



Significant Bits

Journal of Brisbug PC User Group Inc. ""



Vol 38 No 02

19 February 2023

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3	From the President's CPU	Keith Catts	President	
5-9	Johns Jots	John Tacey	Q&A	
10-19	APCUG Articles	Various	Various	APCUG

Meeting Timetable

Mitchelton Library Helios Parade Mitchelton

9:30am	Q&A	John Tacey
11pm	Do you need Windows?	Fred
1:00pm	Lunch -- Report to the Club	
2:00pm	Alternative to Windows.	Keith

If you have a question that may need a bit of a look up, let me know before the meeting

Presentation can be done using Power Point and shared screens.



Significant Bits

Journal of Brisbug PC User Group Inc.

SIGNIFICANT BITS

the Journal of
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PC-type computers*
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CLUB INFORMATION LINES

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The Members' Web Page

Meeting Days

19 February 2023
19 March 2023
16 April 2023
21 May 2023
18 June 2023

Magazine

Editor
Chris Haydock

Proof-reader
John Tacey

Submission Deadline

Friday 3 March 2023

Please use e-mail if possible

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Hi All,

Well as you know I forgot to pick up the key in time from the Library so we had to cancel the January meeting. I will try to do better and have added a dairy note to help.

How have you faired with recent hacking / ransom attacks? We got picked up with MediBank and may be not a lot of data was lost, but we appear to be on the receiving end a lot of spam emails to an email address; so suspect that that may be from the exposed data.

Keeping yourself safe just gets harder.

I see in one of John's jots that Microsoft has stopped selling Windows 10 online from now. This appears to be just a bit more of a squeeze to get us into Windows 11, and for many a new computer to support it.

This makes Fred's question "do you need Windows" more of an interest. Fred will help look at that with his "Programme" he presented to just see what we may need for a computer.

I have a laptop running Linux so can use that to see how it might fill the need.

As you know I have been using Macrium Reflect for many a year after I found it, to my deep sadness they are now stopping the free use. I think I can keep using the current version but there will be no further updates. The cost for the bought one is just too high. You would think they would see a value in a cheap personal user version fee.

All for now

See you at the meeting

Keith

**PLEASE · PAY · YOUR ·
MEMBERSHIP · RENEWAL · VIA ·
DIRECT · FUNDS · TRANSFER**

**Brisbug · PC · User · Group ·
Inc**

BSB · No: · · 034 - 083
Account · No: · 185711

**Remember · to · enter · your · name ·
and · membership · number · in · the ·
comment · field**

Reports

Presentation and Education

Presentation:

Morning 11am. Do you need Window?

Afternoon 1pm: Alternative to Windows.

Membership Report - Gary Woodforth

We had no members at the January meeting, due to Keith forgetting to get the key for the library room.

Treasurer's Report

January 2023

Opening Balance at 1/1/23 2704.21

Income

Bank Interest 0.01

Total Income **0.00**
0.01

Expenses

Total Expenses **0.00**

Month's Gain **0.01**

Balance at 31/1/23 **2704.22**

Ross Skyring
Treasurer



Q&A - January meeting not held

Gleanings from e-newsletters and other sources.

Reviews

NordVPN

By Max Eddy Jan 24, 2023

An expensive but powerful VPN

<https://au.pcmag.com/vpn/29566/nordvpn>

The Best 3D Printers for 2022

By Tony Hoffman Oct 05, 2022

More affordable than ever, 3D printers are booming for personal, professional, and educational use. Here's what you need to know about the technology before you buy, along with the top models from our hands-on testing.

<https://au.pcmag.com/3d-printers/25115/the-best-3d-printers>

The Best VPN Services for 2023

By Max Eddy Jan 23, 2023

Using a VPN, or virtual private network, is one of the best ways to protect your online privacy. We've tested and reviewed scores of them, and these are our top picks.

<https://au.pcmag.com/vpn/138/the-best-vpn-services>

The Best Password Managers for 2023

By Kim Key Feb 02, 2023

Our top-rated password managers help you create strong passwords for all your online accounts and alert you of potential data leaks.

<https://au.pcmag.com/password-managers/4524/the-best-password-managers>

The Best Free Password Managers for 2023

By Kim Key Feb 02, 2023

A password like '123456' may be easy to remember, but it's also equally easy to guess or hack. Use one of these top free password managers to help you create and manage strong, unique passwords for every secure site you use, instead.

<https://au.pcmag.com/password-managers/27971/the-best-free-password-managers>

What Is CAMM? Perhaps, the Future Look of Memory in Laptops

By Matthew Buzzi Jan 26, 2023

See ya later, SO-DIMMs? Those familiar memory modules have been in laptops for decades, but their performance ceiling looms. CAMM is ready to solve the

speed issues—and more—with an all-new module design.

<https://au.pcmag.com/laptops/98453/what-is-camm-maybe-the-future-look-of-memory-in-laptops>

The Best Security Keys for Multi-Factor Authentication

By Max Eddy Jan 27, 2023

A hardware security key is one of the best tools for protecting your online accounts, including those from Apple and Google. We help you pick the best security key for keeping your information private.

<https://au.pcmag.com/security/90650/the-best-security-keys-for-multi-factor-authentication>

InMoat

By Justin Pot Jan 26, 2022

An allow-list approach to inbox filtering

InMoat doesn't block distracting email from reaching your inbox—it blocks all messages and lets you decide what should get through.

<https://au.pcmag.com/productivity/98459/inmoat>

The Best Free Software of 2022

By Eric Griffith 12 Apr 2022, 10:32 p.m.

You want powerful software? You don't have to pay for it. Everything you need to be productive and secure on your PC is on this list, and it's all totally free.

<https://au.pcmag.com/software-services/93440/the-best-free-software-of-2022>

The Best Mechanical Keyboards for 2023

By John Burek Jan 19, 2023

Ready to experience best-in-class typing? A mechanical keyboard delivers the feel and feedback that ordinary keyboards lack. Here's how to buy the right one, plus our top tested picks.

<https://au.pcmag.com/keyboards/43367/the-best-mechanical-keyboards>

New Releases

Avast Free Antivirus

License: Freeware

File name: Avast_Free_Antivirus_v22.11.exe (web Installer)

File Size: 0.26 MB O/S: Windows

Publisher: Avast Software s.r.o.

