

The Space Coast PC Journal



Making Windows 10 Faster

*By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin
Computer Club*

April 2020 Gigabyte Gazette

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Support for Windows 7 is now history. Support for Windows 8 will last for 3 more years. Windows 8 mostly consisted of intermediate steps (and missteps) toward Windows 10. In 2020 I can think of no reason for any user to be running Windows 8 instead of Windows 10, especially since Windows 10 is superior and is a free update to Windows 8. So, if you are one of the few users still running Windows 8 there is no better time than now to upgrade to Windows 10.

Most of us have used Windows 10 for a few years now; Windows lacks the flexibility of the flavors of Linux, and the slick user interface of Mac's Catalina, but is the operat-



ing system installed on the majority of home computers now.

Windows 10 is Microsoft's best operating system so far but is not perfect. However, it is virtually infinitely customizable and I'm going to make a few suggestions that will help you get the most out of your windows 10 system.

Keep Windows Up to Date

Windows is issuing updates on a weekly basis and these are important not only for the operating system and peripheral issues corrected

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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

Unlike many people locally, who remain in their homes at all times, I haven't really noticed the effects of the pandemic . I have gone wherever necessary, to stores, other people/s homes - really anywhere at all that I felt that I needed to be.

I do comply with the requirement to wear a mask when directed, and maintain social distancing where appropriate.

This brings me to my point. I don't know how many of you follow the same practices. I do know of at least a few, who are completely unwilling to risk any exposure and remain isolated at home. How many of you will come to meetings if offered the opportunity?

The library has finally reopened and has intially made available the large conference room. We will be using it for the July 16th monthly meeting. I know you will not have read this before then, but the procedures will remain the same for future meetings. In August we will be conducting the Learning Center meetings here as well. Masks and social distancing required. Table seating will be limited to those seats at the proper distance. Hope to see you there. □

Ron Ingraham, Editor

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Professional also includes DriveScrubber, a utility that

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

July 16, 2020

Meet in the Auditorium

2 PM

Get together welcome

meeting

Discussion, Q&A

Bring Some Friends

Make Windows 10 Faster.....from page 1

but also for keeping your security malware definitions current. Go to Update Settings and confirm that updates are current. Hit Check for Updates to verify this. This is also where you can learn if your system is running the latest update to Windows 10 (1909) and possibly complete this process (as is required in the dialogue box shown). Under Advanced Settings you can make sure auto-updates is checked.

getting popups from the Notifications icon on the lower right-hand corner of your Taskbar. These popups use system resources and can be a pain when they interfere with your computer use. Go to Settings, System, Notifications, and actions and toggle off Notifications. Like magic, they will no longer appear! You will still have many web pages offering notifications, but you can just say “NO!” by hitting “Block” or “Don’t Allow”.

Disable Cortana

Disable Startup Apps



Go to your Task Manager Startup tab and disable any programs you do not need running immediately every time you go into your operating system. Microsoft OneDrive and speech recognition are a couple of major resource hogs. Toggle off anything you do not need running all the time. Remember, you are not removing any programs and you are not preventing them from firing up when you need them.

She needs to just shut up. For most users, Cortana is just an annoyance built into Windows 10. She mostly gives users annoying pop-ups, she is constantly gathering data, and does little more than try to force us into Bing searches. In this day of actually useful voice assistants, such as Google or Alexa, Cortana seems oddly dumb. I have learned to disable Cortana during the installation of Windows but if you have not had this opportunity shutting her off is easy. Go to Cortana under Settings and toggle all sliders off.

Log-in Faster

Go back to the main Settings window and under Privacy Settings you can turn off the sliders for speech and inking and typing to reduce the amount of data Cortana gathers on your computer usage. You can also block Cortana from accessing your microphone and camera on the privacy page. This is also a good time to review all your privacy settings to make sure you are putting as little information as possible out there.



The Windows 10 log-in screen is an excellent example of a worthless “improvement”. Having to swipe up or down or hit “Space” is a step Microsoft somehow felt was necessary; typing in your password takes even more time. Most users prefer to use a four-digit PIN; just enter 4 digits and there is no need to even hit Enter. To set a PIN go to Settings, then Sign-in options. Click on Windows Hello PIN and set your 4-digit PIN. Note that a little further down on this page you can disable the requirement for a sign-in after you’ve been away from your computer for a while.

Disable Notifications

Many users are unaware of why they are constantly

If you want to *remove* the sign-in password require-



From the Cashier's Cage

Financial Report for Month
Ending June 30, 2020

CHECKING

Beginning Balance	19.87
Deposit - USB sales	320.00
Barbara Mead - June Snacks	(10.00)

Ending balancee - includes \$8.41 snack fund
329.87

SAVINGS

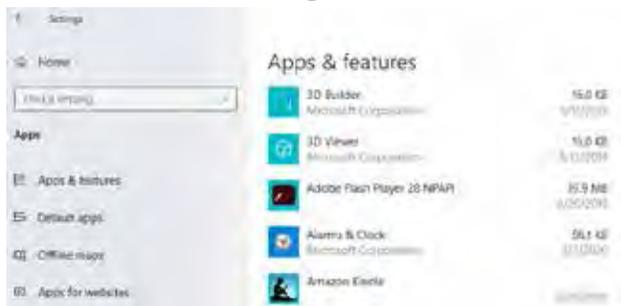
Beginning Balance	305.11
Transfer to Checking (100.00)	
Interest	.03
Ending Balance	305.14

ment, type "NETPLWIZ" in the search box then use this application to disable the password requirement for your computer.

Disable Background Apps

This is not necessary on a new powerful system, but if yours is older you might want to look at these under Privacy/Settings. With an older system performance might be improved by unchecking anything you don't need running.

Uninstall Unneeded Programs



Talking about unnecessary stuff included with Win-

Continued.....page 8

Club Meeting Minutes June 18, 2020

The meeting was opened at 2:10 p.m. by President Dan Douglas. Present were 3 board members, 10 members, and one guest. Board members present were Dan, Ron Ingraham, and Irene Nelson. Absent were Vice President Larry Bennett, Webmaster Curt Potsic, and Membership Chairperson Linda Glassburn.

This is the first monthly club meeting since February 20, 2020 as the Covid-19 pandemic had forced the closing of the library until this month when groups could meet following social distancing practices and masks.

The officers would normally have been voted upon during the March meeting but due to the pandemic, the group decided to go ahead with the same board members in place until 2021.

Since our last meeting, Club Secretary Harry Pearson died. The club sent a plant in Harry's memory. His presence is profoundly missed.

In his absence, Barbara Mead volunteered to take on the position of Secretary until such time as a replacement could be elected.

Irene gave the Treasurer report for May and June. Our balance as of the meeting was \$484.98 which included sales of the SCPCUG flash drive sticks at this meeting.

Dan read Curt's Webmaster report and discussed the contents with the group.

There was no speaker scheduled so various subjects were discussed including Microsoft Edge updates, Malwarebytes, and Zoom.

The group also discussed the possibility of resuming the Saturday meetings if we could use the large meeting room instead of the small one and holding them on a different day since the library is now closed Saturday. Holding future meetings at a park pavilion was also discussed and various members offered to investigate different sites in the area for electrical outlets and WiFi.

No drawing was held.

Meeting adjourned at 3:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Barbara Mead, Secretary.





Dan's Desk

Back to business – part 2! Starting July 18, we'll be resuming our Saturday Learning Center sessions. For everyone's protection, we will be relocating to the large auditorium instead of the conference room. In addition, masks will be mandatory and we'll be spread out across multiple tables. I'm sure everyone will work together to figure out the new normal for our best education experience.

I was recently reminded of a major computer project that I was involved with that led to my career going where it did and ultimately got me to Merritt Island. I'm a member of the Bank of Montreal retirees' group and we get a regular email of news articles where members can reminisce about the old working days and how the job was back then. A recent story talked about the launch of MECH – the common name we called the home-grown online banking mechanization system that was developed and implemented from 1969 – 1975.

This ambitious plan, announced in November 1969, was to create a continent-wide computer-based banking system unlike any that existed in the world at the time. This announcement followed a two-year study jointly conducted by the Bank, IBM Canada and the AGT Consulting group. Prior to MECH, banking was performed at many bank branches pretty much the same as it had been done since WWII; lots of tedious calculations performed manually or on 1950's technology bookkeeping machines. These calculations were a major source of Bank income as the interest, service charges and all other fees were calculated locally. MECH would replace all of these processes with a central database of all accounts, where interest and fees would be calculated consistently and easily maintained. For the customer, the benefits were many – access to your account across the country, fast posting of all transactions. And most importantly, not one job lost! In fact many hundreds of branch staff became

computer programmers and other support staff.

