BITS AND BYTES

April 2016

President Piper's Ponderings....

April's General Meeting will be the same as we had planned for both February and March (before the two snow storms hit). It will be three topics, each about 10-15 minutes long.

Al will be talking about battery replacement in an Android tablet. He also will tell us about "side loading" apps on a Kindle. Carol will speak on alternatives to Charter TV. I won't be there for my talk on Win 10 nags and upgrades. You can, if you like, each mention what ways you have already discovered to handle this "problem".

I just deleted QuickTime on all my computers based upon a number of recommendations. Apple says they will not support it any longer because of a security hole.

I want to get personal for a moment. As I have said, I won't be at the April meeting. First I want to thank Carol and Howard for taking over. I will be attending a function at my high school in Danville, Indiana. I will be inducted into their Alumni Hall of Fame. Part of the deal is that I

will be speaking to the Top 15 current graduates for 2016.

Think about that for a moment. Like many of you, I am 60 years older than the students; 10 presidents and 3 wars have passed, and my experience is in engineering in the corporate world. What can I possibly say that would be relevant, interesting or even understood? I have sought advice from a number of people of varying ages, and obviously reached a decision by now. What would you say? I will look forward to your comments when next we meet.

I am confident of no snow, so I hope you can make it on Wednesday, April 27.

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

GENERAL CLUB MEETING
Midland Community Center, 2205 S Jefferson Ave, Midland MI
Room K111, Barstow Shipps Wing

Wednesday, April 27, 2016
7:00 P.M.
Topic: Several short topics will be presented

2016 BOARD MEMBERS

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

PUBLICITY

Al Adams   aladams12@yahoo.com

Board Meeting

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

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

http://www.morningshort.com/
Brighten up your day by getting your daily dose of short fiction stories each morning at 10 a.m. These interesting stories are hand-pick from some of history's finest writers.

http://bit.ly/1SmrP2l
You can somewhat control what Google shares about you. This blog is part of the overall Google system. You can look around and learn a lot more about Google and what they do with your information.

https://panopticlick.eff.org/
The Electronic Frontier Foundation is a well-known organization fighting for your privacy. The website tests your browser, and reports to you on how much privacy you really have through that browser. The site probably will recommend installing Privacy Badger, but you can improve your privacy rating by simply doing a few tweaks within your browser settings.

http://bit.ly/1mQTziE
National Geographic has released what it calls "The 15 Most Awe-Inspiring Space Pictures of 2015".

Membership Enrollment Form

NAME _____   PHONE _____

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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

How to See Which Applications Are Draining Your Battery on Windows 10

Click or tap Settings option in the Start menu. Select System and then Battery saver.

The right side of the screen displays how much battery life remains and how much time Windows estimates you'll get from that. Click or tap Battery use link to see more details.

By default, information from the last 24 hours is shown. Can change to show information from the last 48 hours, or from the last week. To change the setting, click or tap the dropdown box under *Showing battery use across all apps from the last* at the top of the screen and select 24 Hours, 48 Hours, or 1 Week. Below that box, are System, Display, and Wi-Fi percentages, which shows how much battery power is being used by system processes, display, and Wi-Fi radio.

The In use and background options show how much power is used by applications while they are being used, vs. when running in the background.

You can configure universal Windows 10 apps to not run in the background by selecting *Change background app settings* link. They won't automatically receive notifications, fetch new data for live tiles, or perform other background tasks. This can help you save battery power, especially if you don't actually use those new Windows 10 apps.

Scroll down to see a list of applications. It lists desktop applications as well as universal apps and displays list of apps that have used battery power in the selected period, and what percentage of battery power each app has used. Apps only appear in the list if it was used while on battery.

View more information about a specific application's energy usage by clicking or tapping it and then selecting Details. This will show what percentage of power the app used for system processes, display, and Wi-Fi and how much power the app used while it was actively being used as well as when it was running in the background. Choose to view details for the last 24 hours, 48 hours, or one week.

If the word Allowed appears beneath an app, it indicates it's allowed to run in the background. Select an app and then select Details to see more details. You can disable the *Allow this app to run in the background* option to prevent it from using power in the background.

APCUG
FREE 2016 Spring Virtual Technology Conference (VTC)
Saturday, May 7
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Eastern time

For information on presentations and to register for this VTC, please click on the link:
http://bit.ly/apcug-2016-spring-vtc

Videos from earlier conferences can be found on APCUG's YouTube channel:
www.youtube.com/apcugvideos.

ARTICLE INDEX

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Brokestuff Mountain

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
September issue, Drive Light -- www.uchug.org -- president (at) uchug.org

One of my greatest fears is broken stuff. As an engineer, my work days are filled with problem solving, which often involves trying to figure out why something does not work as expected. At home, I'm looked upon as the builder and fixer of the family. My experience with electronics, electrical items and mechanical things won't allow me to plead ignorance when someone in my family has a computer problem or a malfunctioning device. It seems all I do is solve problems and fix broken things. If heaven and hell are personalized, then I know what mine would be like. Heaven would be a place where everything works perfectly for eternity, while hell would be a place where everything is always broken.

This month I've been confronted with a mountainous pile of broken stuff. Some problems I've solved, others appear to be continuing, and some are fixed for now, but the can may only be kicked down the road a short ways.

