



*Midland Michigan*

# BITS AND BYTES

JANUARY 2022

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

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## **GENERAL CLUB MEETING VIA ZOOM**

**Wednesday, January 26, 2022  
6:00 P.M.**

## Create a 2022 Calendar

By John Krout, Presenter & Newsletter Contributor  
Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society — <https://www.patacs.org>  
jkrou.apcug.presenter (at) gmail.com

### INTRODUCTION

As I did for 2021, I have posted 2022 calendar files for downloading. The files are available for LibreOffice Impress and PowerPoint 365. You can add your photos and calendar events, change fonts, and generally customize as you like.

If you are not familiar with LibreOffice, it is a suite of office productivity apps that provide roughly the same functionality as Microsoft Office and is available for free downloading and use. Try it by downloading for Windows, Macintosh, and Linux at <https://www.libreoffice.org/>. If you like LibreOffice, then you can stop paying those Microsoft Office subscription fees.

There are two different calendar layouts. Initially, I prepared calendars for my use in a **full-page calendar layout**: photos for a month occupy one full 8.5×11-inch page, and the calendar for the month occupies another full page. The full-page layout calendar pages would be printed in Landscape orientation, and the photo(s) for February would be printed on the back of the calendar page for January.

I use comb binding: I bought a machine to punch binding holes in each page and insert a cylindrical plastic comb in those holes. In **illustration 1**, you can see an example calendar with the white cylindrical comb teeth inserted in holes punched in the paper.

Starting in 2021, I also prepared calendar files in a **compact layout**; each calendar for the month occupies the lower half of an 8.5×11-inch page, and the photos occupy the top half of the same page. In addition, the Compact layout calendar pages would be printed in Portrait orientation.

If the difference between the two calendar formats is not clear to you, download each calendar file for your software and compare them.

The advantage of the compact format is savings in terms of paper and ink used. Typically, you would bind the compact format calendar pages at the top.

In each of the files, the area for photos is left blank. Additionally, each calendar month page is a Table, and each day is a cell in the Table. In each day-cell, you can enter event info for birthdays, anniversaries, and so forth. I have already added US Federal holidays.

### HERE ARE THE HYPERLINKS TO THE 2022 CALENDAR FILES

[2022 PowerPoint 365 full-page calendar](#)

[2022 PowerPoint 365 compact calendar](#)

[2022 Impress full-page calendar](#)

[2022 Impress compact calendar](#)

I have already prepared the 2023 calendar files. I will remove the 2022 files at some point in 2023 and post the 2023 files. Therefore, the hyperlinks for the 2023 files will **not** be the same ones that are shown above. I will announce those hyperlinks in a later article.

### GLOSSY PAPER AVAILABILITY

I have been printing calendars on my HP DeskJet 7110 printer for the past few years using HP 2-sided glossy brochure/flyer paper. When I last bought that paper in 2019, the cost was about 22 cents per sheet.

The HP product ID is Q1987A. I still have about half of a package of that paper on hand, with the wrapper showing that product ID.

Since I used most of my stock of that paper when I printed my 2021 calendar last year, and the remaining stock is not enough for my annual calendar production, I decided to go shopping online. Amazon sells HP 2-sided glossy brochure/flyer paper for \$39.61/150 sheet pack: 26 cents per sheet. Staples brand is \$33.98/150 sheet pack.

Note: for calendar printing purposes, stay away from any paper described as "trifold." HP, for instance, scores its trifold paper to enable easy folding. The score lines will be visible in any print you make.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been writing about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s. Now he also writes about smartphones, tablets, and digital cameras. He retired in 2021 after working as a federal contractor software engineer for 30+ years and lives in Arlington, VA, with his son, many computers, digital cameras, and too many cats.

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## Accuvoice V100 "Mini" TV Speaker

By George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society  
<https://aztcs.apcug.org> — [actuary110 \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:actuary110@yahoo.com)

I was given an Accuvoice V100 M "Mini" TV Speaker for review. It is a product made by the ZVOX company.

It is an addition for your TV, smart or otherwise. It is smaller than the sound bars I've seen in retail stores, and it fits nicely below my TV, beside my Dish controller.

The kit comes with a remote (yet another one!) with five buttons: power, sound up and down, mute, and Accuvoice. That last button has a remarkable ability to increase voice when a program has both music and voice, and it is hard to hear the voice. In addition, there are six levels of music suppression, so you can get more voice and less music when you want it.



I've never seen this feature on any other device, but it may become more popular as users realize that such a device is available.

The kit also has several connectors. Only one is used, but you must refer to the brief manual to determine which one to use to connect to your TV set. I had some trouble with this and had to call their support to get the job done. Support was extremely helpful and very patient.