URL: <https://www.avast.com/antivirus>

calibre (32bit)

License: Free

File name: calibre_(32bit)_v6.0.0.msi

File Size: 146.89 MB O/S: Windows

Publisher: © Kovid Goyal

URL: <http://calibre-ebook.com/>

Essential PIM 11.2.3

License: Free
File name: Essential PIM.exe
File Size: 27.3MB O/S: Windows
Released: 19 Dec. 2019
Publisher:
URL: <https://www.essentialpim.com/pc-version>

Foxit Reader

License: Freeware
File name: Foxit_Reader_v12.0.1.15250 .exe
File Size: 160 MB O/S: Windows
Publisher: Foxit Corporation
URL: <http://www.foxitsoftware.com/>

FreeCommanderXE

Dual Pane File Manager
License: Freeware
File name: FreeCommanderXE-32-public_Setup
880.zip
File Size: 24.03 MB O/S: Windows
Publisher: Marek Jasinski
URL: <https://freecommander.com/en/downloads>

Glary Utilities 5

License: Freeware
File Name: Glary_Utilities_v5.200.0.229.exe
File Size: 19.98 MB
Platform: Windows 8, 7, 2000, XP, Vista. 32/64bit
version.
Publisher: Glarysoft Ltd
Languages: 44 Languages [Help Translate]
URL: <http://www.glaryutilities.com/>

Release Notes:

Optimized Disk Cleaner: added support for 'Corel VideoStudio Pro x9' and 'SketchUp Make 2014'

Optimized Tracks Eraser: added support for 'Corel VideoStudio Pro x9' and 'SketchUp Make 2014'

Optimized Software Update: optimized the version comparison algorithm, and increase the comparison speed by 30%

Optimized Empty Folders Finder: add folder delete validation to prevent accidentally deletion of non-empty folder

Minor GUI improvements

Minor bug fixes

Glary Utilities is a freeware with registry and disk cleaning, privacy protection, performance accelerator and amazing multifunctional tools. It can fix dogged

registry errors, wipe off clutters, optimise Internet speed, safeguard confidential files and maintain maximum performance.

It is designed for both novice and professionals. User-friendly interface shows clear & detailed directions. For novice, all work can be done with just 1 or 2 clicks, while for professionals, abundant options are available.

Key features:

Optimise, clean and boost the speed of your Windows.

Protect your privacy and security.

Block spyware, trojans, adware, etc.

Fix certain application errors.

Simple, fast and user friendly interface.

For private use only.

URL: <http://www.glaryutilities.com/>

Google Chrome (32bit) 109.0.5414.120

License: Freeware
File name: ChromeSetup.exe (Web Installer)
File Size: 87.6MB O/S: Windows
Publisher: Google
URL: <https://www.google.com/chrome/>

Java Runtime Environment (32bit)

License: Freeware
File name:
Java_Runtime_Environment_(32bit)_v8.0.3410.10.exe
File Size: 72.73 MB O/S: Windows
Publisher: Oracle
URL: <http://www.java.com/>

KeePass

Category: Password Manager
License: Freeware
File name: KeePass 2.53 Setup.exe
File Size: 4.20 MB O/S: Windows Vista to 10
Publisher: Dominik Reichl
URL: <https://keepass.info/download.html>

LibreOffice

License: Freeware
File name: LibreOffice_7.4.5Win_x86.msi
File Size: 319MB O/S: Windows
Publisher: The Document Foundation
Comments: Contains the functions:-
Writer
PDF
Presentation

Spreadsheet

URL:

https://mirror.freedif.org/TDF/libreoffice/stable/6.2.0/win/x86/LibreOffice_6.2.0_Win_x86.msi

Mozilla Firefox

License: Freeware

File name: Mozilla_Firefox_(32bit)_v109.0.1 .exe
Update

File Size: 53 MB O/S: Windows 7 to 10

Publisher: Mozilla Corporation

Comments:-

To force a manual update:-

Menu Button > ? Button > 'About Firefox'

URL: <https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/new/>

Mozilla Thunderbird

License: Freeware

File name: Thunderbird Setup 102.6.1(GB).exe

File Size: 51.5 MB O/S: Windows XP SP2 to 10

Publisher: Mozilla Corporation

URL: <http://www.mozilla.org/en-GB/thunderbird/>

NotePad++ (32bit)

License: Freeware

File name: NotePad_v8.4.9.exe

File Size: 4.20 MB O/S: Windows

Publisher: Notepad++

URL: <https://notepad-plus-plus.org/>

VLC Media Player (32bit)

License: Freeware

File name: VLC_Media_Player_(32bit)_v3.0.18.exe

File Size: 40.7 MB O/S: Windows XP SP3 to the last version of Windows 10.

Publisher: VideoLAN Project

URL: <https://get.videolan.org/vlc/3.0.3/win32/vlc-3.0.7.1-win32.exe>

XnView

License: Freeware

File name: XnView_v 2.51.1.exe

File Size: 5.65MB

O/S: Windows XP SP3 to the last version of Windows 10.

Publisher: XnView.com

URL: <http://www.xnview.com/>

Want more? See the New Releases list:

<http://ct.com.com/>

Tips etc.

Buying a Mechanical Keyboard Nearly Broke Me

By Jill Duffy Dec 13, 2022

After weeks of troubleshooting and waiting for a happy ending that never came, I gave up on my mechanical keyboard.

<https://au.pcmag.com/keyboards/97737/how-buying-a-mechanical-keyboard-nearly-broke-me>

Here's Why a Minute on the Internet Is More Like a Million Hours

By Chandra Steele Sep 21, 2022

The amount of information that zips around on the internet in just a minute is dizzying.

Chandra Steele

<https://au.pcmag.com/the-why-axis-serie/96319/heres-why-a-minute-on-the-internet-is-more-like-a-million-hours>

Microsoft's Silent Update Checks Your Windows PC for Old Versions of Office

By Matthew Humphries Jan 23, 2023

Nothing is installed, no restart is required, but Microsoft will quietly collect some information about your system.

<https://au.pcmag.com/migrated-15175-windows-10/98391/microsofts-silent-update-checks-your-windows-pc-for-old-versions-of-office>

Microsoft Makes 'Multibillion Dollar' Investment in ChatGPT Creator OpenAI

By Michael Kan Jan 24, 2023

Terms of the deal were not revealed, but reports suggest that Microsoft could be investing as much as \$10 billion in the San Francisco lab, which is behind ChatGPT and DALL-E 2.

<https://au.pcmag.com/news/98399/microsoft-makes-multibillion-dollar-investment-in-chatgpt-creator-openai>

Microsoft Experiments With a 'Split Screen' Feature in the Edge Browser

By Matthew Humphries Jan 24, 2023

Split the Edge browser window in half and load two tabs side-by-side.

<https://au.pcmag.com/browsers/98416/microsoft-experiments-with-a-split-screen-feature-in-the-edge-browser>

Passwordless Authentication: What It Is and Why You Need It ASAP

By Kim Key Jan 25, 2023

The cybersecurity industry has a vision for a more secure future—one that involves getting rid of passwords.

