BITS AND BYTES

November 2013

Midland Computer Club
Midland Michigan

GENERAL CLUB MEETING
7:00 P.M.
4th Wednesday of the month at the
Midland Community Center
2001 George St., Midland, MI

This month's date: Third Wednesday - November 20th

This month's topic: Windows XP: What do I do about it, with emphasis on the possible consequences of various strategies

What you missed! October meeting : Members shared how they use technology to pursue their Passion - what they like to do above all else - hobby, a job, a cause or a retirement dream.

Upcoming Activities: Wednesday, December 18 is Club holiday party.

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.

President Piper's Ponderings

The November topic will be Windows XP. Microsoft has said they will cease support (and upgrades) for XP on April 8, 2014. We will discuss various options for current XP users, and what are the consequences of these options.

Carol has put together a slide presentation which will serve as a framework for this meeting. However, we would like to hear from each of you who are still running XP, and what you plan to do.

I have been spending quite a bit of time with backups lately. The latest virus, CryptoLocker, has exposed a hole in many people's backup strategy, namely, the use of automatic backups to a constantly attached device. (This virus will infect ANY attached or mapped device; the consequences of cloud backups are still uncertain.) I have now acquired a large USB hard drive which I connect to each PC on a weekly basis for a backup. We will discuss backup strategies, and the current status of CryptoLocker at the November meeting. Hopefully, some of the antivirus companies will have developed a method to detect and/or remove this malicious virus by then.

According to our By Laws, November is the time for nominations for Club officers for 2014. Think about who you would like to lead your Club next year.

Many of my family members have taken the opportunity to report on their Facebook page what they are thankful for each and every day in November. This is an excellent exercise for all of us to undertake.

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

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

http://tinyurl.com/mraqvtf
For those who feel more comfortable at the command prompt in Windows, Microsoft provides information on all of the available commands.

http://awkwardfamilyphotos.com/
On the light side, here are some humorous family photos.

When the PC is dead, how will you do this, and this, and this?
http://www.pcworld.com/article/2034842/when-the-pc-is-obsolete-how-will-you-do-this-and-this-and-this-.html#tk.nl_pcwbest

Board Meeting
First Thursday of the month
7:00 PM
Next meeting - January 2014
Chapel Lane Presbyterian Church,
5501 Jefferson Ave., Midland MI

Membership Enrollment Form

NAME _____   *PHONE* _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____   *ZIP* _____

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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   Attn: Membership Chairman
1816 Bauss Ct
Midland, MI 48642-4023

You may also pay for membership at a regular club meeting

Tips, Tricks & Techniques

Windows 8 – merge folder option
When you copy a folder to a drive or other destination that already has a folder with the same name, Windows 8 automatically merges their contents.

That's a change from the way Windows 7 handled things, which was to alert you to the duplicate folder with a dialog box offering options.

Article below provides instructions for how to change the default Windows 8 action.

http://www.pcworld.com/article/2038064/windows-8-tip-restore-the-merge-folders-option.html#tk.nl_pwr

Shortcut to Bookmark a web page
Pressing **Ctrl-D** will save a Bookmark/Favorite in Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera, and Safari. In Chrome, pressing **Ctrl-Shift-D** lets you bookmark a page and edit the details. In Firefox, pressing **Ctrl-Shift-D** bookmarks all currently open tabs.

Access your browser's download list
If you've downloaded a file through a browser and are having trouble finding it, this keystroke combination will open the browser's download history list. Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Opera: **Ctrl-J;** Safari: **Ctrl-Alt-L**

Windows 7 - Fast Way to Launch Programs
Press the Windows key, type the first three letters of the program you want to run, and then press **Enter** when it appears. For example, type **itu** for iTunes, **chr** for Google Chrome, **exc** for Excel, **wri** for Libre Office Writer, or **out** for Outlook. Very rarely you may have to go beyond three letters.
When multiple programs start with the same three letters, like **exp**, which displays both Internet Explorer and Windows Explorer, if the first program isn't the one you want, press the down arrow key to move to the correct program before pressing Enter. (Typing **int** for Internet Explorer, solves that problem.)

