



Midland Michigan

BITS AND BYTES

APRIL 2021

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ARTICLE INDEX

APCUG Virtual Technology Conference — May 1, 2021 — Page 2

Loocid anti-fog wipes for glasses — Page 3

By John Krout, Writer/Presenter, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

QR Codes and More — Page 5

By John Krout, Writer/Presenter, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

React 7-In-1 Vehicle Emergency Multi-Tool — Page 7

by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society

Roybi Robot — Page 8

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society

Searching for Solutions to Computer Problems — Page 9

Tom Burt, Vice-President — Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

'Tis the Season for Fraudulent Email — Page 11

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician

Zoom Etiquette — Tips for Having Better Meetings - Page 13

By Tom Burt, Vice-President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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**GENERAL CLUB MEETING
VIA ZOOM**

**Wednesday, April 28, 2021
6:00 P.M.**

APCUG's May 1, 2021 Virtual Technology Conference (VTC)

Click here to register-- <https://forms.gle/4Mn1tz5pR8efWFYN6>

Registration closes at 11:30 pm on Friday, April 30 PT

More information and bios: <https://apcug2.org/apcug-2021-spring-vtc/>

You do not need a Zoom account to attend the VTC. Please update to the latest version of Zoom before attending the conference. www.zoom.us/download

Unlike the Wednesday Workshops, you do not have access to the microphone. Please ask your questions in the Chatbox; the moderators (Bill James, Track 1 and John Kennedy, Track 2) will ask the questions. If there isn't time for all of the questions to be answered, Judy will send them to the speaker and forward the answers to those who put their **first and last name** (only) into the Chatbox for each presentation they attend.

If there are any handouts for a presentation, those who have added their names to the Chatbox will receive them as well as the YouTube link to the presentation.

Presentation #1 — Track 1

9am PT – 10am MT – 11am CT – 12pm ET

Learn all about a VPN (Virtual Private Network)

Don Arrowsmith, President

Philadelphia Area Computer Society

What it is; Why you would want one; How you can get one; and How to use one. You can run your own for free if you have the right router, network file server, or even a Raspberry Pi. There will be detailed information about setting up a VPN on a router with that feature available.

Presentation #1 — Track 2

9am PT – 10am MT – 11am CT – 12pm ET

Sharan Kalwani, President

SouthEastern Michigan Computer Organization

The Audio in Audacity!

Audacity is a versatile program that can be used to record audio, edit sound files, and convert them to various formats. Audacity is Open Source; it is free. It is readily available to the public for download. This tutorial is designed to introduce new users to the basic features of the program.

Avidemux - open-source software for non-linear video editing

Avidemux is a very simple basic video editing tool. Of course, it is free and fun to use. This tutorial on Avidemux will introduce beginners to use this to cut, join, split, rotate videos as well as add filters.

Both of these programs are free cross-platform apps: Linux, BSD, Mac OS X, and Microsoft Windows.

Presentation #2 — Track 1

10am PT – 11am MT – 12pm CT – 1pm ET

Using the Control Center on your iPad

Brooke Thomas, President

Central Kentucky Computer Society

Brooke will demonstrate where the iPad Control Center is, how to customize it, and an overview of the different controls available within the Control Center.

Presentation #2 — Track 2
10am PT – 11am MT – 12pm ET – 1pm ET

Your Online Privacy
Joe Kissell, Author and Publisher
Take Control Books

Nowadays, it can be difficult to complete ordinary activities without placing our personal data online, but having our data online puts us at risk for theft, embarrassment, and all manner of trouble. Joe gives practical advice that we need to handle common online privacy problems and to develop a sensible online privacy strategy customized for our needs.

Presentation #3 — Track 1
11am PT – 12pm MT – 1pm CT – 2pm ET

Music in the Car
Ray Baxter, President
Payson Meetup Club

Remember when it was so "cool" to have a push-button AM radio in the car? This presentation will review how to utilize your existing Compact Disc collection, now that many new vehicles no longer have a CD player, by streaming from an online service, using Bluetooth, flash drives, smartphones, etc.