<https://au.pcmag.com/password-managers/98421/passwordless-authentication-what-it-is-and-why-you-need-it-asap>

LastPass Sibling Company GoTo Loses Encrypted Backups to Hackers

By Michael Kan Jan 25, 2023

The hacker also stole an encryption key for a portion of the encrypted backups by accessing a cloud storage database shared by both LastPass and GoTo.

<https://au.pcmag.com/password-managers/98423/lastpass-sibling-company-goto-loses-encrypted-backups-to-hackers>

DOJ: Google 'Corrupted Legitimate Competition' With Ad-Tech Business

By Rob Pegoraro Jan 25, 2023

The Department of Justice is joined by eight states in a lawsuit that accuses Google of monopolizing multiple levels of the adtech stack. Google says the feds are ignoring its rivals.

<https://au.pcmag.com/news/98435/doj-google-corrupted-legitimate-competition-with-ad-tech-business>

ChatGPT Is Smart Enough to (Barely) Pass an MBA Exam

By Michael Kan Jan 26, 2023

On certain exam questions, ChatGPT wrote impressive answers, but on others, not so much, according to Christian Terwiesch, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

<https://au.pcmag.com/news/98443/chatgpt-is-smart-enough-to-barely-pass-an-mba-exam>

Microsoft Will Stop Selling Windows 10 Licenses Online This Month

By Matthew Humphries Jan 20, 2023

Both Windows 10 Home and Pro license sales will end on Jan. 31.

<https://au.pcmag.com/migrated-15175-windows-10/98352/microsoft-will-stop-selling-windows-10-licenses-online-this-month>

How to Stop Apps From Hogging Your Windows 11 Disk Space

By Michael Muchmore Jan 25, 2023

There's an easy way to recover disk space from greedy Windows apps.

<https://au.pcmag.com/migrated-15175-windows-10/98429/how-to-stop-apps-from-hogging-your-windows-11-disk-space>

Why Writers Know Using ChatGPT Is a Bad Idea

By Jill Duffy Jan 26, 2023

Writers are aggrieved by ChatGPT and other AI-written content not because it threatens our jobs, but because it's so clear how and why it's doomed to be a disaster.

<https://au.pcmag.com/opinions/98458/why-writers-know-using-chatgpt-is-a-bad-idea>

How to Set Up and Optimize Your Wi-Fi Router for the Best Performance

By William Van Winkle &

John R. Delaney

Updated December 30, 2022

Looking to update your wireless network for better performance or security? Follow these simple steps for configuring your router and wireless network the right way.

https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-set-up-and-optimize-your-wireless-router-for-the-best-wi-fi-performance?zdee=gAAAAABjNL8ST42l80nl07cPB3qfRUi6ntgUgOTESELeSDlZFhs8z4qnmoLs_AknqwLVhZpQWW_ldjicVkNAoSBZ5elt2gM0-Tu64aKwciwXzXGx5QU6ZfE%3D

Your Smart Oven May Be Visiting Websites in China, Russia Every 5 Minutes

By Matthew Humphries Jan 28, 2023

And it's not looking for new recipes.

<https://au.pcmag.com/smart-home/98488/your-smart-oven-may-be-visiting-websites-in-china-russia-every-5-minutes>

FBI Secretly Infiltrated Hive Ransomware Group's Network for 7 Months

By Michael Kan Jan 27, 2023

The access allowed the FBI to pilfer decryption keys for the group's ransomware and hand them off to thousands of victims.

<https://au.pcmag.com/security/98471/fbi-secretly-infiltrated-hive-ransomware-groups-network-for-7-months>

Bitwarden Warns of Scam Ads on Google Posing as the Password Manager

By Michael Kan Jan 28, 2023

Users notice ads on Google Search trying to lure visitors to imposter Bitwarden sites. The company urges people to navigate directly to Bitwarden.com instead of relying on Google.

<https://au.pcmag.com/security/98492/bitwarden-warns-of-scam-ads-on-google-posing-as-the-password-manager>

14 Essential Apps for Ironclad Online Privacy

By Neil J. Rubenking 12 Jan 2023, 6:14 a.m.

Another day, another data breach. Sidestepping trackers and protecting your personal information might seem

like a hopeless task, but these top privacy apps can really make a difference.

<https://au.pcmag.com/security/85204/12-essential-apps-for-protecting-your-privacy-online>

What Does Big Tech Know About You? Basically Everything

By Angela Moscaritolo Jan 19, 2022

Security Baron examined the privacy policies of Facebook, Google, Apple, Twitter, Amazon, and Microsoft; just how much these tech giants actually know about you might be surprising..

<https://au.pcmag.com/security/60591/what-does-big-tech-know-about-you-basically-everything>

10 Easy Tips and Tricks for Better Smartphone Photos

By Jim Fisher Jan 28, 2023

For many, phones have completely replaced dedicated digital cameras, but even pros reach for their iPhones or Samsung Galaxy phones to snap images from time to time. Here's how to take better pics with your smartphone.

<https://au.pcmag.com/cameras-1/57810/10-easy-tips-and-tricks-for-better-smartphone-photos>

Power From Electric Vehicles Keeps Elevators Moving After Blackouts

By Emily Dreibelbis Jan 28, 2023

Nissan successfully tests using an EV battery to keep an elevator running for 10 hours with nine people in it, and hopes to roll the system out in Japanese apartment buildings in April.

<https://au.pcmag.com/cars-auto/98499/power-from-electric-vehicles-keeps-elevators-moving-after-blackouts>

Here Endeth John's Jots

APCUG ARTICLES

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Is Your Life Boring?

Spice it Up by Becoming a Victim of Scammers and Thieves!

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society. <https://ckcs.org/>

If you're bored to tears, why not put more excitement into your life by becoming a victim?

Follow the tips below, and you're sure to find yourself quite busy as you try and dig yourself out of trouble. But at least you won't be bored!

Write your PIN number on the back of your ATM and credit card! How else are you supposed to remember that vital number to tap into your finances?

Why waste time by shredding documents? Just toss those financial statements, online credit card notices you printed, and your retirement account papers into the green bin. I mean, it's filled with cat litter, coffee grounds, and tea bags. Who would dig into your garbage to retrieve a few slimy documents?

Don't be stingy when someone using an unrecognizable phone number calls you and asks for a donation! Instead, make sure you open your heart by making sure the person on the other end has correctly typed your credit card number. It's a good cause, and you're helping out in a big way. I mean, doesn't it feel good to share your credit card number with the \$20,000 account limit to a charity you've never heard of before? Sure! You're a big sweetheart.