Windows 8, Lay Them Straight

My daughter started graduate school this fall and sought my advice on getting a new computer. The old Windows Vista laptop I bought her for college carried her through to a bachelor's degree, but it has gotten filled up with junk over the years and she wants a fresh, new start. I paid for her first degree, so she realizes this new endeavor is on her own dime. She bought herself an iPad tablet after graduating, but even she does not think it sufficient for college work. She would have liked a MacBook Pro, a small, light Apple notebook computer, but she is on a budget, and so fortunately chose an Asus Q301LA tough screen laptop instead. It is a lot like the MacBook; small, thin and light, with no optical drive or removable battery. It does have a powerful Intel i5 processor, a 13.3" touch screen display and a 500G hard drive. She got a good deal by purchasing a factory refurbished unit from Amazon for a third of the MacBook's price.

She brought it down with her on a visit with us a few weeks ago, so I got to spend a few evenings with a Windows 8.1 touch screen laptop. My assignment was to get it set up for her to use at school. It took me a little while just to figure out how to get around in Windows 8.1. The touch screen gives Windows 8.1 a tablety feel; one of the ways to get to Control Panel was to swipe the screen from right to left.

My first order of business was to back up the existing system as delivered, so I could recover from any mistakes I might make. I knew the Acronis True Image 2015 backup program I use can support Windows 8 touch screen PCs, but without a CD drive, it was going to be difficult to install or boot from the program CD. Fortunately, I have a Samsung external USB CD/DVD drive (I also have external USB 3.5" floppy and Blu-ray drives). I use an external USB3 hard drive to store my back-up files; it took me a little time to insure both external drives were being recognized when connected. I decided to run True Image from the bootable CD, but it again took a while to figure out how to change the boot options. I didn't see any apparent BIOS screen when booting the laptop, so finally had to search for the manual on-line to find out which function key allows you to enter the BIOS screens. Once I got it booting from the CD, the backup went smoothly.

My daughter wanted me to install Windows 10 and Microsoft Office (I have an unused 3-user copy of Office Home and Student 2010), but I was running out of time and there was no Windows 10 upgrade icon in the system tray. I finally figured out that there were over a hundred updates yet to be installed for Windows 8.1. Once that was done (an all-evening process), the Win10 upgrade icon was present, but my daughter's visit was almost over. I just barely had enough time to install Office 2010 (once again using the external USB CD/DVD drive) and make a final backup before she left. I figured she could live without Windows 10 for a while.

My daughter called me yesterday to tell me she had decided to install Windows 10 herself, but had run into a few problems. Something had happened to her cursor, but she was able to search online and find a fix for it. She also asked if I had installed Office, because now she couldn't find it. I don't know what settings she used to install Windows 10, but I hope it did not wipe out my installation of Office 2010. Why am I suspicious that Microsoft might do something like that, so she would be enticed to subscribe to Office 360? I guess this problem lives on.

Assault and Battery
One nice thing about laptops is that they come with a built-in UPS (uninterruptable power supply). When running off of ac power, they will automatically switch to battery should line power fail. This is not a standard feature of desktop computers, so unless you want to risk losing valuable data or even messing up your system, an external UPS is a necessity.

I have an external UPS for each of the desktop PCs in the house, plus a smaller one to run my network drive. A UPS uses ac power to charge an internal battery; battery power is used to create 110 VAC to run your computer. I use a 350 VA (200 W) UPS for each desktop computer; the APC model BE350G is one I have several of. It has three outlets that provide uninterruptable power and three that are only surge protected from the switched input power. When the ac power goes out, you can have up to 15 minutes to shut down your computer gracefully. These UPS units work very well, but the internal batteries typically lasts only a few years, and are pretty expensive. I can sometimes buy the whole UPS on sale at a price that is the same as a replacement battery, so I have a few UPS units I've bought on sale in reserve.

This particular model, which I use with my wife's desktop, puts out a loud, high-pitched tone when the battery is on its way out. This is unfortunately something you cannot ignore - it is so annoying. I came home recently to my wife's almost equally loud complaining that she could not use her computer at all that day because the UPS had started putting out the low battery tone.

I had no spare UPS batteries, but I did have a couple of new, spare UPS units. I swapped out the UPS on my wife's computer for a power strip, so I could get her running again. I then opened up the new UPS

units, hooked up the batteries and plugged them in to charge overnight. A new UPS is shipped with the battery disconnected and uncharged.

The next day, I turned on the two UPS units. One appeared to work, but the other put out the screeching low battery tone. Perhaps I'd had that one in the box for too long. I could have used the good UPS for my wife's computer, but though it was the same model number, it had a different mounting hole pattern (I mount the UPS to my wife's computer desk so she can use the UPS switch as a system power switch). I found the good UPS unit used the same battery as my wife's unit, so I swapped batteries and hooked her UPS back up. Now I need to start looking for replacement batteries or UPS units for the next time the battery goes bad.

Wi Fi Fo Fum
While I was working out the UPS battery problem, my wife also complained that she could no longer get onto our home Wi-Fi, and was using up too much data on her iPhone data plan. I have installed a Wi-Fi access point near the center of my house, as my wireless router is located at a corner of the house for better routing of wired Ethernet, and does not provide good coverage throughout all of the house from that location. I also have the access point powered through a power strip, so I can turn it on and off easily.