Presentation #3 — Track 2
11am PT – 12pm MT – 1pm CT – 2pm ET

Word Tips and Tricks
Jerry Heaton, Member
Central Kentucky Computer Society

During this presentation, you will be amazed at the available tools in the current version of Word. These handy tools will enhance your word processing experience. Speech recognition and editing assistance will also be covered.

Loocid anti-fog wipes for glasses

While wearing a PPE mask, keep your glasses fog-free when you cannot carry a Rainx bottle

By John Krout, Writer/Presenter, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
www.patacs.org — [krout75 \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:krout75@yahoo.com)

A few months ago I published an article about my use of the commercial RainX product as a way to minimize fogging of glasses when wearing a PPE mask.

There is at least one situation, airplane flights, where the mask use can last hours and no bottles of fluid can be brought aboard by passengers.

More commonly, if you forget to treat your glasses with RainX before leaving home, having an alternative in the car would be useful.

My daughter, who wears glasses, has traveled two times to the DC area from her home in Georgia during September and November 2020. She has bought tickets for a third trip in December 2020. She visits not only her immediate family but also her in-laws in Northern Virginia, along with her 16-month-old son.

So what can be done?

I found an answer on Amazon. Several firms sell individually packaged anti-fog wipes. I tried one brand that was especially highly rated. The brand is **Loocid**, spelled with two-letter Os, and the wipes are not what I would call inexpensive. The price ranges from 45 cents to 60 cents per wipe, depending on how many are purchased.

You can see the 30 packet box of Loocid packets in Illustration 1. Although the actual label depicts the two Os as a pair of glasses, you can find the product by using the name Loocid in the Amazon search field.

I found myself in the parking lot of a grocery store recently. I realized I had not applied RainX at home. So I pulled out a Loocid wipe packet, opened it, and got out the wipe. I wiped the inside of both lenses of my glasses, put on the PPE mask, and got out of the car.

The glasses fogged up *immediately*, before I was fully out of the car, possibly due to winter temperature in the parking lot. So I grabbed the same wipe and used the opposite side of the wipe to wipe the inside of my glasses again.



After that generous treatment, my glasses were fog-free not only for 20 minutes at that grocery store but also for another 30 minutes in another grocery store after roughly 15 minutes of car travel sans mask between the two stores.

The advantage of packets is that The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) will allow those to be carried by passengers.

I have been using Zeiss brand lens cleaner wipes to clean my camera lenses since late December 2019, because TSA will not let me carry my little bottle of lens cleaner fluid aboard an aircraft. I believe TSA would also object to a bottle of RainX.

TSA let me carry the Zeiss packets aboard when I last traveled by air in December, January, and February 2020. Therefore, I believe that TSA allows Loocid packets to be carried also.

If you travel by air during the pandemic, add up the time to be spent in airports, plus the flight time. You want your glasses to be fog-free for hours. Even if the initial treatment wears off, you can re-apply it when needed.

My only caveat about the Loocid packet is to apply each packet generously. Scrub scrub scrub.

I have an update on RainX. The company seems to have discontinued the smallest size of their interior glass anti-fog product. However, the next larger size of the product is still available, and on Amazon costs less per ounce of fluid than the smallest size.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about uses of personal computer tech since the early 1980s. He is a frequent contributor to PATACS Posts, the newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society, and occasionally provides demos on various tech topics at PATACS meetings. He lives in Arlington Virginia with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats.

QR Codes and More

Barcodes containing useful info now show up in videos and presentations. Learn how to use those barcodes.

By John Krout, Writer/Presenter, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
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A QR code is a square 2-dimensional barcode that provides useful info such as a web page address (URL). QR codes can also contain email addresses, contact info, and just about any text. It is not the only square barcode out there. QR codes can be recognized by the square target blocks in the top two and bottom left corners.

Illustration 1 shows a QR code example. This particular QR code provides a web page address for a site where short user-created videos can be downloaded for free. You have probably seen square QR code barcodes many other times in recent years.

My presentations for PATACS frequently include web page addresses. In this pandemic era of virtual meetings, I have decided to include not only the actual URL but also the QR code containing the URL.



Illustration 1: pexels.com/video

Anyone in the audience who wants to copy the URL from the presentation immediately can do so simply by using their smartphone. Chances are that you won't even need to install a barcode reader app on your phone. In recent iPhones and Android 10 phones, the camera app has been augmented to act as a QR code reader.

