



Midland Michigan

BITS AND BYTES

MAY 2019

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

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GENERAL CLUB MEETING

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

**WEDNESDAY, MAY 22, 2019
6:00 P.M.**

Cut the Cord ???

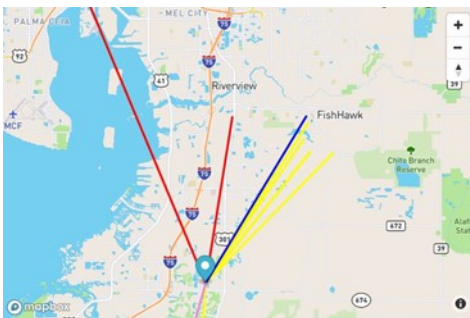
By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, FL
January 2019 -- www.sccccomputerclub.org -- [Philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:Philsorr@yahoo.com)

TV is definitely one of our favorite sources of entertainment. The entertainment is created by studios and TV networks and delivered by cable (coax), FIOS (fiber) or satellite (dish). The “cord” (or cable) is our connection to one of these providers. Usually, the same cord also connects us to the internet, and possibly even provides phone service. Much of what used to be available only as cable TV channels may now be available using the internet or by receiving local broadcast stations.

In an article I wrote a little over three years ago (7/15) I discussed the thought of “cutting the cord”, which if you’ll remember is basically eliminating the TV part of your cable service and therefore the TV expense from your cable bill. Most of us get both TV and Internet from our cable provider and some of us go one step further and have the “triple play”; TV, Internet, and Phone from them. So, in order to cut the cord, meaning leaving only the Internet, we would have to replace the TV service (and possibly the Phone service), with equivalent services. The Phone is pretty straight forward, just find a less expensive service that uses “Voice over the Internet” or VOIP, like Magic Jack or Ooma. The harder part is replacing the entertainment that we get from all the cable channels. Many cable TV packages can include 200+ channels with a lot of special entertainment like ESPN and the History channel, and premium movie channels like HBO and Showtime. Many of these special channels may not be able to be replaced. But if you don’t take advantage of these special channels and are not too demanding in your choice of entertainment, then cutting the cord may be for you. You may be able to satisfy your TV entertainment needs by local broadcast TV augmented by the addition of a streaming device to your TV.

Local “broadcast” TV channels may satisfy a good portion of your entertainment and local (and national) news needs. Local TV channels can be received by an antenna and a broadcast tuner. Most modern TVs have both a tuner for cable (probably the default) and a tuner for broadcast. In the TVs settings or setup, there is typically a choice of “cable” or “air” (or something that indicates broadcast TV, like OTA). The “air” choice uses the broadcast tuner. It may not be well known, but the modulation schemes for these two transmission types are different. (Modulation scheme is the way the picture and sound is put on to a carrier signal for transmission.)

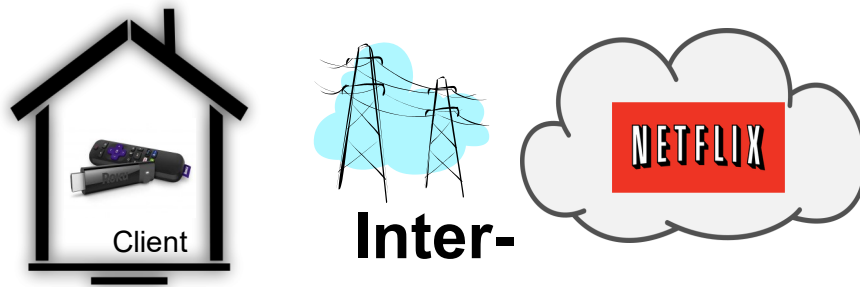
An indication of how successful you may be in receiving local broadcast signals can be found by going to the antennaweb.org website. Click “Click Here To Start”, and on the next screen enter your zip code, then click Submit. The resulting map will show you the broadcast stations that you may receive along with the distance to the transmitting antennas and the direction from your location. The distances and directions will help you decide if it is possible to receive the station and what type of antenna (indoor, outdoor, directional or omni-directional) may be needed. Here are the results for zip code 33573, Sun City Center, FL. All the major networks and a few local stations can be received using an indoor antenna.



If you want to take advantage of broadcast TV and prefer to time-shift your TV watching, TiVo, SiliconDust, and Tablo make DVRs (Digital Video Recorder) for recording your shows. Don’t forget that you also need a “guide” so that you can schedule the recordings. The guide may be a monthly expense or it may be bundled into the cost of the device. Some DVRs even allow you to buzz through the commercials during playback.

In addition to local broadcast stations, some TV programs can be watched simply using a browser on your computer, or an APP on a Tablet or Smartphone. Many shows are available at www.abc.com, www.cbs.com, www.nbc.com, and www.fox.com. You can't always get every episode of every show, but usually you can get the last few episodes of all of the major shows. Unfortunately, you will have to watch the commercials attached to the shows.

Streaming devices, the other part of replacing the Cable TV channels, can provide access to a collection of current shows and a large assortment of movies. Streaming devices can be as basic as the Roku Streaming Stick and the Amazon Fire stick, or as elaborate as Apple TV or nVidia ShieldTV. Each of these devices provides the ability to use Apps (clients) that can access the major streaming services.



