



Midland Michigan

BITS AND BYTES

March 2017

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GENERAL CLUB MEETING

Midland Public Schools Administration Building
600 E Carpenter Street - Room D

**Wednesday, March 22, 2017
6:00 P.M.**

Interesting Internet Finds – June 2016

Steve Costello, Boca Raton Computer Society editor (at) 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 June 2016.

Android Tip: A Faster Way to Launch the Android Camera App

<http://heresthethingblog.com/2016/06/01/android-tip-faster-launch-camera/>

Quick camera access for Android Marshmallow devices.

How to Set Up and Use Open365, an Open Source Alternative to Office 365

<http://www.howtogeek.com/256450/how-to-set-up-and-use-open365-an-open-source-alternative-to-office-365/>

If you are using LibreOffice, and would like to try out the Open365 (beta at this time) alternative to Office 365, this post from *HowToGeek* is a must read.

5 Common VPN Myths and Why You Shouldn't Believe Them

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-common-vpn-myths-shouldnt-believe/>

If you don't use a VPN (Virtual Private Network), and you really should, check out this *MakeUseOf* post. Your reason is probably one of these myths.

Ten Tips for Donating a Computer

<http://www.techsoup.org/support/articles-and-how-tos/ten-tips-for-donating-a-computer>

Upgrading to a new computer? Have an unused working computer just laying around? Well check out this post for how best to donate your old computer so someone in need will be able to have one.

5 Things You Need To Know About Password Managers

<http://www.pcworld.com/article/3085395/security/5-things-you-should-know-about-password-managers.html>

I know there a lot of you that don't think you need a password manager. If you are one of them, read this post to learn some reasons why you should.

Seven Tips on Keeping Your Phone Safe While Traveling

<http://www.cnet.com/news/seven-tips-on-keeping-your-phone-safe-while-traveling/>

This is the time of year for vacation travel, so check out this post to refresh yourself on how to keep your phone safe while you are out there.

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.

Wearable Technology: Fitbit fitbit.com

Quad-Cities Computer Society Meeting Review

Presented by Judi McDowell, QCS President, Reviewed by Joe Durham, Editor, Quad-Cities Computer Society, IA May 2016 issue, Qbits www.qcs.org julee89 (at) gmail.com joseph85_us (at) yahoo.com

Fitbit Charge HR

At a recent meeting, Judi McDowell, QCS president, shared her knowledge and experience with wearable technology. The pace of technological change is fast and these devices are now the "in" thing for groups of all ages. She focused on the Fitbit devices as she has a Fitbit Charge which is one of the newer models in the Fitbit line of devices.

She asked for a show of hands among the audience for those who currently use this technology. There were 6 hands: 3 had a Fitbit Charge, one had a Fitbit Alta, one had a Fitbit Flex, and one had a Garmin device. This indicates that the desire to use these new gadgets is growing day by day, even among our QCS members.

Judi gave us an historical overview of how these devices emerged on the scene. Like all technological revolutions the fitness tracking device has its origins in many diverse needs and slowly the growth of technological change brought it all together.

Amazingly, it has its origin in the creation of the lie detector in 1921. A lie detector measures electronically your pulse, blood pressure, and there are sensors on your skin to measure changes there.

Segue to 1961 in Japan. A professor wanted the means to track walking for health. He developed the pedometer, I am sure we have all seen these mechanical aids from time to time.

Now move to 1971 and car technology. The development of air bags brought forth the creation of the accelerometer which measures change in direction, an obvious requirement for air bag to deploy at the right moment in the event of a crash.

Now switch to 1974 and game technology was needed for the all of the new gaming controls, to help us enjoy and become a part of the experience. These advances help everyone navigate through Zelda, Donkey Kong and the rest.

1982 brought forth development from another direction; sports training. Devices appeared that monitored the athlete's heart rate.

In 1999 stationary bikes with monitoring and visual feedback were popular.

GPS technology came to the masses in the year 2000 when it was released for public use. Now there was an earth wide means of tracking movement.

A 3D accelerometer was developed in 2003 which allowed technicians to measure movement in all three directions: up, down, left and right, forward and backwards.

Take the mixture of all of these changes from 1921 to 2003, and a company was able put all of these functions into a small wearable size in 2008, Fitbit

The new models of Fitbit now monitor your heart rate, and sleep. All these functions designed to motivate us to a more healthy lifestyle with the means to monitor our goals in the device and online. James Park and Eric Freidmen were the creators of Fitbit. It is so popular that there are competitors in the marketplace from Apple, Android and Garmin.

In 2015 Fitbit was encouraged to issue an IPO and it is now worth around \$3.7 billion. And Park is now #29 on the list of those 40 or under in wealth.

As a means of improving her lifestyle, Judi purchased a Fitbit Charge. She choose this model because it monitors steps, heart rate and has the time on it. When you purchase one, it recommends that you attach it two fingers above your wrist bone. It also has caller ID when configured with compatible mobile devices.

It comes with a USB charger, a dongle that you place in your computer through which you upload data to your Fitbit page online so that you can record your activity. She said that the battery life states 7 – 10 days, but it is not that long in her use of it, but that was not a big issue.

The Fitbit charge also monitors your sleep. Current health advice strongly recommends that we get enough sleep in this fast paced world and the Fitbit aids you in that accounting. Judi did wonder what it records when one falls asleep in the chair from time to time.

Judi then brought her Fitbit account online, this is displayed in what is called the Dashboard. This is the genius of the device, as you dogle the Fitbit periodically it uploads all of your data and helps you visually to see your progress and goals.