Why in the world would you waste your time by bothering to monitor your banking account online? Jeeze. The sun is shining. Go outside and have fun! No need to bother yourself with numbers on a website or an app. Even though there might be a few purchases you can't identify - heck - it's no big deal! No reason to contact the bank and speak to that helpful customer service rep that you cannot understand, anyway.

Sarcasm is a powerful tool to get across a message. We've been using it throughout this article to get your attention. Now that you're reading this — What's currently the leading cause of financial loss by fraud? Romance scams. There's big money being lost here by thieves targeting the lonely.

In 2020, more Americans of all ages lost more money through romance scams than any other means.

Wow. That is an eye-opener!

Talk about the way to rob someone in the 21st century. In 2020, victims of romance scams lost \$304 million –

and people 70 and older had more money stolen that way – on average, \$9,475 – than any other age group. Whew!

Here's how it's done. First, the scammer creates a fake profile on social media or dating sites and tries to start a relationship through texting or chatting.

Romance scammers usually make one excuse after another why they cannot meet their victim, um, "loved one," in person. For example, romance scammers often ask their "loved ones" for money by requesting gift cards. But instead, they never share their real photos, opting for faked headshots cropped from Instagram, Facebook, or even models displayed on websites.

Don't be gullible. Don't become a victim.

Be smart. Be aware. Be vigilant. It's time to learn more about your iPhone Clock

By Jim Cerny, Education Chair and Forums Coordinator. Sarasota Technology Users Group. www.thestug.org

Most of us have and use an iPhone, and it comes with a great and straightforward app called simply "clock." The app icon looks like an actual clock, and the app icon itself shows you the correct time. So, let's open the "clock" app and see what it can do for us.

You will notice it has four different options at the bottom of your screen – the "World Clock," "Alarm," "Stopwatch," and "Timer." These are really all easy to use and mostly self-explanatory. But let's look closely at each of these and see what fun we can have.

World Clock – will show you the time anyplace on the globe. You can ADD a new location (city) by touching the plus sign ("+"). You will get an alphabetical list of cities and a search area at the top where you can enter the city's name if you prefer. Not every city is listed, so you may have to pick a city near the location (that is, in the same time zone) you want. If in doubt, ask Google what time zone a city/town is in or "What's the time in Pago-Pago?" to help you. You can have several cities on this list, and the clock will tell you how many hours (plus or minus) the city is from your time, even if it is another day. So, add your "time" locations for your friends and relatives, and you'll never have to guess the time difference again.

Alarm – will allow you to set one or many alarms to alert you at any time you choose. This simple function comes with several options which may be helpful. You can set and save several alarms. You can turn "on" any of them that you like. If an alarm is not "on" (by touching the round white circle to show a green patch), it will not go off. When you set a new alarm, or if you touch on an existing alarm time to edit it, you can set the following options: Repeat an alarm on certain days, Label an alarm to any name you want to give it, Sound

the alarm with your chosen sound (or song!), and/or Snooze for a

second chance in a few minutes. And you can "Delete Alarm" to remove it from your list.

Quite a list of options for just alarms!

Stopwatch – will time anything. Do you like walking as I do? Or riding a bike? Or driving, doing chores, cooking, or whatever? Why not time what you do? This stopwatch has a digital display and an old-style classic stopwatch display. It only has two commands, the "Start" and "Stop" buttons and the "Lap" button. I bet you can figure out the start-and-stop button, but the Lap button can be fun. I have never timed a race around a track, but when I go for my walk, I hit the Lap button at each milestone on my route. This way, it will record a time for each leg of my walk without interrupting the overall time. I can tell if I am lagging behind and if I should walk faster to improve my time.

If I stop to talk to someone and still want to track my time, I just hit the Lap button at the start and end of my conversation. Then, I can subtract that time later. Of course, all this is unnecessary, but it is fun and makes my walks seem more enjoyable.

Timer – Use to time anything and sound an alarm when the time is expired. As far as I can figure out, you can only set one time on the timer to any number of hours, minutes, and seconds. You can, however, select the alarm sound you like from a long list.

Note that your alarms may only vibrate if your phone is in silent mode. If you have a "do not disturb" time at night (like I do), an alarm WILL still tone to wake you up!

My alarm just went off, so I know it's time to close this article. How long did it take you to read it?

Microsoft Windows in "S Mode"

News and/or Opinion from the SHCC Editor. By Paul Baecker. September 2022 WYSIWYG issue

<http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>

Someone recently asked me for my opinion on a sale-priced laptop at a local store and whether I'd recommend its purchase.

An HP laptop with an Intel i5 CPU with a Passmark rating of 691, 8GB of RAM, 256GB SSD, 17" screen, Windows 11, backlit keyboard, and full HD display. All in all, a decently powered mobile PC on sale for only \$399, advertised as "\$300 off their regular price."

What could be wrong with this selection?

Windows 11, that's what could be 'wrong' with this selection. However, looking closely at the specifications of this offering indicated that the version

of Windows 11 that came installed on this laptop was "Windows 11 Home in S Mode."

I had never heard of "S Mode," so this would be a new education for me. "S Mode" (Windows 10 or 11) basically limits you to accepting applications only from Microsoft. However, they say that "S mode is designed for security and performance, exclusively running apps from the Microsoft Store. So if you want to install an app that isn't available in the Microsoft Store, you'll need to switch out of S mode".

But this laptop isn't such a bad purchase after all (if you are on a budget and accept the small drive size and the middle-of-the-road Passmark CPU score) because you can "leave" Windows S Mode at any time. This will result in your new PC having the full Windows Home edition. The only caveat is that you cannot reverse this decision. But I suspect that for most PC users, this would be the right permanent direction to go anyway.

See below links to review articles about Windows S Mode (for Windows 10 and 11) — what it is and how to leave it.

When shopping for a new PC, always study the specifications sheet for each of your purchase candidates so that you don't encounter unexpected surprises after your eventual choice. But be aware that the specifications list for a PC on any particular store's website may not be complete, and some of the spec info listed there may also be inaccurate (which happens too often!), so double-check the information about your potential purchase, perhaps on the PC manufacturer's web site.

Also, purchase from a retailer that offers a return policy without any restocking fee. In my opinion, if you can't test-drive your selection in the store, you should be able to do so at home and return it at no charge if it doesn't meet your expectations. (Be sure to delete all your files and footprints before returning the device! Maybe even re-install the Operating System on it to accomplish that entirely.) Most retailers offer a free 14-day return policy. Costco offers a very generous 90-day return policy (as well as great sale prices on equipment).