These streaming devices act as the “clients” in Client-Server Technology where the Server is the Cloud Service that the client accesses for the streaming entertainment. Streaming entertainment may come from Netflix, Hulu, DirectTV Now, Amazon Prime Video, HBO Now, SlingTV, or YouTubeTV. And there are a host of lesser known services like, PhiloTV, Fubo, and Tubi. Most of these require a monthly subscription fee in the \$10 to \$40 per month range. Most will give you a one-month free trial. Tubi advertises itself as a free service that provides movies and TV shows. (And by the way, you can even stream music with the Pandora or Spotify free streaming music services.)

A streaming device is fairly easy to set up. Just connect it to your TV via one of the HDMI inputs on the TV, and get it on to your Wi-Fi (yes, you'll need the Wi-Fi password). Once you have the streaming device set up, you might want to give Tubi (the free one) a try just to see how streaming works. And finally, if you don't mind TV on a small screen, the Pluto TV Android App provides access to movies and some live TV channels.

When all is said and done, I suspect that many of us feel that we pay too much for the TV part of the cable bill, because of the ever-increasing cable bills for a collection of cable channels that we hardly ever use. But, on the other hand, most of us have gotten used to the fact that the TV service is convenient and familiar - we don't have to learn anything new to use it. So although with the right combination of broadcast channels and streaming devices, cord cutting may be possible, is it the best thing for you to do? It's your choice.

Computer Flu Season on Windows

By Jim Cerny, Forum Leader, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
January 2019 issue, The STUG Monitor -- www.thestug.org -- [jimcerny123 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

Did you get your flu shot this year? It's always good to protect your health from those nasty germs and viruses – and the same is true with your Windows computer. In this short overview we will cover some essential basics of computer protection.

There are many FREE anti-virus protection programs (apps) out there, and almost all of them offer an “upgraded” version for a monthly or annual fee. I really have no experience with what the upgrades (\$) versions offer compared to their free version, but I have used the free Windows Defender for quite a few

years now and so far, so good. Windows Defender comes with Windows and it may already be active on your computer. Just left-click on the little Windows icon in the lower left corner of your screen and you will see an alphabetical list of all your apps. Left-click on "Windows Defender Security Center" and you will see if this program is running on your computer.

You do need an active "running all the time" virus protection program on your Windows computer to protect you from the nasties. If you use another virus protection app, remember that only ONE virus protection program should be active or running, do NOT try to run two at the same time – they will interfere with each other and bring your system back to the stone age of slowness. I think it is wise to delete all other virus protection apps from your computer except the one you are actively using. On my computer, if I delete an active virus protection program, Windows Defender steps right in to protect me right away. That's very nice of them. Whatever virus protection app you are running, check the options for "automatic updates" and turn that "on". That way it will update itself without you having to do anything.

Like they say on TV – "But wait, there's more.." and there is. Besides active virus protection, you also should use some free software that will SCAN your system for problems. In my case, I use "CCleaner" (note the two-letter C's) and "Glary Utilities." There are probably a least a dozen more you can pick from. These apps are not "always active" type of virus protection – you have to run them. I usually run both of them every day, it only takes a minute.

Of course ALL of these apps have multiple options, tools, and things you can do with them. For example, Windows Defender has an option to scan your computer for problems too – a "quick," "full," or "custom" scan. Whatever app you choose, please take some time to learn about it by searching YouTube – "How to use Windows Defender" for example. You do not have to learn all the options – there are way too many anyway – but only the basics.

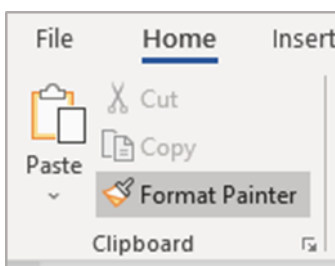
As another example, Glary Utilities can also tell you what software upgrades you need and install them for you – a very nice option. Please ask your friends and relatives – "What do you use to protect your computer?" And searching the internet for the "most popular" apps is always a good idea too. I am sure you are aware of how great it is to use Google or YouTube to find very helpful videos on how to use whatever apps you pick. If you run ANY app, it is always a good idea to watch a ten-minute video about it. You will learn not only how to use it for the "basics," but also will learn some of the popular options that may also be helpful to you. Most of the options or choices offered are way over my head so I just stick with the basics.

Unfortunately nothing is guaranteed. You could pay good money for protection and still get a virus. But it is always better to have something than nothing. And if that something costs nothing, well, that's not a bad deal.