ARTICLE INDEX

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Apps for Windows 8: What can they do for me?

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President Sarasota PC Users Group, FL
July 2013 issue, PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Apps are what make Mobile devices -tablets and phones- so useful. So, what Apps should I have on my mobile device? Well, Microsoft has provided a starter set of Apps, at least for its tablets and laptops, as part of Windows 8. It is a basic set that allows a (new) user to immediately start taking advantage of their mobile device. Most of these Apps are general in nature, but other Apps, more specific to a task, are available (mostly for free) at the Microsoft Apps store. All of the Apps that you have heard of are there for the taking (downloading): Skype, Netflix, Angry Birds, SugarSync, etc.

Here is the collection of Apps that come with Windows 8, in a list prioritized by my particular feeling of usefulness. The first three may be all you will ever use.

1. Desktop - This tile, or App, gets you to Windows, as you knew it. All of the Windows 7 capabilities (with the exception of the old "Start" button) that you are comfortable with are here. If this is all you're looking for, click here and never come back.
2. Internet Explorer - A portal to the Internet, though the User Interface is a little different than you are used to. But, if all you want to do is surf the web, this can get the job done.
3. Store - This App connects you to the Microsoft Store where you can download all the Apps (and some other software programs) that can run on Windows 8.

The next few Apps are certainly useful, but you might find other Apps at the "Store" to satisfy your particular needs.
4. Calendar - A very simple calendar App to help you schedule and keep track of events.
5. Maps - A great way to view your surrounding geography. Input an address or point of interest and see it plotted on a map, with turn-by-turn directions, if needed.
6. SkyDrive - An App that connects you to Microsoft's portion of the "cloud." It provides 7GB of free on-line storage. It can be a central location for files you want to access from any of your computers and/or a good place to backup your important files. It can also be used to allow you to share big files with others.
7. Mail - A very basic Mail App that allows you to send and read your mail.
8. Messaging - An App that allows you to chat with your friends. If your friends use a different chat network, you'll probably want to download an App specifically for that network.
9. Photos - An App that helps organize and view all of your pictures. It collects and organizes pictures from folders and from the on-board camera.
10. Music - An App that lets you collect, organize, and listen to your favorite music. Music will also let you stream music for free. It also lets you get to Microsoft's new "Xbox Music" service. ("Xbox", seemingly, has nothing to do with the Xbox gaming system.)
11. Video - This App helps organize, and allows you to view, all your videos. It also provides an entrance to Microsoft's TV and movie stores.
12. Bing - Microsoft's search capability. Try to "Bing" something; if it's out there, Bing can find it. "Bing it on."
13. People - An App that provides a centralized Address Book for all of your cyber social acquaintances. A centralized place to keep all those email addresses, mailing addresses, social media names, phone numbers, and pictures.
14. Weather - This App provides a color weather map, including a five-day or hour-by-hour forecast for your location or a location of your choosing.
15. Finance - A "Finance News" App that includes stock market activity and financial news that can be customized to your own portfolio.

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16. News - A News App that includes Sports, Finance, and Travel. This App combines articles from many websites like The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal. It scrolls horizontally and feels much like a newspaper.
17. Sports - A Sports magazine App that includes sports articles from many news sources.
18. Travel - A Travel magazine App. Travel articles from many news sources and pictures of Featured Destinations.
19. Games - An App that connects you to Microsoft's "Xbox Games on Windows" store.
20. Camera - An App to control the onboard camera. Good for video chats and creating photos for sharing.