I logged into the wireless access point through its wired connection and turned off encryption on the wireless link. Even then, though my iPad Mini could see the SSID and connect, I could not get any data through the access point. This access point was bad - time for a new one.

I had fortunately bought a few low-cost Wi-Fi access points on sale, thinking I might use them for travel. I opened up a TP-LINK TL-WR700N mini pocket router I had bought and set it up per the manual. It had the advantage of being capable of more secure Wi-Fi encryption than my old access point, so I set it up for stronger encryption and installed it in the same location in the house. Now my wife is happy again - until the next thing breaks.

Insert and Sign…no need to Swipe – EMV Credit Cards

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

By now, we all have heard of credit cards with chips. In fact, you may even be carrying one in your wallet or purse. The nationwide shift to these new credit cards is well underway. In the wake of numerous large-scale data breaches and increasing rates of counterfeit card fraud, U.S. Payment systems are migrating to this new technology to protect consumers and reduce the cost of fraud. Many of our credit cards have already been upgraded to the new "chip" type. These new credit cards have a chip embedded in the card. You can see an indication of the chip on the top surface of the card close to the shorter edge. Most cards still include the magnetic swipe information, for backward compatibility, so they can be used in either the older swipe terminals or the newer chip terminals. If you have a choice as to which method to use to complete your purchase, choose the chip type; it is much more secure (details to follow… if you must, jump down to the last paragraph). The cutover date for retailers was October 1, 2015. Many large retailers such as Walmart, Target, and Costco, have already made the switch. Unfortunately, scammers have launched phishing schemes, to try to take advantage of this transition. They are sending emails to card holders, asking them to update their credit information. Do Not respond to any of these emails.

These new cards are called EMV cards. EMV is a technical standard for smart payment cards, payment terminals, and automated teller machines which can accept the new chip credit cards. EMV cards are called smart cards, chip cards or IC cards. They store their data on an integrated circuit embedded in the card. With these new cards, the retail transaction can be completed in three different ways. First, if the card has the magnetic information, the card can be swiped as we have been doing for lo these many years. Second, the card may be a "contact" card type which has to be physically inserted (or "dipped") into a reader. Most of the cards we have now are of this type. Or thirdly, the card may be a "contactless" card type which can be read over a short distance using RFI (radio-frequency identification) Technology. The EMV standard is intended to be used globally. EMV stands for Europay, Mastercard, and Visa, the three companies which originally created the standard. The standard is now managed by EMVCo, a consortium with control split equally among many payment companies; Visa, Mastercard, JCB (a Japaneese Payment Company), American Express, China UnionPay (a payment company in The Peoples Republic of China) and Discover.

Many of us who are familiar with the Client-Server technology concept will recognize that when we use a credit card for a transaction, the credit card (the client), is accessing a Payment System (the server) in the cloud to authorize the transaction. (Those not familiar with the Client-Server technology could remedy that by attending one of the many computer courses given at the Computer Club lab.) And with all Client-Server transactions, determining that the client is truly who it says it is, and that it has the rights and privileges to the data that it is attempting to use, must be accomplished by an authentication process.

Guaranteeing that the holder of a credit card is the owner of that credit card has always been a problem with credit cards. Similar to computer use, a Credit Card must be authenticated before a transaction can occur. With the computer; before the computer account can be used by a potential user, the potential user has to be authenticated. This is usually done with a User Name and a Password. So, "Is this user the owner of this account?" is the question that computer authentication answers. With a credit card, the authentication process tries to guarantee that the credit card holder is the owner. Credit card authentication tries to answer the question, "Is the holder of this card, the owner of the card?" Credit card authentication is typically done with either a Signature or a PIN (Personal Identification Number). With the new cards, these two methods of authentication are called "Chip-and-Signature" and "Chip-and-PIN". Chip-and-PIN is the more effective, but unfortunately most of the transactions in the United States will use Chip-and-Signature authentication.

Until the introduction of the chip to the credit card, all face-to-face credit or debit card transactions used a magnetic stripe or mechanical imprint reader (remember them?) to read your account data, with a signature used for authentication. All of your account information was on the card, either in the magnetic

stripe, or as the raised account numbers. You have probably done this many times: you hand the card to the clerk, who swipes the card through a magnetic reader, or if you remember long ago, the clerk makes an imprint from the raised text on the card. Either way, a printed slip is generated for you to sign. The signature authenticates the transaction. (The signature is not really intended for handwriting analysis by the clerk, although it is typically thought to be the reason for the signature. The signature on the printed slip is only an agreement to pay the charges as printed.) This system is very insecure since technology, which is easily available (on the black market), can be used to quickly read the magnetic stripe. Also available is technology for writing the magnetic stripes. This makes the cards easy to clone, and a cloned card works as good as the original. The real problem was when the transaction took place out of sight of the card owner, such as in a restaurant where the waiter had to take the card away from the customer and bring it to a card machine. It was easily possible for a dishonest employee, when out of sight, to swipe the card through one of these illegal magnetic card readers, which would record the information on the card, so a clone could be created.

