THE WYSIWYG

May 2017 Volume 29, Issue 5

$3.00

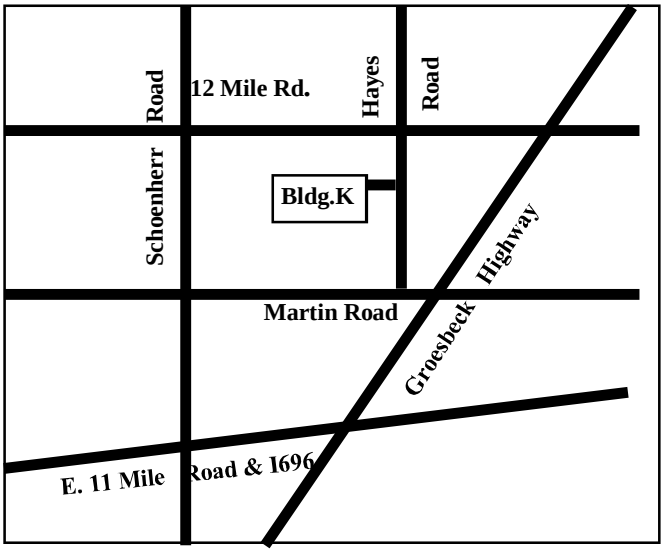
STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385
Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

MAIN MEETING: TUESDAY MAY 2

6:30 PM

Macomb Community College
South Campus
14500 E 12 Mile Road, Warren
John Lewis Community Center
(Building K)



This Month's Main Meeting Topic:

" 'FindAGrave' And Some Genealogy" presented by member Jack Vander-Shrier

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Guests and visitors are welcome. People can attend any SHCC meetings during two consecutive months before deciding to become a member or not. Meetings include the main meeting and SIG. July and August don't count since there is no main meeting. Membership includes admission to all SHCC functions and the newsletter. Membership is open to anyone. It is not limited to the residents of Sterling Heights.

DUES: $25/YEAR

CLUB ADDRESS: PO Box 385, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385
CLUB E-MAIL ADDRESS: Info@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org
CLUB WEB PAGE: http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

Resource People:

Family Tree	Rick Schummer
Firefox	Don VanSyckel
FoxPro	Rick Schummer
General Computer Questions	Jack Vander-Schrier
Hardware	John Rady
MS Publisher	Rick Kucejko
MS Word	Rick Schummer
Spreadsheets	Rick Schummer

2017 SHCC Officers

President: Don VanSyckel
V. President: Mike Bader
Secretary: Rick Kucejko
Treasurer: Bernie DeFazio

SHCC Coordinators:

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Door prizes	Don VanSyckel
Greeter for visitors	Jim Waldrop
Newsletter publisher	Rick Kucejko
Program Coordinator	Mike Bader
Publicity	Patrick Little
Resource People	open
PC SIG	Jack Vander-Shrier
Welcome & check-in desk	Jim Waldrop
Web Site	Don VanSyckel
Web Watch column	Paul Baecker

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

MAY 2017

2 - SHCC - **" 'FindAGrave' And Some Genealogy" presented by member Jack Vander-Shrier**

3 - COMP meeting

14- SEMCO meeting

THE CLUB DOES NOT MEET IN JULY AND AUGUST

JUNE 2017

6 - SHCC - **"HDTV : Current Technologies And Features," presented by Stanley Luhe, assistant store manager of the Madison Heights Best Buy.**

7 - COMP meeting

11- SEMCO meeting

Other Computer Clubs:

As a member of SHCC, you can attend meetings of other clubs where we have reciprocating membership agreements, at no charge.