The 20 Apps that are included can give a new Windows user a good idea of what Apps are, what they can accomplish, and how to basically control them. Smartphone and tablet users are probably more familiar with the whole App concept. Once you are familiar with the idea of Apps, you will probably want to go to the Microsoft App Store and get (install) Apps that might help you take advantage of your mobile device. When you get to the App store you will find that there are many categories and there are many Apps in each of those categories. Because computer software (read that as Desktop) has been around for almost 30 years, there are established standards like Microsoft Office for Office applications, Adobe Photoshop for photo activities, Acronis for backup, and Adobe for PDF readers. The world of Apps is very new and standards are only now being established. So, it is hard to put together a list of App standards, but from my recent experience let me leave you with a short list of some very good, free Apps to add to your collection. You might want to give some of them a try. To get to these Apps, click on the "Store" App on the start screen and you will be greeted by a display of Available Apps. Websites change, frequently, so things might be a little different by the time you read this, but currently, there are suggestions for "Top Paid", "Top Free", and "New Releases". Click on the category of your choice (Games, Entertainment, Photo, Sports, etc.) and see the available Apps.

A click on "Spotlight-Top Free" yields a list of the Spotlighted top 100 free Apps. In the list you will find:
- Skype - for video chatting
- YouTube player - for watching YouTube videos
- Netflix - for Movie streaming (if you have an account)
- Yahoo Mail - for Yahoo mail accounts
- CNN - for news and weather
- Google Search – If you prefer Google to Bing
- Microsoft Solitaire Collection - for Solitaire enthusiasts.

In addition to the Apps that are included in the major categories, you can also search for a particular App. This is done using the Search feature that is part of the Charms bar. To get to the Charms bar, click in the lower right corner of the screen. Search is the top icon, the one that looks like the magnifying glass. Click on it, and then type in the name of the App you are looking for. This will result in a search of the "Store" Apps. When, or if, you see the App listed, click on it and it will be available for installation. You might want to try the following Apps:
- Evernote - for note taking
- IMDB - for movie and TV information and
- Dropbox - for an additional storage location in the cloud.

Microsoft's Store is a lot newer than the Google Playstore (Android) or the Apple iTunes store (iOS). If you are familiar with an App from either of those stores, you may find that that App is not available at

the Microsoft store, yet. Check back in the future, it might be available then. Microsoft's App developers have had less time to create versions that work on the Windows 8 platform, but I'm sure they are working on them.

As you can see, Apps cover a lot of territory and can help you accomplish many things, from simple note taking to video chatting, and video entertainment. Apps turn your computer into all the things you expect from a modern digital programmable computer- your home PC.

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GET SMART! *
Would you believe that you could become a smart phone junkie?
By Bob Woods, Webmaster, UCHUG (Under the Computer Hood UG), CA
April 2013 issue, DriveLight, www.uchug.org, webmasters (at) uchug.org

A couple of weeks ago we had a phone call from my son seeking help with setting up his first Android Smart Phone. My wife and I have been using one for about six months so have already gone through much of the learning curve. We are using the non-contract provider Straight Talk and a ZTE Merit 990 phone. The Straight Talk service is half the cost per month as compared to a contract service and there is unlimited data, texting and phone calls. The only down side is the phone cost is not subsidized through a contract so you will be paying whatever the going cost is for the model you choose. But, you will quickly recoup that cost in relation to the much higher cost of a contract service.

Anyway, it got me thinking about how much we had learned about setting up and using the Smart Phone. Remember, the phones are small computers. They have a CPU, memory (RAM, ROM and an SD Card slot for external memory); displays that are touch screens, operating systems and applications. Learning to use and manage them takes a bit of time and effort as the manuals that come with them do not give you much insight as to how this is done. So here is some of what the first time user will be faced with on an Android based Smart Phone. Note - I am not going to recommend a particular phone as there are many choices available with plenty of reviews to back them up. Basically the choices have to do mainly with individual preferences and what you're willing to spend.

For a fully interactive tutorial of Android go to:
http://tracfone.deviceanywhere.com/straighttalk/home.seam?custId=STZEZ990G&locale=en_US < http://bit.ly/Z6hRWC >

The tutorial uses the phone I have (ZTE Merit 990G), but should be pretty close to what you will encounter on most Android phones.