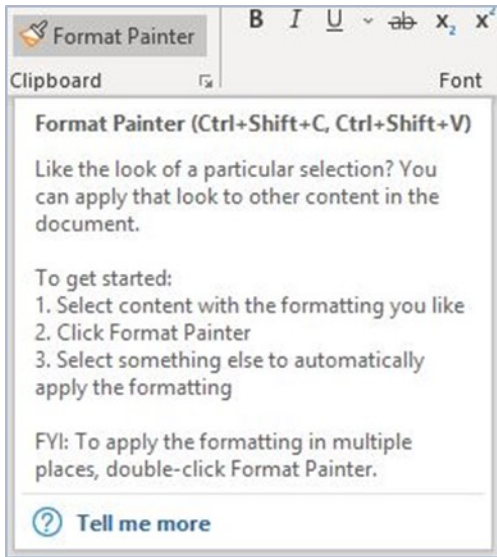
Help is Only a Few Clicks Away in Word

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
December 2018 issue, STUG Monitor -- www.thestug.org / [ndemarte \(at\) verizon.net](mailto:ndemarte@verizon.net)

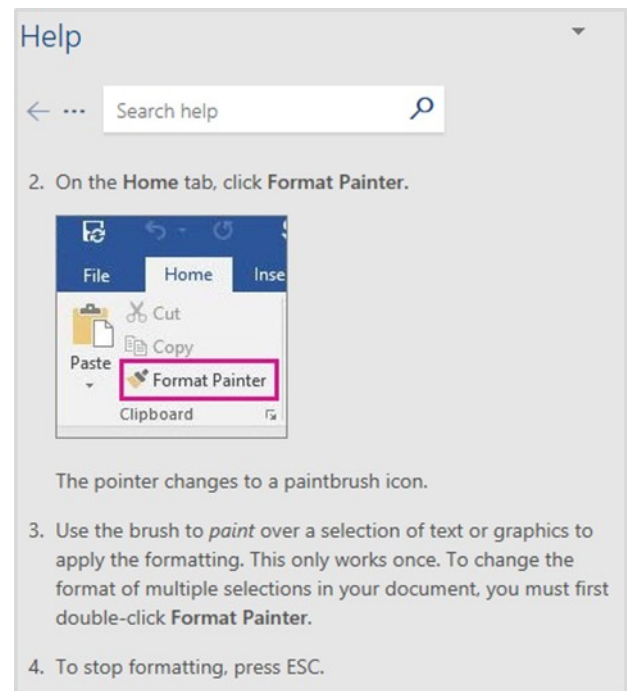
Microsoft Word has hundreds of tools to help us create professional-looking documents, with new tools being added all the time. Learning how to use these tools can be frustrating. Fortunately, Word has added ways to find help without leaving the application.



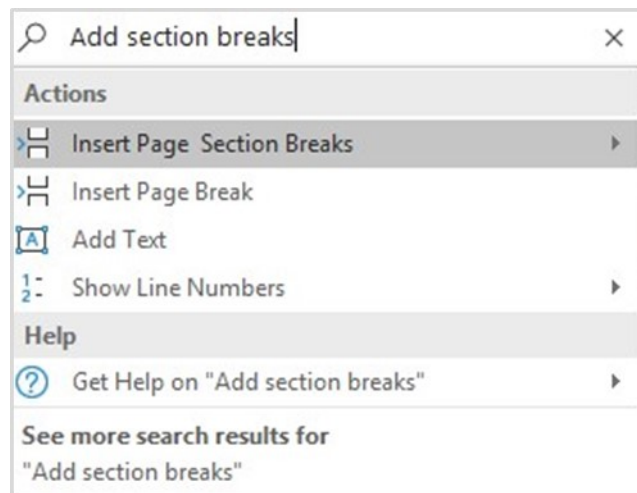
An example would be Format Painter, located on the Home tab on the left end of the Word ribbon. To learn the function of Format Painter, move your mouse pointer over its name on the ribbon, but don't click. You will see the keyboard commands, definition, and steps in using this tool, as shown here.



The “Tell me more” message below the definition offers more information. Click it to open a Help panel on the right side of the screen with more help on Format Painter. Here is a portion of the Help panel. Notice that the instructions have been expanded to offer even more help.



Sometimes we need help with performing a task in Word, like how to add section breaks to a page. On the right end of the ribbon's Tab row is a small magnifying glass followed by “**Tell me what you want to do.**” Click this sentence and type a short phrase, like “Add section breaks.” Press Enter to open the box below.



Clicking the highlighted line will take you to a gallery of page and section breaks with information about when to use each one. If that doesn't answer your question, try clicking **Help** or **See more search results for** at the bottom of this box.

Word and some other Office applications also provide help with content. If you are unsure about the spelling of a word, for instance, right click the word and click **Smart Lookup** which appears in the dropdown menu. The results include correct spelling, definition, synonyms, and other information about the word from Wikipedia.

magnify

mag-ni-fy [ˈmagnəˌfi]

verb

magnifying (present participle)

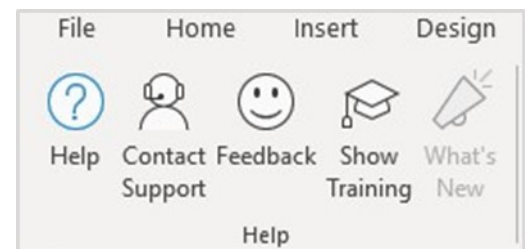
1. make (something) appear larger than it is, especially with a lens or microscope.
"the camera's zoom mode can magnify a certain area if required"

Synonyms: enlarge, boost, enhance, maximize, increase, augment, extend, expand, amplify, intensify, heighten, deepen, broaden, widen, dilate, blow up

Antonyms: reduce

Show more

A new addition which provides more extensive help is the Help tab on the ribbon, which may only be available in the subscription version of Office, Office 365. Here is what the Help tab offers:



These are only some of Office Help tools located within the related application. Some older versions of Word may not contain all of these, which may be one reason to update to a newer version. Office 2019 is already released for the business version and will soon be available for home users. It will contain more recent tools than Office 2016 or prior versions.