Here is why you should opt for the chip reader to complete your transaction. The magnetic stripe is a problem because it contains fixed data, account number and such. If someone gains access to that data, they have all the information they need to make a purchase. Unlike magnetic stripe cards, which always use the same data (account number), every time an EMV card is used for a payment, the card chip creates a unique transaction code that cannot be used again. (That little chip is a tiny computer.) Because a new transaction code is created for each transaction, if a criminal steals that information from a specific transaction, it will not be useable for another transaction, and the fraudulent transaction will be denied. Unfortunately, while these new cards will help reduce crime at the point of sale, fraudulent transactions will probably shift to the more vulnerable telephone, internet, and mail order transactions, but at least our face-to-face transactions will be more secure.

Microsoft Office Apps for Your Apple or Android Devices

Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
August 2015 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor -- www.thestug.org / ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

Microsoft Office is hugely successful in the Office suite market. Now they are giving free access to the

most popular of these applications - Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, and OneNote – to anyone with an Apple or Android mobile device. It is true that those of us who have paid subscriptions to Office 365 get more features in our versions of these apps, but everyone else can get MS Office apps on Apple devices. The Office apps include the most popular and useful features in this powerful suite. The limited version of Word, for example, may not allow a user to put shadows behind a photo or add section breaks. But it does include a large collection of fonts and styles, margin settings, the ability to insert photos, tables, and headers and footers, plus many other tools needed to create a quality document.

MS Office apps on Apple devices

Anyone who is willing to sign up for a free Microsoft account can download the mobile apps free to his or her tablet or smartphone from the iTunes store (Apple) or Google Play store (Android). Requirements for Apple devices are iPad with iOS 7 or later and iPhone 5, 6 or 6 plus. For Android devices, the requirements for tablets and phones are kitkat4.4 or later and an ARM-based or Intel 86 processor and a 7'-10.1' screen on a tablet, according the Microsoft website.

All the apps come with a large number of templates for easy design looks. Excel has over 25 templates. PowerPoint includes more slide types than the full-featured version. All the apps are formatted for touch by streamlining the command ribbon and putting more space between each icon. They also work well with a keyboard.

MS Office apps on Android

The perfect accompaniment to the Office apps is the OneDrive mobile app. This Microsoft cloud storage app includes a generous amount of free storage to non-Office 365 users: 15GB, plus 3 GB more if you enable automatic photo uploads and 5GB more if you refer five people to OneDrive. That is more free storage than iCloud, Google Drive or Dropbox. (Office 365 subscribers get 1TB (1000 GB) of free storage, offering an incentive for joining the paid Office crowd.) Not only can you save photos, documents and other files there, but they can be accessed from your PC, tablet or phone, as long as you have the OneDrive app.

The newest OneDrive version, 5.4.2, works more smoothly than earlier versions. After a small learning curve, I could use all the features of the app – add items, organize my folders, and share photos and other files – with none of the glitches I had experienced with earlier versions. There are only a few menu options to learn, and these give the user a lot of flexibility.

Documents, presentations, or spreadsheets created in the Word, PowerPoint, or Excel app can be saved to OneDrive, where they can be organized and shared with others via email or by sending a hyperlink. Photos taken on a device can be set to upload automatically. They become available on your other devices where you have installed OneDrive. The major restriction for non-Office 365 subscribers is that files created in the apps cannot be edited collaboratively.

Note: The "modern" format style used in the OneDrive app is so minimalistic that the tool icons can be easy to miss. For instance, when viewing a photo in OneDrive, you may not see any commands at all. To view the toolbar, tap the bottom of the screen. Tap the three dots on the bottom right to see the main functions, such as "Add Items" and "Sort by." Other icons include tools for Sharing, Trash, and Organizing. The iPad/Phone icon designs are consistent with iOS icons. The Android icons are much like the ones used by Google.

People today are on the go. If I can take Microsoft Office with me on my iPad or iPhone, and have access to all the files I have stored on OneDrive, I won't get bored on that next trip or burdened down with my laptop.

My Chrome Away From Home
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
November issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org -- president (at) uchug.org

I'm writing this on my new Chromebook at 30,000 feet over the Pacific. I decided to take my Chromebook with me on a vacation trip, as I wanted to see how useful it would be as a traveling companion. I also wanted to continue exploring the capabilities of this device. I've had it for a couple of months, but have not had the opportunity to investigate all its features.

For a very low cost device (I paid only $130 for my Acer Chromebook 11 at Fry's on a promo code deal), it so far has proved to have a lot going for it. At home, I would often use it daily to look up something on the internet, as it can boot up very quickly. Even though I planned to take my normal Windows laptop on this trip, I really wanted to take this Chromebook. I was not confident enough in it to leave my familiar

Windows PC friend behind, however. With space and weight an issue on an airline trip, I probably didn't need the hassle of taking two screens and chargers. My quest for knowledge won out, however, and I determined I could take them both. My wife likes the Chromebook as well, and did not discourage me in taking it. She insisted on bringing her laptop as it has work software on it, so between the two of us, we are traveling with two laptops, an iPhone and a Chromebook.