The Fitbit Charge will also track your movements as you exercise. One day she walked around a large building at her place many times and you could see her track recorded online as a series of circles in transit.

She did mention a couple of operating quirks. For example, when she was shopping in Walmart and her hands were on the shopping cart the lack of movement of her hands meant that the Fitbit charge was not tracking her steps. Apparently the Fitbit needs to see change in your arm movement to record steps. For situations such as these you can tell Fitbit that you are walking a predetermined amount of time and it will account for steps accordingly.

The Fitbit Charge also tracks your movements on stairs. Judi's explanation of her recent stair movement was interesting. She arrived early before the QCS meeting and decided to walk about to record and demonstrate the device. Nearby is Viele Park in Moline. There is a descending terraced set of steps. Going down was easy, but coming back was a bit of challenge. This walk was a good choice for exercise.

Her Fitbit Dashboard account of that travel indicated that her heart rate reached 153 beats per minute and that she was credited with going up 17 flights of stairs on her return back to the Butterworth Education center. By the time she entered the building her Fitbit Charge buzzed which meant that she reached her goal of over 10,000 steps for the day.

The online interface calculates calories burned. You can also input your food intake to see what you have taken in and the balance burned for the day. Additionally you have the option of downloading your data to a spreadsheet so that you can monitor and analyze your progress.

If you purchase a premium subscription to the Fitbit service, a personal trainer will devise an exercise plan just for you. Judi mentioned that Fitbit Blog online is a good and enjoyable source for information and comment while using the devices.

You may have seen reports that Fitbit is being sued by some athletes for inaccurate results. With any measuring device of this type it is more noteworthy that you have the same device giving you data each day, as a base from which can accurately monitor your progress even though it may not tell you to the inch what your travel has been.

Judi concluded her remarks by observing that media forecasts see a 35% growth each year in personal tracking devices of this type for the next five years. It is certain that we all wish to improve our health status in life and devices of this nature will help move us along towards that goal. The QCS would like to thank Judi for her fine presentation and look into this new and emerging tech field.



Open Source Software of the Month

By Geof Goodrum, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
July 2016 Issue, PATACS Posts www.patacs.org linux (at) patacs.org

Gargoyle – v2011.1. <http://www.ifarchive.org/indexes/if-archiveXinterpreters-multiXgargoyle.html>. Free GNU General Public License and others for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Tor Andersson and Ben Cressey.

Gargoyle is a cross-platform player for text and illustrated text games, also known as Interactive Fiction (IF) that supports all of the major formats, including Agility, Alan 2 and 3, Frotz (glk port), Glulxe, Hugo, Level 9, Magnetic, Scare, Tads 2 and 3. Gargoyle is based on the standard interpreters for the formats it supports, which are copyrighted and freely distributable under various open source licenses. The Gargoyle home page is at <http://ccxvii.net/gargoyle/>.

IF content is available for download at the Interactive Fiction Database (<http://ifdb.tads.org/>) and the Interactive Fiction Archive (<http://www.ifarchive.org/>).

[Screenshots at <http://ccxvii.net/gargoyle/screenshots.html>]

KeePass – v2.33. <http://keepass.info/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Dominik Reichl.

KeePass is a password manager, which helps you to manage your passwords in a secure way. You can put all your passwords in one database, which is locked with one master key or a key file. So you only have to remember one single master password or select the key file to unlock the whole database. The databases are encrypted using the best and most secure encryption algorithms currently known (AES and Twofish). You can drag and drop passwords into most windows or use a hot key to type your login information into windows automatically. You can also quick copy user names and passwords to the clipboard with a double-click on a field in the password list. And KeePass can import data from a variety of formats like CSV, while the password list can be exported to formats such as TXT, HTML, XML, and CSV. KeePass also includes a strong password generator.

[Screenshots at <http://keepass.info/screenshots.html>]

Krita – v3.0. <https://krita.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by the Krita Foundation.

Krita is a 2D sketching and painting application designed for concept artists, illustrators, matte and texture artists, and the VFX industry. Krita has been in development for over 10 years and has had an explosion in growth recently. It offers many common and innovative features to help the amateur and professional alike. Krita 3.0, the Animation Release, includes animation support integrated into Krita's core with animatable raster layers and onion skinning, Instant Preview for better performance painting and drawing with big brushes on big canvases, an improved user interface, broader tablet support and more multilayer features. NOTE: OS X will support Instant Preview and Big Canvas scaling in the 3.1 release.

[Screenshot at <https://1015253982.rsc.cdn77.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/krita-3.0.png>]

Lua – v5.3.3. <http://www.lua.org/>. Free MIT License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by PUC-Rio.

Lua is a powerful and fast programming language that is easy to learn and use and to embed into your application. Lua is designed to be a lightweight embeddable scripting language and is used for all sorts of applications from games to web applications and image processing. It supports procedural programming, object-oriented programming, functional programming, data-driven programming, and data description. Lua combines simple procedural syntax with powerful data description constructs based on associative

arrays and extensible semantics. Lua is dynamically typed, runs by interpreting bytecode with a register-based virtual machine, and has automatic memory management with incremental garbage collection, making it ideal for configuration, scripting, and rapid prototyping.

Tesseract OCR – v3.0.4.01. <https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tesseract>. Free Apache License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Ray Smith, Zdenko Podobny et al.

Tesseract is an Optical Character Recognition (OCR) engine and command line program to convert images of printed text (e.g., photos, scanner output) into plain text and HTML documents, or PDF images with searchable text. Hewlett-Packard originally developed Tesseract and released the software as Open Source in 2005. Google oversees current code development.