Computer Club of Marysville and Port Huron (COMP)
Time: 1st Wednesday, 7:00PM
Place: Mackenzie Bldg, Room 201, St Clair Community College, Clara E McKenzie Library-Science Building, 323 Erie St.
Port Huron, MI (810) 982-1187
Web Page: http://www.bwcomp.org
Reciprocating: Yes

South Eastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO)
Time: 2nd Sunday at 1:30PM
Place: Altair, 1820 E Big Beaver Road, Troy, MI 48083
(248) 840-2400
Web page: http://www.semco.org
Reciprocating: Yes

Royal Oak Computer Club
Time: Every Wednesday at 12:30
Place: Mahany/Meineger Senior Community Center 3500 Marais Ave. Royal Oak, MI 48073
248-246-3900
Reciprocating: No

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Jack Vander-Schrier	586-739-5952	jvanders@comcast.net

(**Call Jack after noon**)

Newsletter submissions are due 10 days before the club meeting, but the earlier the better. They should be sent to :
WYSIWYG Publisher
5069 Fedora, Troy, MI 48098
OR at the e-mail addresses: newslet-

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The President's Pen

by Don VanSyckel

Hi, I'm back. For those of you who hadn't heard; I broke my left leg the Sunday before Christmas and had it operated on the Thursday before New Years. The broken leg eventually triggered a huge blood clot and I wound up getting an ambulance ride to the ER the second Wednesday in February. It was so great I stayed for five weeks. The good news is I'm in the 3% that survive the conditions I had and with no long term issues.

Recuperating means you are limited to being on your butt and have a lot of time on your hands, so I thought I'd investigate the alternative video delivery sources, namely the web based services. I investigated the Roku and decide it was the way I wanted to go. Roku's are available various places both locally and on line. Each retailer does not necessarily carry every model Roku so if interested I research on the Roku web site and then find who sells it. All the local stores that sell Roku's sell them at the list price which I found a bit odd.

Roku can output composite video, but in today's electronics, the HDMI output is much better. Online streaming content falls into four categories: the video type and the audio type. YouTube is a crossover because people like me turn on a music channel and listen, rarely looking at the video content. Then within the video and the audio types there are both the free and the pay services.

There really isn't anything that's free. The free content doesn't charge you money, they charge you your time to wade through advertisements. The other issue with the free content such as Crackle, which streams movies free, is that they provide a list of a few hundred movies arranged in a few categories such as comedy, adventure, drama, etc. The list is not alphabetical and there isn't a search function, so finding a movie you're interested in watching is hit or miss, mostly miss. Then when you're watching the movie, the system stops the movie and shows you a couple of ads occasionally. Unlike broadcast TV where ads are inserted at specific points in the show, the ads are apparently inserted on a time basis which can interrupt the movie at awkward points. It was way too much work to use Crackle for way too little benefit. I previewed a couple other free movie sites and they all seemed to have roughly the same format. So I decided free content was too costly.

I then looked at SlingTV and HULU. SlingTV looked good but the $20 per month which they advertise was not going to do it. I would need services in the $60 to $70 per month range. Add on the cost of internet service and I'd be back to what I'm paying for cable TV and Internet now. Various places mentioned that you can use multiple devices such as Roku, a tablet, or a smart phone. Then I had a thought, while they mention different devices, I hadn't seen anything about concurrently. It was an effort but I finally found that one SlingTV or HULU account can only be used by one device at a time. We have four TVs and while my wife and I only use two at a time, two $60 per month subscriptions, plus Internet fee, kills that idea. HULU didn't match our viewing needs as good as SlingTV but that's a person by person thing.

The other advantage to a Roku is you can take it with you when you travel. Most, or at least many, hotels have newer flat screen TVs with an HDMI input. I haven't tried this yet but there is information on the web about how to do it. The only issue is getting the Roku connected to the hotel network if they use a network service with questions you have to answer to connect. If the network is open like a home network, then there should be no issue.

Two of our TVs are smart TVs and two aren't. So that the Roku is not a waste, I intend to move it to one of the regular TVs since it will give that TV all the features we use on the smart TVs.

If your e-mail or mail address changes, please e-mail: secretary@SterlingHeights ComputerClub.org

SIG NOTICES

Jack Vander-Shrier will no longer host the Windows SIG meetings. It has been a long running SIG, and we thank Jack for his commitment to running the SIG. The club is looking for someone else to host it in the future. If no one offers, then the SIG will cease for now.