I joined the bank in early 1975 as a senior computer operator in the main computer center located in Toronto. The computer center was in a building owned by IBM Canada which also housed their headquarters staff. The MECH project was just getting ready to roll out and the pressure was on. The roll-out was, like most projects of a large scale, not what they had hoped for. Once in production, many errors started popping up. These by themselves could be addressed with daily program patches, but a larger problem soon presented itself – a lack of Change Control. Just as with any software program today, a change in code to fix one issue, may have many undesired consequences. Change Control processes would recommend a total environment test, including all changes for the period, before moving into production. After enduring many long outages due to unplanned/uncoordinated changes, senior management made the decision to back out the roll-out for as long as it took to implement Change Control procedures and practices. This was a major advancement for Data Processing Centers at the time. A management process was now on equal footing with the programming and design functions. After a few months of Change Control, MECH was finally released and more than delivered all of the promised benefits. It is still in operation today, as Online Banking, and serves as the backbone that all customer web access relies on.

In 1983 I formed a team to automate the Change and Problem management processes at the bank and selected an IBM software tool to be the foundation for this automation. This tool would turn out to be part of my career for the next 20+ years. Through my knowledge of the Change and Problem processes, I got see the world and ended up meeting people from FL that eventually led to moving here for my semi-retirement.

I look forward to seeing you all again at some future meeting and until then stay safe!

If you have suggestions for topics that you would like to see explained, please let me know! ☐



Jere's Tech Tips

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

New items include

Windows and Android Tech Tips

Microsoft's New Bing Wallpapers App Will Beautify Your Android Phone

How to get Bing's Daily Photos as Your Wallpaper on Android.

<https://apcug2.org/jerestips/>

APCUG 2020 Summer & Fall Online Workshops

Get to Know Windows from An Insiders Point of View at 12pm ET the second Wednesday of the month (July 8, August 12). These 2-hour workshops are on how to get the best out of Windows 10. There will be how-tos, hands-on demos, and discussion with ample time for Q&A. Moderator is Bill James, APCUG Advisor, Region 8.

July 8 is Week 3 - File Explorer

August 12 is Week 4 - Edge

More info on Special Events page.

Week 2 was held June 10 and featured Settings - They explored the many options you can change to make your computer more secure. Do you know how much Ram you have? What version of Windows? What about the Security & Update area, do you take a look at every once in a while? Do you check your custom settings after the spring and fall Feature update?

2020 APCUG Virtual Technology Conference Dates -

Future 2020 VTC dates: Aug 15 and Nov 7.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic (coronavirus) all

meetings at the Merritt Island Public Library were cancelled for March, April, and May. Monthly meetings are now restored starting with our Jun 18 meeting.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic (coronavirus) all meetings at the Merritt Island Public Library were cancelled for March, April, and May. Starting with the June 18 meeting, monthly meetings are restored. Chairs will be spaced out 6-8 feet apart. According to the CDC and WHO, face masks should be worn in public while keeping at least a 6 foot space between people. Beverages and snacks should not be shared. This will be a Welcome Back meeting featuring discussions and a Q&A.

1 New Link

betanews - Has Hot Topics on the Following: Windows 10, Microsoft, Apple, Cloud, Linux, Android, Security, and Reviews. <https://betanews.com>

Computing Help Links

Examples of Win 10 articles include: Microsoft is showing ads for Edge in the Windows 10 Start menu if you search for rival browsers, Microsoft is now pushing out Chromium-based Edge to all Windows 10 users, How to free up disk space after installing Windows 10 May 2020 Update, Best Windows 10 apps this week, How to boost your privacy and remove unwanted features from Windows 10.

Misc Items

Windows 10 Accidental Deleting of Files is Stopped

Microsoft gave users an option in Windows 10 ver 1809 to check a box for Disk Cleanup to clear disk space from the Downloads folder to recover hard disk space. However, some users did not know about the addition of Downloads to Disk Cleanup and accidentally deleted files that they wanted to keep. With Windows 10 ver 2004 Microsoft has now removed the Downloads folder from Disk Cleanup options preventing the auto deleting of files from the Downloads folder, as long as they are synced to the cloud. This prevents accidental deletes

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Webmaster Wanderings..... ..from page 7

Windows 10 v2004 (May 2020) Issues

Microsoft has listed 10 significant “Known Issues” currently active. These include problems with Bluetooth, audio, gaming, connectivity, graphics card drivers and system stability. Windows 10 PCs which take advantage of the Fast Start feature may not install updates when they are shut down. Instead, users will have to restart their computers for updates to be applied. Cortana has reduced integration with third party media and connected home. Windows To Go, which allowed you to duplicate your Windows OS to an external drive, is gone. There are incompatibilities with certain Nvidia display drivers, Conexant and Synaptics audio drivers, broken mouse control, plugging and unplugging Thunderbolt docks, broken variable refresh rates with Intel graphics, difficulty connecting to more than one Bluetooth device and unexpected restarts with certain network adapters. Bottomline is experts are advising mainstream Win 10 users to stay away from this update for now.

Windows 10 v2004 (10 May 2020)

Update Breaks Intel Optane Memory

Another major issue with Windows 10 v2004 has to do with Intel Optane Memory which is a high-performance piece of circuitry primarily used by enthusiasts. It appears that Optane Memory Pinnings are not being migrated to the new update resulting in Windows essentially left trying to launch a program with .dlls that do not exist. If you are using Optane Memory, it might be best to hold off upgrading to Win 10 v2004.

Coronavirus Pandemic Gives Momentum to Digital Voice Technology

Voice-activated systems such as Google Assistant, Amazon Alexa, & Apple’s Siri have seen strong growth in recent years. Voice has already made significant inroads into the smart home space, and voice control can mean avoiding commonly touched surfaces around the home from smartphones, to TV remotes, light switches, thermostats, door handles and more. The COVID-19 outbreak could accelerate that as people seek to limit personal contact. The pandemic is likely to provide additional motivation & incentive for voice control in the home that will help drive awareness & adoption for a

range of additional smart home devices & applications. Estimates are that voice control device shipments for smart home devices hit 141 million last year. In 2020 they are expected to grow globally by close to 30%. □

Making Windows 10 Faster.....from page 5

Windows 10, there is a ton of “Bloatware” included on most new store-bought systems you can just ditch. Right-click on Start and click on Apps and Features. Scroll through the list and you will see a lot of programs on your system that you never use.

Games such as Candy Crush and security programs such as Norton or MacAfee are major offenders in this area.

Here is where you can simply uninstall the unused applications, freeing up room on your hard drive, and ensuring these programs will not try to load and take system resources in the future. □



How Not To Send Your Email to a Bunch of People (or Just Reply To Sender)

By *Lou Cioccio, Board Member, Computer Users of Erie*

May 2020 CUE Newsletter

[https://www.cuerie.com/lcioccio\(at\)mac.com](https://www.cuerie.com/lcioccio(at)mac.com)

This happens to me and probably happens to everyone at one time or another whether we are professionals or just “regular” people. In business situations your email, when sending, will have the following:

TO:

CC:

And maybe BCC:

The TO: is sent to the person you are sending to or replying TO: (this IS important for you need to be aware of Reply TO: or Reply TO ALL:). Sometimes someone makes a foolish mistake or broke a mail etiquette rule, and you want to tell him/her but not embarrass the person so you need to Reply TO:, not Reply ALL:, otherwise you are correcting the person amongst him/her peers.

This is one thing I had taught my junior leaders in scouts and also how I handled it when I was an NCO in the Army. As long as it's not a life-threatening mistake, you do not have to make an example to their peers!

On to emails. Here is an example of a person sending an email to a bunch of people rather than having them hidden in BCC, otherwise known as Blind Carbon Copy. Those of you that are old enough will remember Carbon Paper!



If I expand it this is a partial list about half of those emails!

So, when replying, STOP, make sure you are not replying to the whole Enchilada, only to ONE person. So I hope I did not offend anyone but at least you know and are aware of the difference to Blind Carbon Copy when you do not want to share an address or have something private to say but are letting others know that you sent this email out. ☐

Thinking of Buying a New Router?