No matter which version of Android is installed on the phone you choose, the interface was designed for the touch screen. It responds to a tap to select an item or double tap to launch an app. Swiping a finger across the screen left to right, right to left, up and down will scroll in the direction of the swipe. Touch and drag will move an item or, in the case of text, select all between starting and stopping points. Touch and hold will usually bring up a popup menu of actions to take.

Most phones have accelerometers to see the orientation of the phone. When using the on screen keyboard it is really nice to turn the phone sideways to get a wider screen and more spread out keyboard. Also, if the screen does not respond to the turn or goes dark a light shake of the phone it will wake it up to the action. You will quickly get used to using the screen.

After you turn on the phone and unlock it the first screen you will see is the home page. The home page is the Android equivalent of the Windows desktop. Most phones have home pages that are a few screens

wide. To move between them you swipe your finger across the screen to the right or left. You will find some icons or small control panels on most screens. At the top right of the home screen you will see status icons showing time, battery level, signal strength for Wi-Fi and provider signals (2G/3G/4G), Bluetooth (if turned on) and GPS (if turned on). On the left top will be notify icons for when you get a text message, email, or voicemail message or other items such as application updates. If a notify icon shows up you can touch the notify area and drag down to open a drop down menu. At this point you can touch the item to open it or clear the box by touching the clear button. At the bottom center of the screen there should be an icon that will take you to the main screen showing all of your installed applications (apps). On my phone it looks like a square of tiny dots. When your phone is new, all of the apps you see come hardwired to the Android OS and cannot be uninstalled. I highly recommend that you do not update any of the apps that you do not use. When an app is updated it takes more internal phone memory than the previous version. The built in apps must reside in the phones internal memory. You will find that not using up all of your phones free internal memory will be a constant challenge (more on that later). To put the icon of often used apps on the desktop just touch and hold the icon. A copy of the icon will be put on your home page. As the home page fills with icons or you want to group icons on different pages just touch and hold the icon until it changes size and then drag it to the bottom corner to the right to move it to a screen to the right, left for left. You can also delete an icon by dragging it to the trashcan in the middle. It will not delete the app, just delete the icon from the home pages. I found that if you have large fingers you will get the best result moving icons with your little finger.

Many phones will have on screen buttons at the bottom or actual buttons at the bottom of the phone below the screen. The button with the house symbol will take you from an app directly to the home screen. The one with a ¾ round circle with an arrow at one end will take you back one screen. The button with a symbol that looks like lines of text or bars will open a menu box with functions appropriate to the active screen.

On one of the home screens you will have an icon that looks like a gear. That is the settings icon. It is the Android equivalent of the Windows Control Panel. It takes you to a menu of utilities and control panels for the various phone functions. You will want to take a few minutes looking around in here to familiarize yourself with this area.

The Contacts icon is what you touch when setting up your contacts. You enter names, phone numbers, email addresses, street addresses and any other info you want to add. Caution, when you put in phone numbers for your contacts, always include the "1" and area code. Make sure you do this even if the phone number is in your own area code. When you make a phone call or send a text message to someone in your area code the "1" and area code portion will be ignored. However, when you respond to a text message that has been sent to you the messaging system needs the "1" and area code for your response. Without them you will get an illegal error code from the messaging system and the reply will not be sent. While in Contacts touch the extra menu items button (at the bottom of the screen phone and looks like lines of text). Select the Import/Export and export your contacts to the SD card. Then if you lose your contacts you can import them back in. There is also an app that will assist you in storing your contacts in your Google account.

When you are ready to add apps to your phone you will want to use the Google Playstore. There will be a Google Playstore icon on one of your home screens that will take you there. During the initial phone setup you will have created an account with Google that identifies what phone you have. The Playstore is tied to your account so will indicate to you if an app you are looking at is compatible with your phone and will not install anything that is not compatible. During the app installation there will be a checkbox for allowing automatic updates of the free or purchased application. This choice can be changed at a later time, but only through the phone connecting to the Playstore. If you log onto the Playstore from a PC the checkbox for changing the update selection will not show.