A few members have indicated interest in resuming the Novice SIG meetings at the Clinton-Macomb main library, as we did a few years ago. Paul Baecker has offered to host them again, but has indicated that he needs some attendance commitments (half a dozen attendees at each meeting) to do so. All members who have interest in resuming the Novice SIG (even those who previously voiced their interest) should email their interest to Paul Baecker, at shccmbr@wowway.com. The Novice SIG meetings would probably be held on a Tuesday evening (pending room availability) once each month or every other month.

Door Prizes

Door prize drawings are held at regular club meetings. The winner's circle for April included:

Ralph Osinski won a mini-hook set

Tom Wojno won a pack of DVD's

Paul Manning won a flashlight

Warner Mach won a head lamp

Bernard DeFazio won a power strip

Font To Use For The WYSIWYG *(INPUT NEEDED)*

Some fonts are easier to read on paper, and some fonts are easier to read on a computer screen. When the WYSIWYG was started, it was all printed on paper. Eventually we added a digital version. Now, most of our newsletters are digital. We have not changed the font since the paper versions.

Below are 2 fonts of the same information. Which is easier to read? If you can see a difference, e-mail which font you think is better for the newsletter. (Send e-mail to **rick@kucejko.com**). Is the one on the left (Font 1) easier to read than the one on the right (Font 2)? If I get no responses, I will assume that the WYSIWYG readers see no difference in the readability for the two fonts.

Presenters Wanted

FONT 1

The officers invite any member to make a presentation at the main meeting.

If there is some software you have been using and think others may be interested as well, or there is a computer topic you would like to present to other members, please call or e-mail Don VanSyckel. Making presentations is not that difficult. The hour goes by before you know it and there is always enough material to cover in a software package so that the hour is easy to fill.

If there is a topic you are interested in or something you would like demonstrated, please see any of the officers. They are always interested in what the members would like to see.

Presenters Wanted

FONT 2

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Are Free Email Services Worth It?

From the Ask Leo Newsletter
https://askleo.com

Free email services and accounts are convenient and ubiquitous, and can be used safely if - and only if - you take responsibility for that safety.

This is a major update to what I consider one of my most important articles, dating all the way back to 2004 (with intermediate updates in 2010 and 2013). My answer has changed from "mostly no" to "mostly yes", with the following important caveats:

- You *must* understand the costs.
- You *must* understand the risks.
- You *must* prepare for disaster.
- You *must* take responsibility.

I'll dive into each of these in detail, but before I do, I'll share one concrete data point: all of my email is currently being processed via free email accounts. Clearly, I believe it can be done safely.

The cost of free email

I'm sure that by now you know *there's no such thing as "free"*. Everything has a cost. It may not be money that comes out of your wallet, but there's always a cost of some sort.

Here are some of the costs associated with free email services:

- **Customer Service (or lack thereof):** For all intents and purposes, *there is no customer service for free email accounts.* While there may be forums, contact forms, and even email addresses that accept your questions, your chances of getting a helpful response are near zero.
- **Advertising:** Most free email services are supported by advertising. You will see ads alongside, or in some cases within, your email, and in some cases, they may be added to your outgoing email.
- **Privacy:** Advertising based on the contents of email raises the issue of privacy; it "reads" your email to determine which ads to display. Some services may also use your information to target ads elsewhere, tailor features and functionality based on your usage, or even share your information – presumably anonymized – with third parties.
- **Spam:** Free email services seem to receive a disproportionate amount of spam. There are theories about why, but you'll receive more spam using a free email service than with most alternatives. Some are better at spam filtering than others, but occasionally, legitimate email will be a casualty.
- **Deliverability:** A lot of SPAM seems to come *from* free email addresses. Spammers regularly abuse free email accounts, or make it look like spam is coming from free email accounts. The result is a built-in penalty: email from a free email service is slightly more likely to be filtered as SPAM.

In my opinion, and based on questions I receive and problems I see every day, the lack of responsive customer

service is the single biggest cost that people "pay" on a regular basis.

