



Midland Michigan

BITS AND BYTES

August 2015

<http://mcc.apcug.org/>

President Piper's Ponderings....

August is the Club picnic, same time (7:00 pm) as our regular meetings. Bring a dish to pass that will feed 6-8 and the Club will provide subs, pop and table service.

We do not have a formal topic prepared for August, so this will give us plenty of time for Q&A as well as a Show & Tell of any new hardware or software which you have acquired over the summer.

I know of at least four members who have upgraded at least one computer to Windows 10, so we will ask them to tell us about that experience. I anticipate this Win 10 discussion will occupy much of our meeting. You will be able to decide if now is the time to upgrade your computer.

Our Club's help sessions four times each month in the Computer Lab will resume in September. We have been seeing more drop-ins seeking help, and the Community Center bulletin has been giving more publicity to our program. Here

is a chance to volunteer to help others or just show up and get your own questions answered.

Bring any computer related hardware or software which you are no longer using, and the Club will use it as a raffle or donation item. As I acquire small items, I have adopted the habit of buying a couple extra to give away.

We had three new members last year, so don't hesitate to bring a friend to our meetings.

See you Wednesday, August 26 at our General Meeting

(The above comments are the opinion of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Midland Computer Club.)



GENERAL CLUB MEETING

Midland Community Center, 2001 George St., Midland MI
Room K111, Barstow Shipps Wing

Wednesday, August 26, 2015

7:00 P.M.

Topic: Club Picnic

2015 BOARD MEMBERS

MCC OFFICERS

President Larry Piper larryp56@chartermi.net
 Treasurer Jan Ensing btiger6@yahoo.com
 Membership Gary Ensing btiger6@gmail.com
 Editor & Carol Picard webbyte@yahoo.com
 Webmaster

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER

Joe Lykowski joseph@lykowski.com

PROGRAM COORDINATORS

Howard Lewis lewis3ha@chartermi.net
 Bill Tower tower.w@gmail.com

Please let Howard or Bill know of topics you would like covered at future meetings.

PUBLICITY

Al Adams aladams12@yahoo.com

Board Meeting

First Thursday of the month
 7:00 PM
 Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
 5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

Useful, useless and strange (in no particular order) Web Sites:

<http://ilovelibraries.org/>

The American Library Association maintains this site which gives insight on libraries across America. Included are what libraries do, how to volunteer for your local library, help find some interesting books to read, etc.

<http://www.firstbook.org/>

FirstBook's mission is to help children become better educated by getting them to read. To this end, FirstBook wants to make sure that all kids have access to books, even if they can't afford them. Check out this site and see what else FirstBook is doing to encouraging children to read.

<http://www.ejury.com/>

eJury.com is an online jury site where attorneys present a case and the jurors selected weigh in online on the case. They typically pay \$5-10 per case, but the number of cases you are selected for depends on how many attorneys in your county sign up for the service. Cases are real cases, but not the real trial. The object is to help attorneys prepare for their actual court cases.

<http://smartcheck.cftc.gov/>

If you would like to move to a different financial advisor, the U.S. Commodity Futures Trading Commission maintains this site with links to their various pages where you can run a credentials check on an advisor or their firm.

<http://read.gov/>

The Library of Congress maintains a large database on their offerings along with common reading lists that might tweak your fancy.

Membership Enrollment Form

NAME _____ PHONE _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ ZIP _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Membership dues FAMILY (\$20) STUDENT (\$15) New Member _____ Renewal _____

Please fill out the above form and mail it along with payment of check or money order to :

MIDLAND COMPUTER CLUB
 1816 Bauss Ct
 Midland, MI 48642-4023

Attn: Membership Chairman

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Tips, Tricks & Techniques (submitted by Larry Piper)**How to “Listen” to Your Movies**

A friend told me he had numerous videos—in the form of a CD or DVD—which he wanted to “rip” the sound to an mp3 file. Why would you want to do this, I asked? It turns out his videos, of which he has 20 to 30, are instructional in nature, and he wants to merge them together so he can listen to them while riding in his car.

I quickly determined that my video copying software did not have an option to merely copy the sound. A Google search on audio recording/copying wasn't much help, but once I added the word “streaming,” I got two hits. One was Wondershare Streaming Audio Recorder, \$19, with an 8.0 rating, and the other was Apowersoft's Streaming Audio Recorder, \$40, with an 7.0 rating. Both software packages will record any sound that passes through your PC. They also have a free, trial version which will record up to 3 minutes, so you can try it before buying it.