It is interesting that I am so enthusiastic about this Chromebook. I am much more excited to use it than I am my iPad Mini. Maybe I've never gotten into the Apple way of thinking, but I find the Chrome OS much easier to understand and operate. Maybe it is because the OS is symbiotic with the Chrome browser, which I have been using for a while on Windows computers. Chrome also seems a lot more like Windows in its approach to things, while I think Apple goes out of its way to be different.

The travel environment is also quite different these days, in some good ways and some not so good. This is my first flight since the FAA and airlines loosened up restrictions on electronic devices on commercial flights. Previously, almost all passenger electronics had to remain off from taxi to 10,000 feet, and from descent down to landing. My main gripe with those restrictions was that, with the advent of digital photography, I could no longer take photos out of the plane window during take-offs and landings, and at low altitudes when the views are the most interesting. I took lots of those kinds of photos in the old 35 mm film days (with an older manual camera), so it was really refreshing to be able to take some great shots over San Diego at dawn when we took off.

The airlines are much more integrated into the digital world since my last flight. In addition to checking in online and printing my boarding passes for Alaska Airlines, I was able to pay my bag fees (more on that later) and print luggage tags, speeding up check in. Even the aircraft are more accommodating for travelers with electronic devices. Alaska now has USB and 110 VAC power outlets at every seat, so you can arrive at you destination with your devices fully charged. They also have the now-standard paid Wi-Fi and movies, though not over the ocean.

In spite of these advances in technology and some very friendly and helpful employees, the airlines have found ways to turn air travel from an exciting adventure into an expensive battle of attrition. I'm traveling to paradise, Hawai'i, through a metal tube crammed full of people and luggage. Airlines once were known for service, with everything, including meals, drinks and baggage service included. In the last ten years or so, however, it seems to me that the airlines have moved profits to their number one priority, and moved customer service way down on the list. Planes are now typically always full, overhead bins are overflowing, any refreshments other than soda and peanuts are costly and bags usually have to pay to fly as well. The seats look thinner, less padded (lighter to save fuel) and are probably closer together now.

This flight that my wife and I were on was completely full, so while I was in the window seat taking photos, my wife was in the middle seat on one side of a center aisle, with a large man in the aisle seat adjacent to her flowing over the arm rest. Even on an almost six hour flight, we received no complementary meal service, just drinks and pretzels (there was someone on our flight with peanut allergies, so no peanuts were served). The airline did provide a number of choices in meals they offered for sale, or we could also bring our own food on the plane to consume (a trend that does not work so well for those other passengers with food allergies, as there is no way to limit what foods customers bring on). My wife and I chose to bring on some snacks, and eat some equally expensive airport terminal food before boarding.

We also had to pay additional fees for the airline to transport our checked bags (two bags in total, at $25 each). With a lot of airlines now charging bag fees, a lot of customers try to avoid them by bringing more in their carry-on luggage. This results in less space in overhead bins and more time spent boarding passengers, as they search for space in an overhead bin. Getting off the plane takes longer with more passengers trying to exit down the aisle with rolling carry-ons. I did see fewer passengers with laptops on our flight; most passengers played with their smart phones and tablets instead. Of course, maybe they didn't bring them out on the plane, preferring, like me, to use their smaller electronic devices in the cramped seating.

So far, the Chromebook has done well on the trip. With over 8 hours of battery capacity, I'm not worried about trying to fish my charger out of my bag to try the airline's in-seat power. It boots up and shuts down in around ten seconds, so I can check things quickly. It was able to easily connect to the free airport Wi-Fi and the GoGo inflight Wi-Fi hub on the plane. Even though the Chromebook was built to be online, I can easily write this column in Google Docs while offline, and save the file on my USB thumb drive (or so I thought; more on this later). I can play music I brought on the thumb drive (I found that ear buds, though compact for travel, give poor results with all the background noise on a plane), or watch a movie file I brought.

So, why bring the larger and heavier 14" Windows laptop? While I can get all my email through a web browser, it is so much easier with Thunderbird, which is not available under Chrome. I can also feel safer checking my email on free airport Wi-Fi, as I have a VPN on my laptop (the setup of my Private Internet Access VPN under Chrome OS appears difficult). I also have a 1 TB hard drive in the laptop, so as I fill up camera memory cards with vacation selfies, I can off-load to the laptop drive and then snap more pics. With only the Chromebook, I'd have to either invest in more memory cards, or resurrect the old photo hard drives I thought were obsolete (and are now quite small).

Once we arrived at our destination, we still used the Chromebook a lot to look up local points of interest and map out sightseeing trips. I found, however, that the Chromebook was no match for the old familiar laptop in some respects. Perhaps with further experience on the Chromebook, I may find out how to do all the things I found a lot easier (or possible) with the laptop.

One thing I have not quite figured out is Google Docs. I think I understand the Chrome Files app; it is similar to Windows File Explorer (I've yet to figure out how to do the same things on my iPad). I started writing this column in Google Docs on the airplane, which, since I was not able to connect to the internet, was in off-line mode. I tried to save and get out of Docs a few times, early on, to make sure it was actually saving the file. I was unable to determine where it was being saved on the Chromebook, however. I finally tried to save the column on my USB thumb drive, and thought I had, but was not able to open the .gdoc file with my Windows laptop. I might have been able to install the Google Drive program on my laptop, or there might be a way to export the file from the Chromebook as a .docx file. In the end, I took the easy way out and selected all of the column's text in Google Docs on the Chromebook, and then pasted it into an email (in Gmail). I sent the text in an email to an account I use with Thunderbird on the Windows laptop, and then pasted the text into Word, where I could edit and write comfortably.