The soundbar includes its own speakers, which are a bit better than my TV's speakers.

My Dish remote turns on both my TV and the Dish controller. The ZVOX's remote turns on the soundbar. Two LEDs let you know what the status is. One is blue, which indicates power on, volume down, or mute, and the other is amber, which indicates volume up. When you push Accuvoice, the blue LED shows briefly.

A standard power cord and plug power the soundbar. The sound bar's dimensions are 10" X 2.5" X 3".

The company provides free shipping and a 60-day free home trial. In addition, the product has a one-year parts and labor warranty.

I'm very satisfied with this product. It provides a measure of relief for those situations where the program's voice is nearly unintelligible because of the overriding music or other background sound.

ACCUVOICE AV100 "MINI" TV SPEAKER

<https://zvox.com/collections/accuvoice/products/av100-accuvoice-speaker>

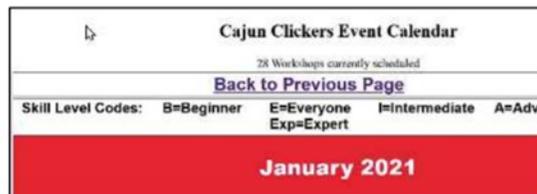
Price \$100

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## Changing the Mouse Pointer

By Cal Esneault, former President of CCCC and leader of many Open-Source Workshops & SIGs  
Cajun Clickers Computer Club  
February 2021 issue, CCCC Computer News — [www.clickers.org](http://www.clickers.org) — office (at) clickers.org

A key item in the Windows desktop graphical interface is the “pointer” (controlled by either a mouse or by a laptop touchpad). Since we use it often, finding it quickly makes our sessions more efficient. The default setting has a white pointer with a black outline. It can take time to locate when on a white background (see screenshot below)



Windows 10 (as with previous versions) gives us an easy way to customize this pointer. From the “Settings” menu, chose the “Ease of Access” item (see below)

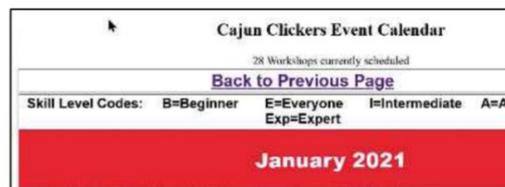


Pointer options are shown below.



You can change the color of the pointer to any other basic color that you desire.

For example, below the cursor has been changed to a black fill (with white outline) over the same screen as seen earlier. This may allow for improved recognition. Other colors can be selected based on your preference (for example, green or yellow).



You can also choose the “inverted” option. This changes the color of the pointer depending upon the color of the background. Thus, better contrast is automatically selected, but you must reconcile your mind-muscle connection to accept the fact that the cursor will not always be the same color.

In the mouse pointer dialog, there is also a slider to change the size of the pointer. By default, it is set to “1”, but you can make it larger (for example, “2” or “3”) using the slider. This improves recognition, but it takes some getting used to having a large object constantly moving on your screen.

As with any personalization setting, results vary based on your perception of what is “better”. Give it a try to see if this helps. There are many other ways to customize the screen, text, taskbar, dark mode, etc. Search the internet to see if you can find some that improve your situation.

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## COMPLETE ROBOCALL DETERRENCE

A two-step approach: prevent the ring and convince the robocaller that your line is disconnected.

Part 1 of a 3-part article series

By John Krout, Presenter & Newsletter Contributor

Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society — <https://www.patacs.org>

jkrou.apcug.presenter (at) gmail.com

### INTRODUCTION

Robocalls are a pervasive problem. The Washington Post reported in April 2019 that the estimated US volume of robocalls in March 2019 was 5.2 billion. That's a billion with a B. Divide 5.2 billion by 31 days, then 24 hours, and then 3,600 seconds. So, the number of robocalls **per second** was about 2,000.

Refusing to answer your smartphone is not enough. Robocaller systems are smarter than that; the systems won't stop calling. And the robocalls often jam your voicemail inbox.

The best deterrence is based on a **thorough understanding of what automated robocall systems do**. Then, we can use robocall system behaviors against the robocaller systems.

First, robocaller systems change their Caller IDs constantly. Often, when placing 1,000 calls, a robocaller system can use as many as 1,000 different Caller IDs. Since most robocall deterrence apps and systems maintain a database of robocall Caller IDs, called a **Blacklist**, such databases always fall behind the robocaller Caller IDs. Second, robocaller systems often are based overseas, making it impossible for the US government to establish criminal jurisdiction. Third, robocaller systems keep a list of phone numbers known to have answered their robocalls in the past, even calls "answered" by a voicemail greeting. The robocall systems continue to call those phone numbers ad nauseum.

