, or hire, filmmakers. Buying and selling real estate in the U.S. has been becoming highly competitive, and both Wall Street and Silicon Valley want in on it. iBuyers will buy your home, fix it up, then resell it on the open market. The "i" stands for instant. Wade thinks we may see more of them in the future, especially for those who may need to move quickly.

The Internet is not going to go away. It will continue to evolve, and it will be making buying a home easier. □

[ZAP!] Try This Near-Perfect Spam Filter

By Bob Rankin

www.askbobrankin.com a Translator for the Technology Impaired

According to researchers, it is estimated that about 54 percent of all email traffic is spam. But I rarely see any spam in my inbox. That's because Gmail blocks 99.9 percent of all spam, phishing and malware emails. Read on to learn how you can get near-perfect spam filtering, even if you don't use Gmail.

Today, that number has decreased significantly, but not enough. One factor in that decline is machine learning, an application of artificial intelligence, which has been part of Gmail's spam filter program since its inception. Every time a user clicks the "Report Spam" or "Not Spam" button on a message, Gmail learns. Today, that number has decreased significantly, but not enough.

But Google is also using technology to help Gmail learn on its own, without the user's clicks. The Gmail spam filter uses an artificial neural network (ANN) that can detect and block the "especially sneaky" spam that sometimes slips past users' radar. What's an "artificial neural network," you ask? The oversimplified answer is, a lot of computers connected to each other in an attempt to simulate the interconnections of human brain cells. It's expensive to build an artificial neural network; most are tiny, with 1 to 10 million connections.

Google has built an ANN with over one billion connections using the processors in its vast and far-flung empire of data centers. That sounds awesome, until you learn that the human brain contains several trillion connections! None the less, Google's ANN is capable of rudimentary human-like

Continued.....page 28

Zap! Try This.....from page 27

That's a good thing, because more and more large companies are encouraging customers to receive their monthly statements by email, rather than paper copies in the mail.

Even if you don't use or like Gmail, you can still use it to filter spam. Here's one technique that some people use to "prefilter" their incoming emails. Instead of providing your actual email address when asked, give out a Gmail address that you've created.

Configure that Gmail account to simply forward everything to your actual address. Gmail does spam filtering BEFORE forwarding, so the messages that do get forwarded are virtually spam-free.

Gmail's spam filter is so reliable and accurate that I hardly ever check my spam filter for false positives anymore. I get hundreds of emails daily, and I rarely find myself clicking on the "Report Spam" button. The spam filter just works. ☐

Seniors Targeted in Latest Gold and Bitcoin Scams

by Scambusster Keith

Scambusters Newsletter, January 20, 2021

Two different types of coins -- gold and the cybercurrency Bitcoin -- are being used to target vulnerable investors, mainly seniors, during these times of economic uncertainty.

They're being tricked into handing over millions of dollars for over-priced bullion coins or lured into the prospect of mouthwatering profits amid the turbulent pricing of Bitcoin.

We've previously reported on some of these scams but the past few months of record-low interest rates and rollercoaster equity markets in a challenging economy have seen a big rise in speculative investment fraud.

Gold is used as a safe haven. With lockdowns and other restrictions hitting the economy hard, experts say they expect gold prices, recently trading around \$1,900 an ounce, to rise steadily during 2021.

On the other hand, cyber currencies like Bitcoin are soaring and plunging, sometimes overnight, creating big losses for some and huge profits for others. Recently, Bitcoin prices have rocketed to record levels, leaping thousands of dollars in just a few weeks, before falling back again.

Some analysts say the price could reach mouthwatering levels in six figures within the next year or two.

At the same time, many investors in these markets don't know a lot about them. Both gold and Bitcoin are complex markets, calling for considerable knowledge to avoid big-time losses.

In other words, everything is ripe for scamming. The scene is set for crooks to up their game.

How Gold Coin Scams Net Millions

One of the most common scams involves the selling of metal that isn't what it's supposed to be, either not gold at all or of a lower quality, or karat value.