By Jeff Wilkinson, President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

April 2020 Gigabyte Gazette

www.scscc.club
pres.scscc (at) gmail.com

Purchasing a new router can be an intimidating task. Trying to decide what you need and how to make the correct selection from the myriad offerings can certainly use some clarification. Having just gone through this experience, I thought I'd offer some guidelines.

If you have a modem/router supplied by your internet service provider and you are tired of paying a rental fee each month, you may also want to consider purchasing your own modem and router.

Overwhelming as it can be, let's see if we can sort it out. Your router is the central hub of your home network. The internet connection is input to the router from the cable modem and the signals are "routed" to your devices by either direct connection or Wi-Fi. You will want to choose a router that is powerful enough and has enough features to service all your current devices and has some expansion or growth capacity for future needs.

A first step would be to estimate the number of devices you expect to connect to your network via Wi-Fi – such as your smartphone, laptop computer, a streaming device like a Roku or Amazon Fire TV, Wi-Fi thermostat, newer IoT appliances, and Kindle devices. Next look at the size of your home and the locations where you will be using any of the wireless devices. If your home is over 2,500 square feet, you may want to consider a mesh wireless system. That requires multiple devices and can become expensive and is generally not needed in our community. Expensive doesn't always mean better!

Then consider the location of your internet connection, where your cable modem is located, or where the

Continued.....page 10

Buying a New Router.....from page 9

internet connection enters the residence. This is the location where you would most likely locate your router and you would want it to allow for strategic placement of the router. Up high rather than on the floor is desired. Open surroundings rather than behind equipment or in a cabinet would also be preferred. Looking at routers and their advertised specs, they often sum up speeds of the various bands which is a meaningless number for all practical purposes. If the top speed from your Internet Service Provider (ISP) is 100 Mbps having a router capable of 800 Mbps is not necessary. An AC750 would work well for a single user.

You will want to look at routers with an “AC” prefix on the model number, AC750, AC1750, AC1900, etc. The AC prefix indicates WiFi-5 standards and AX indicates WiFi-6, which is the current latest standard but can be a bit pricey. Many of your current Wi-Fi devices won’t support the AX standard. The iPhone 11 and Samsung Galaxy S10 are exceptions.

The numbers after the prefix give you a rough sense of the combined speeds of each of the router’s bands - typically 2.4 and 5GHz, and perhaps a second 5GHz band if we’re talking about a tri-band router. Since a device can only use one band at a time the number is not all that relevant and is a theoretical number achievable in a controlled lab environment, maybe. Of course, your speed will vary!

For the typical user in our community, someone who uses the internet to check email, surf the internet, buy online occasionally, and has a smartphone, a dual-band router can be had for under \$100. I don’t think our internet speed will increase much from where it is today given the infrastructure upgrades required, so a superfast tri-band router is generally not needed although that is what I wound up with.

The common manufacturers are Netgear, Asus, D-Link, TP-Link, and Linksys but there are many others. A router should be easy to set up and require little to no maintenance. You can read users’ reviews at many web sites to help you make a decision.

Routers are fairly easy to install and setup. Many come with Apps for your smartphone which can

guide you through the process. We also have club members who can help install and set up a new router.



So, in conclusion, a router upgrade can be a major improvement to your home network. □

Genealogy Research Online

*By Frank Fota, Secretary & APCUG Rep,
Fredericksburg PCUG, MD*

FPCUG Notes for April 2020

www.fpcug.org
fotafm (at) gmail.com

Well, the Coronavirus has us isolated at home instead of at work. Some people, so I’ve heard, are tackling tasks they’ve deferred for the proverbial “rainy day.” I’ve often said to myself that I would scan that box of photos I rescued from my departed uncle’s home before its contents were sold at an estate sale. I intend to distribute the images to my relatives. The issue is ... identifying the people in the photos. Genealogical research can be a tedious task. Just such a task for a time like this. If you are interested in creating a family tree, or simply learning more about your ancestors, there are many websites where you can conduct genealogical research. Some of these websites are interactive and allow you to share photos and communicate with distant relatives. Bob Rankin at AskBobRankin.com provides a list of useful sites for Genealogical research:

1. Ancestry.com – perhaps the best-known website for genealogical research. It is a subscription-based service that costs \$199/year or \$99 for six months. A 14-day trial will allow you to evaluate the service. For an additional fee, the “World Explorer” package adds the ability to search internationally.

2. Cyndi's List – is a free, "...categorized & cross-referenced index to genealogical resources on the Internet. Over 335,000 genealogical sites are linked from this website.
3. Family Search – is run by the LDS Church. It provides access to over a billion records worldwide at no cost. The LDS Church also provides personal assistance and access to some of the paid sites via local family history centers. A local family history center is located at 20 Boscobel Rd Fredericksburg, VA 22405 (540) 361-7494.
4. Roots Web – is the oldest and perhaps the largest genealogy site on the internet. The Roots Web site has genealogy search engines and message boards where you can obtain help from budding but more experienced genealogists.
5. USGenWeb – provides lists of genealogy resources by state and county.
6. WorldGenWeb – is similar to USGenWeb. Bob Rankin says, "WorldGenWeb is a nonprofit volunteer organization that is dedicated to the free use and access of public domain genealogical information."

Mr. Rankin notes several other websites and the resources that are provided in the article linked above (i.e., at AskBobRankin.com). He also provides links to genealogy software. □

Windows 10: MS Re-thinks Control Panel,

by John Lister, July, 7 2020
Infopackets Newsletter



Microsoft has unveiled the latest batch of changes coming to Windows 10. Most are usability improvements, though fans of the Control Panel might be concerned.

The changes come in the latest release in the Windows Insider Dev Channel. That's recommend only for the most technically confident users and is the first place that new features and changes are tested by people

outside of Microsoft itself.

One change had already leaked, namely the appearance of the tiles in the Start menu. They will now be partially transparent and will reflect the user's choice of a light or dark theme, the idea being to make sure nothing in the Start menu is too visually jarring.

Alt-Tab Changes Focus

There will also be a change to one of the most basic actions in Windows: using Alt + Tab to switch between Windows. At the moment this simply switches between windows and therefore only switches to the active tab in a web browser.

The change means the default will be that when Alt + Tab reaches a window with a web browser, each subsequent press of the Tab button will switch to the next tab in the browser. Once it gets to the last tab, the next press will switch to the next window in sequence

Users will be able to change the settings to only go through three or five tabs this way, or to return to the current system. (Source: windows.com)
System Information Moves Home

Another change is to the Taskbar at the bottom of the screen. This will now be automatically customized to reduce clutter and only show relevant icons, which will depend on whether the user has linked an Android phone to their PC and/or has an Xbox Live account on the PC.

Notifications in the bottom-right corner of the screen will now list the app that has created the icon.

Finally, some of the key information that appears on the System page in the Control Panel will move to the Settings -> System -> Control Panel page in the Settings menu. Microsoft believes that will reduce redundancy in finding information, but the news has prompted fears that it may have started the process of down-playing and eventually phasing out the Control Panel. (Source: techradar.com)

What's Your Opinion?

Does the Start Menu's appearance matter? Would you find the Alt-Tab changes useful? Is system information best placed in Control Panel or the Settings menus? □

Open Source Lab

GIMP 2.10

By Cal Esneault, Former President of CCCC and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs

April 2020 issue, CCCC Computer News

www.clickers.org

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GIMP 2.10 GIMP, the GNU Image Manipulation Program, is an open-source image editor suitable for touching up photos or drawing original creations. GIMP has a long history (started in the 1990's) and has continually been improved to become a very powerful and sophisticated tool.

Even version numbers (2.0, 2.2, 2.4, etc.) indicate stable versions, while odd version numbers are for developmental releases. Early in 2018, GIMP 2.10 was issued. This was long-anticipated since the previous stable version, 2.8, was over 6 years old. Unfortunately, this version was too late to be included in the Ubuntu and Linux Mint repositories, so users of these would need to go to the GIMP website to get the latest release.

I downloaded and installed GIMP 2.10 on my Windows PC (yes, GIMP is cross-platform). The first thing you notice is the dark theme and symbolic icons installed the default. Compare the previous 2.8 icons with the new set as shown below.



GIMP 2.8 default icons GIMP 2.10 default icons Originally, GIMP had multiple isolated activity windows, but GIMP 2.10, like GIMP 2.08, has a single-window mode that is similar to the interface for Photoshop. Following is a screenshot of GIMP with the main toolbox on the left, the image of interest in the middle, and a tool options panel on the right. GIMP has the ability to have “layers,” and the example shown illustrates how this can be used to superimpose text on the image to indicate its location.