The risks of free email
Not a day goes by1 that I don't hear of problems with one of the major free email providers. It's never a problem with the service itself – that always works as expected. The problem is almost always lost email, or a lost or compromised account.

As a result, I can easily identify the single biggest risk for anyone using free email in any way, at any time, and for any reason: lack of customer support. *THERE IS NONE*.

Someday, somehow, you'll run into a problem for which you need help, and *there will be no one to help you*. Period. You will not get help. You're on your own. If you can't figure it out, tough luck. And yes, that often includes losing your email or losing access to your account completely.
You might think I'm being alarmist, but please trust me, I'm not. This is what I see and hear from people desperately asking for help almost every day – help that in most cases, neither I nor anyone else can give.

Preparing for disaster
With all that being said, it is possible to use free email accounts quite safely. I do it.
You simply need to prepare.
Being prepared really boils down to a list of "do's and don't's" you've probably heard before.

- **Use a strong password.** Many hacks result from simply guessing your password. You should use *at least* a 12-character password these days, ideally with random characters. See What's a good password? for more.

- **Use two-factor authentication**. Sometimes referred to as multi-factor, or simply "2FA", knowing the account password is not enough to log in on a machine that hasn't been used previously – like an overseas hacker's machine.

- **Don't share your password** with anyone. Accounts are often hacked by ex-friends and ex-spouses who were given the password in better days. Planning to change passwords when you break up doesn't work; often the account theft happens *before* the breakup (or even causes it).

- **Don't write your password down.** If you must, keep it in a locked drawer, a safety deposit box, or something similar. *Written-down passwords will be found.* Consider using an encrypting password vault like LastPass to remember your passwords for you. This also makes it simple to use exceptionally strong passwords you don't need to remember yourself.

- **Don't log in to your account on any computer you don't control, *ever*.** Public or shared computers are a goldmine for account thieves and hackers. I often hear from people who checked email at a "friends" house, (or worse – a public library), only to find their account quickly compromised.

- **Don't log in to your account over unencrypted or "open" Wi-Fi hotspot connections.** Fortunately, most web-based services use https, which is encrypted. The problem is when they are unencrypted, anyone within range can capture your username and password. See How Do I Use an Open Wi-Fi Hotspot Safely? for more.

- **Keep your machine clear of malware.** This could be another list of "don't's" all by itself. Don't open attachments you don't expect, don't download from sites that aren't known to be absolutely trustworthy, run up-to-date anti-malware software, keep all your software up-to-date, and so on. See Internet Safety: 7 Steps to Keeping Your Computer Safe on the Internet for more.

- **Don't fall for phishing scams.** No legitimate service will *ever* ask you for your password in an email. If you're not sure, check with the service directly *by visiting their web site*. Do not respond to email that asks for your password, *ever*.

- **Keep your recovery information up-to-date.** This one is hard to stress enough. When (not if) you run into problems at the account level – perhaps a forgotten password, or even a compromised account – it's the recovery information, like a phone number or alternate email address, that will save you. If you don't have those, or they're no longer accurate, *you will very likely lose your account completely*. In fact, I call it A One Step Way to Lose Your Account … Forever.

- **Back up.** I don't mean your PC (though of course you should back that up too); I mean back up the contents of your online free email account. Should the worst happen and you lose access to your online account, a backup copy of your email and contacts will help at least mitigate the disaster. I recommend backing up to your PC using an email program like Thunderbird.

All the recommendations apply to any email service, regardless of how you access it. In fact, those recommendations apply to *any* online service, not just email.

Here's a quick rule of thumb to help judge if any of this matters: if your free email account went away completely tomorrow, along with all of the mail and contact information that it contains, would it be an inconvenience or a catastrophe? If the latter, you need to prepare. **Now**.

How I use free email
As mentioned, I use free email – specifically Google's Gmail – for all my email. I do this mostly for the spam filtering, and for the ubiquity and power of the Gmail web interface.