Most phones have slots for micro secure digital or some other type of digital memory. When you add memory you might be thinking that you will never run out of memory. Well, there is internal phone memory that is a fixed part of the phone and there is external memory. For this discussion we will call external memory the SD card. You cannot move any of the built in apps from phone memory to the SD card. Any extra apps you add to the phone install to phone memory by default. Most apps will require cache memory to function which is stored in phone memory. Also, text messages, documents, and pictures taken from the built in camera or saved from other sources will go into phone memory. So you may have a 16 or 32 GB SD card installed, but you will still have the internal phone memory as your biggest limitation.

So you may ask, what do you use SD memory for if everything wants to natively store to phone memory? After installation, some of the added apps can be moved from phone memory to the SD card. Others will require residing in phone memory and will not move. I have found that an app called "AppMgr" (also known as App 2 SD) by Sam Lu will help to quickly determine if an app will move from phone to SD and easily complete the action. It also has the added benefit of clearing cache files for all apps with one click, a job that would otherwise take opening each app in the built in Android Application Manager. It also shows you at a glance what apps are installed in which memory and how much internal phone memory if free for use. Another app called "Send to SD" by Denis Nelubin will help you to quickly send pictures and documents to a folder in your SD card by adding a SD Card item to the Share menu. The Share menu is accessed by touching the extra menu items button that looks like lines of text at the bottom of the screen or physical button at the bottom of the phone.

Most versions of Android have a built in file manager app called Filer. You will find it grouped in with the Apps when you touch the Apps main screen icon. Filer is kind of limited as it only allows you to see what the developers thought was safe. Kind of like Windows Explorer at its default setting of not allowing you to see system files. For viewing directories and file management I like to use "ES File Explorer" by ES APP Group. It has no restrictions and many nice features. I used it to create a folder on the SD card for moving pictures from my phone memory to the SD card using the Share menu item "SD Card" created by the "Send to SD" app.

For keeping the bad guys at bay I installed the Avast! Antivirus app located in the Playstore. Avast has the best ratings for protecting Android devices and is free.

Other apps that we have found to be extremely useful are:

- SwiftKey Keyboard by SwiftKey – Replaces your Android dumb keyboard with a keyboard that learns your writing style and makes auto corrections and saves typing by allowing you to select words as you type. It is spooky how it quickly gets to know what you want to write. After the trial period the free version does not give you guesses to select word insert. We paid out the $3.99 for the Pro version because we found the word insert to really save time.
- Split N Tip by Handy Apps – This free tip calculator app not only calculates tips quickly and easily but also helps to split the bill between any number of people.
- Wi-Fi___33 Analyzer by Farproc - Turns your android phone into a Wi-Fi analyzer!! Shows the Wi-Fi channels around you. Shows signal strengths and info for wireless routers within range. Helps you to find a less crowded channel for your wireless router.
- Epson iPrint by Seiko Epson Corp – Easily find your wireless or networked Epson printer and print to it from your phone. You can also scan documents or photos to your phone. If you do not have an Epson printer you should be able to find other similar apps for your printer brand.
- Barcode Scanner by Zxing Team – This free app scans barcodes on products then looks up prices and reviews. You can also scan Data Matrix and QR Codes containing URLs, contact info, etc. Also share your contacts, apps, and bookmarks via QR Code

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- iHeartRadio by Clear Channel Digital - iHeartRadio offers free music in an all-in-one, digital internet radio service that lets you find more than 1,500 live radio stations. With the free music app for Android, create commercial-free, all-music Custom Stations featuring songs from the artist you select and similar music. We especially like listening to talk radio shows.
- SugarSync by SugarSync, Inc. - SugarSync is the easiest and most advanced way to sync, share, as well as search and access all of your files – documents, photos, videos and music. SugarSync for Android puts all of your files from across all of your computers right at your fingertips, making you more productive when you're on the go.