This is often in the form of jewelry. Scams range from parking lot tricksters who offer fake gold, usually brass, to passers-by, often with a stooge who seemingly happens to walk past and "confirms" its value, to dubious traders passing off 14 karat gold as 22 or 24 karat.

However, these tricks usually involve relatively small individual sums. There are a lot of them, but each usually tricking a few hundred dollars or less out of victims.

On the other hand, during the past few months, one scam alone is alleged to have tricked buyers into handing over a total of \$185 million for wildly over-priced bullion coins. Sometimes, prices were as much as four times what they should have been.

Florida attorney general Ashley Moody was quoted recently as saying: "I am sickened by the way these fraudsters preyed on vulnerable investors' fears of market instability and economic uncertainty."

People who fall for the scam -- lured by social media and TV or radio ads -- are often repeatedly pes-tered by the crooks to buy more, at increasingly inflated prices. Sometimes, according to the seniors' organization AARP, victims have been drawing heavily on their life savings to make the purchases.

The US Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) says the best way to avoid gold fraud is to:

- Be wary of salespeople who can't prove they're licensed to trade and pressure you into buying right now, often by offering a supposed "instant discount."
- Online and broadcast ads that "guarantee" price rises or claim you can't lose.
- Do your research, checking the seller out with the CFTC (<https://www.cftc.gov/Contact/index.htm>) and other regulatory agencies.

You should also never yield to pressure to "buy now" and, as with all investments, seek advice from a financial professional.

Famous Names Used in Bitcoin Scams

Recently, we've been hearing a lot about so-called influencers -- people, especially celebrities, who are paid to recommend certain products online.

It's bad enough when they don't declare this when they're promoting products. But it's even worse when they don't recommend a product at all but scammers pretend they do.

That's what's happening with Bitcoin and other cybercurrencies.

Russian scammers are running a global racket using names and images of well-known celebrities, sports stars, and financial experts. For instance, recent ads have used the name of tennis star Boris Becker, ac-

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BREVARD USERS GROUP

B U G Officers

President

Bill Middleton

President@bugclub.org

Treasurer

Loretta Mills

Treasurer@bugclub.org

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Bill Middleton

Secretary@bugclub.org

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Special Interest Groups

Beginners' SIG:

beginners@bugclub.org

Hardware (Tinkers) SIG:

Bob Schmidt 952-0199

hardware@bugclub.org

BUG Web Page

<http://bugclub.org>

Brevard Users Group Secretary's Report

By Bill Middleton

Monthly General Meeting Report, January 11, 2020

1. The meeting was called to order by President, Bill Middleton at 2:00 PM.
2. Members were urged to pay their dues and make sure their registration details were up to date. Dues may be paid at any meeting or mailed to the BUG Club, PO Box 2456, Melbourne, FL 32901. Please make sure your current email is included with any mailed-in dues. Dues paid now will be for 2021. A few members, including the President, reported that they were, once again, getting the Space Coast Newsletter.
3. The month's DD was on Internet sources for Covid-19 vaccinations. Some of the telephone vaccination reservation sources seemed to have been abandoned. Thus, the Internet has become the primary source to try to get a reservation to get vaccinated. At the time of the meeting, pretty much all available reservations for January had been taken. Of the four sources for vaccinations at the time of the meeting, only the Veterans clinic was still able to offer reservations. Al Moge reported he had no problem getting his vaccination at the clinic. Another member reported getting her vaccination without a reservation by employing a rather sly strategy (name and sly strategy withheld to protect the.....). Note: because not everyone shows up for their reservations, most facilities will have a few left over doses at the end of their work day.
4. A couple Android phone problems were discussed and mostly resolved. The only recent Windows update problems noted were long installation times on the H42 update. Microsoft has announced that there will be a major

feature update in the near future or significantly changed the look of Windows. This revelation met with thunderous applause or perhaps, thunderous groaning.

- 5. The meeting was adjourned shortly after 3:00.
- 6. Respectfully submitted by Bill Middleton,

Seniors Targeted..from page 29

tor Chris Hemsworth, and international consumer finance expert Martin Lewis.