Either package will get the job done. The problem is that you must start the recording software before you start streaming the sound. So you will end up with a blank spot at the start of every recording. Therefore, you will also want to find an audio editing program to trim out any blank areas. Audacity is a good choice, and it is free. Audacity will also work if you want to merge some of your mp3 files. You probably will want to rename the saved mp3 files to something appropriate, because the programs automatically give them a name based upon the date and time of the recording.

Recording streaming data is a time consuming process. Unlike mp3 ripping software which can copy the sound in something like 10 to 20% of the play time, recording a streaming sound takes 100% of the play time. So put on your multitasking hat, start the recording process, and come back in an hour to edit and rename the saved file.

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Interesting Internet Finds

Steve Costello, Boca Raton Computer Society - editor@brcs.org - <http://ctublog.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 the month of July 2014.

What's New in Android 5.0 L?

<http://www.maketecheasier.com/whats-new-in-android-5-0-l/>

Have you been hearing about the new Android 5.0-L? Been wondering what it is all about? If so check out this post from MakeTechEasier.

Can I Make Phone Calls from Within Gmail?

<http://www.askdaveytaylor.com/can-make-phone-calls-within-gmail/>

Dave Taylor explains how to make phone call for free with your Gmail account.

Picasa Tip: Picture Sort Order, Folder Sort Order

<http://picasageeks.com/2014/07/picasa-tip-picture-sort-order-folder-sort-order/>

Jim and Chris Guld explain how to sort pictures and folders in Picasa. You can find more Picasa tips like this in their free weekly articles at <http://picasageeks.com/> and check out <http://geeksonatour.tv/> for non Picasa related tutorials.

How to Train Google Now to Show You Better Cards.

<http://www.greenbot.com/article/2449596/how-to-train-google-now-to-show-you-better-cards.html>

Have an Android and use Google Now? This post from Greenbot, shows you how to train Google Now so you get better cards over time.

How to Start System Restore When You Can No Longer Log Into Windows

<http://www.7tutorials.com/how-start-system-restore-when-you-can-no-longer-log-windows>

If you should no longer be able to log into Windows, this post will tell you how to start System Restore anyway. Keep this handy, because it is likely you will have the problem sooner or later.

What Is RSS and How Can It Improve Your Life?

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/what-is-rss-and-how-can-it-improve-your-life/>

If you have been reading this column or the Interesting Internet Finds posts for a while, you know that I get these kinds of things from RSS feeds. Check out this MakeUseOf post to learn about RSS feeds, then check out some for yourself. I guarantee you will find lots of useful things for yourself.

Most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog: <http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/>

The posts are under Creative Commons licensing.

Preserving Your Ancestral History

Dave Howell, Member, Computer Users of Erie, PA

April 2014 issue, Horizons - www.cuerie.com - dhowell63 (at) neo.rr.com

"In all the world and in all time, there isn't anyone exactly like you - with your history, your family, your stories, attitudes, or abilities.

"Your stories are what makes you unique to your family, friends, and the world. Family histories are what draws you together.

"Your family history is like a written memoir, a legacy that serves as a link between the past and the future. By leaving a legacy, you are giving back to life."

One of the ways to get started developing your family story is to begin with interviewing the older members of your family, 50 years or older, be they parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins and even older friends of the family. Choose a quiet time, such as after a family dinner. Make sure you won't be disturbed by telephones or other electronic gadgets. Record the interview with sound or video recorders, and/or take notes so that you get all the details and can review them later. Keep the interview no longer than 60 to 90 minutes long.

Use open-ended questions, such as "What was it like when?" As you listen to answers, other questions will come to mind. Ask them. Use memory triggers, such as old photographs, keepsakes, letters, places, and names of deceased family members.

Listen attentively and don't interrupt or correct. Maintain eye contact and show interest by leaning forward or nodding. If someone is talking about a painful experience, show empathy and say, "That's very sad." Expect emotion to be a part of the process.

If a person doesn't want to talk about something, just go on to the next question. An interview shouldn't last more than an hour. People do the best when they're not tired. Thank the person you've interviewed.

Here are some examples of questions to be asked:

Were you born in a hospital, at home, or elsewhere?

Who attended your birth - a physician, a midwife, or some else?