Switching out of Windows "S Mode" results in a full Windows Home edition and cannot be reversed.

https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/switching-out-of-s-mode-in-windows-4f56d9be-99ec-6983-119f031bfb28a307#WindowsVersion=Windows_11

Some low-cost Windows PCs and tablets ship with Windows 11 Home in S Mode. Here is the process for switching out of S Mode.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/545076/how-to-switch-out-of-windows-11-in-s-mode.html>

Most of Us Get It Wrong: Not Just Teenagers Depend Upon the Internet

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society. <https://ckcs.org/>

70% of seniors are now online and using technology, reports the World Economic Forum in July 2019. When it comes to the Internet, the website claims it's – No Longer Just for the Young.

“Young people may roll their eyes at older people who can't use technology as fast as they do, but it's wrong to say that older Americans can't use technology. Remember, a baby boomer, Tim Berners-Lee, invented the World Wide Web, so why should we be surprised that they continue to create, adapt, and use new technology?” reports the World Economic Forum.

In January 2022, Pew Research revealed its latest technology poll results. It discovered: “When it comes to internet use, virtually all adults ages 18 to 29 now say they use the Internet (99%). A similar share of those 30 to 49 (98%) say the same. And 96% of those 50 to 64 use the Internet, compared with 75% of those 65 and older who report being internet users.”

So, if you're over 50 and depend on the Internet, how do you protect yourself against the onslaught of cybercriminals who want your money? Let's start with good advice from [Reviews.org](https://www.reviews.org/).

First off, don't share your information online. I'm amazed at the number of folks who scream to the world on Facebook or Instagram that their baby is due on a specific date. Isn't that an invitation to a burglary? I mean, mom and dad are obviously at the hospital. Who's at home watching the turf? Just don't make major personal announcements on social media. You're visiting New Zealand over the summer? Keep it to yourself. Why in the world would you list your departure and return dates online? Talk about an opportunity for burglars.

Before clicking on a web link, hover your cursor over it. You should see where the link takes you in your browser's status bar. This prevents you from visiting a rogue website disguised as a legitimate one.

Use only secure public websites and a trusted VPN (virtual public network.) Logging onto unsecured Wi-Fi at a motel, restaurant, library, or airport is just crazy. If you must log onto an open wireless network, ensure your VPN is up and running. (I use a VPN even when a Wi-Fi password is required.)

Experts say you should only log onto websites that begin with https:, but this isn't always possible. For example, if I visit a specific school from the home page of the largest school district in central Kentucky, the page won't automatically load on my version of Firefox. I have a Firefox add-on installed called HTTPS

Everywhere, which blocks the page and tells me it's not secure.

A button allows me to continue to the http-only site, but the browser add-on is a red flag alerting me to a possible security problem.

There are plenty more basic security tips on the [Reviews.org](https://www.reviews.org/) page. Check them out if you want more security suggestions.

Just because you're over 50 doesn't mean you have to fall for traps designed to steal your money. Be smart. Be safe. Be vigilant. Scammers are out there, even if you cannot see the them.

President's Corner. Most Wished-For New Tech

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood Use Group. www.uchug.org

We seem to have so much technology in our lives - how could we want more? But, I'm writing this on President's Day, and I wonder, if George Washington could be transported in time to today, would he be able to cope in our world? Beyond the social and economic changes, he would face, would he be able to deal with our technology? Cars, trains, airplanes, radio, TV, cell phones, space travel, nuclear bombs - would he be able to understand any of it, or would he want to hide up in a cherry tree? There is a saying: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

If we were able to bring Abe Lincoln to the present day, would he be any better able to understand our world? He would have at least some familiarity with trains and some industrial technology. Since he used the telegraph, he may be better able to cope with our communications tech today. What if we could bring Albert Einstein (who died in 1955) to the present? Would he be astounded by the capabilities of a smartphone?

What new technology would you most like to see introduced this year? This was a question a web app asked my friend's wife. Because she currently has two retirement homes, one in Idaho and one in Arizona, she said what she wanted most was a transporter.

No matter how much tech we have, we still have science fiction, which can drive our desires for more and direct our innovation. For example, everyone has seen Star Trek and its transporter

device, a means to "beam" people and materials from one place to another in almost an instant. My friend and his wife have traveled between their homes many times in the last year, so it was understandable that she would like a way to make that trip more quickly.

The Star Trek transporter is generally portrayed as a circular pad connected to a device or console on the floor. A person on the pad is scanned atomically and then de-materialized, with the data representing their physical manifestation sent to a remote location and re-materialized. Matter, to energy, and back to matter. That seems like it could be in the realm of science and not magic, at least for non-living things. If we can have a 3D printer today using elemental materials, who is to say we couldn't one day print in atomic particles, creating atoms and molecules of any kind?

That is likely the science behind the Star Trek replicator, the cousin of the transporter. It can create inanimate objects of great complexity from a data file, with energy as the only apparent input. From "tea, Earl Grey, hot" to complex parts, the replicator could help feed our world and solve many problems, as long as you could solve the problem of where to plug it in. Of course, Star Trek tech would have to include a powerful green power source like a fusion reactor.

We are starting to take some steps toward the food replicator concept. For example, I've read about a company trying to "grow" animal tissue that can be 3D printed into burgers or steaks. This would provide "cruelty-free" meat that perhaps requires fewer resources than our current agricultural methods.

The Star Trek replicator only made food and parts; it seemed incapable of creating a living object, making it more plausible. Many people, myself included, have concerns about the apparent "destroy, then re-create" operation of the transporter in Star Trek. There were a few episodes in which a character's information was trapped in the device's "pattern buffer" (presumably memory) for years or decades before someone found a way to re-materialize them. In one episode, a transporter malfunction created a second instance of a character. This would have obvious religious implications in the real world, but apparently not in Star Trek.

My preference for quick and distant travel would be by stargate, from the movie "Stargate" and its derivative TV series. In this sci-fi franchise, stargates are devices created by ancient aliens that can connect with a wormhole (a "tunnel" through spacetime). Anything passing into a connected stargate instantly passes through the wormhole and out the stargate at the other end. These seem more supported by science than transporters; now, we need to find those aliens to show us how to build them. Perhaps those aliens in the movie "Contact" could help. If only they'd send us the plans.

My favorite "wish-for" tech device is something I've not specifically seen in any science fiction: the temporal cakebox. My concoction solves one of my most vexing problems: how to fully enjoy my favorite food - chocolate cake. We live in a time of food plenty, with a nice chocolate cake available at Costco for a good price. I'm too thrifty to want to pay for cake by the slice, but I can't (and should not) consume a whole cake in the time before it degrades. So what I need is a temporal cakebox.