I tried my Samsung Galaxy S10 camera app. I pointed it at the computer screen where a QR code was visible in one corner of a presentation. The camera app immediately displayed the web page URL contained in the QR code, as you can see in **Illustration 2**.

I did not even have to snap a photo of the QR code. The app gave me the option of tapping the address to open that web page. Opening the web page is ideal for quickly saving the URL for later bookmarking.

Many retailers post QR codes enabling you to learn more about products.

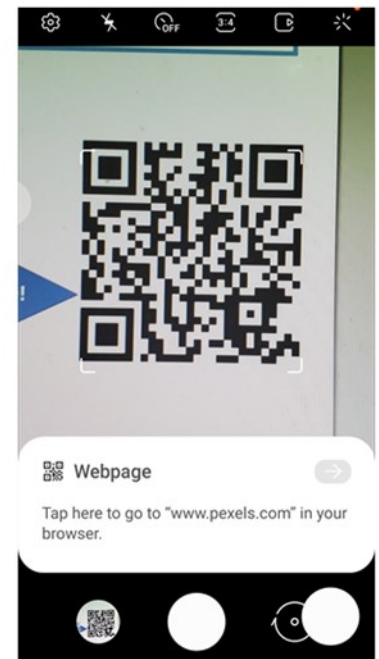


Illustration 2: Android 10 camera app reading QR code

MUNZEES

There is an outdoor game based on QR codes printed on small stickers posted outdoors. The name of the game is Munzees. I have not tried the game, though I know a few of my geocaching friends also play Munzees, and occasionally I see the small Munzees QR code stickers outdoors. Any small QR code in a place where it does not seem to identify any product or other specific object is quite possibly a Munzees QR code.

The Munzees game has its own website, www.playmunzee.com, and its own free phone app for communicating found Munzee QR codes to the website. That URL is encoded in **Illustration 3**.



Illustration 3: Play Munzee URL

CREATING QR CODES

I found that my Galaxy 10 Contacts app will generate a QR code for any record in my Contacts list. When I create a contact QR code, it appears on the phone screen. At that point, I can save the QR code as a graphics image file, or attach it to an email or a text message.

There is a website, <https://www.qrcode-monkey.com/>, which creates QR codes containing the info you provide. It provides some interesting features, such as multi-color QR codes and placement of a recognizable logo in a QR code. You can download, save, print, and share any QR code you generate on that site. The site provides this service for free. That URL is encoded in **Illustration 4**.



Illustration 4: QR code monkey URL

OTHER TYPES OF BARCODES

There are several types of barcodes in wide use.

The **Uniform Product Code** (UPC) barcode on products, which enables rapid checkout and helps the retailer manage inventory, encodes information in several parallel vertical bars. That is an example of a 1-dimensional (1D) barcode. There are phone apps designed to scan UPC codes and tell you if the same product can be found for a lower price elsewhere.

If you have a driver's license, it contains both a 1D barcode and a 2-dimensional (2D) barcode. That 2D barcode is a type called PDF-417, and it includes all the text info on your license as well as some other info identifying your license record in the Virginia computer system. The **American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators** (AAMVA) created a standard for contents of the driver's license 2D barcode and updates the standard every few years. That standard is available online as a PDF document. You can read the field definitions in section D.12.5 of the PDF posted at the following URL, which is encoded in **Illustration 5**.



Illustration 5: AAMVA card standard URL

<https://www.aamva.org/aamva2020dlidcarddesignstandard/> (pdf file)

The 2D barcode on the driver's license is now scanned by Safeway at checkout if you buy alcohol. That means the Safeway computer system may capture a great deal of info other than your date of birth. Does the company save all that additional info about you? Doing so centrally would use up a gigantic amount of storage space. Possibly the stores store the info locally, on a store server. That localized info could be valuable if a company store is audited by Virginia ABC for underage sales.

Barcodes also typically show up on shipment box labels.

United Parcel Service uses a 1D barcode type for machine-readable package tracking numbers. If you have received UPS parcels in person, you have probably seen the UPS driver use a barcode scanner to scan the tracking number barcode and confirm the date and time of delivery of the parcel.