I guess I still have a few things to learn about Chromebooks. I'm glad I brought it on this trip, as it has a lot of advantages over my Windows laptop. I probably overestimated how much time I'd have on this vacation trip to learn about and experiment with the Chromebook. I brought some eBooks on the Chromebook to read, but that's not really what my wife had in mind for our vacation.

## Back to Basics - Internet Browser Tools

By Jim Cerny, Columnist, Sarasota TUG, FL
August 2015 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor -- www.thestug.org / jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

The Internet is a tremendous resource for everything. It is probably the number one reason for having a computer – to get to the internet. In addition for paying for access to the internet, you need a free program called an internet "browser" that allows you to view the internet web pages. One of the more popular browser programs is Internet Explorer (by Microsoft) which comes free on all Windows computers. Other free browser programs are Safari, Google Chrome, and Firefox which can be downloaded from the Internet for free. Using any of these browser programs is easy but, as usual, there are many options and tools available to you. This article will introduce you to the purpose and use of "tabs" (on Internet Explorer).

Along the top of your internet browser program window will be a row that will contain one or more "tabs" (please see the illustration).

Just to the right of the web page address box you can see that I have three tabs, "Golf drivi…", "Gmail", and "HERSH..". If I move my mouse over any of these tabs (hover your mouse, do not click it) I will see the full title of that web page and its address. If I click on any of these tabs, I will see that web page right away. So, you could say that tabs are an easy and quick way to go to a specific web page without having to open a new browser window or using "favorites".
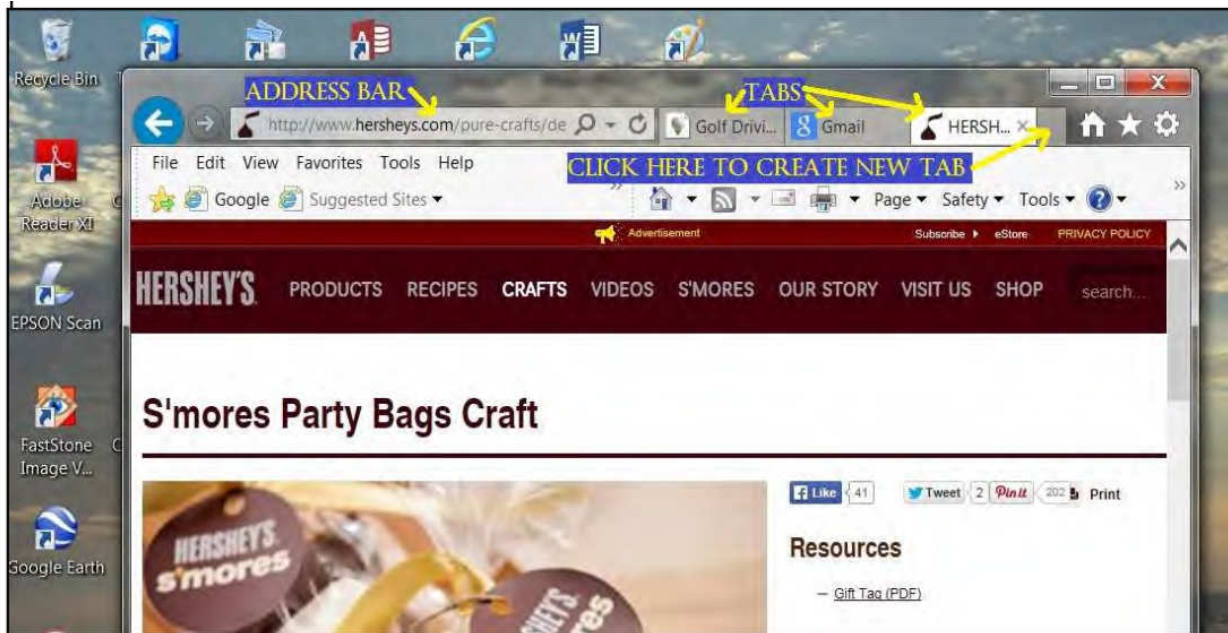
Perhaps you have never created a tab (that you know of, anyway) and you are wondering how you get them. Web pages are designed to have the ability to send you to another web page with the click of your mouse. Certain items you see on a web page, such as colored text, underlined text, photos, or headlines, etc. are called "hot links". Clicking on any such link will display a new web page – the web page to which that link directs you. The new web page address will appear in the "address bar" at the top of the window. In the old days, clicking on a hotlink would always open that new web page in a new window OR display that web page in your existing window. Today many hotlinks will add a new "tab" while taking you to that page. This way, if you visit other web pages, you can go back to a web page by clicking on its tab -- you do not have to "hunt" for it by clicking on the "previous web page" arrow multiple times or open your history list. Basically, it is a shortcut to a web page. You do not have to use "tabs" if you do not want to, using them is optional. When you click on a hot link, you do not know in advance how that new web page will appear – it may be in a new window, a new tab, or in your existing window. It is not unusual to use the internet, exploring and clicking away, and ending up with several or many new tabs.