Experienced photographers often shoot in a “raw” image mode. Raw files must be preconditioned using a separate editor. GIMP 2.10 cooperates with two excellent raw editors – Darktable and RawTherapee. As noted by others, I could only get GIMP to behave on my Windows 10 system using Darktable.

Under the hood, the big change was further improvement of the GEGL processing engine. For now, this gives deeper color bit depth and better HiDPI support. The new icons are also a part of the process to give sharp icons on HiDPI monitors. Improved multi-threading makes better use of the multiple cores in modern CPUs. The full implementation of GEGL is a prerequisite for adding non-destructive editing (planned for v3.2). Color space workflow is improved, and native color management is now available.

There are numerous other advancements in this major release that should be of great use to serious photographers. Be sure to read the complete set of release notes to find out details on how to improve your creative work. ☐

Desktop Linux Mint 19.3

By Tom Burt, Vice-President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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Even though I’m predominantly a Windows 10 user, every 18 months or so, I teach a seminar on “What’s New with Linux.” As you might guess, it doesn’t usually draw much of a crowd. My favorite “distro” (version) is Linux Mint because it’s free (open source), it comes with a very nice graphical desktop (actually, a choice of three), it includes lots of bundled applications, it’s well-supported and it performs great on old, low-end hardware. Also, because it is internal design, Linux is innately very secure. With Windows 7 losing support from Microsoft as of January 14th, if you’re now among the Windows 7 orphans, you might want to consider installing Linux Mint to replace or run alongside Win-

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dows 7 on your “well-seasoned” PC. Following is an overview of Linux Mint 19.3, the newest version released in December 2019.

How to Get and Install Linux Mint 19.3

Browse to: <https://linuxmint.com/>. The home page has lots of links to information about Linux. Click one of the buttons to choose which desktop version (Cinnamon, Mate or Xfce) to download. A page of information, including download links, will appear. Click one of the “USA” download links to download a 64-bit “ISO” (DVD) image file to a folder on your PC’s hard drive.



LinuxMint.org Home Page with Cinnamon Desktop Version selected

Once the Linux Mint ISO download is complete, you can burn the ISO image to a DVD to make a bootable setup DVD. Or, you can download and use a free program called balena Etcher (<https://www.balena.io/etcher/>) to convert the ISO image to a bootable USB flash drive.

To get a feel for Linux Mint, you can simply boot and run Linux Mint from the boot media without installing it. This is called a “live session”. The live session desktop includes an “Install Linux” icon that will let you install Linux. In the installer, you can choose to replace the current operating system, or you can install Linux Mint alongside the current operating system. This will configure your PC to dual-boot Linux and Windows. The 64-bit Linux Mint configuration defaults are fine and the installer will automatically handle secure boot and UEFI issues.

For comprehensive Linux Mint installation instructions, see:

<https://linuxmint-installation-guide.readthedocs.io/en/latest/index.html>

Another alternative is to set up Linux Mint in a virtual machine. For this, I use Oracle Virtual Box (<https://virtualbox.org>). After the empty virtual machine has been set up, boot it from the Linux Mint ISO and install Linux Mint to the virtual machine’s virtual hard drive. To learn more, see my Virtual Machine seminar at https://www.scscclb.com/smnr/Virtual_Machine_Primer.pdf. □

Not Another Sunset!

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group

Drive Light Newsletter

www.uchug.org

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I have seen the sun set on a lot of technology. As tech improvements are made and new innovations come to market to brighten our days, the old devices, systems, and ways of doing things often slowly pass over the horizon and out of sight.

In most cases this is a good thing, bringing many benefits, but there are rarely any downsides, however minor. With a lot of innovations, there can still be some advantages to older ways. Young people today don't know what it is like to get up from the couch, walk to the TV and turn a knob to change the channel, yet with all that convenience, the remote control can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Another thing many don't remember is having to manually defrost a freezer. Self-defrosting technology saves labor but uses more energy. Automatic transmissions in automobiles made driving easier for everyone but provided poorer mileage until the technology improved. Now many automatic transmissions are manuals with a computer doing the shifting, and it is hard to find a new vehicle with a true manual transmission. A true manual can still be an advantage, however, since when so few today know how to operate them, they are less likely to be stolen or carjacked. A lot of tech innovations improve our lives in almost all aspects, and there seems little reason to retain the old ways.

Computer technology has improved greatly over 40 years. It would be hard to argue that we would be better off today with no Internet and non-portable devices controlled through a text interface or rows of switches, with large monochrome displays that can't show graphics. All the changes we've seen, from the DOS command line prompt through ten or more versions of Windows, all the versions of Apple products, from the stationary desktop through laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, smartphones, and watches, have meant that a lot of products have seen the sun set on them over the years. In most cases, we run enthusiastically towards the rising sun of new products and capabilities. In a few cases, though, it seems major tech players want to push our still useful and valued technology off a western cliff into the abyss of obscurity before we are willing to part with it, all in the interest of ringing up new sales.

I live in the Wintel (Windows-Intel) world and have seen many products and operating system sunsets. DOS was revolutionary, but Windows graphics and mouse use made leaving it easy. Windows XP was a great OS; I'm writing this on a 15-year-old PC that still runs fine (without an Internet connection), with an early version of Microsoft Word that has all I really need. MS Office is one case where I feel Microsoft has been adding "features" and changing versions primarily to squeeze more money out of users. There have been some nice feature improvements over the years, but a lot of the recent changes have been to the user interface, which I feel was just fine as it was. I'm tired of companies that feel they need to change the look and feel of their software to justify new versions and fees. I especially don't care for the idea of "subscription" software (like Office 365), where I feel I've just become a revenue stream to some company.

I know some will say I should perhaps switch to Linux, or at least to open-source (and free) office productivity software, but I unfortunately still live in a working world, where I must use my employer's MS OS and Office

I prefer not to cloud my sadly-limited mind with having to be fluent in multiple ways of doing things. I have the utmost respect for multi-lingual people, as I have really only ever spoken English, and I often don't feel I've mastered the one language.

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I had a good run with Windows 7 and was sad to have to plan last year for its January 2020 security sunset. A year ago, my wife and I were running three Win7 computers (a desktop and two laptops), three Chrome OS devices (two Chromebooks and a Chromebit), a Win10 computer I hardly used, a couple of tablets, an Android Smartphone and an iPhone. I'm still transitioning to Windows 10; while my wife is happy on her new Win10 desktop, I'm still setting up the new Win10 laptop I bought myself. I try to be good and use my old Win10 computer, but like an unmotivated dieter, I still briefly cheat from time to time and reconnect the network cable on my old Win7 laptop.

I've come to terms with Windows 10, having had to use it at work extensively. The Win7 security end-of-life deadline turned out to be a boon for Microsoft and computer makers, at least in regards to my family. It caused me to buy two new desktops (I bought my mom one as well) and a laptop I might not otherwise have been in the market for. It is nice to have new, faster and better equipment, but I resent being forced into things by the deadlines of others.

While I grudgingly use Microsoft's products, I also chose devices running Google's Chrome OS to add to my tech stable. I bought my first Chromebook, an Acer Chromebook 11, in 2015. The following year, I bought an Acer Chromebit stick computer. Chrome computers are inexpensive (at least the ones I buy are), quick booting, and very portable. They are great for going on the web and for reading and light writing tasks but are too underpowered for much else. I found my Chromebook was great for web browsing, reading the newspaper, and a wonderful travel accessory. I bought a second Chromebook, a Samsung XE501-C13, in a 2018 Black Friday sale simply because I loved my first one so much I wanted to have a spare.



Photo 1: Acer and Samsung Chromebooks

Google started out of the gate with what Microsoft only went to with Windows 10 -forcing automatic OS updates on the user. Google's Chrome OS updates are small and quick, so you hardly notice they have happened. They have seldom changed the look or features, sticking mostly to security, and I don't recall hearing of anything breaking as the result of an update. Microsoft of course earned disdain from early Win10 users with forced OS updates happening at inopportune times, taking a long time and breaking existing capabilities.

I use my Chromebooks every day, but my Chromebit has seen little use. It is plugged into an HDMI port on the back of our smartTV. I bought it a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse and thought I could surf the web with it like my Chromebooks, but my old eyes have problems with the small text at normal TV viewing distances. It is good for watching YouTube videos, but we don't do a lot of that. Since COVID, we have been using it every Sunday morning, as our church now broadcasts services on YouTube.