I envision the temporal cakebox as a device similar to a large microwave oven. When you buy a cake, you would take a slice, put the remaining cake in the temporal cakebox, close the door and activate it by pressing the Reset button. Later (hopefully at least a day or two), you can return to the temporal cakebox and press the Return button. This would return the inside of the device to the time when you last pressed the Reset button. Then, you could open the cakebox door, remove another slice (just as fresh as when you put the cake in), close the door, and press Reset again. This sequence can be repeated over any timeframe until the cake is gone, with the last slice just as good as the first. Since I'm not violating any laws on the conservation of matter (I'm not creating any cake, just doling it out over spacetime) or making any time travel paradoxes (no cake is going back in time to kill my grandfather), I don't see why the temporal cakebox can't work.

The stereotypically expected technology always involves a flying car. Don't you remember thinking as a child that we would have flying cars by the 21st century? We are almost a quarter of the way through it, and still no flying cars. I can't see that we could have flying cars for the masses unless they were self-flying. Since we can't seem to

perfect self-driving in two dimensions, flying cars seem like a long way off.

Another slightly related tech item is the personal jetpack. Those appear to be available (as well as wingsuits), though they are relatively expensive, in the \$250k to \$500k range. Finally, the personal drone is affordable, though I've yet to see any Amazon delivery drones in my neighborhood.

AI, or artificial intelligence, is being worked on today. It may one day drive our cars, fly our planes, find a solution for global warming or rule us as a benevolent overlord. Right now, all an AI can do is win at Jeopardy and predict what we will buy next. It has been eleven years since the IBM Watson computer beat Ken Jennings on Jeopardy; what has it been doing since then? At least Watson is not trying to invade Ukraine. Or is it? [see the article "Watson Sold Off for Parts" at <https://slate.com/technology/2022/01/ibm-watson-health-failure-artificial-intelligence.htm> editor]

If AI could be made safe and effective, one good use for it would be as a robot helper. Having a few droids around the house to help out would be great. Oh, wait! My wife has a Roomba robot vacuum, though she hardly uses it. So, I guess it is no R2-D2 or C-3PO.

Personal Computer Databases

An Overview

by Tom Burt, Vice President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club. <https://www.scscclb.com>

Introduction

I've spent much of my career in software development, working with various database programs, including a stint at Ashton-Tate / Borland as Director of the dBase development team. For this month's Tech Notes discussion, we'll do an overview of what database technology is available for regular personal computer users. Interestingly, some of the best database programs are free. The tradeoff is that you have to invest some time learning how to use them.

The basic idea of a database is that it's a way to save and organize information so that specific pieces can be quickly retrieved on demand for either display or computational analysis. The most common way this is done is to impose some

tabular structure (rows and columns) on the data so that a standardized set of retrieval interfaces can be used. Such databases are referred to as "relational" databases.

A relational database is comprised of one or more data **tables**.

- Each table contains one or more **rows** of data.
- Each row includes one or more **columns**.
- Individual columns have a column name, a size, and a data type such as text, integer, float, date, or Boolean.
- One column is commonly designated the **primary key** and contains a unique value that can be used to identify and refer to that row in the table.

It's possible to link data from one column of a set of rows in a table to the "key" column of a row in another table, creating a relationship between the "master" row in one table and a set of "detail" rows in another. For example: think of the bill for a meal at a restaurant (a row in the Chits table) with the individual itemized entrees, sides, and beverages as details (one or more rows in the Chit_Items table).

To support data retrieval and other operations (e.g., Add, Update, Delete), relational databases use a special language: **Structured Query Language** (SQL for short, often pronounced "sequel"). Many database programs also have a visual front end that makes it easy to design SQL queries that will retrieve specific subsets of the data.

Spreadsheets

The most straightforward database programs are traditional spreadsheet tools like **MS Excel** or the free **LibreOffice Calc**. These have a natural rows and columns structure. It's easy to sort the rows based on values in various columns. You can set filters on multiple columns to display only a subset of the data. A search can also look for specific values in a column or anywhere in the sheet. You can also include computational columns and rows that aren't part of the actual data but "sum up," count, average, or perhaps show minimum and maximum values.

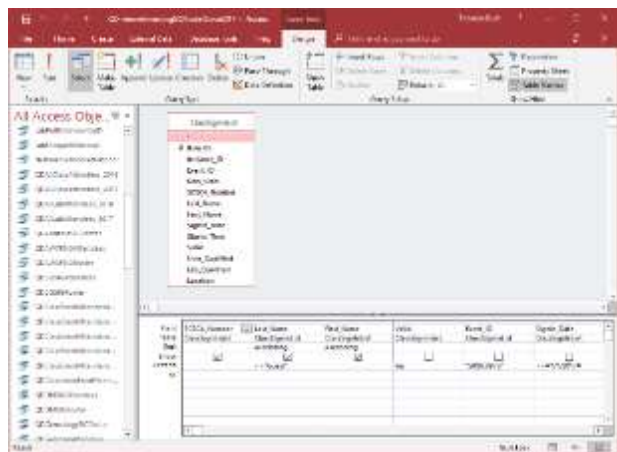
Spreadsheets are great for contact lists, asset tracking, inventories, and catalogs. However, they don't easily support relationships between records in different tables, and there's no SQL support.

“Flat File” Database Programs

Commercial database programs like **MS Access**, Word Perfect **Paradox** (formerly a Borland product), and **Apple FileMaker** are more full-featured database tools with true relational support and SQL support. These tools can build relatively sophisticated applications with complex relational data structures, input forms, result viewers, and printable reports. However, these commercial tools aren't free and take some serious time to learn.

These commercial tools support multiple concurrent users via “file server” locking technology on a local area network. Each user runs their copy of the database “engine” to do reads, inserts, updates, and deletes, which can lead to access contention. Performance can become an issue if more than a few concurrent users access the database file(s).

The screenshot following shows an example of the MS Access visual query designer setting up a query to retrieve a list of club members who attended at least one session of the Internet Investing SIG since January 2017.



MS Access Visual Query Designer

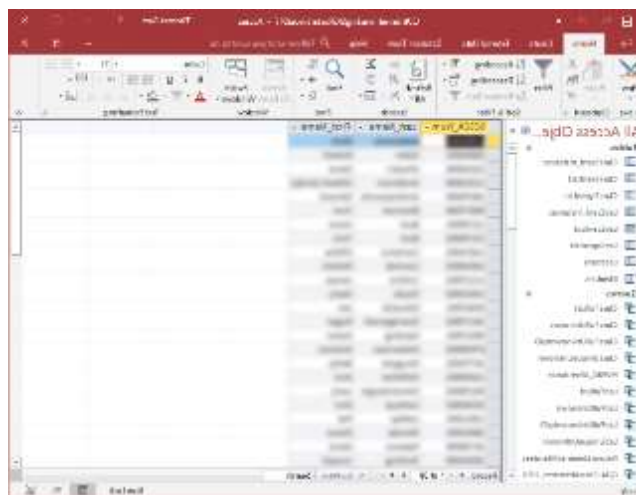
Once the query has been set up, you can click the View button in the ribbon to see the results as a data table. Note that various selection criteria are defined so that we only get the set of rows we're interested in.