Furthermore, many ads based on these scams are turning up at the top of browser searches.

Media site TheGuardian.com reported last month that victims who click on these ads are lured in by having to pay a relatively small amount, like \$250, to get into the market. But, again, they’re pestered to commit larger and larger sums, sometimes to the point of committing their entire life savings.

In other instances, victims’ names are sold to other scammers because they’re identified as gullible.

TheGuardian.com quotes Google as saying it removed 5,000 bad ads per minute in 2019 - but “scammers are constantly evolving their efforts, while we evolve our policies and enforcement to address this.”

British newspaper site Mirror.co.uk reports on a Bitcoin-based scam involving the previously mentioned Martin Lewis saying: “Anyone who does not jump on this opportunity is missing out” and “I would say that it could transform anyone into a millionaire within 3-4 months.”

Lewis said nothing of the sort, of course. Nor did other famous names like Bill Gates and Elon Musk who were said by the scammers to be consultants to their program.

The thing about Bitcoin and other cybercurrencies is that they are hugely complicated and require

Bug Club Treasurers Report

By Loretta Mills , Treasurer

Checking Account	July 1, 2019
Beginning Balance	\$ 1052.36
Ending Balance	\$ 1052.36
Saving Account Balance	\$ 1087 65
Combined Balances	\$ 2140.00

a high level of expertise for investment trading. Novices who buy them might just as well be at the racetrack betting on horses.

While it seems perfectly reasonable to buy a small amount without knowing much, to pay for purchases from organizations who accept Bitcoin payments (and often offer a discount for doing so),

it’s crazy to enter the market as an investor without consulting an expert.

Plus, of course, as we frequently report, Bitcoin transactions are untraceable, which means they’re favored by crooks as well as legitimate firms.

If you see a Bitcoin promo using a well-known name, be on your guard. It’s almost certainly a scam ☐

“It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.”

Confucius

Calendar of Events

**Going North for the summer or coming back?
Don't miss a single issue of your
Space Coast PC Journal**

If your email address will be different

Please give us the correct email

For your temporary location

*****Reminder*****

We need your e-mail addresses!

We'd like to keep in touch with you, especially if there is a last minute change in venue for the club meeting.

Please send e-mail addresses and changes to Linda Glassburn glassburn@earthlink.net

**Club Meeting, 2 PM January 21
Auditorium, Merritt Island Library**

January 31, 2021 - Deadline for Journal Input



**Are you having problems with your hardware or software?
Did you find the solution yourself?**

How about sharing that information with your fellow club members? Sit down for a few minutes open up that word processor and put your ideas to paper. Aside from the value to the members, you'll get your name in print!

Don't worry about the details, we'll edit it for the best appearance and presentation.

Presentations Schedule

Bring Some Friends or Neighbors

**Beginners or Advanced
Bring Your Questions
Get Technical Help
Share Your Knowledge**

at Your SCPCUG

Learning Center

**Open 1st, 3rd, 5th Saturdays,
12 to 3:30 p.m.
Merritt Island Library
Conference Room**

Please restrict your visits to
these times.

Bring your hardware or
software problems,
We'll do all we can to help.

If you bring a desktop computer
please bring the keyboard, mouse,
and power cord

Call Ron Ingraham, 321-777-2578,
for more information.

The Space Coast PC Users Group Journal

is produced using

Adobe InDesign CS3

*All SCPCUG club members are entitled to
receive the electronic version of the Journal
in pdf format. You'll need Adobe's widely
available Acrobat Reader X.X (free) to view the
eJournal.*

Contact Ron Ingraham
ringram28@cfl,rr.com to get on the
eJournal mailing list

***Space Coast PC Users
Group is proud to be a
Charter***



The Space Coast PC Users Group's
Computer Doctors
Make House Calls

Free to
SCPCUG Members!

Dan Douglas, owner of
DataDan Computer Services,
will accept phone requests
for computer assistance
(321) 301-1075

After a phone call, a house call may be
made within 5 miles of Merritt Island

Free Remote Support
For those using Windows 10
Quick Assist



The above member will help you with a *particular* computer glitch on your personal (not business) computer. In some cases, he may even make a house call. But, please do not expect him to install your computer nor teach you how to use it. If you have continuing problems or need additional help, please take a class, or check the ads in the *Journal* and hire a consultant, etc.