### SPOOFING

First, robocall systems use a phone network behavior called **spoofing** to hide their real Caller IDs. That phone network behavior introduced many decades ago had and still has a valuable purpose for large phone sub-systems such as companies, hospitals, and the like.

Spoofing allows a caller to change the Caller ID shown to you when the customer calls you. The idea was to show the organization's main number, often the receptionist, even if the call was placed from technical support or Accounts Payable. This is appropriate for a large organization calling you back so that you can see a consistent and familiar Caller ID rather than one of the dozens or hundreds of phone lines used by the organization. That Caller ID replacement is done inside the phone network, based on commands sent by the caller system.

The bad news is that the **phone network never imposed any security or restraints on Caller ID replacement**.

The key thing to know is that automated robocaller systems often use spoofing to change their Caller IDs and with impunity. Often robocall systems use a spoofed Caller ID, including your area code and even your exchange (the three digits after the area code), to appear to be a call originating locally. The systems might even show a caller ID for a live local phone number. The systems seldom use the same ten-digit number twice to dodge Blacklist enforcement.

### WHITELIST: AN ALTERNATIVE TO BLACKLIST

In the area of robocall deterrence based on Caller ID, the most powerful strategy for you is **Whitelist**, meaning configuring your phone to accept incoming calls only from the numbers in your phone's Contacts.

I have used that method on my phone since roughly September 2019. **Paul Brandus, a Marketwatch.com columnist**, had asked his readers to send in their own personal fixes for robocalls. Brandus published the most interesting reader responses in September 2019.

Brandus did not publish details of Whitelist configuration but did provide enough info to figure out the details on my own.

### WHITELIST BEHAVIOR OUTLINE

The Settings feature you need to find in any iPhone or Android phone is called **Do Not Disturb**. The Settings app may allow you to type in a search term to find the place in the Settings app where you can access the feature. Use Settings search to find Do Not Disturb.

Here's the basic purpose of Do Not Disturb: don't ring the phone. It is not the same as Airplane mode, which disconnects your phone from the cell tower network; when Do Not Disturb is on, the phone stays connected to the cell tower network. You can place calls and read and write emails and text messages while using Do Not Disturb with Whitelist configuration.

And, very importantly, you can configure an **exception** to Do Not Disturb. The exception I have chosen are calls from my Contacts list. That turns this configuration into a Whitelist behavior. Calls from my Contacts will ring my phone. Other calls will not.

Once in a while, I have to turn off Do Not Disturb, for instance, if I expect a call from my state's COVID vaccine management office. Of course, I have no idea what that number might be.

So, yet another feature of Do Not Disturb becomes very valuable. It is possible to configure the phone to **resume Do Not Disturb on a schedule automatically**. For example, I have my phone set to continue Do Not Disturb at 10 PM local time. That way, *I do not have to remember to re-enable Do Not Disturb* after the expected call comes in. Unfortunately, the scheduling system requires you to specify a time range when Do Not Disturb will be in effect.

The complete Android Whitelist configuration steps are captured from my Samsung Galaxy S10 running Android 11 OS. Before Android 11 was available, I was able to do the same setup using Android 10, although the step details differed in some minor ways.

**STEP 1.** Open the Settings app. See **Illustration 1** for the **main screen** of the Settings app. In that screen, tap the **Notifications** choice, which is circled in Illustration 1.

**STEP 2.** The Notifications screen opens, as shown in **Illustration 2**. In that screen, find the **Do Not Disturb** choice, which is circled in Illustration 2.

**STEP 3.** The Do Not Disturb screen opens, as shown in **Illustration 3**. On that screen, tap the phrase **Add Schedule**, which is circled in the illustration.