The equivalent Structured Query Language (SQL) statement would look like this:

```
SELECT DISTINCT SCSCA_Number,
Last_Name, First_Name FROM
ClassSignInList
```

```
WHERE ((Last_Name<>"Guest") AND
(Valid=Yes) AND (Event_ID="SI0BC097B")
AND (SignIn_Date>=#1/1/2017#)) ORDER BY
Last_Name, First_Name;
```

The SELECT DISTINCT tells the database engine only to return each unique attendee once, no matter how many times that person attended the SIG. Here's a display of the results of running the SELECT query. I've intentionally blurred the results.



MS Access Results Display Members who attended a session of the Investing SIG since 1-1-2017

I use MS Access and its databases (along with the VB.Net programming system) for the Computer Club's membership roster and the event sign-in systems, which has worked very well in those contexts.

A good **free alternative** to commercial programs is **LibreOffice Base**. It also has a nice visual front end. However, the native database engine in Base is fairly limited, so it's best to use Base as a visual front-end to a more sophisticated database engine/server, such as MySQL or PostgreSQL (see below).

Full-Featured FREE Relational Database Servers

I've recently looked at a few free full-featured database server products running on Windows. Of these, Microsoft's **SQL Server Express**, Oracle's **MySQL**, and the open-source **PostgreSQL** all combine high-end server functionality and performance with the ultimate low price (FREE). You can run these on the same PC as your end-user applications, or you can run them on another PC acting as a network database server.

At this point, I'm most familiar with Oracle's **MySQL**, which runs on Windows, Linux, and macOS. I've built an experimental version of the club's sign-in system that uses MySQL databases instead of MS Access. As a true database server engine, its performance on a network is much better than that of MS Access. MySQL is often used as the database engine to support websites. It can scale to retrieve thousands of records per second. Despite this, MySQL was very quick to download and install on my Windows desktop at home. MySQL is accompanied by the **MySQL Workbench** visual front-end, which isn't quite as nice as MS Access but does a decent job. You can get MySQL at: <https://www.mysql.com>.

SQL Server Express is a free download from www.microsoft.com. It is a "light" version of Microsoft's very high-end SQL Server and only runs on Windows. SQL Server Express is high-performance and has an excellent visual front-end for designing and managing databases.

PostgreSQL is a free download from www.postgresql.org. It runs on Windows, Linux, macOS, and Unix. In addition, it has a very rich browser-based visual front-end, **pgAdmin**, for designing and managing databases.

Summary

Depending on your needs and skills, a simple MS Excel or LibreOffice Calc spreadsheet may be the perfect solution for managing your various data collections. Spreadsheets are also easy to back up and share with others.

For more sophisticated users, the flat file database tools may be the way to go – especially if you're

running a small business or supporting a non-profit or charity.

The full-featured database server products may be overkill for a home user, but it's hard to beat the price. To use them, you will need to learn their features, including a working knowledge of the Structured Query Language.

Power Basics

By Dick Maybach, Brookdale Computer User Group. www.bcug.com

Electrical power is remarkably reliable, especially considering that much of the system is exposed to the elements and sometimes wildlife. On the rare occasions when it does fail, it will be helpful if you know a bit about it. Troubleshooting by candlelight is seldom quick, and ignorance won't make it faster.

You may have noticed that electric power enters your home on three wires. Two of these, which we'll call "Phase 1" and "Phase 2," carry 110-V AC, and the third is neutral. Figure 1 shows the waveforms on the "hot" wires; the voltage on the neutral wire is always close to zero.

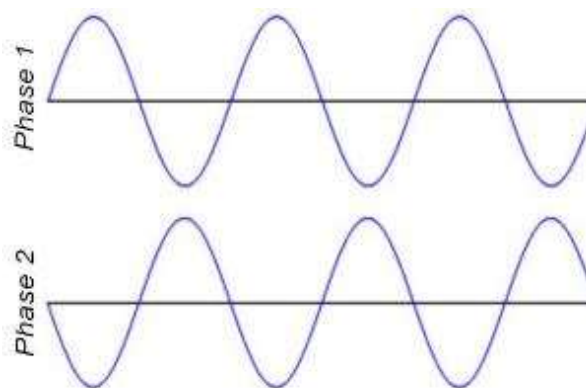


Figure 1. A-C Power Waveforms.

A 110-volt outlet connects to either phase 1 and neutral or phase 2 and neutral. For example, an appliance needing 220 volts connects to both phase 1 and phase 2. Since phase 2 is the negative of phase 1, such a connection applies twice the voltage to the appliance as that between one of the phases and neutral. Thus, although some devices may need 220 volts, the maximum voltage in your house is 110. By the way, if you measure the voltage, you will find it's about 125. When electric

power was first developed, it was 110 volts, but that label is no longer accurate.

Figure 2 shows a portion of a home breaker box, which is the interface between your outlets and devices and the power company. At the top is the master breaker through which all the individual circuits connect. Turn this off to remove all the power in your house. Below are the breakers for the individual circuits. If your home is new, there is probably a sheet on the breaker box cover that lists what each breaker controls. In older houses, this sheet is often out-of-date or even missing. Note that the two top individual breakers are actually two individual ones; these are for 220-volt service. As you go from top to bottom, alternate breakers connect to phase 1 and phase 2. Thus, as breakers are added, the loads on phase 1 and phase 2 remain approximately equal, and adjacent breakers can control 220-volt circuits.

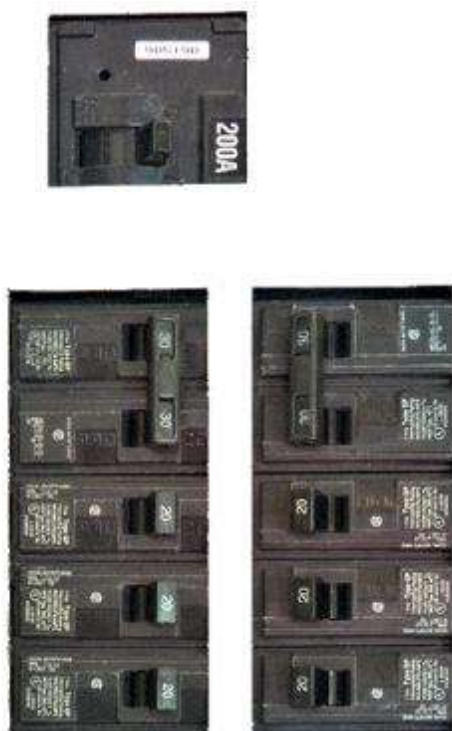


Figure 2. Residential Breaker Box.