Stellarium – A Home Planetarium

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer User Group, NJ
www.bcug.com -- n2nd (at) att.net

This free software for Windows, Linux, and OS X (<http://stellarium.org/>) turns your PC or Raspberry Pi into a planetarium to display the stars in the sky, the constellations, and individual and groups of stellar objects. There is a Web-based version you can access with a browser (at <http://stellarium-web.org/>), and variants are available for cell phones (usually for a small cost). Available on the home page is a 355-page user guide, and you should read this if you want to do more than take a casual look at the night sky.

Features

- Over 600,000 stars from the Hipparcos Catalogue and the Tycho-2 Catalogue, with extra catalogues available containing more than 210 million stars
- Illustrations of the constellations, from the Western and other cultures
- Images of nebulae (full Messier catalog)
- Realistic Milky Way
- Realistic atmosphere, sunrise and sunset
- Planets of the solar system and their major moons
- Ability to display stars and other celestial objects as seen from reference points other than the Earth

Visualizations

- Equatorial and azimuthal grids
- Star twinkling
- Simulations of meteors and eclipses
- Deep sky objects

If you are connected to the Internet, Stellarium will configure itself on startup by loading your location, although you can fine tune this. It starts in full-screen mode, which you can turn off from the menu bar, visible when you move the cursor to the bottom of the screen. A second menu bar appears when you move the cursor to the left edge of the screen (both are shown in Figure 1). Stellarium shows the sky for a given time, which by default is the current time. This was 7:30 pm. on a summer day for Figure 1, and of course, the stars weren't visible, because our atmosphere scatters sunlight which overpowers light from the stars. Stellarium allows you to turn off this effect so you can see the stars during the day. (The sun still appears as a very bright star.) The program also allows you to remove the ground to view stars below the horizon.



Figure 1. Stellarium Day View.

Advancing the time past sunset, results in the more satisfactory view of Figure 2, where the field of view has also been increased to show more of the sky. By default, only the major objects are labeled. (The two objects labeled “Aquiriids” are meteor showers.)



Figure 2. Stellarium Night View

You move around the sky with the mouse and zoom with the mouse wheel (or the Page-up and Page-down keys). Because your PC screen is flat and relatively small, you will probably display only a portion of the sky. (Stellarium's default is to show approximately what appears in your normal field of view.) However, you can zoom back to see everything above the horizon, as shown in Figure 3.

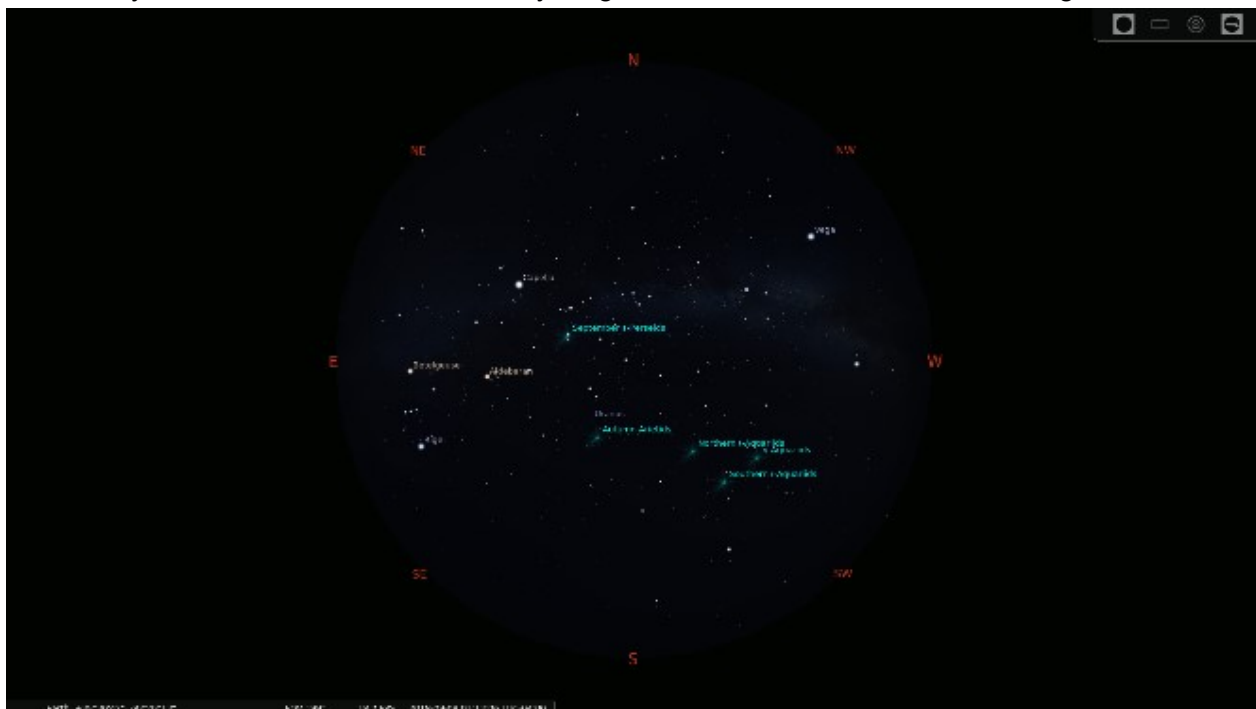


Figure 3. Full Sky View.