My phone came with 512 MB of internal phone memory. The OS and pre-installed apps take up 350 MB leaving me 162 MB free for my installed apps and contacts. Updates to pre-installed apps also take up internal memory. So with all the stuff and apps that I have loaded I am left with 32 MB of phone memory free. Not a whole lot, but I am managing it. My son had to one up the Old Man with a more current Smart Phone that came with 1 GB internal memory. So I am envious as he has yet to get the dreaded "Out of Memory" warning that I get if not diligent with keeping everything clean. Oh well, maybe on my next phone…

If you have not used a Smart Phone before you will be delighted and amazed at just what you can do with them.

PS from his better half - With this wonderful article Bob forgot to mention the fact that you have Google, Google maps, and Google navigation readily available on these phones. Even if you don't have the GPS active the phone will triangulate your location on Google maps from nearby cell towers. By the by, I use the voice recognition on my phone for quick texts and emails. After six months I'm a smart phone junkie!

[* Read more about Get Smart, Maxwell Smart, and the original smart phone, aka shoe phone, circa 1965 – UCHUG Editor] < http://nyti.ms/16UVFU7 >

Are we all turning into magnetic ink?

By Greg Skalka, President, UCHUG (Under the Computer Hood UG), CA
April 2013 issue DriveLight, www.uchug.org, president (at) uchug.org

I've miles
And miles
Of files
Pretty files of your forefather's fruit and now to suit our great computer,
You're magnetic ink.

(From "In the Beginning" by Graeme Edge, from the album "On The
Threshold of a Dream" by The Moody Blues, 1969)

Are we all turning into magnetic ink? That poem was written over 40 years ago, before the Internet, server farms, Amazon.com, big data, social media and digital image recognition, yet it predicts a road we are traveling down now. In the liner notes, it is the "Establishment" that speaks these words, with the goal of turning man into a quantifiable set of data. Are we all on our way to being defined by our data?

Companies compile more and more data about our habits and preferences, reducing our privacy and our ability to remain anonymous. From Google's targeted advertisements to Amazon's purchase suggestions, we are being reduced to a database of our likes and dislikes, ready for commercial exploitation. Our web searches are tracked so we can be presented with "more relevant" advertising, but the goal is more effective advertising, meaning more sales for less cost. It may be nice to be presented only with things we really would be interested in, but when algorithms are implemented incorrectly, it can lead to limiting and even inaccurate suggestions. I once bought my daughter a lamp she wanted as a gift from eBay; now I regularly receive suggestions for other lamp purchases, something I care nothing about. The history of one oddball purchase may haunt my account forever.

A bigger problem is privacy in this era of commercial digital surveillance. From all this seemingly innocent and inconsequential data being collected about us, we could become defined by our purchases (like the lamp) or our searches. It has probably gotten to the point that one must be careful about what one searches for on Google, or any other search engine.

While the Internet represents an almost unlimited data resource, asking for the wrong things could get you in trouble, or at least earn you an undesirable label. This goes way beyond the obvious illegal activities like child pornography or online involvement with hate groups. Simply searching for information about embarrassing topics like incontinence or a gambling problem can put those topics into your "profile", so later ads reflect those issues. When you let someone else use your computer, those embarrassing issues may be revealed. And since that data is out of your control, who is to say that someday a record of your searches on cancer won't be sold to life insurance companies that could use it to deny you additional coverage.

Though the commercial world probably collects more data, governmental categorization of all of us is even more troubling. Repressive governments all over the world use data collected on their citizens in bad ways. Searching on the wrong topics in some countries can lead to imprisonment. Here we would hope to have more freedom and privacy, but some day, following another incident like 9/11, could we find a misinterpreted web search leading to a visit by the FBI or inclusion on a no-fly list?

There are also real criminals out there trying to collect data on us. Whether it is data to be sold or used for identity theft, or personal information from social media sites exploited for scams, home burglaries or child abductions, our data is sought after by malicious people intent on taking advantage of us. Once again, this may be data that we have no control over, stored on company servers, perhaps with poor safeguards.