While the phone camera apps will read only QR codes, other free apps can be used to read a variety of barcodes. I downloaded one Android app with the rather generic name Barcode Scanner to read the Virginia driver's license barcode. The same app reads QR codes, UPC codes, PDF-417 codes, CODE 39 (1D barcode type, which appeared above the address in correspondence I received from the Arlington County Government), Data Matrix (another square 2D barcode type), and some other types. I used that app to read the PDF-417 barcode on my Virginia driver's license.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. Until April 2020 he was a software documentation writer, contracted to support a major federal government computer system. Now he lives on his IRA and writes whatever he wants to. He resides in Arlington Virginia with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats.

React 7-In-1 Vehicle Emergency Multi-Tool

by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society
Tucson Computer Society — www.aztcs.org — [actuary110 \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:actuary110@yahoo.com)

Here's a handy gadget! It's multipurpose and has seven uses.



1. It can be used in your car to charge any USB chargeable device. You plug it into your car's power outlet. The enclosed battery will charge if needed and any of our additional devices that you connect to it will charge as well. There is a battery charge indicator to tell you how much charge is available.
2. It can be used away from your car as a charger for any USB chargeable device
3. It is a flashlight. A button on the side of the React turns on the light. Further presses cycle through low and high options. A long press turns it off.
4. Using the side button also gives you access to a red flashing light.
5. A button on the other side of the React turns on the S.O.S alarm.
6. React includes a seat belt cutter, available for emergency use. The blade is protected so it won't slice your fingers, but it is strong enough to slice a seat belt.
7. React can also be used to break window glass in an emergency. It should not be used to break laminated, windshield, or pane glass.

The manufacturer recommends that the tool be replaced after using either the glass breaker or the seat belt cutter.

The tool comes with a cable that can be used for charging the internal battery. The unit also comes with a User Manual.

The unit has a one-year limited warranty.

This is a very handy tool to keep in your car for use when needed.

React by LimitlessInnovations
Price \$40

<https://limitlessinnovations.com/collections/usb-chargers/products/react-7-in-1-vehicle-emergency-multi-tool-powered-by-chargehub>

Roybi Robot

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society
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This is more than just a child's toy, although it is designed to be for a child.

In fact, it is an educational companion powered by AI (artificial intelligence).

It tutors young children in languages, with over 500 lessons, 70 categories and a 70,000 word vocabulary in Chinese and English.



In the company's words, "Through play, children can learn a second language, practice language arts, explore scientific subjects and develop communication and analytical thinking skills."

The categories include sessions in technology, math, science and language arts. Here are some of them:

- Alphabet
- Continents
- Places
- Math

- Senses
- Science
- Biology
- Nouns

The categories and content are updated from time to time.

The robot includes voice recognition (understands your child’s responses), has a 1080p camera, has a durable body to withstand drops, is made with material that is safe for children, and has an 8 hour battery.

It is powered by connection to a USB port by the included cable.

Mandarin-Chinese and English are currently supported, but French, Spanish, German, and Russian versions are being planned.

Ages 2-8 are recommended for English use, but for learning a new language, there is no age limit.

An Android app is available for parent use for scheduling or directed learning.

Roybi Robot — Price \$300, currently \$150 (4/3/21)

<https://roybirobot.com/>

Searching for Solutions to Computer Problems

Tom Burt, Vice-President — Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

<https://www/scscc/club> — tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

A while back, I was diligently working on the weekly meal plan and shopping list for our happy household. I do this by copying the previous week’s plan and editing it while reviewing the online versions of the local supermarket weekly ads. My meal plan Word document has two columns: one for the menus and one for the shopping list. Here’s a screenshot ...