How many brothers or sisters did you have?

What are your first memories?

What kind of toys did you play with?

Did you have grandparents, aunts, uncles, or other relatives living with you or nearby while you were growing up?

Did any non-relative live with you?

What kind of clothes did you wear? Did your parents purchase them or make them?

Were you treated differently from your brothers or sisters, if you had any?

If your parents, grandparents, or ancestors before them came from overseas, what country did they come from? What year?

How important was religion in your family?

What special holidays or events did your family celebrate? Do you recall the people who came on those occasions, how they dressed?

During those special occasions, do you remember what food was served, what prayers were said before the meal, and who was in charge at the table?

Can you remember how the food was prepared? Can you recall how the people at the table acted or dressed?

Did you have a piano or other musical instrument in the house?

What kind of stove did you have? How was the house heated and lighted? Did you have an icebox?

Where did you go to school? Can you recall your teachers and any other incidents at school?

Did your family move while you were growing up and how did you travel to your next house?

How did you spend your summers?

How did you meet your husband or wife?

What do you know about your family surname? Were they ever changed?

What stories, traditions, legends have come down to you about your parents, grandparents, or other ancestors?

Is there a family cemetery or burial plot?

Were your parents active in community life? What responsibilities did that take?

Were there other languages spoken in your home besides English?

What kind of work did you do? How about your grandparents?

Did you bring any photos, mementoes, or other artifacts from your ancestors to show me?

Did you vote in any election for public offices?

On concluding the interview, ask if there are any other statements they would like to make. For example, is there something they would do over again if they had the chance?

Review: SanDisk Ultra Dual USB Drive - Android file transfers made easy

By Frank Ramsey, Editor, Akron Canton PC Users Group (ACPCUG), Ohio
www.acpcug.org -- Aframsey (at) yahoo.com

Your first question is probably what is a dual USB drive and why might it be useful?

In this context, a dual USB drive is a device that has two USB connectors. In the case of the SanDisk Ultra, as shown in the picture, it has a standard USB type A male and a standard micro USB male connector.

The connections are not to be used at the same time.

There are covers that slide over the connectors, protecting them. Since the covers are attached to the device itself, you cannot lose the cover. Best Buy has them in sizes of 16GB, 32GB and 64GB, priced around \$15, \$25 and \$50 respectively.



Yes, you could use an OTG (on the go) cable and a standard USB device with a USB type A male connector. I personally guarantee that no matter how many OTG cables you have, there will a time when you need it that you cannot find it. Not the case with this device. The two connectors are always attached to the device.

To use, slide the cover back on the connector to use and plug in the device.

Android and PC devices will typically recognize the device as external storage.

When is the device useful? When you want to backup stuff on an Android device, or transferring large amounts to/from the Android device.

Think of the picture library on your Smartphone. Have you protected it? What would happen if you drop the phone into the sink? Are your pictures gone?



Not if you use this device. Plug it into the smart phone. Using your favorite file manager, select the picture library (typically contained in a folder called DCIM). Click copy. From within the file manager, browse to the SanDisk dual USB device, typically called USBDriveA (or B or C). Select the device. Click, paste and wait until the picture library has been copied.

Now, unplug the SanDisk dual USB device from your Smartphone and plug it into your PC, copying the picture library to your PC, the Cloud, or an external USB device attached to your PC. The possibilities are endless.

Great device. Highly recommended.

CEAInnovate!

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ

December 2015 issue, TCS eJournal - www.aztcs.org - [georgehardingbd \(at\) earthlink.net](mailto:georgehardingbd@earthlink.net)



I attended a program put on by CEA, the parent organization that produces the Consumer Electronics Show, presented in Las Vegas the beginning week of January.

The program included a session called Technology Trends to Watch in 2015. It covered some of the hottest subjects today: 3-D printing, the Internet of Things (IoT), Big Data Analytics, Digital Health and Entertainment.

The panel on 3-D printing stated that the technology for home use is not mature and someone trying to use the reasonably priced models available today will have difficulty using them to do anything significant. The business versions, however, are very useful. The latest James Bond movie blew up a golden Aston Martin. It was created from a 3-D printer! It was actually a miniature, but was, nevertheless, an accurate replica of the car. The panel anticipates high growth in this product area over the next few years, as more uses are found for creative products.