But you'll rarely, if ever, see my "gmail address". All of my email addresses are on domains that I control. For example, email sent to leo@askleo.com will eventually end up in a Gmail account.

Replies will come "from" leo@askleo.com. It's very possible my correspondents have no idea that Gmail is involved at all.

In the unlikely event that I lose my Gmail account, I simply set up a new one and route my askleo.com email through or to it. In fact, it doesn't even have to be a Gmail account; I could elect to move to a Microsoft account, a Yahoo! account, or ever start handling email directly on askleo.com without using a free email account at all.

There's more about the technique in my *Ask Leo! On Business* article, Use Gmail to Handle Your Email.

Taking responsibility
Most of what I mean by being prepared is taking *personal* responsibility for the security, integrity, and reliability of your own email.

It's *your* responsibility to ensure that your account is maintained securely. It's *your* responsibility to back it up in case of data loss. It's *your* responsibility to have the information and procedures in place to be ready to deal with account lockouts, theft, or just about any hiccup that might come along.

It's *your* responsibility to deal with any and all problems that come up.
Always assume there will be no help. It's all on you.

If that's not acceptable, you shouldn't be using a free email account at all. Look for alternatives that, at a minimum, offer more comprehensive customer support.

Free email is ideal for some things
Free email accounts can be used with less concern for purposes that are less important than "real" email.

Throw-away accounts:
Free accounts are *perfect* when you really don't care what happens. They're great when you need an email address for a company that might spam you later. They're useful if you need or want to remain anonymous, or otherwise separate that email from your important stuff.

The risk is that while you might *think* it's unimportant, it turns out that it really is. Back to the rule of thumb: if the email account went away *completely* and without warning, would it matter? If the answer is anything other than a hearty and well-considered "No!", it's not really a throw-away account.

SPAM filters: In an ironic twist, Google Mail (Gmail) turns out to have a very robust spam *filter*. Yes, your Gmail account will get tons of spam, as all the free services do, but Google's spam filters are (as I write this) the best I've seen at filtering out spam. In fact, it's what first attracted me to using Gmail for the majority of my own email.

Service access: Sometimes you simply have to have an email address with a particular service to access certain functions. My Hotmail account is my Microsoft account, my Yahoo account is what I use for Flickr (a Yahoo service), and my Gmail account is how I access Google-related services. Even if I never use these free accounts for any email at all, they're important, and need to be treated responsibly.
Can you use free email "for real"?
Yes, but…

Remember: if you lose your free email account for any reason, it is likely you will *not* get it back. It's possible, but in my years of experience, it's unlikely. When it happens, you lose your email address – permanently. People who send email to that address will not reach you, and may in fact be emailing the hacker who stole your account.

It's a fundamental risk of a system that has little or no customer service *because it's free.*
You can, however, minimize your exposure by preparing for disaster, as outlined above. That's the first step – or rather list of steps – to safely use a free email account "for real".

By far the single most important thing you can do is to consider what happens if your free email account were not there tomorrow, and take responsibility for making sure that doesn't happen – or has as little impact as possible if it does.

Years of reader questions and reported problems only continue to strengthen my position.

This article is republished, with permission, from the Ask Leo! Newsletter.

Back to Basics: Using Windows Explorer Is a Must

by Jim Cerny, Chairman, Sarasota Technology UG, Florida
www.thestug.org jimcerny123@gmail.com

This is an article on the basic use of Windows Explorer (known as File Explorer in Windows 10). It is very important for ALL VERSIONS of Windows users. This program (or app) allows you to do everything you can think of with FILES and FOLDERS. The icons for this app (see illustration) have not changed very much over the years. It is basically a yellow folder.

What's the big deal?
I have taught classes many times on using "Files and Folders" or "Computer Organization" and in every class many students were amazed to discover answers to most of their computer frustrations just by learning how to use this one app or program. Even if you have used this app before, I believe reading these articles will help you discover more or easier ways to help you with your Windows computer.

Windows Explorer (or File Explorer in Windows 10)
Why they changed the name I'll never know. It can easily perform the following functions. Have you ever wanted to do any of these things?