Computers 4 Kids

C4K Volunteers Need
Donated

Computers, Keyboards, Mice
etc

for

Building PC Systems

complete with software
for

Needy School Children

Call

Ken Clark @ 223-7402

To arrange pickup

Space Coast PC Users Group, Inc.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Membership Dues
\$25.00 [] Check [] Cash

Check No. _____

NAME _____ [] New [] Renewal

ADDRESS _____ Date _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone (Optional) _____

E-mail _____

Would you like to attend: a class for BEGINNERS? []
 an ADVANCED DOS class? []
 a WINDOWS class? []
 an ADVANCED WINDOWS class? []

What other topics would you like covered in a class? _____

Do you have expertise that you would like to share? Please describe.

Would you be willing to be listed in the Helpline of the *Journal*?
 If so, what subject? _____ Calling hours: _____
 Phone _____ E-mail _____

Would you like to help the Club in the following areas?
 Resource Center Staff _____ Journal Staff _____
 Computer Doctor _____ Room Setup _____ Teach Class _____
 Other _____

What topics would you like to see for monthly programs?

What can the SCPCUG do to help you and others?

If you were told about the SCPCUG by a club member, write that member's name here _____

Make check payable to: Space Coast PC Users Group
Mail to: SCPCUG , 801 Del Rio Way, #304, Merritt Island, FL 32953

Are You CPU

Bewildered?

DRAM
HTML
Windows
Modem

Join the
Space Coast PC Users Group
 and learn the lingo!

Membership benefits:
 The *SCPCUG Journal*
 Computer Literacy Classes
 (e.g. Windows 7-10)
 Seminars and Workshops
 Computer Doctors - computer
 help - **FREE!**
 Group Purchases, Raffles, and
 Door Prizes!
 Helplines - get help from the
 experts

Join Now!

ADVERTISING RATES

	1 Month	3 Months	6 Months
1 Year			
SIZE	~10%*	~15%*	~25%*
Full Page.....	\$90.00.....	\$243.00*.....	\$459.00*.....
Half Page..	45.00.....	123.00*.....	230.00 *.....
1/4 Page.....	23.00.....	62.00*.....	117.00*.....
Business Card.....	35.00.....	59.00 *.....	105.00*

* = Discount from regular monthly rate. Discount applies to ads running in consecutive issues.

Payment **must** accompany order. Make checks payable to:

Dimensions (W x H) for ads are as follows:

- Full page: 7" x 9 1/4"
- Half page: 7" x 4 3/8" or 3 3/8" x 9 1/4"
- Quarter page: 3 3/8" x 4 3/8"
- Business card: 3 3/8" x 2"

Camera ready ad copy is due by the 28th of the month to ensure that the ad will appear in the next issue. Mail ad copy to the Editor at 1360 Mayflower Avenue, Melbourne, FL 32940-6723 Prices will be quoted for design work. Questions? Call (321)777-2578.

All advertisements are subject to the approval of the Editor.

SPACE COAST PC USERS GROUP, INC.
801 Del Rio Way, #304,
Merritt Island, Fl , 32953

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Space Coast PC Users Group is an independent, not for profit, computer group open to anyone interested in computers. It is not affiliated with any business. Our purpose is to serve as an educational, scientific, and literary organization designed to enhance computer literacy.

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Initial Membership \$25 . Annual Dues have Been Suspended

BENEFITS: Members get the monthly *Journal*. In addition, *only* members can:

- copy from the Shareware library
- participate in meeting drawings
- attend special seminars/workshops
- talk to one of our computer ‘doctors’
- use the Helplines

NEXT MEETING

February 18

Merritt Island Library Auditorium 1185 North Courtenay Parkway, Merritt Island, FL

To get to Auditorium after entering the front door, go to the second door on the left.

Guests are always welcome at the Space Coast PC Users Group meeting.