The Internet of Things refers to the universe of applications which connect devices to the Internet resources without human interaction. There are many examples of this already in place: refrigerators advising you of the need to replace food; the many home situations that can be controlled by remote devices like smart phones; wearable technology to monitor and measure your health quality; GPS mapping in automobiles; self-driving cars. The current state of IoT has just begun and will expand dramatically in the future, according to the panel.

Big Data Analytics refers to the collection of usage data from you and others, in order to analyze and predict actions. This may be to identify the products you want more efficiently, to broaden product categories to better satisfy customers and increase sales and profits. Whether you know it or not, you are surrounded by Big Data collection and analysis. Every time you use a credit card, the data associated with the purchase goes to combine with other data to better serve our needs and the needs of business. An associated issue is that of privacy. There is as yet no consensus about whether Big Data is good or bad, whether it should be allowed or controlled in some way.

Digital Health is also known as Wearable Tech. This is a fast developing field, with quite a large number of products already on the market. The continued development will be in making products do more and do it better. It may go from the ability to track and measure health and fitness to actual diagnosis of disease.

Entertainment is big now, of course, but it shows no signs of slowing down. The personal game devices and the online gaming continue their rapid growth. What is just starting its big growth is the streaming of movies and shows. The trend is driven by the growing reluctance to be tied to a television set for one's entertainment.

It will be very interesting to see how these areas develop and grow over the next decade.

Tech Armor case for iPhone6

There are many cases available for the new iPhones. One of the best is Tech Armor's case for iPhone6 (there's also one for the iPhone6 Plus).



The new iPhones are different in several ways: thinner, larger and with screen that is rounded at the edges. The Tech Armor case handles all of these.

Not only is it attractive, being a steel gray color, but it is tough enough to protect your phone from bumps, drops, scratches and knocks. The case has a slightly rough surface, making it easy to grasp and hold.

The cutouts for the various buttons are well done, making it easy to press the buttons when needed.

The back is clear plastic, hard and protective of the iPhone back. The case does not come with a screen protector, but Tech Armor has that, too.

The case comes with a lifetime warranty and is reasonably priced.

About: Tech Armor case for iPhone6

Vendor: Tech Armor

www.techarmor.com

Price: \$15, screen \$7

Price: \$15, screen \$7

Ventev

This company produces wireless infrastructure products and mobile accessories. I was provided with several of the mobile accessories to test.

Powercell 6000. This external battery can be easily charged in any wall socket. The back of the charger has two prongs which fit the wall socket and fold into the charger case. You can charge one or two mobile devices with the built-in USB sockets, one providing 1 amp output at 5 watts, the other 2 .1 amps at 10 watts . The higher capacity output can be used for a tablet, or a smart phone. In fact, you can charge two mobile devices at the same time, if needed. Price \$75.



Dashport r900. This is a charger, too, but designed to be used in your car. It plugs into the power outlet in the car's dash and provides power whether or not you are near an outlet. It comes with a cable for standard USB connection and also micro-USB. Price \$40.

Chargesync cables. There are several versions of this product, but each is designed to connect your mobile device to its charger or to another type of charger. What's really great about these cables is that they are flat, which means that they do not get tangled up like the round ones. They come in different colors, too. Whether you have an iPhone with 30-pin connection or one of the newer iPhone 5 or 6 cables, or even something else, you'll be able to find one of these cables for you.

Price: \$15 - \$25

About: Ventev

www.Ventev.com

WeMo by Belkin

We've known Belkin for many years for electronic gear, but they recently opened a new product area for exploration, capitalizing on the use of the Internet to connect disparate things, the so-called IoT (Internet of Things).

I received their WeMo LED Lighting Starter Set for review. It contains two light bulbs and a Link device, plus a set of very brief instructions.



The light bulbs are equivalent in illumination to 60 watt tungsten bulbs. We have been urged to replace tungsten bulbs with CFL (compact flash light) bulbs, with the incentive that illumination is equivalent but electrical usage is much lower. The bulbs in this kit are LED and go further in reducing electrical usage.

The bulbs look like what we're used to, but have some wizardry inside to allow connectivity through the Internet.

So, what does the kit do for you? It allows you to control two light fixtures separately and to turn each off or on at specified times, on specified days.

The procedure is to plug the Link into a wall socket. An LED comes on to tell you that it's connected. Next, you replace an existing bulb in a lamp or other fixture with one of the WeMo bulbs. You can use both bulbs in the same fixture (a chandelier, say) or in two separate fixtures. Each is controlled separately.