It was on one of these Sunday morning Chromebit viewing sessions that I noticed it had an odd notification: "Up-

dates end November 2020"! With dismay, I started to research this issue. It appears Google has set up a security sunset date for each model of Chrome OS device. This was not well advertised, so users often only find out near the end of their device's security lifetime.

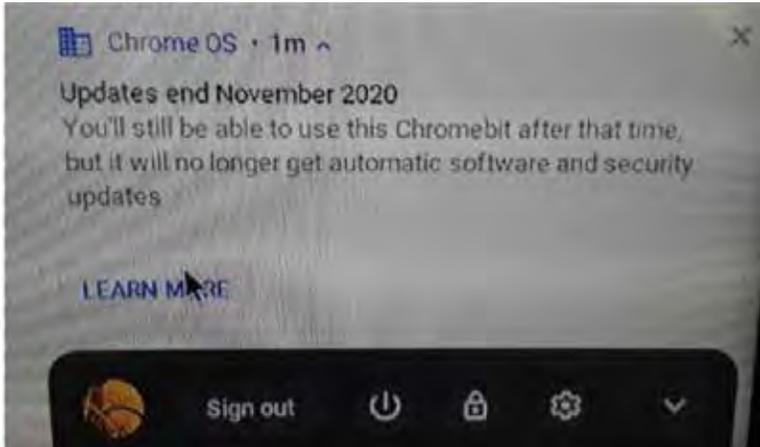


Photo 2: Acer Chromebit stick computer



Photo 3: Google Sunset Notice

It turns out all Chrome OS devices have a set date beyond which no more updates will be provided, the Auto Update Expiration (AUE) date. The auto part of AUE doesn't mean much, as I didn't find any evidence you could manually update the OS after that date either. Google provides information on this at www.google.com/chrome-book/older. It is not clear if the manufacturers have any input into this date, but Google certainly appears to, as there is evidence they can change it.

Google emphasizes that this does not prevent the use of the Chrome OS device after the AUE date, but the device will stop receiving Chrome OS and browser updates. These updates include:

- "Security updates, bug fixes, and new features for Chromebooks. Existing features may stop working."
- "Support for certain apps and extensions that require specific Chrome OS or browser versions."

I looked up the AUE dates for my three Chrome OS devices. To find the AUE, go to settings, then at the very bottom of the left panel, select "About Chrome OS." Select "Additional details," and in the "Update schedule" section the AUE will be shown. I found mine were:

- Asus Chromebit - November 2020
- Acer Chromebook - September 2021
- Samsung Chromebook - June 2022

This means I'll lose updates on the Chromebit in about 6 months, and I have only a year or two left on my Chromebooks. Now I'm getting that same sinking feeling I get with Microsoft.

I found out a bit more about the AUE from some articles on Chrome enthusiast websites (chromecomputing.com and chromeunboxed.com). According to these articles, Google originally set the AUE dates based on an assumed five-year device life expectancy. The supposed goals were to keep the Chrome OS from having to maintain compatibility with older hardware, keep its reputation as a fast and reliable OS intact and incentivize hardware manu-

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facturers to continue to create new Chrome OS products. They said Google changed to 8+ years of update support for products, starting with those released in 2020. Additionally, Google may be extending the AUE date for recent products to match their new assumed lifespan, so it is possible to find the prior AUE for a product extended.

If Google sticks with the five-year plan for my products, I will be disappointed, as that will make them more restrictive than even Microsoft. I bought the three Win7-installed computers I just retired from use between 2010 and 2012, meaning Microsoft allowed me 8-10 of operation with that OS before “forcing” me to change. I don’t know if I’m careful or just lucky, but I’ve yet to have a computer fail; they always get retired (mostly unwillingly) first.

I guess I’ll be looking for a new Chromebook come the Black Friday sales this year. And now every time I see my Chromebooks, in my mind I’ll be hearing Elton John singing “Don’t Let the Sun Go Down on Me.” ☐

President’s Corner

What the Heck is That, and Why Didn’t I Do This Before?

by Greg Skalka

Drive Light Newsletter

www.uchug.org

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The world is full of interesting things. As an engineer, I am usually in the habit of analyzing everything I see.

Ocasionally I will find something I cannot quite figure out initially, but often with a little help, it may make sense.

We all at times get in the habit of doing things a certain way. Even when it has become inconvenient or more costly, we often stick to our old ways despite having considered better solutions. It some-times takes reaching a tipping point before we decide to try a new method, and often later wonder why it took us so long to change.

What the Heck Is That?

I love little tech gadgets. I buy a lot of little (meaning relatively inexpensive) things just on speculation, thinking that they might be useful. If they are not, at least I will have probably learned something. I am especially attracted to items on sale or that appear to be a bargain.

I buy a lot of USB Flash memory devices - after all, who cannot use more digital storage capacity? I have bought all sorts and styles of USB drives. Some have caps over the USB type A male connector for protection. Some act like a ball-point pen - the connector is concealed in the case and slides out for access. Some are large and some are tiny, not much bigger than the USB connector. I have some that are made of metal, though most have plastic bodies. Some have swivel covers, and some have no cover for the connector at all.

I bought one a while back that I thought was unique - a Patriot Stellar Lite 32 GB MicroUSB / USB 2.0 Flash Drive. (Photo 1) It has a standard USB type A on one end and a USB micro on the other (Photos 2 & 3). It was

advertised to work with both PCs (the standard type-A end) and Android mobile devices (the USB micro end), assuming the mobile device supported USB OTG (On-The-Go).



Photo 2: Patriot Stellar Lite - Type A Side



Photo 3: Patriot Stellar Lite - Micro Side



Photo 4: Patriot Box

I bought this drive thinking I could easily transfer files between my computers and my Android tablet, but I found, in reality, I had little need to do that. It turns out that I seldom use my Android tablet at all. It is too big to carry around, and at 9" is too small to be comfortable for a lot of reading. With the touchscreen, it is too difficult to use for extensive writing, and adding a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse results in the equivalent of an underpowered netbook (remember those?) with some assembly required. My tablet really only served as a gateway device to my Chromebooks and smartphone.

I love my Chromebooks; they are lightweight, small but big enough to be useable, fast booting, and are great as an internet access device. They don't have much internal storage as I only buy the original, inexpensive kind (those new Chromebooks with large screens, powerful processors and lots of storage are just Chrome OS laptops), so I need to keep SD cards and USB Flash drives with them. Since that Patriot Stellar Lite drive was small and provides less of a lever to catch and break off when plugged in, I assigned it to Chromebook duty.

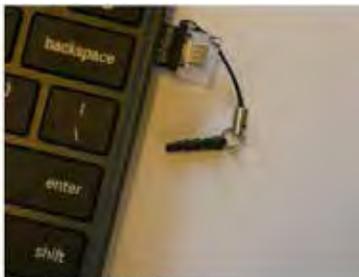


Photo 4: Peg in the way

That is when I began thinking - what the heck is that little peg on the cord that came with the drive?

The cord obviously keeps the cap for the USB micro side from getting lost, but what is with the funny peg? It kept getting in the way under that side of the Chromebook.



Photo 5: Peg v Headphone Plug comparison

I was almost going to cut it off when my wife mentioned what it must be for. She suggested it would plug into the headphone jack, and thus retain the drive when it was unplugged.

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Photo 6: Stellar Lite in Chromebook

I tried this, and it worked (at least for the USB port on that side of the Chromebook).

I tried it on my smartphone and it worked as well. (I do not know if it is a necessity, but it must be what the manufacturer of the Flash drive intended.



Photo 7: Stellar Lite in Smart Phone

Mystery solved!

Why Didn't I Do This Before?

I started regularly reading the newspaper at a young age. I have subscribed to the local paper since moving to San Diego in 1982. While I still get news from the radio and television, the newspaper has always been a trusted source, a familiar format, and my favorite way to stay informed. When internet news came along, I was ahead of many in questioning how accurate and factual the information was.

I do not often get to read books (or technical manuals, like Mr. Scott from the original Star Trek) for entertainment, but I try to keep up with the newspaper. I am too busy in life right now to succeed in this, however, and am usually days or weeks behind the current issue. Others might discard the paper after a day or so without reading it, but I find much more value in it than just the headline stories. I usually get all the front-page news I need in the little bit of local and national evening TV news broadcasting my wife has on when I get home, or on the radio during my commute. It is the more timeless articles of local, regional, and national issues in the newspaper that I find of most interest. The comics have always been worth the price to me as well.