Graphic interfaces are available (see <https://github.com/tesseract-ocr/tesseract/wiki/3rdParty>).

BACK TO BASICS

Microsoft “Edge” – The New Web Browser with Windows 10

By Jim Cerny, Chairman, Forums Committee, Sarasota Technology UG, Florida

May 2016 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor

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One of the apps (programs) that comes free with Windows 10 is their new web browser called Edge which is supposed to replace Microsoft Internet Explorer. The icon for Edge is still a white or blue letter “e” but with a cut instead of a yellow sash. Although Microsoft claims several improvements or better web interactions with their new browser, my experience with Edge has made me decide to continue using Internet Explorer or Firefox.

In Microsoft’s enthusiasm to upgrade and provide some new cool features, it seems they once again failed in the area of making it easy for users to convert to their new version. They have moved things around, reconfigured the appearance, and confused the icons and tools. I give Edge, as it exists today a grade of D-minus. I am all in favor of improvements, but I also want to be able to easily do today, in the new version, what I did yesterday in the old. So, as we all should do, I asked Google about the problems I was experiencing and found much help and equally discouraging comments on the internet from others. I don’t need to see videos of all the new wonderful features, I first need to see videos and learn how I can do what I have always done in the past on the new version or upgrade.

My recommendation would be to continue using your current web browser on Windows 10 until Microsoft improves Edge, which will probably take some time. Here are a few areas that were difficult for me in Edge:

FAVORITES (also known as “bookmarks” in some internet browsers) – I am a big fan of using favorites on my web browser. I have hundreds of them. If you upgrade to Win10 on your existing computer, most likely Edge will easily import your favorites from your previous browser program, such as from Internet Explorer, and that’s fine. But if you want to import your favorites yourself (by exporting a file from your old browser such as from another computer as I did) you will find that Edge does not accept or import favorites from an exported file. The only solution I found for this was to actually install my existing browser program on my new computer, import the favorites to it, then have Edge get the favorites from that old browser program.

But if I install my old browser and I am ready to go, why should I trouble myself to convert to Edge at all? Also be aware that Edge may already have many “favorites” already installed, so you should delete those that you do not want before you have Edge install your list. Once you have your favorites in Edge, sorted into folders, of course, I find that you cannot drag a favorite from one folder into another. You can only drag them out of the source folder into just “favorites” and then you have to go back and drag them from there into your destination folder. Another confusing change is to have two different icons for favorites – one to go to a favorite (an icon of lines) but another (star) if you want to create a new favorite or try to reorganize your favorites. In Internet Explorer you had one icon for favorites and the “organize favorites” option appeared right at the top.

MISSING HOME BUTTON – The home button is not on the tool bar by default, you must go to the “settings” and then to the “advanced settings” list to turn it on. I like having the home button to start over, they should have kept it. Of course when you do this and it appears, it is located in a different place than where it appeared in Internet Explorer.

ASK GOOGLE – Fortunately, you can “Ask Google” anything about Edge and get some answers and help. You will also find that you are not the first person to ask your question or experience your problem. Without Google’s on-line help, my difficulties would be, well, much more difficult. By asking Google I can find a way to do what I did before on the old version, or I will find out that it can’t be done it at all.

PDF File Type – What and Why?

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, Florida
<http://sccccomputerclub.org> / Philsorr.wordpress.com philsorr (at) yahoo.com

The Portable Document File (.pdf) file type has been around since 1993 when Adobe Systems made the specification available to all, free of charge. However, PDF was initially a proprietary format, controlled by Adobe, until it was officially released as an Open Standard in 2008. Since then it has been controlled by a committee of volunteer experts who are part of the International Organization for Standardization. The .pdf file type was developed as a way to share documents that would include text, formatting, and inline images, among computer users of different types of computers from different companies. (PCs, Apple, IBM, Sun, anyone remember DEC?). The PDF standard endeavors to present documents in a consistent manner that is independent of application software, hardware and operating system. The .pdf file type, by its very nature, and name - Portable, was intended to be a file that could be a complex of text, graphics and so on, and be easily shared by people that didn’t have the same hardware or software. So, the real benefit was that the file would look exactly the same when displayed on all different types of computer systems.

Each .pdf file encapsulates a complete description of a document, including text, fonts, graphics, forms, annotations, outlines, and other information needed to display the file. .pdf files can also contain links, buttons, audio, video, and business logic; and where security is important, they can be password protected. So a .pdf file can end up as a pretty big file. (When I was almost finished with this article I saved it as a .doc and a .pdf. The .doc was 36KB, and the .pdf was 106KB. I also looked at a PowerPoint presentation, 127 slides with lots of graphics; it was 11.5MB saved as .ppt, and 32.4MB saved as .pdf. Finally, I saved a fairly large Excel spreadsheet (125 rows, with columns that went out to column AT, with quite a few calculations within the spreadsheet), which was 157K saved as .xls and 475 KB as .pdf. So from that limited testing it looks like the .pdf will be about 3 times the native applications size.)

.pdf files can easily be viewed on your computer using a free PDF Reader from Adobe called “Acrobat Reader DC”. A mobile “Acrobat Reader DC” App is also available, free, for your Smartphone or Tablet. And for Windows 10 users, who are also Microsoft Office owners, PDFs can now be created from the Office Apps, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. (By the way, you may have seen a reference to an .xps file type along with .pdf. The .xps file type is Microsoft’s alternative to .pdf. It was introduced with Windows Vista but never attracted much of a following. Of the two, the .pdf format is the preferred choice.)