You can create a new tab yourself if you wish just by clicking on the "New tab" (a blank tab) as shown in the illustration. After you click to create the new tab you will have to go to the web page you want for that tab, such as by entering the address in the address bar. To remove or "close" any tab, move your mouse to that tab and click on the small "X" that appears on the right side of that tab. You should not have more than a few tabs at any one time. As new tabs are created (either by you or by clicking on links) they become more squeezed together and are harder to read. Of course you can hover your mouse on any tab to see what it is if you wish. When you exit your web browser, most likely the tabs that have been created during your previous session will be gone. If you want to make some tabs permanent, so they appear every time you open Internet Explorer, you can do that by going to Tools – Internet Options – General – then add the web pages you want as tabs in the "Home page" box. I don't use tabs that much, I still like and use "favorites" to go to my favorite web pages. But I did create a permanent tab for my Gmail web page which I use every time I do email.

I do recommend that you close all program windows when you are through using that program (such as your internet browser program) and shutting down your computer at the end of the day. This prevents programs staying open over long periods of time and building up multiple things like tabs, links, history, etc., until there are just too many clogging up your screen. If you do leave your computer on for long periods of time, you may want to check to see how many tabs are in your window and delete the ones you do not want.

If you are interested in using tabs in your browser program and want to learn more about them, please use Google and ask specifically "How do I use tabs in Internet Explorer on Windows X", or for whatever browser you are using. Tabs can be helpful but at least they are optional (so far, anyway).

Interesting Internet Finds – October 2015

Steve Costello, President / Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL
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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 October 2015.

US Government Says It's Now Okay To Jailbreak Your Tablet and Smart TV
http://www.theverge.com/2015/10/27/9622066/jailbreak-unlocked-tablet-smart-tvs-dmca-exemption-library-of-congress

Though the exemptions don't go into effect until next year, it is good to know that the government is loosening up a little bit.

Why Everyone Needs Protection against Malware
http://www.groovypost.com/unplugged/why-everyone-needs-antimalware-protection/

A very interesting, at least to me, post about anti-malware protection, and why it is needed.

5 Little-Known Factors That Could Affect Your Browser Speed
http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-little-known-factors-affect-browser-speed/

A slow browser is frustrating. If you have tried everything you can think of and it is still slow, check out this post, maybe you will find something to help.

What Kind of Ethernet (Cat-5/e/6/a) Cable Should I Use?
http://www.howtogeek.com/70494/what-kind-of-ethernet-cat-5e6a-cable-should-i-use/

With wi-fi everywhere, most people don't even think about their wired connection. This HowToGeek post explains the differences in Ethernet cables, and which one you should use for which situation.

How to Set Up an Android Smartphone for an Older Family Member
http://android.wonderhowto.com/how-to/set-up-android-smartphone-for-older-family-member-0164785/

Do you have an older family member who is not very tech savvy, but wants an Android smartphone? If so check out this post, and use some or all of the ideas to make things much easier for them.

Chromebook Buying Guide
https://www.maketecheasier.com/chromebook-buying-guide/

If you are interested in getting a Chromebook to supplement your system, you should check out this post.

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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.

What to Expect in Microsoft Office 2016
By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
November 2015 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor -- www.thestug.org -- ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

Amid all the hype about Windows 10, another Microsoft product has been released: Office 2016. As we all know, Microsoft Office has been the preferred office suite in the business world for many years. Many companies still find that for productivity, a PC, keyboard and mouse are the best option for workers, although tablets are gaining popularity. Office products are not going away.

On July 9, the Mac version of Office 2016 was released to the public. Prices for various versions are predicted to be much the same as Office 2013. The subscription Home Premium version, Office 365, will cost about $100 a year for five installations and $70 a year for the personal, one installation edition. The standalone edition will have a one-time price of $140.

It appears that Office 2016 is being built around a few key goals. It is designed as a cross-platform application that will work well on a computer, tablet or smartphone. It also emphasizes online collaboration and has added some new tools to aid in this goal. In some apps, several people will be able to view and edit the same project simultaneously. Users will be able to see not only who is currently viewing their project, but also who is editing it. All apps in the suite will offer more efficient methods of saving, opening, and editing files in OneDrive. Office 2016 will also include a few new features and several that have been improved. It appears that anyone who has used Office 2007 or later can transition easily to Office 2016. There are no jarringly new tools requiring a long learning curve. It is touted as being a perfect complement to Windows 10, but will work smoothly on Windows 7 or 8.

A few new features are worth a mention. One is the **Tell Me** bar, which is an updated approach to Help. A user can ask how to perform a task by typing in the bar or verbally asking Cortana, the talking personal assistant, and will be taken to the appropriate spot in the Microsoft support site. Another is **Clutter**, a feature of the Outlook email program that sorts emails and assigns low priority ones to a special folder for later consideration. Another improvement in Outlook is the option of choosing how much email to download at once onto a phone or small device. Currently, it's a month's worth, which can slow down download time. The **Insights** feature now extends to Excel and PowerPoint instead of just Word and Outlook. If you right click a word or phrase, a sidebar appears containing information related to it from Bing search, Wikipedia, and the Oxford dictionary.