- Organize all your files and folders on your computer and other memory devices.

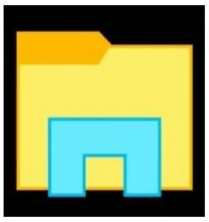
- Move, copy, delete, and rename files and folders
- Create new folders
- Copy files and folders TO and FROM other devices such as other drives, phones, cameras, disks, etc.

Create quick and easy backups of your stuff.

Please take a look at the large illustration of a sample of the File Explorer window – I will be referring to it. Please remember that this app or program is in ALL versions of Windows and the functions are basically the same. So let's get started simply by understanding what this app shows you in its window without really doing or changing anything.

Windows 7

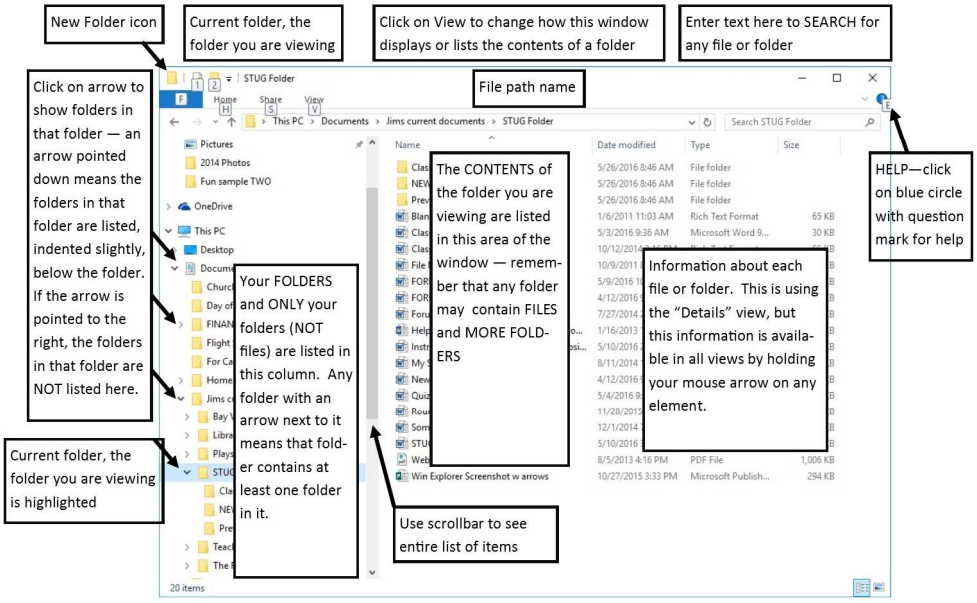
Windows Explorer



Windows 10

File Explorer

BASIC WINDOWS 10 FILE EXPLORER ELEMENTS



It may help you to think of a steel filing cabinet in an office. You don't want to just throw things into the drawer, you would never be able to find an item without searching through everything. So you use a FOLDER and write a NAME on the folder and put things INTO that folder so you can find them.

Everyone has done that, right? Remember that you can put a folder INTO a folder too – so you could have one big folder that you have named "Home Expenses" and have folders IN that folder such as "Electric bills", "Phone bills", "Water bills", etc. So, to get to a specific electric bill you would have to first look IN the "Home Expenses" folder and then open the "Electric bills" folder in it. It's not too hard, right?

Basically, the File Explorer app is a way to find and organize anything in memory on your computer's C drive and any memory device connected to your computer. This is one app that I think Windows has done pretty well to help us all use our computer. The app window has two basic areas (called window "panes", get it?), a left pane and a right. The LEFT pane contains the list of FOLDERS and only folders. You will never see a "file" in this list! The RIGHT pane displays the contents of any folder you have selected in the left pane. When you click on a folder name in the left column, the contents of that folder appears in the right area of the window. EVERYTHING on your computer is organized in FOLDERS. You could think of your entire "C" drive as one big folder. If you connect another drive, that whole drive is a folder as well. Your C drive contains hundreds or thousands of folders, way too many to see them all at one time in the list on the left, so only the highest level of folders are shown in the list.