Next you download the WeMo app. There is one for Apple as well as Android. You next connect through the app to the WeMo network, then to your home or office network. Once this is done, the app searches for devices. When it finds the bulbs, it stores them and takes you to a page where you can set up your rules.

The rules involve On time, Off time and day(s) of the week. There is also an Away From Home setting, which is different from the standard setting. One other feature is the ability to fade in or out when the bulb turns on or off.

With the bulbs and the app, you have control over your lighting, no matter where you are, provided you have Wi-Fi, 3G or 4G service.

Belkin has other devices in the WeMo line: Light Switch, Switch/Motion, Crock Pot, Holmes Heater, Holmes Humidifier, Mr. Coffee and Holmes air Purifier.

About: WeMo

Vendor: Belkin

www.belkin.com/us

Price: \$100, additional bulbs \$30

Memory Cards

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
December 2014 issue, BUG Bytes - www.bcug.com - [n2nd \(at\) att.net](mailto:n2nd@att.net)

USB memory sticks and Secure Data (SD) cards are the most convenient media for transferring data among computers. Both are compact, inexpensive, and rugged and have capacities of up to several Gbytes. Above this, you have little choice but to use a considerably larger, more fragile, and more expensive external hard disk. CDs and DVDs are less expensive, but are larger, more fragile, and have lower capacities; moreover, fewer modern portable PCs have optical media drives than in the past. Finally, writable optical media have reliability issues, especially if they are subjected to high temperatures or humidities. It's also true that memory sticks and cards experience fatigue in that they will fail after a finite number of write operations. However, the limit is so large that you can ignore them for devices used for the applications we're discussing here, although it is a consideration for internal solid state disks.

For many years, I've carried in my keycase a USB memory stick with two partitions, one with a bootable diagnostic operating system and the other with a FAT32 file system that is available to Linux, OS X, and Windows. Thus, I always have with me a computer toolkit and a means of transferring files. (If you do the same, make the first partition the FAT32 one. While a PC can boot from any partition, once Windows is running it can read only the first partition on a memory stick. Other operating system don't have this limitation.)

We have seen three generations of Universal Serial Bus (USB) devices. USB 1 has a top speed of 12 Mbits/s, which because of protocol overhead results in a practical data transfer rate of about 1 Mbyte/s. Such devices are now obsolete. USB 2 claims a speed of 480 Mbits/s, and protocol overhead reduces this to no more than 35 Mbytes/s, but only the fastest memory sticks can approach this. Finally, USB 3 has a maximum transfer rate of 5 Gbit/s, which could allow transfer rates of over 600 Mbyte/s, but this is faster than what current memory chips and readers can achieve. Actual test results show that, depending on the reader, USB 3 memory sticks are at most twice as fast as USB2 devices, and in some cases the difference is negligible. The good news about USB is that there are few compatibility issues; you will experience reliable data transfers with almost any combination of memory stick and reader.

The Secure Digital Card (SDC) situation is more complex, as it includes four families and three physical sizes. The families are SD (standard capacity), SDHC (high capacity), SDXC (extended capacity), and SDIO (which combines storage and input/output functions, such as Bluetooth). There is also an SDXC family that is designed for use in video cameras and uses the proprietary Microsoft exFAT file format. The three sizes are standard (32 x 24 mm), mini (21.5 x 20.0 mm), and micro (11.00 x 15.00 mm). Adapters are available that allow the use of mini and micro cards in standard slots. Early SD cards had an "x" rating, where x was equivalent to 1.2 Mbit/s; for example an 8x rating implied a read speed of 8 x 1.2 = 9.6 Mbit/s (about 1.2 Mbyte/s), with write speeds being substantially slower. Modern SD cards have a class rating that implies a minimum read and write speeds.

- Class 2 – 2 Mbyte/s
- Class 4 – 4 Mbyte/s
- Class 6 – 6 Mbyte/s
- Class 10 – 10 Mbyte/s
- UHS Class 1 (U1) – 10 Mbyte/s
- UHS Class 3 (U3) – 30 Mbyte/s

UHS cards are intended for HD video recording and require slots designed for them.