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Unfortunately, we are often willing, though possibly unknowing participants in this conversion of our lives into data. All the information we freely share on social networking sites can be a treasure trove to marketers, prospective employers and anyone interested in taking advantage of us. As time goes on, new ways are developed to monitor each of us, from location tracking through our phones, keyword analysis of our emails and facial recognition and tracking of our movements through security camera images. Even data collected with the best of intentions can fall into the wrong hands, or the intentions of the collectors can simply change. Once lists are started for convicted criminals, sex offenders, the mentally ill and potential terrorists, how hard would it be to make more lists, like of those that complain about the government? After all, we are only data.

Where to Put All That Data

All the data we store, and that others store about us, has to be kept somewhere. Today it is stored not in the "magnetic ink" of magnetized domains on recording tape, but in magnetized regions of spinning metal platters. Mechanical hard drives, though losing out in some applications like tablets and phones to solid state memory, are still the primary means of bulk data storage. Seagate recently shipped its two billionth unit, the first hard drive manufacturer to reach that milestone. That is a hard drive for almost every third human on earth. While that seems amazing, what is really of interest is how they got to 2 billion. They have been making drives since 1980, and took 29 years to produce and ship their first billion units. Their second billion took only four years. That is a tremendous amount of digital storage, especially since that last billion were probably each 100 GB or larger drives.

This exponential increase in cumulative drive capacity is necessary, as our need for storage grows exponentially. In 2007, we were uploading just over 5 hours of video to YouTube each minute. Now it is estimated that 72 hours of video is uploaded per minute to the site. To put this in perspective, if you were in the habit of watching YouTube 12 hours a day, every day, then in the five minutes it will take you to read this column, another month's worth of new content was put on the site. The break is over; get back to watching!

High-Tech Pants

I just bought a new pair of my favorite kind of pants, Costco's Kirkland blue jeans, and got a surprise. Costco jeans have gone high tech. The product label advertises a new feature I'd not seen before - a cell phone pocket. It seems that Costco has tinkered with the classic five-pocket design and turned the small right front coin pocket into a cell phone pocket. They made that pocket deeper and a bit wider, so it could hold a standard cell phone. A large smartphone would probably be a tight fit. Of course, making that pocket so much deeper makes it useless for holding (or at least extracting) coins.

Most people today think that fifth pocket was designed for coins, but in the days before cell phones and wrist watches, it was meant to hold a pocket watch (the kind on a chain). That was the intended purpose of that pocket on the first Levi's 501 jeans introduced in 1890. If this cell phone pocket thing catches on, it would thus be appropriate, as many people have stopped wearing wrist watches, using their cell phones as timepieces instead. If we get to the point where we also use our phones for making retail purchases like they do in Japan, then we won't need to worry about where to put our displaced coins either.

Just A Minute

Intel has produced a graphic and video outlining what happens today in an Internet minute. It shows 639,800 GB of global IP data transferred on the Internet in a minute, with the amount of various activities in that time listed. Some numbers are staggering (6 million Facebook views, 204 million emails sent), some are crazy (320+ new Twitter accounts, 1.3 million video views) and some are scary (20 new victims of identity theft, 135 botnet infections). And just as with hard drive shipments, future growth for the Internet appears to be exponential. Today the number of networked devices equals the global population; by 2015, it will be 2x. If the Internet and the number of devices on it keep growing this way every minute, it won't be long before humanity is minute by comparison. < http://intel.ly/wjibt1 >

CHARGE!... DIY and some free favorites

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Prez Lou & faithful partner, Pookie

How would u like to have a 4 unit charging device right where u want it and install it in about 20 minutes?

Yes u can... this is a Power 2U wall outlet u can install yourself (DIY) and have the capability of charging any 4 devices at once... 2 plugged into the USB outlets and 2 plugged into the power outlets.