If a folder in this list contains at least one folder, then there will be an arrowhead ">" next to the folder name pointing to the right. If you click on this arrowhead (which is pointing to the right) it will change to an arrow pointing DOWN ("v") and will display below, indented, the names of all the FOLDERS in that folder. Thus you can view the contents of any folder on any memory device connected to your computer.

If you connect another drive, for example, to your computer, that drive or disc will be given a letter (such as "E" or "F"), which is a folder. You will see it appear in the folder list on the left probably at the bottom of the list. You can explore all you want to look to see what is in any folder on your computer. But remember that YOUR stuff, YOUR files, are in folders put there for YOUR use – such as "Documents" (or "My documents"), "Pictures", "Music", etc. Windows has and needs hundreds of other folders to store their stuff too, so do not go changing any files or folders in their folders. Stay in your folders. Although any folder may contain ANY kind of a file, the folders provided for

you with Windows means you should put all photo files into "Pictures", all documents into "Documents", etc.

So you can see that folders, which can contain files and more folders, are organized like an "outline" that you did in grade school. You have Roman numerals I, II, III, IV, etc. and under each of these you have the capital letters A, B, C, etc. and under each of them could be numbers 1, 2, 3, etc. Each level is indented slightly to show you visually that a list is contained within the element above, etc. Folders are LOCATIONS in your computer's memory into which you put your FILES (or more folders).

Now it's your turn. Open your Windows Explorer or File Explorer app and open some folders to see what is inside them. Use the scrollbars (if they appear) to scroll up and down the lists. When you have clicked on a folder, the contents of that folder will appear in the right pane. Click on some arrows to see how you can list the folders in a folder. Try to stay within your "Documents" or "Pictures" folders. Doing this will only display what you have and will NOT CHANGE anything, so don't worry about messing anything up.

We will get to moving things around in another article.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

How Do I Protect Myself From My ISP?

From the Ask Leo Newsletter
https://askleo.com

I know you'll think I'm nuts, but I'm absolutely convinced my ISP is snooping on what I do and reporting it to the government. I know you said my ISP can see everything, but … how do I stop them?

This is a composite question crafted from the many variations on the theme that, over the years, keep coming from time to time.

While I don't actually think people are nuts, I do think that 99% of the time, they are mistaken, misled, or misinformed.

The 1%, however, can be all too real for some people.

Your ISP really doesn't care
For at least 99% of internet users: your ISP doesn't care what you do, where you go, or what you use their connection for. You and I just aren't that interesting. No one is watching you. No one is monitoring your online behavior. No one is updating your "permanent record" with your digital exploits.

If you look carefully at the terms of service you probably agreed to when you established your internet connectivity, you'll probably see there are a couple of things your ISP *does* care about – the most blatant being excessive use for whatever account type you have. So, in that sense, they might be keeping loose track of how many bytes you upload or download over some period of time. If you exceed some threshold, they might tap you on the shoulder and ask you to slow down, or pay more, or in the worst case, find a different ISP. Or they might just slow your connection. But chances are they're not looking at *what* you're doing – just keeping an eye on how much.

Your ISP may also respond to complaints about your usage, some of which we'll see next, but it's not something they proactively look for. They have better things to do with their time and resources.

When your ISP does care
There are some things an ISP might choose to care about – either on their own, in response to complaints, or at the request of others.

- Large media companies might ask your ISP to track large downloads to identify people downloading copyrighted material.
- If they suspect you are involved in some kind of criminal activity, law enforcement agencies might ask – or even require – your ISP to track your activity.
- Overly oppressive governments might require ISPs to monitor the actions of their citizens more actively.

Of course, your employer can certainly monitor your usage of the connections they provide for a variety of reasons, as can public or private institutions like libraries, internet cafés, or others.

Perhaps more realistically, since anyone who provides your connection to the internet *is your ISP*, your landlord, the hotel's IT "department", or the stranger in the corner at a coffee shop with Wi-Fi could all just be nosy, for whatever reason.