At this point in computer evolution, .pdf files can be opened by just about every major operating system (Windows 7, 10, OS X, iOS, Android) and can be used by many different applications. In addition, the majority of modern web browsers (Chrome, Edge, and Firefox) allow .pdf files to be read without the use of an external application, making them easy to use in web applications. (Though the literature doesn't give these internal PDF readers much of a good review; and advice on how to replace the internal PDF reader is easily found.) Also, Mobile Operating Systems (Android, iOS) are including PDF readers, making the PDF format almost universally useable. (This can't be said of any other file type; even though we all may be familiar with Microsoft's Word format (.doc), this format can only be used by a limited number of applications.)

Those of you who have been to our File Explorer class know that there are hundreds of file types on a typical computer, and that you can inspect and change the association between a file type and the program that uses that file type, using the Control Panel. (Remember, "Default Programs", followed by "associate a file type or protocol with a program"?) So, you have to have a program on your computer that knows how to use the .pdf file type. If you are having trouble opening a .pdf document, you probably don't have a program that knows how to use the .pdf file type, on your machine. If this is your situation, consider getting the free Adobe Reader, from the Adobe website, <http://www.adobe.com>.

Normally, .pdf files cannot be modified by the user, making these files perfect for use by an "end user", i.e., someone who needs the content of the file without being able to modify the file contents. In other words the file was not intended to be changed, once it was created or "published". So, originally there was no way to change a .pdf file without using the very expensive PDF Creator software from Adobe (or lesser expensive PDF creation software from Foxit). However, there are situations where it makes sense to change the contents of a received .pdf file, like "if you need to fill in some information on a PDF form".

"PDF to Word" conversion websites like "PDF Converter", "PDF to Word" or "PDF Online" are websites that advertise that will do the conversion for free. (Google "free pdf to word" and you'll see many possibilities.) Also, you could try "free document converter" found at www.hellopdf.com. I haven't any experience with these, but the literature claims they work as indicated. And, for those of you who need to do a lot of these conversions, Adobe offers "Adobe Acrobat DC" for about \$15/month or you could buy it for around \$200. There must be a large enough number of people who need to convert .pdf files to .doc files because when I Googled "pdf to word", I was pointed to many websites that could supposedly help me in my quest. There even was a YouTube video that indicated that you could upload a .pdf file to Google drive, (yes, you'll probably need a Google Drive account), and then download it as a word (.doc) document. When I tried it on a pretty simple PDF, the conversion didn't seem to preserve a lot of the formatting, so it didn't look like it would be acceptable, at all, on a more complex document. I haven't had the occasion to need to convert a document, but if the situation ever arises I'm sure I'll be able to get it done, though I just might have to go to the lab and get some help from one of the very able and helpful Monitors.

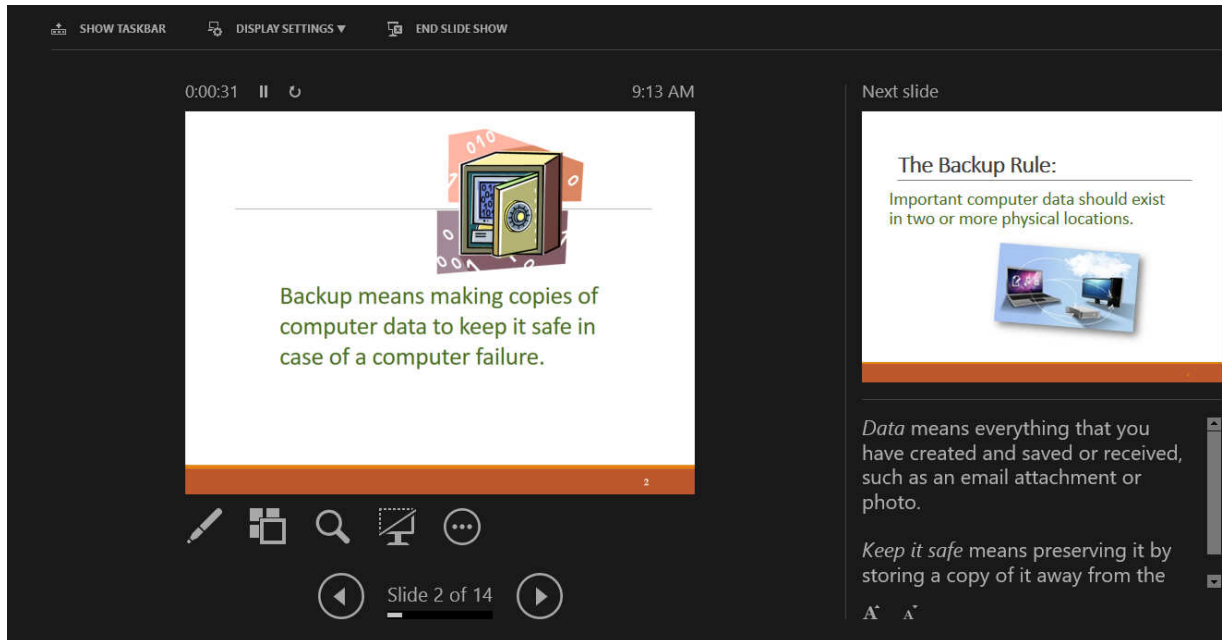
So, when all is said and done, the PDF standard is deeply ingrained in modern computing because it allows a single file to provide a display that looks the same on all different types of computers.