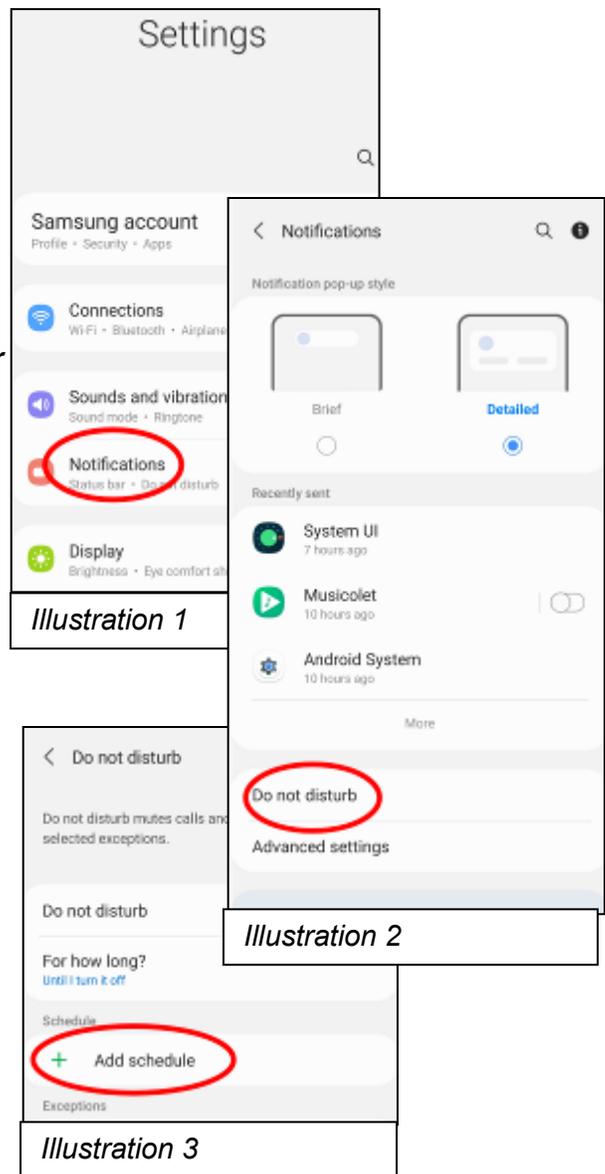


Illustration 1

Illustration 2

Illustration 3

**STEP 4.** The **Schedule screen** opens, as shown in **Illustration 4**. In that screen, make sure all seven days of the week are selected.

**STEP 5.** Then tap the **End Time**, which opens a **time adjustment window**, shown in **Illustration 5**. Change that to 9:59 PM the next day. Each of the three parts (hour, minute, and AM/PM) can be adjusted by swiping up and down.

At the lower right corner of the window, tap the **Done** button. The window closes.

**STEP 6.** In the Schedule screen, in the Name field above the weekday list, type a name such as 24 hours.

**STEP 7.** At the bottom of the Schedule screen, tap the **Save** button (not shown). The Schedule Screen closes, and the Do Not Disturb screen reappears. The schedule name and hours now appear under the Schedule heading on the screen.

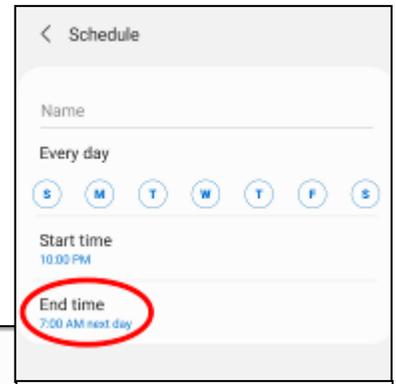


Illustration 4

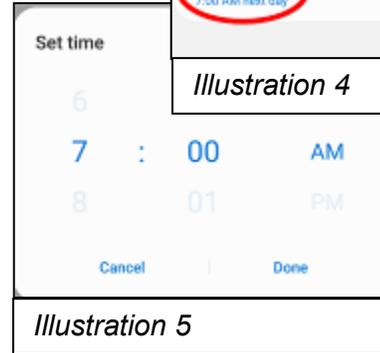


Illustration 5

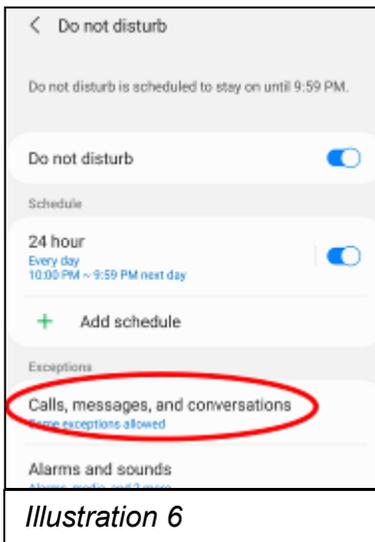
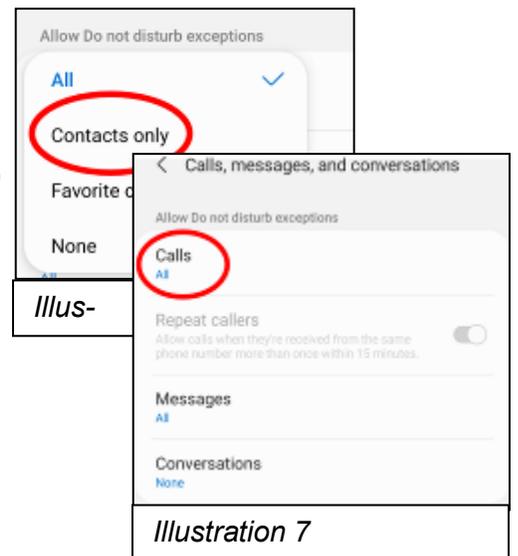


Illustration 6

**STEP 8.** In the Do Not Disturb screen, tap **Calls, Messages, and Conversations** under the **Exceptions** heading, which is circled in **Illustration 6**. That tap opens the **Calls, messages, and conversations screen**, as shown in **Illustration 7**.