You can add the constellations as lines connecting their stars as shown in Figure 4, and you can also see their artwork as in Figure 5. The constellations and artwork shown are those used in the western

world,
which
are
the



defaults. The program can instead display the constellations of many other cultures.

Figure 4. Constellations.

sky in real time, and at high magnifications individual objects will rapidly move off the screen, but you can correct this by stopping its clock.

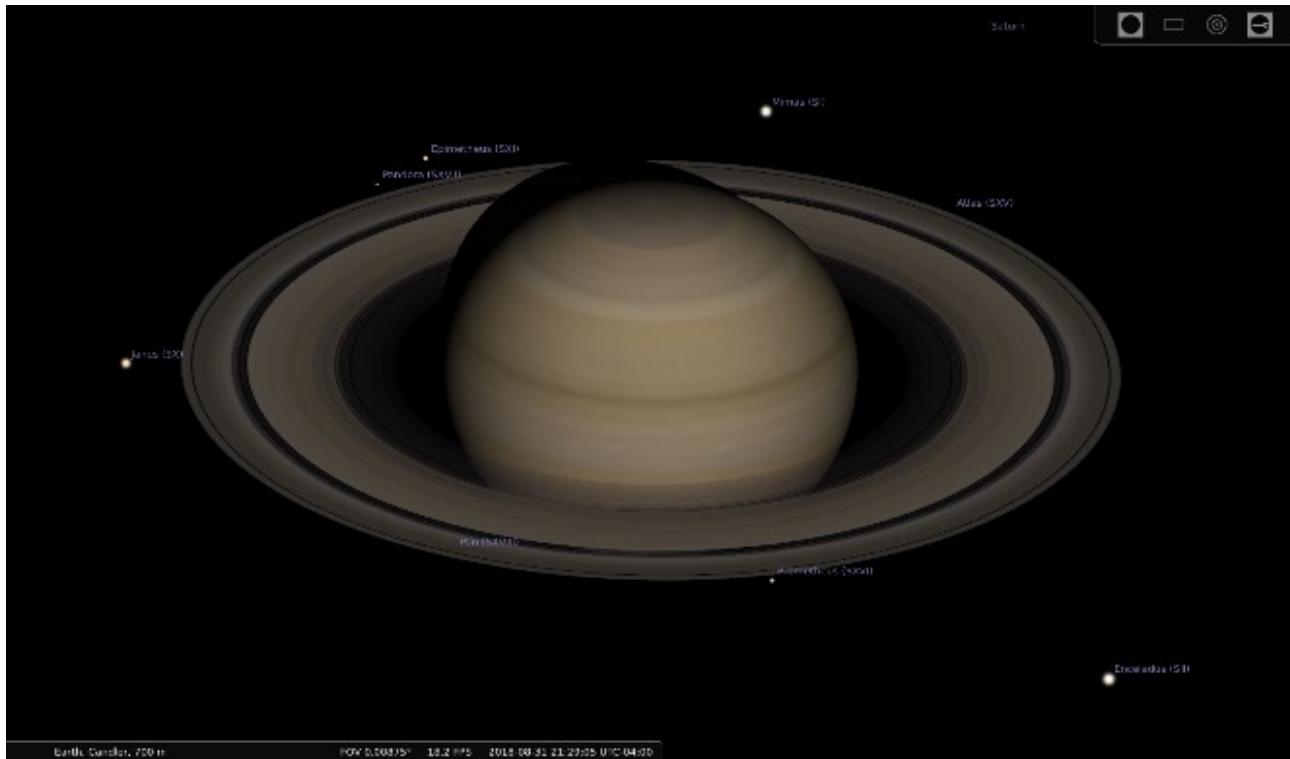


Figure 7. Saturn.

If you have Stellarium on a laptop or other mobile device, you can use it outside to help you identify features in the actual sky. In this case, you'll want to use Night Mode, which displays everything in red to preserve your night vision; see Figure 8.