Try the Presenter View in PowerPoint

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
April 2016 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor
www.thestug.org
ndemarte (at) verizon.net

One of the most helpful new features in Microsoft's PowerPoint 2013 is a tool for people who do presentations. At first, I thought an article on this topic might be useless to anyone except a professional presenter or teacher. But on second thought, anyone who puts forth the effort to build a PowerPoint presentation, like a travelogue from a recent trip or a biographical show for a family reunion or wedding reception, can make good use of this new feature, called the Presenter View.

The purpose of the Presenter View is to give the speaker more control over the presentation. For years, I've used PowerPoint presentations in classes, meetings, and other occasions. More than once, I found myself in the awkward position of finishing my discussion of the slide on the screen and then going on to say what I intended to say about the next slide before I even displayed it. With Presenter View, I can avoid that problem. Here is an example of the Presenter View of a show from one of my classes. This is what I see.



The only slide the audience sees is the large one; the small slide is the next one in the show. Beneath the Next Slide are notes I wrote to accompany the current slide. I set the font large enough to see at a glance. The top of the screen contains three often-used commands, visible only to the presenter. **Show Taskbar** opens the computer's taskbar along the bottom, making it easy for me to open another app or access the Internet, if necessary, without leaving the presentation. **Display Settings** lets me leave the Presenter View or switch it with the normal view, and **End Show** provides an alternative to the Escape (Esc) key to complete the show.

Other tools are available around the large slide. On the top left is a **Timer** which starts when a new slide is displayed. This helps me manage my time so I don't over-discuss a slide. Next to it is a Pause button and a curved arrow icon which restarts the timer. The **actual time** displays on the top right. Below the current slide is a **pen** which can be used as a laser pointer, highlighter, pen to draw on the slide in a choice of colors, or an eraser. The next icon, a **square with boxes** behind it, when clicked, shows all the slides in the presentation in the Slide Sorter view. This can be useful if I decide to skip a slide or change the slide order during the presentation. The **magnifying glass** lets me zoom in on a section of a slide to focus audience attention there. I can turn the screen black or white with the next icon that resembles a **computer monitor**. I might use this if topic comes up in discussion that is unrelated to the current slide, and I want to eliminate its distraction. The **circle icon with three dots** (a new Microsoft settings icon which appears in many apps) contains settings like Hide Presenter View, End Show, and Help.

To use Presenter View, check the box next to "Use Presenter View" on the Slide Show tab – Monitors group, then begin your show. Some people, however, find using this view disconcerting at first. Fortunately, I can practice using the Presenter View even when the show is not being projected. Click the Slide Show tab, then click "From the Beginning" in the Start Slide Show group, right click the first slide, and choose "Show Presenter View" from the menu. Now I can practice using it without any audience pressure.

Although I'm a longtime PowerPoint user, adapting to this new view took a little practice. Now that I feel comfortable with it, I appreciate how well it helps me avoid unexpected problems during my presentations.

Update Upsets

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group
May 2016 issue, Drive Light www.uchug.org [president \(at\) uchug.org](mailto:president@uchug.org)

More and more of the things we own and use require updates, and a lot of them require updating more and more. When you think of updates, computers typically come to mind first, but so many other products now allow or require updates that keeping them current can seem overwhelming. Updates can be beneficial to insure safety or improve performance, but there are darker sides to this seemingly perpetual updating as well.

It used to be that the product you bought was the product you had, and updates were only for the correction of serious health and safety issues. When changing the product meant physical manipulation of the product's hardware parts, updates were costly to the manufacturers and usually had to be mandated by law to correct some serious safety error on their part. Mandatory Federal product recalls of automobiles for safety issues were the only way to get problems like gas tanks that ruptured when rear-ended or seat belts that became unbuckled in a crash corrected, so that innocent consumers were not further endangered. Sometimes the nature of the problem and the difficulty in making an update meant the product had to be returned or discarded, as there was no economical way to correct the hazard (a toy with small parts that represented a choking hazard for a small child, for example). While these kinds of hazards and the update of product hardware still occur all too often today, the age of computers changed the paradigm of product updates.

The personal computer was perhaps the first consumer product whose functionality was less defined by the hardware you bought as the programming it could contain. Since this programming came in the form of firmware (in add-on peripherals) and software that could be purchased later, the computer as a product was a work in progress. Just as functions could be added easily, corrections to existing capabilities could be made without onerous efforts. Most updates could be, and usually were required to be installed by the owner, and this became the norm for computers.

There are many levels of updating possible in a personal computer, and some are typically overlooked by the owners (until something goes wrong). At the lowest level, the computer's BIOS, or Basic Input-Output System, can often be updated. This is considered firmware (or microcode), which is programming stored in a semi-permanent manner on a non-volatile memory device in hardware (firmware is software that is not easily erased). In the computer, it is the BIOS code that provides the computer a way to understand the components it contains and how to use them in a general manner. BIOS developers often provide updates to their products to correct hardware compatibility issues and other errors; these updates are downloaded from their web site (perhaps also hosted on the computer manufacturer's site) as a file, and a special programming procedure is typically required to replace the old BIOS file in hardware with a new one. Things can get messed up if you don't follow the update instructions or if you install an inappropriate BIOS file.

The next level of programming in the computer is the operating system; the BIOS helps load this software from a hard drive (or solid-state drive) when booting. Whether you use Windows, Chrome OS, Apple Mac OS or a Linux variant, your OS will require periodic updates to stay current and secure. The amount of control you have over this depends on the OS and the update settings it allows. Chrome automatically installs updates without exception; Windows provides a lot of flexibility in when and if updates are applied.