It appears that individual applications in the suite have not changed their basic operation too much, probably to help businesses avoid excessive re-training. But there are predicted to be a few changes. **Excel** has new analysis capabilities and one click forecasting based on the data on the spreadsheet. It also has some new chart types, such as Waterfall and Tree Map, and keyboard access to Pivot Tables. **Outlook** lets the user attach links to files in OneDrive. **Word** and **PowerPoint** automatically insert photos with the correct orientation and offer more shape styles. One complaint from the bloggers is that PowerPoint, Publisher, and

Word have the same sets of templates as they did in Office 2013. There are, however, more themes available. Plus, as I write this, more revisions can still be made.

The new Office will have some formatting changes. Each application will sport a different color, as indicated by its icon and title bar. For instance, Word is blue; Excel is green. The suite color scheme, which has been white, will become somewhat darker to allow easier accessibility for sight-impaired users.

So should you plan to get Office 2016? If you are thinking of using Office on a tablet or phone, using either the Windows, Apple, or Android operating systems, Office 2016 can give you a more touch-friendly experience than previous versions. If a laptop or desktop is still what you prefer to use for productivity jobs, as I do, you might not need to make the change to Office 2016. You may decide to wait for the next Office edition, which, if Microsoft follows its pattern, will be 2019. But if you are still hanging on to Office 2003 or earlier, it is time to upgrade, if for no other reason than much better security. If you do decide to update your Office suite, keep in mind that you can get more features and much better cloud storage if you purchase the subscription (365) version than if you buy the standalone version.

Freebies!
By Dave Bilcik, member, Southern Tier Personal Computer Club, NY
January 2016 issue, Rare Bits -- http://www.pageorama.com/?p=stpcc1979 -- dlbilcik (at) yahoo.com

It's that time of year again. The past year is done and gone and a brand new year is here. Are you ready with all your heartfelt resolutions for this pristine year full of exciting possibilities? Me neither. Will you be honest and resolve to lose the same 15 pounds you gained and lost last year? How about getting one year older by the end of the year (this one we can all keep). January 22 is the date my odometer turns over one more time so if you want to get me something for the old birthday, Federal Reserve Notes ending in "0" are always nice. Take the opportunity for some new experiences (even humble ones) that will make this year memorable for the next January 1. If you can't do something better, at least try different (different works almost as well) in your new year. At worst you won't be bored and at best you won't be boring. Don't be discouraged, not everyone can live the high adventure of writing "the" next great novel.

Freebies column.
Proper nutrition in the new year can be useful, especially after you finished off the last of the Christmas cookies, but you first have to know what "proper" is. Freebies is here to help. Health Sciences Academy has a free starter nutrition course that is informative and gives you some new (at least to you) ideas about what you stuff in your face on a daily basis. Who knows, you may find out you are in great shape nutritionally (or not). Good or bad, head over to https://thehealthsciencesacademy.org/registration-free-starter-nutrition-course/ to register for your free course materials. You can start making small changes now that will make for a healthier new year. Do it now, the buy-in is free. Look down and see your feet in 2016 (2017?)!

Win 10 has stirred up some controversy about user privacy. One camp thinks that it is a major step forward in user convenience in trying to enhance the "user-experience" by tracking and anticipating what the user wants in their use of the system. The other group (some say slightly more paranoid) thinks that Win 10 is a glorified keystroke logger dressed up as an operating system. The truth is probably in the middle somewhere. The good news is that you can configure the privacy settings in Win 10 to control how and what the system looks at when the operating system is in use. Website TradePub.com has a complementary e-book "Preserving Your Privacy in Windows 10" at http://www.tradepub.com/free/w_wini02/?p=w_wini02, where you can download the e-book and find out how to limit Win 10's information gathering on how you use your system. Make informed decisions about your system, the

information it generates and how that information is shared. If you do go the trade.com site, check out all the other free industry related material that they carry on the site after you download your Win 10 e-book. You may also find some industry specific publications that will be useful to you in your current job.

Start the new year out right by protecting your PC properly. Gizmo's Freeware had a recent update on the "Best Free Antivirus Software." For the full article and relevant links go to…
http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-anti-virus-software.htm. The short answers to which are the best are "Comodo Anti-virus" and "Avast! Free Anti-virus". The long answer is to read the entire article and consider the strengths and weaknesses of all the products on the page first before pulling that download trigger. Make the decision considering you and your system in the mix. Research first, then go.

Are your e-mails important to you? If they are then you need this next Freebie "Mailstore Home." It is an e-mail archiver and search utility that works with Windows versions XP SP3 up through Win10. You can send and reply from the archive with your usual e-mail program and upload from it if necessary. Get your e-mail on a USB drive or an external hard-drive. If your drive goes south your e-mail correspondence and work product is safe; or if your web-based account is hacked, you will still have your e-mails (even the silly ones). See http://www.mailstore.com/en/mailstore-home-email-archiving.aspx for details and the download link for the latest version. Do you know where your e-mails are in the new year?

My personal e-mail address is dlbilcik @ yahoo.com if you want to send me comments, questions or cash. Please put "Freebies" somewhere on the subject line so I will have some idea about its contents. Tell us about your best free software experience or the best new years' celebrations (the ones you can remember) ever and I will pass it on. Happy New Year!