**STEP 9.** In the **Calls, messages, and conversations screen**, tap the word **Calls**, which is circled in **Illustration 7**. A menu appears, as shown in **Illustration 8**.

**STEP 10.** In the menu, tap the **Contacts Only** choice. The menu closes, and the phrase **Contacts only** appears below **The word Calls**. At the top of the screen, tap the left arrow to return to the **Do Not Disturb** screen.



Illus-

Illustration 7

**STEP 11.** In the **Do Not Disturb** Screen, tap the **Hide Notifications** heading. The **Hide notifications** screen appears. Turn off all of the switches on that screen. At the top of the screen, tap the left arrow to return to the **Do Not Disturb** screen.

**STEP 12.** In the **Do Not Disturb** screen, turn on the **Do Not Disturb** switch. You can see that switch in **Illustration 3**.

Note: that same Do Not Disturb switch can be used to disable Do Not Disturb when you expect a legitimate incoming call from someone outside of your Contacts list. Due to the automatic schedule, you won't have to turn on Do Not Disturb manually; the phone will do it for you.

That's it. Your Android phone is configured for Whitelist behavior. Exit the Settings app.

## IPHONE DO NOT DISTURB

I identified similar Whitelist settings on my corporate iPhone 6s. Due to corporate policy issues, I was unable to apply and test the iPhone Whitelist settings. The basics are very similar to Android: in Settings, find Do Not Disturb. Set a schedule, set an exception for Contacts, and turn off Hide Notifications.

## NEXT UP

In part 2 of this article series, you will learn how to convince robocaller systems that your phone number is not in service, so they won't call you again, and how to assemble a combination of your voice and other sounds in a voicemail greeting for that purpose.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** John Krout has been writing about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s, and more recently, about creative uses of smartphones. He finished a long career as a software engineer with 14 years as a technical writer for a federal contractor. He lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats.

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## Google Voice and Its Many Uses

By Dorothy Fitch, Editor, GVR Computer Club

March 2021 issue, Green Bytes — <https://www.ccgvaz.org/> — dmfitc (at) cox.net

I recently had a use for an additional phone number. Google Voice to the rescue! It's free (for calls within the U.S.), works nicely, and is easy to use. Here is what I learned in the process.

**What is Google Voice?** Google Voice is a software tool that allows you to obtain a free phone number. It can't be your only phone number and you need a Google account. You can set up a Gmail account for free if you don't already have one. It doesn't require any hardware or physical phone (other than what you already own).

**Why would you want an additional phone number?** Here are a few reasons:

- You temporarily want a phone number that you can delete later.
- You want a phone number for a different U.S. city.
- You have a side gig, perhaps selling hand-crafted items, and don't want to use your own phone number for that business.
- You want a phone number for specific people to use, such as family members.

I recently read of two teachers in Maryland who set up a Google Voice phone number for seniors to call if they needed help setting up a Covid vaccination appointment. The possibilities are endless.

**How do I sign up?** To get started, [go here](#) and sign into your Google account. If you are already logged in, click on the grid of nine dots for Google apps at the upper right of the screen. Scroll to the very bottom and click "More from Google". Then scroll down until you see the Google Voice icon and click on it. Here are the icons to click on.

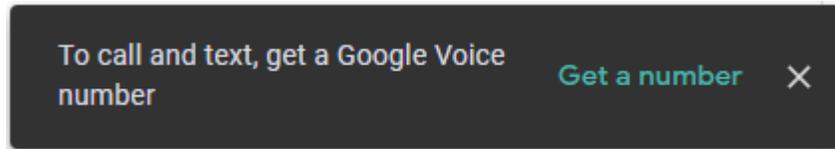


More from Google



Voice

You now see the "dashboard" for your voice account, even though you don't yet have a number. To get your number, click the box at the bottom that prompts you to get a Google Voice number.



Type in the location where you want the phone number to be based, then choose your new number from a list of available ones. It can be either in your local area or elsewhere in the United States.