| MENUS: | | GROCERY SHOPPING LIST: | | | |
|--|--|---|---|---|-------------------------|
| Friday 01/22/21 | PGA Chicken breasts tikka-masala w onion, coconut milk, cooked lentils, spices on rice, salad | Meat: NY Steak b ns 5 lb Fri Bacon 24oz 5 Fri Beef roasts b ns 3.47 lb Beef chuck b ns 2.99 lb Ham steak 2.99 lb | St Al Al Al Sm Sm | Dairy / Deli: Milk? Eggs AA Lrg 18 Yoghurt – Yoplait .49 ea | St Al |
| Saturday 01/23/21 | PGA Split pea soup w ham, carrots, onion, celery, parsley, fruit | Produce: Bananas Grapes Large Avocados Mushrooms Salad mix? Onions? Tomatoes? Lemon(s) Strawberries 1.67 lb | St Sm | Canned / Bottled: Sodas? Veggies & fruit Sauerkraut Red cabbage? | St |
| Sunday 01/24/21 | NFL, PGA, David Beef stew, onions, celery, carrots, mushrooms, lima beans, flour, wine on mashed potatoes, chips & guac, ice cream | Dry / Frozen / Misc.: Split peas? | St | Costco: Gas Bread Nuts Bagels | St |
| Monday 01/25/21 | Grilled tuna & cheese melts, veggie munchies | | | | |
| Tuesday 01/26/21 | KK 8:30 AM Leftover pea soup, fruit | | | | |
| Wednesday 01/27/21 | Carry-in (EOT) Fish & chips? | | | | |
| Thursday 01/28/21 | Grilled steak, tater tots, cole slaw, fruit, sauteed mushrooms | | | | |
| Beef: steak (3), hamburger (9), meatballs (1), chuck (2) Chicken: breasts (5), thighs (2), legs (1); whole (0); Turkey (1) Pork: chops (3), Filets (3), ribs (0), roast (0); Lamb: ground (0) Other: sausage (2), shrimp (2), pepperoni (2), ham steak (1) Canned: salmon (6), tuna (6), spam (6) | | | | | |

The exact details don't matter. I use Word tables for the two columns. This document has worked fine for several years.

I was working on it last week and, suddenly, when I tried to place the Word cursor at a location within the table so that I could type in some changes, the cursor simply could not be placed anywhere inside either table. All the tools in the ribbon were clickable. I saved and closed the document and Word. When I reopened the document, the cursor worked properly for a bit until I clicked something outside the table; then once again I couldn't place it anywhere inside the table. By repeatedly closing the document and reopening it, I was able to finish the meal plan, print it, and hand it off to Mrs. Burt, so she could plan out her weekly shopping expedition. However, this was not going to be viable long term.

Later that day, I decided to search the web to see if others had experienced this problem. I used Google and entered **word 365 won't accept cursor in table** as my search word set. The search produced 600,000 hits! I browsed through the first page of search results and the 5th item down from the top was the following:

[www.datanumen.com > blogs > 6-ways-resolve-issue-u...](#) ▾

6 Ways to Resolve the Issue when Unable to Input Anything ...

Apr 24, 2020 – There are situations when we **receive** a **Word** document from others, but only to find that we are unable to enter either text or data into **Word tables**. ... Meanwhile, when you put **cursor** in a cell, it display abnormally, such as ...

You've visited this page 2 times. Last visit: 1/25/21

People also search for

[can't type in table in word](#)

[can't select text in word table](#)

[why can't i type in column in word](#)

[how do i enable typing in excel?](#)

[can't type in excel 2007](#)

[word cannot select text in table](#)



This article included a suggestion that if I had set **explicit row heights** in the table (I had), that I remove those row height settings. I tried that and "voila!", the problem with placing the cursor went away. I then reset the row heights in the tables to their former values and saved the document. After this, I had no trouble placing the cursor anywhere on either table.

So, it appears that my Meal Plan spreadsheet in some subtle way had become corrupt or triggered some latent bug in MS Word. The "fix" (really a hack) worked, so I'm happy. However, I would never have thought to try that fix because that document had worked fine for years.

The moral of this story is that, when you encounter bizarre behavior in Windows, Office, or other applications, don't beat yourself up. Once you've tried the simple, obvious things without success, it's time to fire up your favorite search engine (Google, Bing, DuckDuckGo, ...) and see what suggestions others might have to offer.

The key to success is in the phrasing of your search terms. If an error message is popping up, use that error code as one of your search terms. Be as specific as you can to narrow your search results to ones likely to be related to your problem. Include the name and possibly the version of the program as a search term. If you don't get an answer with one set of search terms, try varying the terms with synonyms. Try being a bit more (or less) specific. And don't give up after reviewing the first page of results; sometimes the real gems are further down in the result list.