While I have never had any real problems with the quality or content of the product, it is the price that has given me the hate in my love-hate relationship with the newspaper in the last few decades. Long ago the subscription was a fixed, advertised amount per period that had only reasonable increases over time. Then the newspaper appeared to adopt the pricing philosophy of the cable and satellite TV industry, not “what the market will bear,” but what I will call “whatever the individual customer will bear.” In this business model, customers don't all pay the same price, and pricing is often not well advertised. Low introductory offers are available for new customers, but these rates soon increase until customers complain or cancel. Customer loyalty seems to be an undervalued trait.

I'm fine with reasonable price increases over time, in line with the general cost of living, but I still have a spreadsheet I generated in 2014 that showed I'd seen a 140% increase in my newspaper subscription cost over the prior three years. Calling and complaining got it reduced by 25%. Then I spoke with a friend in another part of town that got the same paper by paying 1/2 what I did. This price battle with the newspaper went on for years, but there was not much I could do since I had no acceptable alternative.

Though reading the paper was something I enjoyed, it was also a source of household discord. My wife is much like Mary Poppins (practically perfect in every way), and though she did read the newspaper (at least some of the time), she did not like the way I read it. She felt that once the sun had set on an edition it should be discarded; my piles of weeks-old papers were clutter to her. She blamed the newspaper ink on my hands for grime-marks on the kitchen table (where I read), the nearby furniture, and the walls near light switches. With no children or dogs in the household any longer to blame, I had to be the culprit. The physical paper was also a nuisance when we traveled, as we had to arrange for a neighbor to collect it each day (I didn't want to stop the paper temporarily and let unscrupulous newspaper employees know our house would be vacant). I also had to go out on the driveway each morning and hopefully pick it up (and then call to complain when it was not there).

I had looked at the newspaper's web site (Photo 8) as a digital alternative, but a hodgepodge of articles you have to search through is not what I wanted for getting my news. I wanted the same curated experience I got from the print paper, so a PDF version of the published paper would be the only acceptable digital substitute. Even then I was not sure I would be satisfied without the physical part of the newspaper experience.

Finally, after another price increase and another reading of the riot act about my piles of papers from my wife last fall, I seriously investigated the digital edition of the newspaper (it was included in our paper subscription anyway). I found you could read a reproduction of the paper on their web site (with a viewer I found less than ideal), and you could also download a PDF version. With the digital-only subscription costing 1/4 of what we were paying for print, I finally was motivated to cancel the paper version and went digital-only. No more trips to the driveway (or to the neighbor's after a vacation), and no more late (or wet) papers or tips to a delivery person.

Unfortunately, I've yet to figure out how to download the PDF version from their site successfully with a Chromebook. I now download on a Windows computer to my small USB Flash drive and read them on my Chromebook at the kitchen table (or wherever). The papers can pile up on my Flash drive without my wife complaining of clutter. She says the household grime level has gone down as well, but I am suspicious of the sudden improvement, which may just be coincident with cleaning for the holidays. I have heard it said (probably by a woman) that men are bears with clothes, so I may be accused of having my hand in the honey jar yet in the future.

I have tried reading the PDF paper on my smartphone, (Photo 9) but it is way too difficult on the small screen. I have to scroll around to show only a small segment of a column on the screen to satisfy my old eyes (Photo 10). With the Chromebook, I can read when viewing the full-page width, and can still enlarge a bit more if necessary one day (something not possible with real paper).

I've found I've adapted well to reading the PDF newspaper on my Chromebook and now don't miss the paper version at all (though I might when my stock of old papers I lay out when cleaning my bike chain is used up). Digital technology has improved my life yet again. I suspect I will still have to watch my subscription charges carefully, but it will, in any case, be a lot less than for having a real paper delivered and is better for the environment. With the digital-only subscription, I now look back at my physical paper days and wonder why I didn't do this before?

Charity donors caught up in PAC scams; Plus: dispute erupts over pandemic mask “exemption” cards:

Internet Scambusters #917

Political Action Groups — PACs — are being used as a front for a scam, raising millions of dollars from donors who think they’re giving to charitable causes. PACs are only loosely regulated and mainly support political causes but, as we approach the November elections, donors need to be aware of the risks of a scam, as we report this week.

We also have some disturbing news about so-called mask exemption cards and fliers, some of which have been declared as fraudulent.

Let’s get started

PAC Scams Blur Election Fundraising — Plus Latest Covid Alerts

As we run up to the November elections, we’ll be hearing a lot about Political Action Committees (PACs) — and, no doubt, we’ll be hearing too about PAC scams .Political Action Committees are groups of like-minded individuals who raise and spend money on behalf of causes they support. Mostly, the cause is a political candidate or party, but not always. PACs are always around but come to the fore at key election times such as the upcoming November elections for Congress and the Presidency.

There’s a lot to play — and pay — for, and usually there’s no shortage of citizens who want to contribute. Which is where the scammers come in. PACs are not subject to tight federal control; that attracts scammers. They can set up PACs and avoid detailed scrutiny, using them as a front for their dubious activities. Some have been accused of scamming by posing as charities (which they are not), while other individuals just pretend they’re from a local PAC, take your money and run. Yet others are legitimate organizations who swallow up most, if not all, of their donations in salaries and “administration costs,” just like some “charities.”

One of the issues is that PACs are not subject to the same rigorous controls as charities, and some legitimate charities do have PACs to support them. It’s a confusing mess.

Warning Issued

One of the organizations representing charities has just issued a warning about the tricksters. “Political action committees... are not the same thing as public charities, but some questionable actors from the charity world may be confusing donors into thinking otherwise,” says the organization Charity Watch. “These individuals appear to be operating, or providing the for-profit fundraising and administrative support for, what have been dubbed ‘scam PACs’ to enrich themselves at the expense of the donating public.” Other media, notably the New York Times and the investigative website Politico, claim there’s been an alarming rise in scam PACs in recent years.

These groups of individuals often use names that make them look like worthy charities, seeking to promote their cause or support favored political candidates (though they can’t donate to candidates directly). The US Center for Public Integrity (CFPI) has published a list of almost a dozen organizations it alleges are masquerading as charities, using worthy names. But it says that in recent years it has identified 61 such organizations.

Most of the victims of PAC scams appear to be small-time donors who agree to donate in response to telesales calls. According to the CFPI, donors contributed more than \$101 million to those 61 dubious organizations in 2017-2018. In one particular case, only 2% of the money raised by a group of PACs, allegedly operated by the

same person, were ever used to support a political or other cause.

Furthermore, an investigation by the global news agency Reuters, earlier this year, found that some of the PACs claimed to be supporting charities when they were, in fact, funneling some income to political causes. “These so-called ‘scam PACs’ and their fundraisers exploit the gray zone between U.S. election finance and state charity fundraising laws,” Reuters reported.

“They often are set up as super PACs, groups which in recent years have been empowered by the courts to raise and spend money in unlimited amounts, with little regulation.” However, it’s important to point out that, as

Reuters notes, the scam PACs represent only a sliver of the 6,800 such organizations currently operating in the US.

Can You Tell?

But how can you tell if your PAC caller is legit or not? Often, you can’t, although high-pressure tactics to make you give are frequently a red flag.

Instead, if you receive an unsolicited call, don’t donate until you’ve had time to check the organization out. Be skeptical of anyone claiming to be from a charity or raising money for a charity. You can also check them out at CharityWatch.org or CharityNavigator.org.

You can also see the [list of alleged PAC scam names](#) on the Charity Watch site. And you can read details of the [Reuters investigation](#) at the Reuters site.

And if you want to contribute to a political cause, speak directly to the local office of the party you want to support and ask them for details of supporting PACs.

Coronavirus (Covid-19) Alert

A tiny proportion of people can’t wear face masks. But there’s no such thing as an official mask exemption certificate. That doesn’t seem to stop people downloading supposed exemption cards from the Internet, carrying them around and brandishing them. Some “cards,” titled “Face Mask Exempt Card,” appear to come from an anti-mask campaign organization calling itself the Freedom to Breathe Agency (FTBA). Although this may be a legitimate organization, the US Department of Justice (DOJ) has expressed concern about references on the card to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The cards, printable versions of which have been posted online, say that under the Act, the exempt holder is not obliged to disclose the condition that prevents them wearing a mask and warns of penalties against anyone who ignores the Act. In other words, these documents imply the holder is exempt from wearing a mask and doesn’t have to say why. Some fliers allegedly carry the seal of the DOJ.