**How does it work?** Calls to your new number will forward to a number you specify. It might be your cell phone or landline. The number it forwards calls to is your linked number, and you can set up more than one number to ring at the same time. You can also edit the name for the number that will appear on the recipient's caller ID.

One of the settings lets you see the number that the person dialed, as opposed to the number of the phone it is linked to. That lets you know that they are calling the Google Voice number. Adding that number with an identifying label to your Contact list shows you immediately the number the caller dialed. This allows you to answer the phone with a different greeting if you want.

You can also create a personalized message that people hear when they leave a voice mail. The default message, designed to eliminate spam and automated calls, asks the caller to speak their name so you get to decide whether or not you want to take the call.

When someone leaves a message at the new number, you can listen to it in your account dashboard, where a text version is also stored. You will also receive an email at your Gmail account when someone leaves a message.

There are dozens of settings you can adjust in the app or your computer dashboard. For example, you can limit the hours that phone calls to the number will ring (a "Do Not Disturb" setting). You can set up more than one phone to ring at the same time if you want. Be sure to have the other phone handy so you can enter the verification code that Voice will send you before it links the device to the number.

This is the article that convinced me to give Google Voice a try:  
[www.businessinsider.com/what-is-google-voice-how-to-set-up-use](http://www.businessinsider.com/what-is-google-voice-how-to-set-up-use)

For complete instructions on setting up Google Voice, [go here](#).

All in all, it's a very powerful tool and may be just what you need.

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## Stay at Home – Use the time, productively

By Phil Sorrentino, Newsletter Contributor, Sarasota Technology Users Group  
February 2021 issue, STUG Monitor — [www.thestug.org](http://www.thestug.org) — [philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philsorr@yahoo.com)

Now that you have the time, it may be time to catch up on all those computer projects that you have been meaning to do. Some of those projects may be more like maintenance such as backing up your data or system. And some may be more fun like organizing your picture, video, or music collections. Don't have those collections, well then now may be the time to start creating them. Anyone who has a smartphone, probably has a picture collection, though they may not be able to decide where all the pictures are located. Are the pictures on the device or in the cloud or both? Google Photos provides cloud storage for as many photos as you want to store in the cloud. (But Google Drive is limited to 15 GB.) One way to get your arms around the picture collection is to get them all on one device, your computer, and then organize and maintain them on that device. All you need to use to connect the smartphone to the computer is a USB cable that supports data. (Remember that some USB cables are only for charging a device and cannot transfer data.) File

explorer is the tool to use on a PC and the Finder is the tool on the Mac. Oh, and make sure you change the name of any picture that is put into your collection from something like "IMG\_20082100034" to something that makes some sense. If you have a collection of pictures that you want to show people on your phone, you can create a folder for them on the pc and then copy them to your phone. (Copy them to the DCIM or DCIM-camera folder on the phone.) Once they are on the phone you can use any picture viewer like "gallery" on an android device or "pictures" on an iOS device.



So what about music and videos? Well, Microsoft gives music and videos their own top-level folders (Under "This PC" in File Explorer) indicating they think many people will save and maybe even organize these two types of media files. Music is pretty easy to think about organizing because music distributors have been doing this for the past almost 100 years, probably since Edison began selling recordings. We can organize our music easily by artist and possibly by Genre. Music organization by Genre has been around a very long time. In fact, as part of the meta-data that is part of every music file (.mp3 being the most popular file type), there is a parameter included for Genre in addition to those you might expect such as title, artist, album, composer, year, contributing artist, album, and track number. Music players like Windows Media Player and iTunes use this metadata to organize, present, and play your music collection. Our job is mostly to collect the music, which in most cases boils down to "ripping" our CD music collection. Ripping music from a CD is the process of moving (and possibly converting) the music file from a CD to a computer; a perfectly legal process, even if it sounds nefarious. Once this is done, the file can be played on any device with an appropriate music player. Once you have a collection of music files, the music player uses those files with the included metadata to organize the collection. And then you can create playlists within the music player to play the music selections in a sequence of your choice. So, maybe it's time to get on with ripping your CD collection, now that you have the time. Note that if you don't want to go the Rip-CDs route, you can always purchase music from one of the many online music stores such as iTunes or Amazon.