'Tis the Season for Fraudulent Email

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club — <https://www.scsccl.com> — dkretch (at) gmail.com

You have probably already received emails that appear to come from a bank or other online service

“If you can’t spot a phishing email, you could be the next victim.”

requesting that you verify account credentials. You might have been asked to provide personal information including account and credit card numbers and passwords. This is a standard **phishing** technique; oddly, the sender is asking for information they should already have.

Unfortunately, during the COVID-19 pandemic, we’ve seen once again that phishing lures are mutating and they’re often hard to recognize.

Phishing is a form of social engineering email attack in which the sender tries to gain access to login credentials, to get confidential information, or to deliver a virus. This is accomplished by tricking humans like you and me.

Scammers know there’s a good chance that any message will be scanned for malicious content by the security software of your browser and mail provider. Google, Edge, and most other browsers are pretty decent about stopping known spam, but plenty still gets through. Scammers are constantly changing techniques.

Since the coronavirus pandemic started to unfold, fraudsters have wasted no time in trying to profit from the uncertainty and fear connected to the crisis. In March 2020, when this all started, there was a flood of COVID-19 themed spam, spreading malware, phishing for sensitive information, or offering bogus products.



According to Google, scammers were sending 18 million phishing emails about COVID-19 to Gmail users every day in March, which Google blocked. In April Google was blocking more than 100 million phishing emails a day. And these are just the phishing emails the tech giant blocked. Yet some still appear in your Inbox, and if you can’t spot a phishing email, you could be the next victim.

It is no surprise that the coronavirus pandemic has become a top subject for attackers. The appearance of any crisis brings new circumstances that provide a new environment for cybercriminals to innovate. At the same time, phishing attacks have also benefited from the number of new remote workers.

So how do you recognize suspicious emails?

Look at the sender email address

The sender’s email address is the first place to look. If it looks “funny” or unfamiliar be careful with that message. You can check the email address by hovering your mouse over the ‘from’ address *but don’t click*. Scammers’ email addresses used to be anonymous or had very generic names with many numbers. Sometimes the sender’s email address wouldn’t match the sender’s name or the body of the message.

Receiving emails about a problem with your account from financial institutions with whom you have no relationship is a laughable tell. But if you do get an email claiming to be from your bank, closely review the email address. The email address is sometimes the only sign of a scam, due to how professional the messages look. If you feel the email might be legitimate, check your account the way you would normally access it (not a link provided in the email).



Keep in mind that any big outfit is going to have an eponymous address i.e., you contact PayPal at an address that includes paypal.com.

Be suspicious of attached files or unfamiliar links

Cyber criminals' emails might contain malware or send you to a malicious web destination. If you are at all suspicious, don't click. Legitimate service providers don't send messages requesting you to log in via an embedded link. Also, pay special attention to attached files – once they are opened, these attachments can install malware to give someone else control over your computer. They can then initiate attacks on other computers, including by sending spam (often infected) to every contact in your address book.

Watch for poor English

Poor grammar or words used in an unusual way are possible indications of phishing. Always be suspicious; looking for unusual language and vocabulary, or misspelled words can help prevent you from becoming the next victim. Poor spelling and other grammar mistakes are common with phishing emails that have been translated from other languages. This kind of clue is less common today because the quality of social engineering has improved, so you are likely to receive a more professional presentation. Another thing that can signal an attempted attack is generic greetings such as "Dear recipient" or "Dear friend".

There's sometimes a purpose behind misspellings and poor syntax. Cybercriminals most successfully prey on uneducated computer users, knowing them to be less observant and therefore easier targets.

Is it too good to be true or is it frightening?

Social engineering focuses on two human weaknesses, fear and greed. Does the email promise you a windfall of cash? Does it suggest you inherited a fortune or will be paid a fortune to help someone move money out of their country? Here's an idea: Google for the same message, or a key phrase from that message. (highlight, right-click, search Google). You'll often see that many other people have received the same or similar fraudulent message.