The office of the ADA says these fliers are fraudulent. “These postings were not issued by the Department and are not endorsed by the Department,” says the DOJ. “The Department urges the public not to rely on the information contained in these postings and to visit ADA.gov for ADA information issued by the Department.”

Since it’s not clear how a person who genuinely can’t wear a mask can document this, nor the extent to which mask-wearing regulations are being enforced, confusion reigns.

But if you’re tempted to carry a card you found or downloaded online, you should be aware it’s not official, in the sense of being government-authorized and is legally questionable. There are no “official” exemption cards. And if it’s found to fraudulently use names or logos of government departments, you could end up in legal hot water.

That’s it for today — we hope you enjoy your week! ☐

Warning: These toxic hand sanitizers have killed and blinded people

BY JAMES GELINAS, KOMANDO.COM



JULY 7, 2020

It's been nearly four months since the COVID-19 pandemic became official and quarantine began. Even in the days leading up to the shutdown, products like face masks, toilet paper and hand sanitizer were flying off store shelves.

Even before the coronavirus hit, the latter was already the perfect companion for daily activities. When a sink with soap isn't available, a little bit of hand sanitizer can kill harmful bacteria and germs. Hand sanitizers work as well as they do because of the powerful alcohols they contain. But now some are being recalled by the FDA for containing a highly toxic alcohol that can cause debilitating effects like blindness and even death. If you have any of these sanitizers in your home or car, here's why you'll want to throw them right out.

Methanol: Not even once

[The Food and Drug Administration](#) has posted a new bulletin warning consumers about the dangers of hand sanitizers containing the chemical compound "methanol." Several have been identified by the FDA, and a voluntary recall is now in effect to keep them out of consumer's hands.

Methanol, also known as wood alcohol, is a member of same chemical family as isopropyl (rubbing alcohol) and ethanol (the fun kind of alcohol you can drink). Due to a slightly different chemical structure, however, methanol is highly reactive to tissue.

This can lead to a variety of awful effects on the body such as nausea, vomiting, headache, visual disturbances, permanent blindness, seizures, coma, nerve damage and death. And word on the street is that it tastes terrible, too!

Worst of all, you don't even have to ingest the sanitizer to be affected by Methanol poisoning. If you use hand sanitizer frequently that happens to contain methanol, the compound can still be absorbed through skin. This doesn't lead to as dramatic of effects right off the back, but the compound is still highly toxic and should be avoided at all costs.

Does my hand sanitizer contain methanol? What brands should I throw out?

As of now, the FDA is not sure how these methanol-containing sanitizers were able to reach store shelves, and is currently investigating the matter. In the meantime, it's provided a list of known affected products for consumers to check their homes for.

- ITECH 361's All Clean Hand Sanitizer, Moisturizer and Disinfectant: UPC code 628055370130.
- Transliquid Technologies' Mystic Shield Protection hand sanitizer: NDC numbers include

75477-435-02, 75477-435-10, 75477-435-12, 75477-435-25, 75477-435-50 and 75477-534-10.

- Saniderm Advanced Hand Sanitizer, 1-liter bottles: Labeled with lot number 0530 and expiration date of 04/2022 , as well as lot number 53131626 and “Manufactured on April/1/20.”
- Grupo Insoma’s Hand Sanitizer Gel Unscented 70% Alcohol: NDC numbers include 75744-0200-3, 75744-0200-4, 75744-0201-5, 75744-0202-1, 75744-0250-1, 75744-0250-2, 75744-0500-1, 75744-1000-1, 75744-1000-3 and 75744-1001-1.
- Soluciones Cosméticas’ Bersih Hand Sanitizer Gel Fragrance Free: NDC numbers include 75165-003-02, 75165-004-01, 75165-005-01, 75165-006-01, 75165-008-01, 75165-250-01 and 75165-600-01.
- Soluciones Cosméticas’ Antiseptic Alcohol 70% Topical Solution hand sanitizer: No NDC numbers listed.
- Tropicocosméticos’ Britz Hand Sanitizer Ethyl Alcohol 70%: NCD numbers include 76676-402-01, 77676-402-02, 77676-402-03, 77676-402-04, 77676-402-05, 77676-402-06, 77676-402-07, 77676-402-08, 77676-402-09, 77676-402-10, 77676-402-11, 77676-402-12, 77676-402-13, 77676-402-14, 77676-402-16, 77676-402-17, 77676-402-18, 77676-402-19 and 77676-402-20.
- All-Clean Hand Sanitizer: NDC 74589-002-01
- Esk Biochem Hand Sanitizer: NDC 74589-007-01
- CleanCare NoGerm Advanced Hand Sanitizer 75% Alcohol: NDC 74589-008-04
- Lavar 70 Gel Hand Sanitizer: NDC 74589-006-01
- The Good Gel Antibacterial Gel Hand Sanitizer: NDC 74589-010-10
- CleanCare NoGerm Advanced Hand Sanitizer 80% Alcohol: NDC 74589-005-03
- CleanCare NoGerm Advanced Hand Sanitizer 75% Alcohol: NDC 74589-009-01
- CleanCare NoGerm Advanced Hand Sanitizer 80% Alcohol: NDC: 74589-003-01
- Saniderm Advanced Hand Sanitizer: NDC: 74589-001-01

If you had to throw out your bottles and are now empty-handed, don’t worry. With the help of this trusty website, you can see when supplies are in stock for multiple brands of methanol-free sanitizer. [Tap or click here to check it out.](#)

If you used hand sanitizer containing methanol and experiencing any of the symptoms mentioned earlier, the FDA recommends seeking immediate medical treatment. You can also send details about any adverse effects to the FDA’s MedWatch [Adverse Event Reporting program](#).

The information contained in this article is for educational and informational purposes only and is not intended as health or medical advice. Always consult a physician or other qualified health provider regarding any questions you may have regarding a medical condition, advice, or health objectives. □



How to Protect Data on a Laptop – The 4 Most Important Steps

You REALLY need to protect your sensitive data if your laptop runs even the slightest risk of being stolen. It's critical that you protect it (and yourself) with these four appropriate security steps.

How can you set a strong password in a laptop so that data can't be stolen?

It takes much more than a strong password. In fact, it takes at least a couple passwords, plus some settings, plus some encryption on top of it all.

Given that laptops are so easily lost and/or stolen, let's walk through the steps I recommend to protect the valuable data you have stored on it.

Lock your UEFI/BIOS with a password to prevent unauthorized people from booting the machine or making changes.

Lock your hard disk with whole-disk encryption to prevent data access, even if the drive is physically removed.

Secure your login with a strong password to prevent the exposure of data.

Lock your machine with a physical lock to prevent someone from stealing it and attempting to break in at their leisure.

1. Lock your UEFI

If your computer's UEFI supports it, configure it to require a password to be able to boot. This prevents strangers from even starting your machine, much less accessing what's on it directly.

Exactly how you do it will vary depending on the make and model of your computer. Not all UEFI interfaces are the same, and not all support the same set of features. Check with your computer's manufacturer for specifics. DO NOT forget the password.

This will not only prevent someone from accessing what's on the machine, but will also prevent them from making changes to the machine. For example, with a BIOS password set, they should not be able to change the boot order and boot from anything other than the settings you've chosen.

While you're at it, turn on Secure Boot, if it's not already on. This restricts the computer from booting into untrusted operating systems or installing unauthorized UEFI replacements. Caution: turning Secure Boot on or off may change how your system boots, and render the operating system inaccessible. If this happens, simply revert the change and the machine should return to normal. Consider setting Secure Boot prior to your next operating system installation if this happens.

2. Lock your hard disk

This is the single most important step on this list. By "lock your hard disk", I mean use whole-disk

encryption. This can take any of several forms:

Windows BitLocker, if your edition of Windows supports it.² Make absolutely certain to back up the encryption key when offered.

VeraCrypt whole-disk encryption. As it is passphrase-based, do not lose or forget the passphrase. A hard disk encrypted at the hardware level. This manifests much like a UEFI password: you must specify a passphrase prior to being able to boot from the drive. Once again, do not lose the passphrase. Encryption is the ultimate protection for your data. Even when all else fails and a hacker or thief makes off with the hard drive from your machine, they still won't be able to access the data on it without knowing the passphrase or encryption key.

Neither will you, should you ever lose the key or forget the passphrase ... so don't.

3. Lock your login

You should have a strong password for your computer's login, particularly if you use a Microsoft account. Unlike a local machine account, your Microsoft account is also accessible — and therefore vulnerable — online.