Think about how convenient it would be to have an outlet... where u want it... that will allow u to charge 4 things at once. After the 20 or so minutes installing the 15amp outlet, I plugged a camera, cell phone, ultrabook and Kindle in and let them charge... worked like a charm and again, the convenience is great... no more plugging and unplugging wall outlets and using all the USB ports on your PC. I picked the most convenient place where I could place 4 things conveniently on the counter and where all 4 cords reached without a problem. Here are the details from the The Newer Technology web page. BTW, mine is the 15Amp model, but they also have a 20Amp one available.

Newer Technology Power2U
- Black AC/USB Wall Outlet (Other colors available.)
- Designed for standard 15A circuits in homes and other living spaces
- Dual-socket wall outlet with two integrated USB ports for powering and charging USB devices

The Newer Technology Power2U AC/USB Wall Outlet is the convenient and energy-efficient in-wall solution for powering and charging USB devices. Now you can charge and/or power up to four devices at once when using the USB ports and the National Electrical Code (NEC) compliant tamper-resistant AC receptacles, while eliminating unsightly clutter created by multiple cables and bulky power adapters.

Charge Four Devices At Once!

Unlike other similar products, the port and outlet layout of the Power2U doesn't create "plug barriers". This accessible design enables you to charge up to four devices simultaneously! (Here is mine with 4 units charging at once!)

Ideal "DIY" Upgrade For Multiple Device Users.

Ideal for users of multiple USB chargeable devices, the Power2U AC/USB Wall Outlet is a basic "DIY" install on any 15Amp circuit with a 16 cubic inch electrical box to blend seamlessly into the wall as a standard power outlet. A "straightforward" rated "how to" video demonstrates how the Power2U can be installed in as little as 20 minutes.

Money Saving, Energy Efficient Design Offering a modern, centralized location for charging/powering USB devices, the Power2U offers two energy efficient features to complement its use convenience. The Smart Power design only outputs enough charging power required by the attached device, while spring-loaded Safety Shutters turn power off to the USB ports to eliminate "vampire" energy draw when a connecting cable is removed.

New Slimmer Design for Even Easier Install. The 2013 Power2U model offers a more compact design than previous models for an even easier install.

Install With Confidence. Fully UL-Listed and featuring NEC compliant tamper-resistant AC receptacles, Power2U offers peace of mind confidence. And with its more compact design and free how-to installation video, you can have Power2U installed in as little as 20 minutes!

Compatibility:

- Apple iPad (all models)
- Apple iPhone (all models)
- Apple iPod (all USB chargeable models)

Android™ tablets and phones, tablet computers, cellphones, gaming systems (Nintendo, Sony PSP, etc.), Bluetooth headsets, digital cameras, or GPS devices which charge via standard USB plug.

As promised, here is a list of my 7 favorite free programs/utilities. If u would like more info on them or where to download them, send me an email and I'll send u back the info u need.

COMMUNICATION

Skype is a VoIP solution that allows you to make free Skype-to-Skype calls, calls to traditional phone lines, video conferencing, instant messaging and even more features that make it close to a full telephone replacement.

(Continued from page 13)

FILE MANAGEMENT

AxCrypt is the leading open source file encryption software for Windows. It integrates seamlessly with Windows to compress, encrypt, decrypt, store, send and work with individual files.

IMAGE and VIDEO UTILITIES

IrfanView supports a tremendous selection of image and video formats that you can read and many of which you can save. It also features tools such as batch conversion, TIF editing, capturing and much, much more.

MISCELLANEOUS UTILITIES

Foxit Reader: A slimmed down PDF reader that loads the documents faster than the official Adobe product does.

MUSIC UTILITIES

Winamp: A popular alternative method for playing your audio files compared to the Windows included media player.

PRODUCTIVITY UTILITIES

LibreOffice: A well-known free alternative for office applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases and more. It is compatible with Microsoft Office as it can read and save documents in the Microsoft formats.

SAFETY and SECURITY UTILITIES

Avast. The free version of Avast is arguably the most comprehensive set of freely available security features on the market.

That's it for now... have fun and as always... be safe out there on the WWW.

Aloha, Lou

Read all of Lou's columns.
Visit http://tinyurl.com/363qew