Would-be cybercriminals using social engineering methods are very opportunistic. For example, this time of the year the names of shopping websites such as Amazon and Mayfair are used in sending out millions of emails claiming issues with your account or recent order and asking for personal information. They know consumers are most likely to have made purchases this time of the year.

The scammer wants to panic you into doing something. Don't be threatened by an email. Does the message urgently ask for help or otherwise appeal to your emotions? These are common techniques. Do not respond to an email threatening to suspend your account if you do not answer in a short time.

Homoglyph attacks

Homoglyph attacks rely on replacing characters in addresses with ones that look similar, or are the same, but belong to different alphabets. These attacks are extremely dangerous for users because there is a very limited chance of detecting the trick. Like the attack on PayPal users in which the address contained the "correct letters" taken from our Latin alphabet – with two exceptions. The attackers replaced both instances of the letter P with a "P" look-alike letter, but from a different alphabet. This "P" look-alike letter was taken from the Russian alphabet, where it is equivalent to the letter R. With this kind of attack, you are dependent on the other clues discussed in this article to protect yourself.

Zoom Etiquette

Tips for Having Better Meetings

By Tom Burt, Vice-President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
www.scscclub.com — tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

This month's article will explore Zoom etiquette, which has a big impact on how successful Zoom web conferences are. There are many types of Zoom sessions from informal small discussions to more formal business or committee meetings to educational seminars. Zoom is also used extensively for "remote learning" in K-12 and higher education. Etiquette rules will vary somewhat for each scenario.

Part of the appeal of Zoom is that you can attend a meeting without commuting – just fire up your webcam, speakers, and microphone, click the hyperlink to join the meeting, and *shazam*, you're *there*. Actually, your electronic effigy is there ... and all the other attendees are [virtually] in *your* home, looking through your camera at you and whatever else is in your house.

A Google search for Zoom etiquette yielded 23 million hits – an indicator of how prevalent Zoom has become as an alternative to "in-person" meetings. Here are two links to representative articles if you want to dig in a bit more:

<https://www.andrewmacarthy.com/andrew-macarthy-social-media/zoom-etiquette-tips-great-video-calls-meetings>

<https://blogs.otago.ac.nz/zoom/zoom-etiquette-attendee/>

Here are some things you can do to be more friendly to other Zoom meeting attendees.

Invest in Good Gear

When participating in a meeting, your co-attendees will appreciate being able to see and hear you clearly. For a desktop, a quality USB 2 web camera/microphone combo can be had on Amazon.com for under \$40. The best is to get one with 1080P (HD) resolution. The webcam/microphone mounts on top of your desktop monitor. Most modern laptops have a webcam and microphone built-in, though often not capable of 1080P resolution.

Test and Configure Your Gear

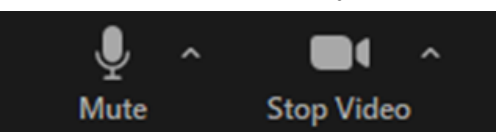
It's no fun for meeting attendees to wait around while newbies try to learn how to do basic things in Zoom (like changing view, turning the mic and camera off and on, posting a chat, setting a background). In your web browser, go to <https://zoom.us/test> and join the test meeting. This will let you download the Zoom client software, check out your camera and microphone settings, configure your background and confirm how you will look and sound to others during a Zoom session.

I See (and Hear) You / You See (and Hear) Me

Be mindful that, when your webcam and microphone are enabled, the other meeting attendees can see and hear you. This might seem obvious, but it's easy to forget that you're on camera. Also, the Zoom app has two display modes: Gallery (which shows a thumbnail image of each attendee in a grid on the screen) and Speaker, which shows a full-screen view of whoever is currently speaking. Each Zoom session attendee can choose which view they want to see.

If you sneeze, burp, cough or make other vulgar noises, or if your phone rings, Zoom may suddenly display your face on the speaker view of someone else's display. Even in Gallery view, Zoom displays a yellow box around the current speaker's thumbnail image.