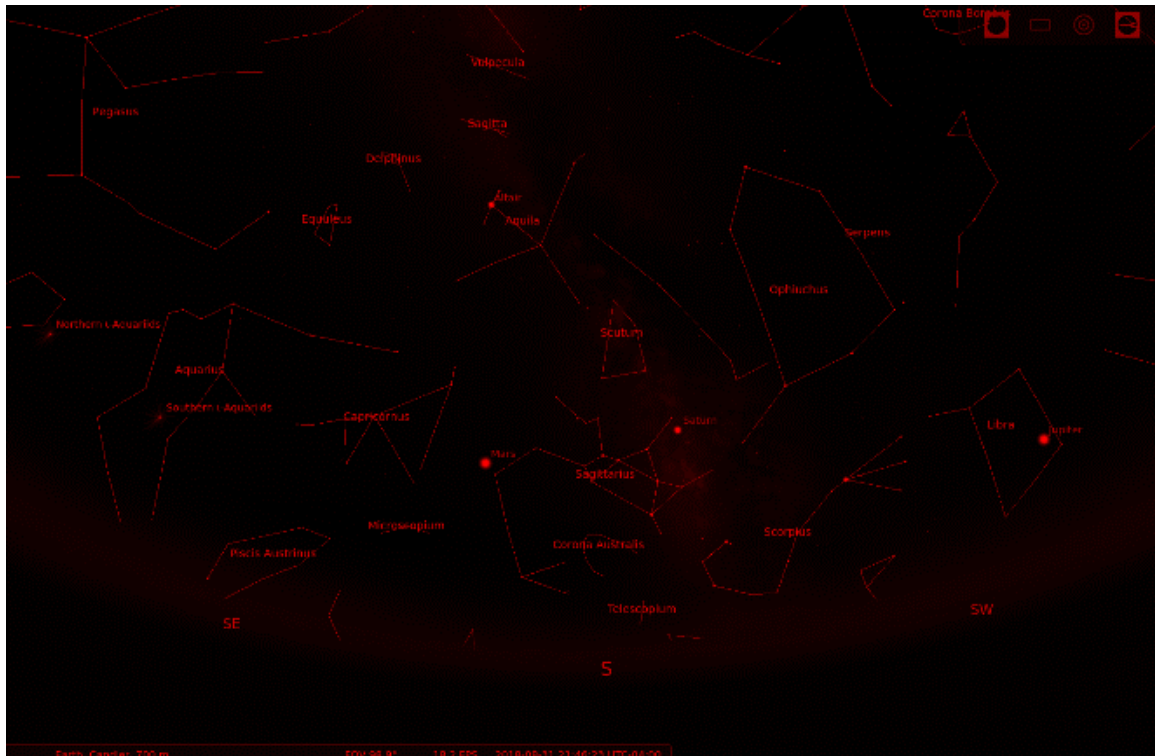


Figure 8. Night Mode.

In addition to the visible stars and planets, Stellarium can also show artificial satellites and deep sky objects (DSOs). The term is used for the most part by amateur astronomers to denote faint objects such

as star clusters, nebulae, and galaxies. It can also show exoplanets (planets that orbit other stars than our sun). As Figure 9 shows, if you display both satellites and deep sky objects, the screen becomes quite cluttered. Especially, since the satellites except those in synchronous orbits are in rapid motion. (In the figure, the synchronous satellites appear in an arc about one-third down from the top.)



Figure 9. Satellites and Deep Sky Objects.

Folks now know far less about our night sky than in the past, when nights were darker and the stars more visible, and we also tend to spend our nights indoors. Most of us can identify only the big and little dipper constellations. Stellarium offers you a way to expand your knowledge without even leaving your chair, although stepping outside on a clear night to look at the actual sky is always rewarding.

President's Corner

The Year of Living Dangerously (The Last Year of Windows 7 Support)

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood UG, CA
November 2016 issue Drive Light -- www.uchug.org -- President (at) uchug.org

Google's Android is now the most-used operating system in the world, holding 40% of market share. This is due to its popularity with smart phone users. Surprisingly, Microsoft's Windows (all versions) still holds nearly 36.5%, in spite of being relegated almost completely to the personal computer market. This appears to be the case because, although there are now more smart phones in the world than personal computers, there are still not that many more (maybe 2.3 billion vs. 2 billion PCs). Per StatCounter, iOS holds 13.02% (of Operating System Market Share Worldwide from July 2017 - July 2018) and OS X is at 5.51%. Linux holds the next largest share (and lowest of named OS's) at a minute 0.74%. Unfortunately for those Linux advocates I know, it was beaten out by "Unknown" at 2.56% and "Other" at 1.61%.

In the PC market, Windows truly dominates, holding 82.79% (of worldwide market share, 7/2017 to 7/2018). OS X comes in second with 12.63%, with Linux at 1.61% and Chrome OS at 0.86%. For Windows versions, Win10 has finally edged out Win7, 42.37% to 42.14%, and Windows 8.1 has 8.59%. These three are the only versions still supported by Microsoft, per the Windows Lifecycle Fact Sheet. The remaining, unsupported versions (XP, 8, Vista and others) hold less than 7% of market share.

Windows 7 was released to the world on July 22, 2009. Its mainstream support ended on 1/10/15,

meaning the end of product improvements and new features. In a little more than a year from now (1/14/20), extended support is scheduled to end. This will mean that Microsoft will stop making security updates to Win7, and it will become more dangerous to use (at least when connected to the internet).