Because of their wide ranges of performance, there are significant compatibility issues with SD cards, and this is made worse by the shoddy quality of many low-cost readers, including some incorporated into laptops. Before purchasing an SD card, check the requirements of the device that will use it. New cards

may have greater capacities than older devices can address. Version 2 of the SD spec changed the interface, with the result that new cards may not work in old devices, and old cards may not work in new devices. Finally, you should avoid SDX and UHS cards unless you are using hardware and software that specifically requires them.

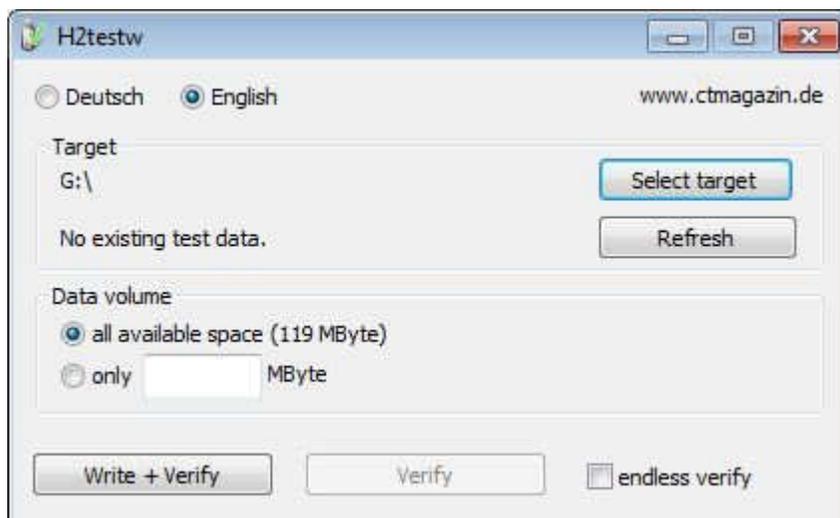
I prefer USB memory sticks to SD cards for transferring data among PCs.

- On USB sticks the connector pins are protected, while on SD cards they are external where they can become dirty and can allow static electricity to damage the card.
- Most USB sticks have a mounting point that allows them to be carried in a key case or on a key ring; SD cards do not.
- Every modern computer has USB connectors, but most desktops lack one for SDCs. I have seen claims that after-market SD readers for desktops and those included on many laptops are not reliable, and some have damaged cards.
- The small size and black color of SD cards makes them easy to lose.
- USB sticks are thicker and appear to be more rugged than thin, plastic SD cards.
- There are fewer compatibility issues with USB memory sticks than with SD cards.

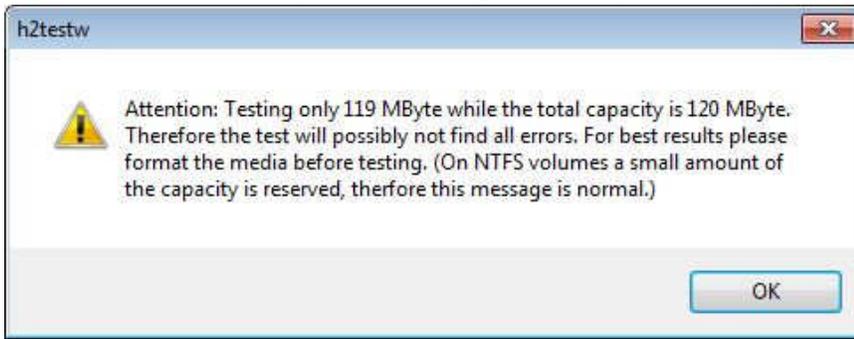
However, SD cards are the standard removable storage element for cell phones and digital cameras.

All the above assumes that you buy name-brand devices from established and reputable dealers. There is a lot of counterfeit merchandise floating around, USB 1 devices with USB 3 labels, low-speed SDCs with high-speed labels, and low capacity ones with high-capacity labels. Some of the latter, will lie about their capacities to your file manager; a claimed capacity of 16 Gbytes doesn't mean it can actually store that amount. If you find a really low price, it may be a bargain, but the only thing you know for sure is that it's cheap.