It's wise to keep your microphone muted except when you explicitly want to speak. Then press and hold the **Spacebar** to unmute your microphone only while you're speaking. When finished, release the



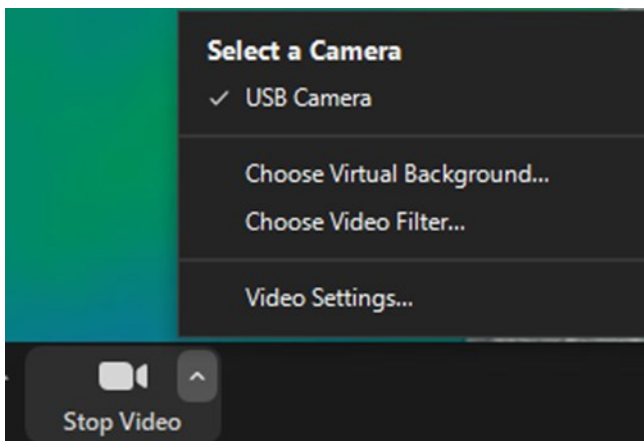
Spacebar again to return to mute mode. You can also toggle between muted and unmuted by pressing the **Alt+A** keys. Or you can click the microphone icon at the lower left of the Zoom window to toggle between muted and unmuted.

You can also toggle the video off and on by clicking the camera icon at the lower left of the Zoom window. It's a good idea to do this if you're leaving the room temporarily or even if you just need to blow your nose or perhaps if someone comes into the room and needs some momentary attention.

If possible, Use a Virtual Background

Zoom's client software is quite clever at distinguishing your head and torso in the overall video image the web camera is seeing. How well it does this depends on the processing power of your computer's video chip along with the Zoom software. This allows you to have zoom superimpose your head and torso onto a background image or looping short video clip that you can select. The background replaces whatever is actually behind you.

The idea is that you don't want to share your messy computer room with the rest of the attendees. The virtual background hides that; it will even ignore another person in the room if they're a few feet away. This allows my wife to work at her computer without being on camera while I'm in a Zoom meeting.



Zoom has a small set of default backgrounds and you can add images of your own to the set. To enable and choose a virtual background, click the ^ chevron on the camera icon to open a popup menu. Then click either "Choose Virtual Background" (for a still image) or "Choose Video Filter" (for a looping video clip). You can add new background images by clicking the + icon and then selecting one or more image files stored on your computer's hard drive.

Identify Yourself

Remember to click the 3 dots at the upper right of your on-screen thumbnail and rename your session so it displays your name instead of your email address. Zoom should remember this setting for future sessions.

Dress for Success

Especially for formal / business meetings, put on business casual attire. This is especially true if you're working from home.

Avoid Eating on Camera

Drinking beverages is acceptable but avoid noisy slurping unless your mic is muted. As noted above, if you make noises, you may suddenly be displayed full screen to the other attendees. If you want to chow down during the meeting unless it's scheduled "virtual lunch or dinner" turn your webcam off while eating.

In Larger Meetings, Raise Your Hand or Use Chat

As the number of attendees grows, it gets harder to manage who has the virtual floor. In larger meetings, it's polite to raise your hand and be recognized before speaking out. The chat icon is in the bottom center of the Zoom window. Click it to open a small chat window where you can type a question or comment to the entire group or specific attendees. This is especially effective for large meetings, where the thumbnails of attendees can't all fit on the screen at one time.

For Business Meetings, Please Exclude Fido, Fluffy, and the [Grand]Kids

Pets and grandkids can be disruptive and distracting to you and to others attending a Zoom session, particularly one whose focus is business issues. If you can, close the door to the room where you are connecting to Zoom. If that's not possible, be ready to turn off the camera and mute the microphone.

Keep it PG-Rated – Recording Alerts

Zoom meetings are often being recorded. Speak and act accordingly. Particularly at business meetings or formal social meetings, civility and decorum are the order of the day. Also, meeting hosts, if recording, should let their attendees know the meeting is being recorded.

Meeting Hosts / Presenters – Managing Your Attendees

If you are hosting a Zoom meeting (i.e. you logged into your Zoom account, set up, and started a meeting), you have some additional things you can do to manage your attendees.

Take some time beforehand to get used to these extra features you can use to control things like muting other attendees' microphones, screen sharing, whether there's a waiting room for your meeting, the initial state of attendees' microphones (e.g. muted) and possibly blocking access after the meeting has begun.

I hope this helps you have better Zoom experiences in the future.