A third level of programming related to the hardware is device drivers, which apply to internal computer hardware or external connected devices. These drivers also get updated periodically as compatibility issues arise, though most users don't concern themselves with them as long as everything is working.

The final level of programming is the application or program software. Users of Microsoft Office products probably know about program updates to Word and other programs to fix bugs and close security gaps. Updates to other popular applications may be out there, but since they may not be as well advertised by the software vendors, users may not consider any are needed. TurboTax is one program I use that always checks for updates when it starts up; these update both the program and the tax forms it uses.

The ease of updating our technology through software can unfortunately create a culture of incomplete or insufficiently tested products. Manufacturers can rush computers and software to market, knowing that they can provide updates on their web sites later to solve their problems.

When the microprocessor spread from the computer to other products, the software update became the benefit and the bane of these devices as well. In addition to our computers and laptops, we must update our tablets and smart phones as well. My auto navigation GPS receiver can be connected to the manufacturer's web site through a PC (and the Internet) to allow its firmware programming to be updated. It can also download updated mapping information. Many consumer products connected to the Internet, like smart televisions, can require periodic software updates. The IoT, or Internet of Things, will bring a lot more devices in our homes connected to the web, and a lot more update opportunities.

Like many users of technology, I have a love-hate relationship with updates. I do want my devices to be as protected as possible from hackers, so I want known vulnerabilities patched as soon as is possible. I do like new features (when I am expecting them) and I like broken features to be fixed. I don't like updates that provide unexpected changes to my user experience, or that cause a previously working device or application to crash. I also don't like being locked out of the use of my device while a long and unexpected update takes place. I dread the times I'm in a hurry to turn off my laptop and take it somewhere, and as Windows starts shutting down, it says "Updates in progress - Do not shut down your computer". What I want is full control of the update process, something the vendors are not always willing to give.

I have a Chromebook, and am always apprehensive when I see the little up arrow in the lower right corner of the screen that indicates an update is in progress. Google forces Chrome users to take whatever updates it provides, when it provides them. It never says not to shut down, so I disregard the update arrow, trusting Google to work things out and keep my Chromebook protected and operational.

In that regard Microsoft gets a bad rap, as though they generate tons of updates for their software, they do allow a lot of control of the process. I have Windows set to check for updates, but let me choose whether to download and install them. This is supposed to allow me to delay the update until I'm ready, but it still sometimes surprises me. I've had some problem updates at times, and have had to call Microsoft (yes, they provide free phone support for failed updates) when an update resulted in an error message.

I've also found Microsoft updates don't always know best. I recently had two new computers to set up, and spent a few days getting them updated initially. I am embarrassed to admit that one was a new Lenovo desktop computer that I'd bought for myself two years ago but had never gotten around to setting up. The other was a recent purchase by my dad (an HP desktop) that I offered to set up for my mom.

When I plugged everything in to run my new Lenovo, I knew I'd be in for a wait, as there were probably a lot of accumulated updates over the last two years. After asking Windows to check for updates, it took several hours before it came back with 211 important updates that were needed. I let it download and install them, but progress was slow and I had to let it continue overnight.

When I got up the next morning, it was waiting to reboot after the update installation. I let it reboot and went downstairs for breakfast. When I came back, it said something like: "Failed to configure Windows updates - reverting changes". It had some problem and wanted to undo all 211 updates. I let it go back to its previous state, and it again asked to try these 211 updates. I'd seen things like this before, where Windows seemed to choke on too many updates all at once. I selected only the first 40, and those installed successfully. I repeated with another 40, and another, until no more updates were shown to be needed. Unfortunately, this took several days to resolve.

My dad's HP PC was much quicker to update, as it was much newer. Windows only reported 34 important updates, and I was able to run it through the three update cycles needed to be current in just one day.

USB is changing as technology advances

By Bart Koslow, Review Chair, Channel Islands PCUG, CA
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USB-C? USB 3.1 generation 1 and 2? The USB interface is changing. It is becoming more versatile, faster, smaller and easier to use. Always interested in new computer developments, I decided to check out these latest developments.

USB long ago replaced the old serial, parallel, and other computer ports. Now it is set to replace many more types of connectors and ports and add functionality.

USB 2.0 (maximum speed 480Mbps) and USB 3.0 (now called USB 3.1 gen 1) are being replaced by USB 3.1 gen 2.

USB 3.1 gen 2 doubles the data transfer speed from USB 3.1 gen 1 from 5Gbps to 10Gbps. This will cut data transfer times in half. USB 3.1 gen 2 will provide up to 100 watts of power for compatible devices. USB 2.0 provides up to 2.5 watts, which can power only small devices like cellphones and tablets. You will get faster charging speeds for all your mobile devices and laptops, and you will be able to deliver power in either direction using a USB-C cable, which means you can use a fully powered device to recharge another device.

USB-C, more properly known as USB 3.1 Type-C, is a new, smaller industry standard cable and connector type that will be used for multiple purposes. All of your devices will use this cable type. A USB-C cable will be used for power, video, data, and audio. Your computer, laptop, mobile phone, and USB hard drive will all use one type of cable.

The USB-C connector supports and will replace DisplayPort, HDMI, power, USB, and VGA cables. This includes all the multiple USB cable types now being used. Instead you will be using USB-C cables. You will no longer have to carry AC adapters. All your devices will be charged and powered using USB-C.

USB-C connectors are not only smaller. They are the same at each end and are symmetrical in cross section so you will not be required to turn them around or rotate them to connect to a USB-C slot.