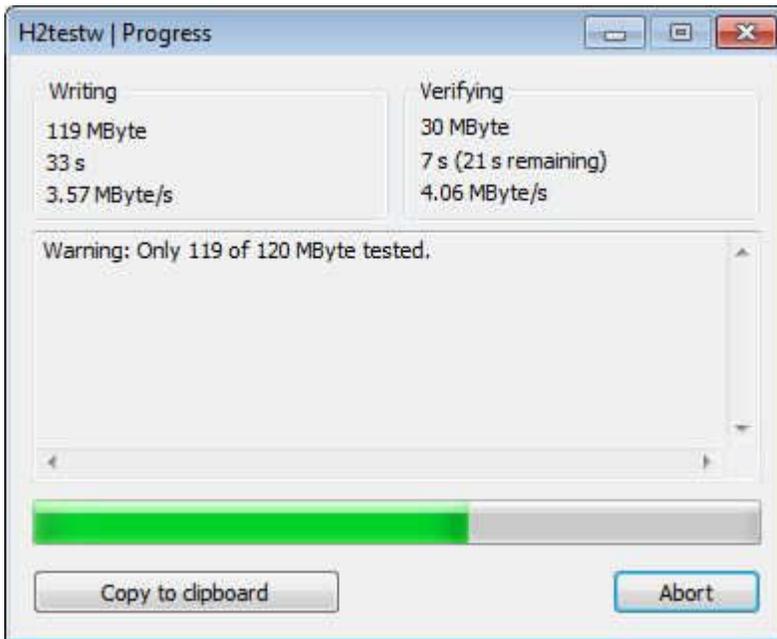
You can use the Windows program H2testw, available at <http://www.heise.de/download/h2testw.html>, to test any SD memory card or USB storage device to find its capacity and data transfer rate. (The Web site is in German, but you can run the program in English.) Just download the zip archive, unpack the program and its German and English readme files into the directory it creates. (The program is self-contained and runs from its directory; you don't install it.) Click the "English" button to obtain the first screen; then click the "Select target" button and choose the device to test. (I used an old, tiny USB stick for this demo, because although slow, its 120-Mbyte capacity means it's quick to test.) The process will destroy any data the device holds, so save anything important first. Start the test by clicking the "Write + Verify" button.



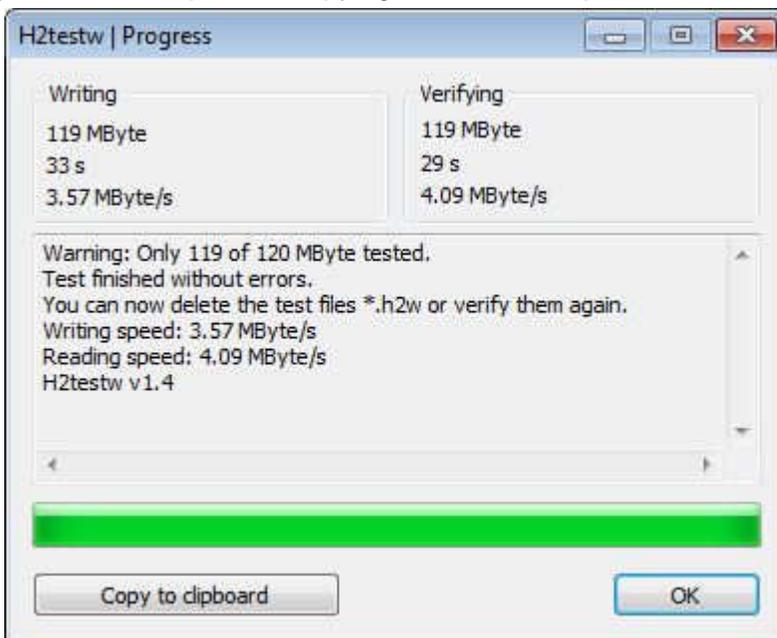
You may see the warning shown below, which appeared in this case on a device that was formatted to FAT32. If this is the only such message the test produces, you can ignore it.



The following screen shows the test in process.



Here are the complete results, showing the actual device capacity and its read and write rates. Note that you have the option of copying them to the clipboard.



After you click OK, you'll see the following screen. Note that the "Write + Verify" button is grayed out. The device is now full of test files and you can run only the read test. As message in the previous screen says, you will have to delete these to rerun the write test.



With this software you can verify the capacity and ensure that it works well. The speed measured however depends on both the stick or card and the host device.

The tiny capacity of the device in this example resulted in a test time of about a minute; expect much longer times for modern multi-Gbyte devices.

Nevertheless, it's worth taking the time to check a new SD card before trying to use it in your camera on a trip to Europe.

Dick Maybach