Using additional login methods — like a PIN or facial recognition — is something I discourage for mobile computers with sensitive data. They represent additional places hackers can poke and prod. Guessing your strong password is unlikely, but a short PIN can easily be exposed in other ways. It concerns me that a good photo might squeak by facial recognition tools, so I'd avoid it as well.

Long, strong passwords remain the best protection.

While you're at it, make sure there are no additional login accounts enabled on your machine. If the normally hidden account called "administrator" is enabled, disable it (assuming your normal login account is administrator capable).

4. Lock your machine

A Kensington Long in Place

A Kensington lock in place. (Click for larger image.)

When travelling, a friend of mine never leaves his laptop alone without physically locking it to something else in the room, like a table.

Most laptops have a slot for what's called a "Kensington Lock". It's a standard design to securely tether mobile devices in place.

Even with all the precautions already taken — UEFI passwords, encrypted disks, and secured accounts — it's still important to make sure the laptop itself can't be stolen.

As I've said many times, if it's not physically secure, it's not secure.

Continued.....page 28

Ask Leo.....from page 27

A story from the trenches

Much of the above came to mind when a friend handed me a laptop and asked me to see if I could make it usable again. It had been part of a corporate network that they no longer had access to, so they could not sign in. They just wanted to be able to use the machine for themselves, and didn't really care about what was on it; any photos could be restored from copies on their mobile phone.

I discovered the machine's hard disk had been encrypted using BitLocker, and of course we did not have access to the corporate encryption key. The result? The data on the machine was completely inaccessible. I was able to back up the hard disk, but the encryption remains in place. I'm not sure the backup will ever be useful, other than to restore the machine to the state it was in when I got it.

On the other hand, without a UEFI password, I was easily able to change the boot order and boot from a Windows 10 setup drive. This allowed me to install Windows 10 from scratch and erase everything on the drive, encrypted or not.

I hate to harp on it, but ...

Much of what I've described above relies on an encryption key, passphrase, or strong password.

Do not lose them. If you do, you will be the one locked out, and everything on your machine may be rendered inaccessible. That's the whole point of this type of security.

There are no back doors.

I mention this — again — because of the fairly constant stream of questions from folks wanting to get into accounts or devices for which they've lost their passwords, passphrases, or encryption keys.

If you found this article helpful, I'm sure you'll also love Confident Computing! My weekly email

For additional informative and helpful articles just sign into <https://askleo.com>

Protect Your Computer Against Power Outages

By Matt Batt, Past President, The Computer Club

www.sccccomputerclub.org

mattbatt (at) gmail.com

The two main causes of damage to computers, TVs, modems, and other sensitive electronics are a sudden loss of power and power fluctuations. Basic power strips do not protect your PC from any sort of electrical fluctuations; surge protectors can protect against power surges, but they offer no protection against drops in line voltage or loss of power.

To protect your computer against power outages or voltage fluctuations, you need a battery backup. UPS (Uninterruptible Power Supply) units are basically surge protectors that contain a battery inside. In the event of a power failure, your computer will seamlessly switch over to battery power and continue to run. This gives you time to

shut down your machine without any damage.

Many UPS units come with software that can detect when the unit switches to battery power and shut down automatically in your absence.

There are many different UPS offerings on the market. There are small units that can keep a desktop computer running for 5-10 minutes or longer, more expensive units that can keep multiple computers running for hours.

The most important step in choosing a UPS is to buy one that has enough power to give your computer system enough time to shut down properly. While it is possible to calculate the power usage of a computer system by analyzing all of its components, for purposes of this article we can estimate the requirements of a typical computer user in our club.

UPS systems are rated VA (Volt-Amperes). Ignore how it is calculated, but a typical low-end desktop needs a UPS rated at about 480 VA while a high-end computer with a high-end video card would need a UPS rated as high as 1200-1500 VA.

Two types of UPS units have an application to home electronic systems.

The least expensive is a Standby UPS. This type of unit charges its battery and waits. When the power cuts off it will automatically switch to the battery for backup power. The switch takes milliseconds and is fast enough so that most electronics do not shut down.

For a higher cost, you can get a unit with Automatic Voltage Regulation (AVR) that corrects power fluctuations without switching to battery power. This feature protects you from instabilities in line voltage often experienced in lightning storms.

There are a few other considerations to note;

Some units include software for your computer that senses when the UPS switches over to battery power and can automatically initiate the shutdown process.

UPS units generally have a mix of power/surge protected and surge protected only outlets. Make sure that there are enough outlets for your needs.

Some UPS units include surge-protected/filtered ports for your Ethernet and Coax cables. Personally, I don't use these as I've had problems with ethernet cable performance degrading through a UPS.

Be sure to get units that have user-replaceable batteries. UPS batteries last 3-5 years. When a battery fails, you'll either need to buy batteries or buy a whole new unit.

I've used Cyberpower and APC UPS units and they all worked as advertised. The two pictured below from Amazon both have shutdown software and replaceable batteries. The APC is rated at 500VA and costs \$55.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and two with just Surge protection. It's the model I use on most of my computers and TVs. The Cyberpower has AVR, is rated at 1000VA, and costs \$109.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and four with just Surge protection. I use one like it for my main computer, Internet mode, router, and my phone system. ☐

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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,

Yes, we're having a General Meeting this month. It will be at our usual 2:00 PM time on Monday July 15. Once again we are RSVPing . Please call Bill on 321-733-7582 or email to wmiddle@hotmail.com. We should have enough seats for our usual GM attendance, but just in case, please RSVP ASAP. We'll bring the little

PA system, but it wasn't needed at One Senior - apparently the masks made everybody speak louder and/or the socialist distancing improved the acoustics! Cool. Oh, yes - Please wear a mask. Everybody's protection....

Bill

Interesting Internet Finds - May 2020

By Steve Costello

scostello AT sefcug.com

In the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during April 2020.

How To Use Chromecast To Cast Your Entire Desktop To TV

<https://helpdeskgeek.com/how-to/how-to-use-chromecast-to-cast-your-entire-desktop-to-tv/>

Most people know they can watch movies from their smartphone on the TV with Chromecast. This post explains how you can watch anything from your PC on the TV with Chromecast. You might just want to see what you are doing on a much larger screen, or maybe you don't have HDMI available on your PC. Whatever, check this out.

GPS: The Underused Navigation Tool

<https://www.techtricksworld.com/gps-the-underused-navigation-tool/>

I know what you are thinking: Why do I need a stand-alone GPS? I thought the same thing until reading this post. Now I carry a stand-alone GPS, as well as my smartphone on trips. At least I will when I can travel again.

Why You Shouldn't Use Your ISP's Default DNS Server

<https://www.howtogeek.com/664608/why-you-shouldnt-be-using-your-isps-default-dns-server/>

A lot of us never change from their ISP's default DNS server. I am not one of those and, once you read this post you will see why you shouldn't be one either. Also, there are suggestions and instructions for changing to other DNS servers.

Listen Up: 9 Audiobook Hacks

<https://litreactor.com/columns/listen-up-9-audiobook-hacks>

In these social distancing times, audiobooks might be able to help keep things from being so crazy. Read this post to learn some things about audiobooks.

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

How to See and Download Your Netflix Viewing History

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/how-to-download-netflix-viewing-history/>

With all the stay at home orders, you have probably been watching a lot of Netflix. If you are like me, you probably can't remember what you have watched so far. Well, this post from MakeUseOf explains how to

download your viewing history so, you can see what you have already watched.

[CAUTION] Hard Drive Clicking Sound?

https://askbobrankin.com/caution_hard_drive_clicking_sound.html

Noises from your hard drive? This post has some suggestions and fixes. Most importantly, if you are hearing strange sounds from your hard drive backup immediately, the worst that can happen then is that it was nothing.

This work by [Steve Costello](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#).

As long as you attribute this article, you can use it in part, or whole, for your newsletter, website, or blog. ☐

Calendar of Events

July 16, 2020 - Club Meeting, 2 PM
Auditorium, Merritt Island Library

July 31, 2020 - Deadline for Journal Input

**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

**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.**



GRILLS
Seafood Deck
& TIKI BAR

Port Canaveral	Riverside
505 Glen Creek Drive	6075 N Highway US1
Cape Canaveral, FL 32920	Melbourne, FL 32940
321-868-2226	321-242-8999

Casual Waterfront Dining
Live Entertainment
Boat Access Available

Presentations Schedule

July 16, 2020

Meet in the Auditorium
2 PM

Get together welcome meeting
Discussion, Q&A

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
July 16, 2020 2 PM

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.