When it comes to organizing music, the task is pretty clear, but what about videos? Video file organization can be a big project. Videos can range from those short (10 to 15 second) videos that you've taken with your smartphone, to professional feature-length movies. For the feature-length movies it might be best to just let Amazon, Netflix, or YouTube keep track of them, and then you can use (and pay for) the service whenever you want to see the movie. If you have a DVD movie collection, you might try to treat them like CDs and convert the DVD files to computer files and store them in a movie database, but it may be easier to just find some shelf space and organize them alphabetically. The smartphone videos, and that could include all of those cute animal videos that get sent around attached to emails, could be collected and organized into a video database. I will not even attempt to describe a database for these because it is probably very different for each of us, due to our own special interests. The only thing to do is to start with a basic hierarchical organization and modify it as needed. Start with a folder for Videos and then create subfolders for any area of interest. I have created folders for "humor", "vacations", "friends", "family", "politics", "magic tricks", "technology"... you get the idea. Create a new sub-folder whenever a folder gets too full for convenient searching. Make sure you give the videos a representative file name before you put the video into the database or you may never be able to find it again.



And there is one last task for those of us who have thought about taking advantage of the electronic books at the library, but never have gotten around to it. The county library system has electronic books (eBooks) and magazines you can read on your electronic device. With a library card and the right Apps on your device, you can borrow the books, read them and return them to the library without ever leaving the comfort, and more importantly in these times, the safety of your home. (Overdrive and Libby are apps that help you borrow eBooks from the library, and Kindle and Libby are eBook readers.)

I'm sure you can find a few other tasks that you've been thinking of doing, but right now it might be more fun to just find some entertaining videos on YouTube and leave those projects for another time.

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## HD TV Technology and Content – What's New?

By Tom Burt, Vice President

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club — <https://www.scscc.club> — [tomburt89134 \(at\) cox.net](mailto:tomburt89134@cox.net)

One of my occasional club seminars is a review of High-Definition TV technology and sources of HD content. I decided to convert my seminar slide show to an article and update it to reflect the latest 2020 offerings.

### HD TV Technology 2020

In 2020 virtually all larger sets (50 inch and up) for sale at retail outlets and on the web support the Ultra HD (aka 4K) resolution of 3840 (horizontal) by 2160 (vertical) pixels. This gives a picture aspect ratio of 16 by 9 and a total pixel count of about 8.3 million. There are some high-end sets with a so-called 8K resolution of 7680 by 4320 and a total pixel count of about 33.2 million.

Most newer sets also feature a wider color depth: 1024 levels each of red, green and blue, giving about 1 billion possible distinct colors. Most sets also feature High Dynamic Range which increases contrast range – making blacks darker and whites brighter.

Most HD TVs also include Smart TV features that make the set able to stream content from various Internet streaming TV services such as Netflix, Prime TV, Hulu, Apple TV, or Disney TV+.

The predominant screen technology is still liquid crystal (LCD), usually backlit by an array of white light-emitting diodes (LEDs). In HDR sets, these LEDs' brightness can be varied selective to help darken blacks and brighten whites. Other screen technologies include organic light-emitting diode (OLED) and quantum dot (QDot). Both of these give higher quality pictures but are expensive.

For example, here's an LG 65-inch LCD (LED-backlit) 4K Smart HDTV with HDR (model: 65UN7000PUD) priced at \$500 at Best Buy. Its rating on Best Buy is 4.6 stars.

This is a quality set with lots of features and is likely all you need for a family room set. It has three HDMI input jacks, good for hooking up various external boxes.



HDTV sets with larger screens, more input jacks, and more Smart features tend to cost more.



For example, here's an LG 82-inch LCD (LED-backlit) 4K Smart HDTV with HDR (model: 82UN8570PUC) priced at \$1500 at Best Buy. Its rating on Best Buy is 4.1 stars.

This is a quality set with lots of features and a good choice for a home theater. It has four HDMI input jacks, good for hooking up various external boxes.

There are now HDTV 4K sets with screens as large as 110 inches.

### Hooking Up Your HDTV

Your best results will come if you use high-definition media interface (HDMI) cables to connect various external boxes to jacks on your HDTV. Unless your connections are longer than 10 feet, there's no need to buy expensive HDMI cables at the big box store. Order the cheap ones from the Internet. Caution, as 8K sets and content become more widespread, you may have to use upgraded cables because they are carrying 16 times as much video data as regular HD content.

You may want to consider **wall-mounting** your HDTV if it's 65 inches or larger. If you do, spend the extra money to get a heavy-duty telescoping wall mount with a weight capacity substantially greater than that of your HDTV. The LG 82-inch set above weighs 102 pounds, so it would be no fun to lift, even for two people. For example, this Amazon Basics wall mount is \$79 on Amazon and has a weight capacity of 132 pounds. It was rated 4.6 stars on Amazon.

A wall mount needs to be anchored to the studs in the wall it is mounted on. It may be necessary to mount a plywood panel to the studs of the wall and then screw the HDTV mount to the plywood panel. (i.e. This may be a job for professionals.)