I currently have six actively used personal computers (desktops and laptops) at home. Of these, more than half (3.5, by my accounting) run Win7. I have a Chromebook, which runs the Chrome OS; it is my favorite for travel and for getting on the web quickly. I still have one desktop PC I still use (I'm writing this on it) which runs XP, though for security it is not connected to any network. My newest computer is a tower desktop that I call my chameleon computer, as its boot hard drive is removable from the front. I have separate hard drives that allow it to run either Win7 or Win10 (thus the '3.5' for Win7 machines, and Win10 would be on 0.5 computers). My primary computer is a 14" laptop running Win7. My wife has a Win7 desktop, as well as a 15.6" Win7 laptop.

Next year will be the 'year of living dangerously' for these three Win7-only machines. Something will need to happen before 1/14/20, so that my wife and I can continue computing safely. Microsoft could extend the support date out further, but that is highly unlikely, as their apparent goal since it was released in 2015 is to get all users on Windows 10. I might spend most of 2018 trying to figure out what to do, but by the end of next year, I will need to be on the path of one or more of these likely actions:

Update my Win7 PCs to Win10. Microsoft did provide me with several opportunities to update my Win7 computers to Win10 for free in the past, but I was not willing to switch at the time. As the end-of-support deadline nears, it is possible they could provide some final upgrade offer to entice those still on the fence to join the Win10 collective. They could offer a discount on an upgrade version, but it is more likely they will hold the line on price and rake in more upgrade money. If I were to go with this option, I'd likely wait as the deadline approaches, to see if any good deals come up.

I could buy the Win10 upgrade for some or all, but I'd need to weigh that cost against the age of these computers, which range from 6 to 8 years old. All seem to still run well, though I fear my wife's desktop, her primary computer, could have a catastrophic failure at any time. I have made upgrades in memory, drive space and interfaces over the years, but none have USB3 or gigabit Ethernet capability, or meet the most current Wi-Fi standards. I could pay for OS updates and then wind up having a hardware failure soon after. I could also find my computer hardware, though once verified to be compatible with an older Win10 version, may not be with the latest. It may be more cost effective to follow the next action.

Buy new Win10 computers as replacements. Buying new computers, with Win10 installed, would certainly be the most expensive option, but would provide many benefits over upgrading old hardware. We could have all the most current capabilities and features, with higher performance and (presumably) longer life going forward. OS compatibility issues would be eliminated, though there would no doubt be extra costs for new application software, to replace those programs we used on our old PCs. My wife's poor old desktop is definitely a good candidate for this option, as is possibly my laptop.

To minimize costs, I'd again likely wait until the deadline looms closer, to buy the most current hardware I can within my budget. I'd probably look more intently at the Black Friday deals this year and next, to see if there are good savings at those times. There is always this China trade war issue to consider, however; I'd hate to find that even larger tariffs on foreign-made computers (effectively the only kind available) have doubled their prices as Win7 support ends.

Abandon Windows and convert to another OS. Both of the options explained so far assume we will need to learn to use Win10. Though I despise change for change's sake, I'm sure I can adapt to Win10 and the new programs that will go with it. I've not used my Win10 incarnation of my chameleon computer very much, though, as I prefer to stay with the more familiar Win7. That would obviously have to change. Getting my wife comfortable with Win10 may be another story, however, as she has a sometimes-tense relationship with Win7 now. Still, she has figured out her iPhone with absolutely no help from me (being an Android advocate), so the transition for her may not be as bad as I might imagine.

Still, there would be an OS change, and so this might be an opportunity to consider other possible

changes. While staying with Windows, which is likely to remain the overwhelming favorite PC OS, will facilitate compatibility with computer use required in employment for both of us, there are other PC operating systems to consider. We could consider a Mac, but my exposure to Apple products so far indicates I don't think the way their developers do. My wife might make this transition better than I (could it be that men are from Mars / Google / Microsoft, and women are from Venus / Apple?). Ultimately, the high cost of Apple product would deter me, as I'm among the most value-conscious persons you are likely to find. We could switch to Linux, and maybe even continue using our old hardware, but I fear the learning curve would be great, and we would still have work compatibility issues with our existing stuff and the work world. Maybe I could convert one of the old computers to Linux to experiment with (though I could be doing this with my chameleon computer now and don't), but, overall, I'd say this option is not likely as a comprehensive solution.

Abandon Windows PCs and use only non-Windows or mobile devices. There are a lot of people now that don't use personal computers in their personal lives at all; smart phones and tablets fulfill all their computing needs. While there are more and more web-based applications available, and I find I'm online more and using "offline" programs less, I'm not yet ready to give up word processing, spreadsheets, photo editing, tax filing and other more PC-centric activities to the small screens (and lower performance) of phones and tablets. It might be possible, but as I get older, I want bigger screens, not smaller. My smart phone and my Chromebook have definitely taken over a growing percentage of my computing time, but I really can't see them increasing to all the time. Maybe some new neural implant and projection display technologies will change that one day, but not by 2020. For better or worse, I feel we need to be tied to that majority of PC users that, again for better or worse, support Microsoft (at least through Windows).

Note that "**Continue using Win7 on the internet**" is not one of the options I'm considering for after its security support ends. It might be safe for a short time, but eventually uncorrected issues found by hackers in Win7 will make it too vulnerable. Since we use these computers to access our online financial accounts, the risk is just too great.