There are two types of 110-volt outlets in the U.S., as shown in Figure 3, but the two-wire one is usually found only in older houses.

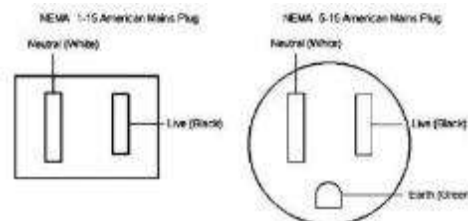


Figure 3. U.S. 110-volt Power Outlets.

The live slot connects to either phase 1 or phase 2 of the incoming power, and neutral connects to neutral. Ground does not connect to the power company but to a good earth ground in your home, typically the incoming water pipe.

You need an adapter between a 3-wire plug and a 2-wire outlet. If you use one, be sure to connect its ground wire to the screw that secures the outlet cover plate. If you have any doubts about your wiring, testers such as the one in Figure 4 are inexpensive insurance. As you can see from its label, the indicator lamp's pattern shows the outlet's state. It's also helpful during the first step of PC troubleshooting, ensuring it has electrical power.



Figure 4. AC Outlet Tester.

You can also use an inexpensive multi-meter to check the voltage at an outlet, but be careful when you insert the probes into the slot; touching 110 volts is always unpleasant and can be lethal. Non-contact testers avoid this hazard, but user reports indicate they aren't reliable.

If a circuit breaker trips repeatedly, either it's defective or the circuit is drawing too much current. Never replace it with one with a higher rating, as the wires in your house are sized to carry currents only up to the breaker rating. In Figure 2, for example, the wires in the 30-ampere circuits are thicker than those in the 20-ampere ones. If you exceed these currents, the voltage at the outlet will drop, and the temperature of the wires in the walls will rise, perhaps enough to degrade the insulation

or even to start a fire. Therefore, any electrical work should be done only by a licensed electrician.

In newer homes, some outlets are protected by a Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI), most often in kitchens, bathrooms, and outside the house. Some, particularly those in kitchens and bathrooms, have a distinctive connector, Figure 5.



Figure 5. GFI Outlet.

If a GFI detects any current flowing to ground, it trips the breaker. Note the two rectangular buttons in the center; "Test" checks the operation by tripping the breaker, and "Reset" restores power. Usually, each GFI outlet connects to two or three others that don't have distinctive buttons but are also protected. It may be worthwhile to press each test button to see what other outlets are affected. Not all GFI-protected circuits have distinctive outlets. Figure 6 shows a portion of a residential breaker box.



Figure 6. Breaker Box Equipped with GFI Breakers.

Note the green squares labeled "Test" on five of them. These are GFI breakers, but all their outlets are normal, with no test or reset buttons. This is probably because the outlets are near the floor and can be obscured by furniture, making them difficult to access.

It would be worthwhile to become familiar with your home electrical power system while it's working.

- Check which lights and outlets each breaker controls and update the sheet on the breaker box cover if needed.
- If you have an older home, use a tester like the one shown in Figure 4 to be sure the outlets are wired correctly. Use the test button on your GFI outlets to find which are on each circuit.
- If you don't have GFI sockets, consider hiring a licensed electrical contractor to install them, at least in your bathrooms and kitchen.

The most frequent power problem is storm damage, usually repaired within a few hours. Gasoline-powered emergency generators are a common solution here but don't use them near your house because of the carbon monoxide they also generate. It's not uncommon for GFI breakers to trip, which is an excellent reason to become familiar with the circuits they control. I've had standard breakers fail, especially when they are old; in such cases, call an electrician.

Internet Tips and Tricks - Can you live without it?

By Jim Cerny, Education Chair and Forums Coordinator. Sarasota Technology Users Group <https://thestug.org/>

Ah, the Internet – gateway to the world, endless knowledge, the master of all trivia, hot breaking news, entertainment, and boundless exploration. We all enjoy the Internet for many reasons. So, let's explore and review some of the basics of the Internet so we can enjoy using it even more.

Here are some terms to understand –

WI-FI – A wireless network using a modem to access the Internet to any device capable of doing so. Your smartphone, iPad, and computer can access a Wi-Fi network IF one is available, and you have the password to use.

MODEM – A device (usually wireless) that allows communication from a computer, phone, etc., to the Internet. Your Internet service provider usually also provides this device to you.

ROUTER – Usually built into the modem, which allows multiple and various devices wireless access to the Internet network simultaneously.

There are two basic ways of accessing the Internet – through your Internet service provider, who allows you access through a modem or the cellular phone network. Many devices can access the Internet either way. Let's start with your cell phone.

Cell phones (or “smartphones” such as the iPhone) were designed to make telephone calls using the cellular telephone network. You purchase (or make payments for) your cell phone and use the cellular network. Your provider probably has an assortment of plans from which you can choose with different monthly rates. If you use your cell phone (or any device that can use the cellular network) to access the Internet, you will pay usage charges depending upon your billing plan. But cell phones can also access the Internet through a Wi-Fi modem – the choice is yours.

With a Wi-Fi modem/router in your home, you can access the Internet (your Wi-Fi network) all you want by paying the monthly access fee to your Internet provider. So the bottom line for keeping your costs down is always using the Internet modem/router rather than the cellular network unless you have a good cellular package that includes many hours of use for your cost. So now here are some tips to help you use the Internet more easily and at less cost.

Go to “settings” on your smartphone and look for “Wi-Fi.” In that option, you will see IF you have Wi-Fi turned on (and it should be) and what networks are in range of your device. You may be at a hotel or a restaurant, but let's look at your home Wi-Fi. Most networks will require a

password to access. Once you enter that password, your phone will remember it so you can get it right the next time you access it. But you should have your password written down! (Use a password manager/JT) You will need it someday, trust me! Most phones will also have a “default” setting to use the cellular network to access the Internet when there is no Wi-Fi network connected. This is handy, but you should be aware of using the cellular network or Wi-Fi to access the Internet.

Many options are available – different rates for different services and speeds, usage time, and devices. It is always wise to contact your provider at least every six months (both cell phone and Internet) and ask if a different plan would be better and cheaper for you. Take a moment to ask Google some good questions such as: “How do I access a Wi-Fi network with my cell phone?” or “How do I access the Internet while traveling?”

These days we all expect Internet access wherever we are; it is a vital necessity for most people. How about you? Could you live without the Internet?