You will have to buy new cables, but think of the many types of cables you will no longer need and the huge improvement in facility and speed these new standards will provide.

What's New - D-Link Wi-Fi Camera

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society www.aztcs.org georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net

This product is an example of IoT (Internet of Things) functionality. You can control a device with your smartphone. In this case, the Camera shows a view of, in my case, my living room, and you can view the image on your smartphone. The idea here is that you can monitor for intruders or others in the camera's field of view. You might be interested in seeing what your cats do while you are out (sleep) or what your teenagers are doing while by themselves or what your daughter allows the boyfriend to get away with.

The product comes with the Wi-Fi Camera, a power cord that is quite long and a Quick Install Guide. The Guide is really brief, being only 4 pages of small print. It tells you what each item is on the camera and tells you to download the smartphone app that takes you through the install process.

I downloaded the app and plugged in the camera, the first step. Next you have set up the connection between your Wi-Fi router and the camera. It would be straightforward normally, but did not work for me.

I had to call Support for help. The product includes a card with the Support telephone number. I followed through several steps that the Support person told me to do, but the connection still didn't work. After a considerable time, the Support person discovered that my router was set with WEP encryption. The Camera only works with WPA encryption. Once that was changed, the Camera worked as it should.

The setup process is fairly complicated. One has to set up a D-Link account and link it to the Camera you have. This involves the usual, user name and password, but also requires the password for the Camera, which is printed on the box and on a separate card in the box. These have to be entered correctly, of course. After all entries are properly made, the Camera connects to the Wi-Fi system and you can control the Camera from your smartphone.

The main thing you get is an image on your smartphone's screen of the area the Camera sees. The Camera has a 180° view, so you get a wide view which is a bit distorted. However D-Link uses a "dewarping" technology to make the image much less distorted than standard fisheye lenses produce. Activity in the view shows up on your screen in a jerky fashion, because the information transfer appears to be about 10 frames a second. But the quality is excellent, up to 1080p.

Another feature that might be handy is the ability to speak to your smartphone and have the Camera repeat. The camera has a built-in microphone which can pick up loud noises and send an alert to that effect.

The Camera has six infrared LEDs which provide a view even when the area is dark. The Camera can be mounted anywhere you want, but for the best view, mounting on a wall would be best. The product comes with a couple of screws for this purpose.

This is a good product with a valuable benefit. I had difficulty installing it, but that was because of the encryption setting on my router. The process probably would have been less troublesome otherwise.

Wi-Fi Camera by D-Link

<http://us.dlink.com/>

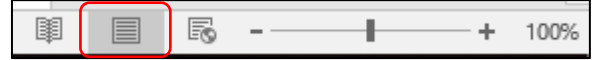
Price \$180



7 Quick Tips for Windows and Office

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
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1. Most of us use the **Print Layout** view when composing multi-page documents in Word because it lets us see all four edges of the virtual piece of paper. But every now and then, the top and bottom edges lose their space and look glued together. Although this view won't affect the printed copy, you can return the space between the pages simply by double clicking the

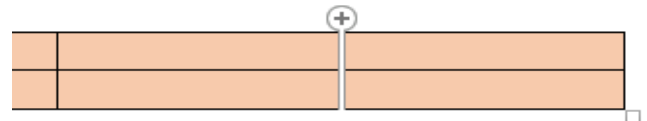


2. Everyone knows that holding down the **Shift key** while pressing a letter on the keyboard will make it upper case. But the Shift key has other important functions. To select (highlight) a large group of contiguous text, click at the beginning of the group, hold down Shift, and click at the end of the group. This same process works for selecting a long list of items, like emails or photo thumbnails. Do you have noncontiguous items to select? Press the Control (Ctrl) key instead and click the desired items in the group.

3. A few other popular **keystroke combos** can save a lot of time and aggravation. Hold down the Control key (bottom left on the keyboard) while you press the A key (Ctrl+A) to select the whole document. Use (Ctrl+Z) when you need to undo your last change. In Windows 8.1 and 10, the Windows key between the Function (Fn) and Alternate (Alt) keys will open the Start screen or menu. (Ctrl+P) is handy when you need to print from a place like the Internet, and no Print button is visible.

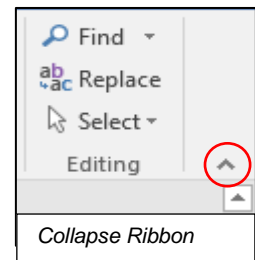
4. **Arrow keys** can be helpful, too. They provide the best way to move around in a document without changing anything. Let's say you want to add a word which begins at the left margin of a document. It can be difficult to click between the margin and the word. You can click a short distance inside the margin and press the left arrow on the keyboard to move the insertion point back to the margin without disturbing the text. In PowerPoint, if you have trouble dragging an object on a slide, try holding down the Ctrl key while pressing one or more of the arrow keys a few times to nudge the object slowly to the exact spot you want it.

5. New tricks with **Tables**: In Word 2013 and 2016, if you have added a table to a document and want to add a column between existing columns, position your mouse pointer over the line between the columns until it becomes two lines with a bulb on top.



Click and a column will appear in that spot. Do the same for adding rows. Or, if you need more rows at the bottom of a table, click in the bottom right cell and press the Tab key to get another row.