### HDTV Makers

The first-tier name-brand HDTV makers include **Samsung, Sony, LG, Vizio, Sharp, Toshiba, and Epson (projectors)**. There are many second-tier and house brand makers whose sets are also of very good quality and generally at better prices.

### Where to Get HD and 4K Programming and Content

You can receive digital HD programming **over the air** from the broadcast TV networks. You need an antenna to receive the digital broadcasts and feed them into the antenna jack on your HDTV or set-top receiver. In Las Vegas, there are about 80 broadcast channels. Many are in Spanish and others may be hard to get because they are weak. There are a variety of indoor antennas, with and without powered amplification. If you can place these in a window, you may get decent reception.

You can also pay for a professional exterior antenna installation, which will deliver a much better signal to the HDTV. Check out **Mr. Antenna**.

You can pay for HDTV from Cox, DirecTV, Dish, or CenturyLink. These services are reliable and offer a vast array of channels that you can't get over the air. Their higher tiers can get quite expensive, especially after any promotional rates expire. It becomes an annual ritual to call up your provider and haggle for a reduction from the listed standard rates. Usually, you have to threaten to switch and then their retention representative comes through with a discount for another year.

You can watch HD and even 4K Blu-ray disks if you have a matching Blu-ray player. However, there is very little 4K Blu-ray content for sale. **Your 4K HDTV will automatically up-convert any incoming regular standard or HD content to "near 4K" resolution.**

You can also stream HD and some 4K content from the various paid Internet streaming services, such as Prime TV, Netflix, Hulu, Apple TV, Disney +, CBS All Access, AT&T TV Now, Sling TV, and YouTube TV. Some offer custom content and some offer a wide array of cable channels. A plus is that you don't need a special receiver – just an in-house network connection from your TV or a "Smart" box such as a Roku or Fire TV to your Wi-Fi router.

Many of the cable and broadcast networks also make recent episodes of shows available to stream from their websites. If your Smart TV or smart box has a web browser app (most do), you can go to the network's website and stream those shows through the Internet to your HDTV.

Commonly a household will opt for a mix of free and paid solutions to satisfy their needs for TV information and entertainment. A website that's very helpful for deciding what mix of services you need is **Suppose TV** (<https://supposetv.com>). You enter a list of "must-have" channels and the website will display which services offer that set of channels.

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## Interesting Internet Finds January 2021

Steve Costello  
scostello (AT) sefcug.com

In the course of going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during the month of December 2020.

*What Is Archive In Gmail And How To Archive And Unarchive Emails*

<https://www.guidingtech.com/what-is-archive-in-gmail-how-to-archive-unarchive-emails/>

Do you know what archiving in Gmail is? If so, do you know why and how to use it? The answers to these questions are in this post.

*How To Clear Cache On Android (And When You Should)*

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/clear-cache-android/>

Do you use an Android? If the answer is yes, you need to read and follow what this post says.

*Opting Out Of Amazon Sidewalk*

<https://firewallsdontstopdragons.com/opting-out-of-amazon-sidewalk/>

Have an Amazon Echo or Ring device? If so, read this post and learn how to opt-out of Amazon Sidewalk. I have opted-out for increased security reasons.

*What Is A USB Security Key, And Should You Use One?*

<https://www.reviewgeek.com/63448/what-is-a-usb-security-key-and-should-you-use-one/>

I read this post and think it is overkill for my needs. But, if you use your laptop for business, have a lot of confidential information on your laptop when you travel, this post explains how you can benefit from a USB security key and what the disadvantages are.

*Fire TVs Becoming Cable Box Substitutes*

<https://www.thestreamingadvisor.com/fire-tvs-becoming-cable-box-substitutes/>

This article has some good information, especially for those who use both cable boxes and streaming services.

*How To Log Out Of Facebook On Any Devices You're Logged Into*

<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/where-you-are-logged-on-facebook-log-out/>

Have you signed into Facebook on different devices? If so, you need to periodically follow the directions in this post to be sure you are logged out of any devices you don't need to be logged in on.

*It's Unsubscribe Season! Clean That Inbox*

<https://www.askwoody.com/2020/its-unsubscribe-season-clean-that-inbox/>

I followed the advice in this post and now have a much cleaner inbox.

*How to Buy a Laptop for Linux*

<https://www.howtogeek.com/185286/how-to-buy-a-laptop-for-linux/>

This post from HowToGeek explains why you shouldn't just buy a Windows laptop and then install Linux on it. Instead, it explains the advantages of buying a laptop designed for Linux from the start, with links to some Linux you can buy now.

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