It is likely I will in any case keep at least one Win7 computer available to run off the network, especially if I find, as I did with XP, that some programs and interfaces for other devices are not easily available on other computing devices or with other operating systems. I have handheld GPS receivers that I can only connect to through my XP machine. I have a lot of admittedly older software for things like mapping, photo editing and scanning that is either not available, not available without significant cost or that I simply prefer on my old XP computer. I'll likely find similar issues going from Win7 to Win10 or to other operating systems and computing devices.

As my year of living dangerously comes to an end and 1/14/20 approaches, I hope I will have determined and perhaps implemented a course of action to allow my wife and I to safely continue the computing activities we need to perform. If not, 2020 might really be dangerous.

Interesting Internet Finds for January

By Steve Costello
scostello (at) sefcug.com

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

The following are some more items I found interesting during December 2018

The Real-World Guide to Using Google Drive

<https://infolific.com/technology/software-worth-using/complete-guide-to-google-drive/>

If you have a Chromebook you will be working more with Google Drive, so check out this post.

How Does Bluetooth Work, and Why Is It So Terrible?

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/how-does-bluetooth-work/>

Bluetooth is everywhere. Ever wonder how it works, or why it is so bad sometimes? This post answers both of those.

Is Your Charging Cable Killing Your Phone?

https://askbobrankin.com/is_your_charging_cable_killing_your_phone.html

Until USB-C becomes standard there is a lot to be aware of in this post.

4K HDMI Cables: How To Cut Through The Marketing Lingo And Figure Out What You Actually Need

<https://www.techhive.com/article/3330376/gaming-gear/do-i-need-a-4k-hdmi-cable.html>

Get

 a new 4K TV over the holidays? If so, check out this post before getting new HDMI cables.

What Is Wi-Fi 6 and Do You Need a New Router?

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/what-is-wifi-6/>

Have you heard about Wi-Fi 6 but want to know more? If your answer is yes this MakeUseOf post explains a lot.

Turning Your Mouse into a Laser Pointer

<https://www.howtogeek.com/398980/turn-your-mouse-into-a-laser-pointer-in-powerpoint/>

I wish I had known about this the last time I forgot my laser pointer. If you do PowerPoint presentations, keep this information handy, in case you forget yours.

Simple Questions: What Is OLED? What Does OLED Mean?

<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/what-is-oled-what-does-it-mean>

Do you know what OLED is? If not read this post from Digital Citizen. It explains what OLED is, as well as its advantages and disadvantages.

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Tips for Getting New Apps

By Jim Cerny, Forum Leader, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
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Are you still playing around with your new iPhone or iPad, and thinking you would like to explore and download some new apps to enjoy? Well, don't be shy about doing it, it is easy and fun. Don't forget to DELETE any app you do not like or use. That's easy too. So here are my tips for helping you decide what apps to download and try:

Touch the “App Store” app on your device (it looks like a big uppercase “A” made out of white popsicle sticks). It will open and you will see on your screen some apps and news that Apple has decided you need to see. But look at the bottom of your screen and you will see “Today,” “Games,” “Apps,” “Updates,” and “Search.” I like to begin by touching “Search” and entering some words to search for an app I may think I would want. I can put in any search words I want, such as “golf game,” “solitaire,” “spreadsheets,” “blackjack,” or anything else. And presto, you will see many apps (scroll down) that are available for you to download. Of course you can look through the other options such as “Games” or “Apps,” but I really find the “Search” to be the most helpful.

So now what? How do you decide what app to download? Well, first scroll down (or swipe right) to look at the

sample screen shots to see what the app will look like on your device. Sometimes the first screen shot is a video. At the top of each app article, to the right of the title, will be an oval box that will say: “GET” (touch this to download the app), “OPEN” (which means you already have this app on your device and you can open it here if you want), a “cloud” symbol (which means you have already downloaded this app but it is NOT on the device you are using), or a price, such as “\$4.95” (which indicates the price of the app that will be billed to your Apple account if you download it). Some apps have a “free” or “lite” version for you to download to try their product and then you can buy the full app (hopefully with no advertising) for a price later.

After looking at the screen shots, look at the “Ratings & Reviews” to see how many people rated the app and their average rating. You will see a bar graph displaying the numbers for each star category. Beware of an app rated very high but only has a small number of people rating it! You need a few hundred people to get a good impression. Finally, read the comments submitted by some people who rated the app. You will get a good idea if their rating or comment would be important to you. For example, some people may say the app “locked up” their iPhone but you would only be using the app on your iPad – so that issue may not be a problem for you. This information will help you decide if you want to give the app a try – and if it is free, why not?

Once you have downloaded an app, it is yours forever. If you delete it from your device it will still be yours in the cloud waiting for you should you ever want it again. And all your apps will have to be updated eventually to fix bugs (or add new ads). I believe you can get a refund from Apple for an app (or music or movie) you have purchased that you don’t like – you can find out how to do this on the internet and it does not look like it is too difficult. But when most apps are under five dollars, I bet most people don’t bother.

There are very few apps I have purchased, almost all of them are free. Of course, I get ads but I guess I expect that now. It is also time to carefully review your apps (and your contact list while you are at it) to delete and clean out all those not needed anymore. Hey, it’s easier than cleaning out your garage! I recommend it.