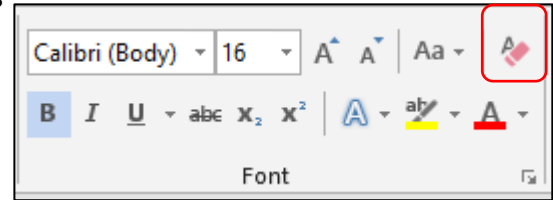
6. Windows has added a tool "**ribbon**" across the top of most Windows application windows. Convenient as it is, some people complain that it covers too much of the work space. Fortunately, Office 2013 and 2016 make it easy to hide the ribbon. To hide the ribbon but leave the tabs visible, click the tiny caret in the top right corner of the screen directly above the scroll bar. This works with any tab selected.



If you change your mind, click the Ribbon Display options box near the right end of the title bar which has an upward-pointing arrow inside. Here you can choose to Auto-hide the ribbon, show just the Tabs above the ribbon, or show both Tabs and Commands.



7. One of the new and overdue tools in Word 2013 and 2016 is the **Clear All Formatting** tool located in the top right corner of the Home Tab – Font group. It lets you remove the bold, italics, glow, shadow, and all the other effects that you can apply to text. Select the portion of the document where you want to remove the formatting or press Ctrl+A to select a whole document, then click the icon to return the text to the default font and font size with no special formatting. I use it when I'm combining multiple documents into one or when a word gets stuck with certain formatting and needs to be unformatted.



Snipping Tool Update: For Windows 10 users, here is an addendum to my article in December about the Snipping Tool. I mentioned that it had been upgraded in Windows 10. Here is how: If you want to capture a screen shot of a menu or other temporarily visible item, you can save time by using the new Delay feature. Open the Snipping tool, then click Delay and choose a number of seconds from 1 – 5. Then click New, which makes the Snipping tool disappear. Open the menu or item you want to snip. When the time is up, the Snipping tool reappears so you can complete the snip.

Browser Pop-up Scams

By David Kretchmar, Computer Hardware Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV
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Windows 10 has proven itself to be the most secure Windows operating system ever, so hackers seem to be turning to another vulnerability. Browsers (Internet Explorer, Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome) are becoming a prime target of scammers.

If you are at all adventuresome exploring the Internet, you probably have had a browsing session interrupted by a pop-up visual often accompanied by an obnoxious audio warning to the effect that your computer has been infected and you must call a toll-free 800 (or 8XX) number to prevent something terrible from happening to your hard drive or data. **Never call any phone number that appears**

This warning is bogus; often this “threat” can be usually be deleted by simply closing your browser.

To protect yourself from serious malware infection, you must be careful about how you close a pop-up window. Specifically, you should never click anywhere in a pop-up window. Even buttons labeled "Cancel" or "Close" or a red-X button in the upper-right corner are dangerous to click; doing so could trigger an infection.

Safely close a pop-up window

To safely close a pop-up window, locate the button in your Taskbar that represents your browser. Also, look for other highlighted icons on the Taskbar; the button and the pop-up will usually have a similar name. Right click on the button and select Close.

If that doesn't work, you need to use the Windows Task Manager to close the pop-up. Simultaneously press the CTRL, ALT, and DEL keys, and, from the resulting window, select “Task Manager”. In the Task Manager, under the Processes tab, highlight your browser application and click the End Task button. It is probably a good idea to close all applications except the Task Manager, unless you are comfortable identifying non-problem items.

Occasionally you will have to power down your system to remove the problem, either by holding in the start button on your computer for 10 or so seconds or unplugging your tower. If the problem occurs on a laptop computer naturally the battery must also be removed to completely power down the computer.

What has happened to my system?

Usually the pop-up described above does no lasting damage to your computer. It is "only" a URL (Internet site) function with some unique properties. The purpose of the URL function, which you experience as a pop-up, is to frighten the user into calling the toll-free number. A con-man (it seems to usually be a male - probably on the other side of the world) will attempt to extract as much money and data from you as possible to remove the threat.

Usually the scammer will attempt to get the caller to initiate a remote connection to the victimized computer. The remote connection can then be used to make it appear that the scammer is examining your system and often additional software, such as a Citrix program, which is a legitimate application, is loaded into your system to increase the scammer's control of your computer.

The scammer might trick you into granting them remote control of your computer. This might, enable them to install a "backdoor", granting scammers the unfettered ability, now and in the future, to harvest any or all the information contained on your system, to be used for any purpose. Never allow anyone you don't know to remotely log in to and use a computer that you own and control.

Inevitably the scammer discovers some terrible problem with your computer. You are informed that you will be required to pay a substantial fee to have the problem removed and/or prevent future problems.

Educational, Fun, and Interesting Web Sites (submitted by Howard Lewis)

www.calculator.net

If you ever need a calculator for something, this site probably can help you out.

<https://knowledgestew.com/>

Get several random facts each week. This site does their best to find three verifiable, independent and reliable sources for the information they present, so if you go around quoting them, you can be reasonably certain that what you're saying is true.

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

This site offers over 1600 free templates for Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Google Docs, and PDFs that you can download and modify as needed to generate fliers, invitations, cover pages, invoices, etc.

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

I suspect that most of us have played video games at some point in your younger years. This site is the National Videogame Museum.

<http://cnn.it/2mPDDki>

A lot of people go to Snopes to check out various rumors that we've heard to see if they are true or not. Recently CNN visited Snopes to see how they verify if something is truth or fiction.

<http://machineconversations.kone.com/>

Kone is a Finnish manufacturer of elevators. They have taken the communication between the elevator and it's control and converted it into a language that we can understand. Kone has posted live links to four different elevators in the U.S. (Chicago) and in Europe. For the best effect, try to check in on the elevators when they are being frequently used (otherwise it is