Then what?

Option 1: Choose a different ISP
The first, knee-jerk reaction is that if you don't trust your ISP, find another ISP.

In some cases, that's simply not practical. In areas that have a monopoly provider, you might only have one choice.

Switching may also not be practical. Often, when there are alternate providers, the cost, performance, or service differential is high. You might find yourself an ISP you can trust, only to find their offerings come with significantly slower speeds or reliability.

Switching may also not be cost effective. Only you can determine the relative priority of the threat versus the potential of increased costs incurred by choosing a different provider.

In a home or business environment, the options typically boil down to cable, telephone/DSL, or wireless. You'll need to take into account the

different cost/performance/service tradeoffs of each.

Of course, all this assumes you can find service from an ISP that you would trust any more than the one you currently have. If you can, and they meet your needs, this option can be the simplest in the long run.

Option 2: Use a VPN

The classic solution for protecting yourself over an untrusted connection of any sort is to use a VPN, or Virtual Private Network.

When using a VPN, your device creates an encrypted connection to that VPN's servers, and all of your internet traffic is routed through that connection. All your ISP sees is that you've connected to a remote server using an encrypted protocol; it cannot see what actually transpires over that connection.

This makes a VPN a perfect solution for travelers who regularly use otherwise untrusted connections, such as those in airports, hotels, and coffee shops.

It also means a VPN is a potential solution for any untrusted connection, even if that untrusted connection is your home internet, as provided by your ISP.

VPNs are not without issues, however.

The cost of a VPN

Using a VPN typically involves two types of costs: monetary and performance – and these two costs are often at odds.

There are free VPN services out there, but they often have poor performance. Spending money to purchase a VPN subscription typically means you'll get better service and speeds.

This ends up becoming important because when using a VPN, you're adding an additional layer of complexity to everything being communicated over your internet connection. The data itself is "wrapped" in a layer of encryption, and it's all routed through extra servers run by the VPN. While slower speeds are perhaps tolerable periodically while traveling, if you're constantly using a VPN at home, you probably want it to impact your experience as little as possible.

The privacy of a VPN

One thing many people overlook is that when using a VPN, in a very real sense that VPN *becomes* your ISP. While the ISP can no longer see everything you do, the VPN service can. All of your internet activity is routed through their servers.

Therefore, it's important to select a VPN provider you trust – presumably more than you trust your ISP.

What your ISP can still see

There's one important thing your ISP can most definitely see that there's simply no practical way around: your ISP can see that you're using a VPN. In fact, they can probably see *which* VPN service you're using.

Indeed, some governments have gone so far as to outlaw VPN connections, or to block as many VPN providers as they can keep track of, to prevent you from bypassing their mandated monitoring.

Option 3: Don't use your ISP

This is the most cumbersome and perhaps even impractical option. In a way, it's really the same as option #1, but with more legwork.

If you can't get an alternate ISP for your location, and using a VPN isn't an appropriate approach for you, then the only real solution is to go elsewhere. By that, I mean when you want to use the internet, take a laptop to a location with an ISP you can trust.

What that might be, I can't tell you. It could be the coffee shop or library down the street – but then you'd probably want that VPN. It could be a friend's house, or your place of work – again, as long as their ISPs are more trustworthy to you.

But if you can't "fix" or bypass the internet connection at home, and you can't trust it, then you shouldn't use it… at least not for anything you consider sensitive.

Postscript: I'm soaking in it

I trust my ISP. I trust that my ISP cares little about me, as long as I pay my bills and cause them no problems. As a result, while I have a subscription to a VPN service (TunnelBear), I don't regularly use it at home.

I decided to try it out while researching and writing this article, so I enabled the VPN here on my desktop at home. I confirmed (via my own "what's my IP address" page) that my IP address had changed, and that I was indeed connecting to the internet from a different location – New York, it would appear, as opposed to my ISP's normal point of presence here in Washington State.

Everything kept working, albeit ever so slightly more slowly. My web browsing continued; my remote server connections disconnected when the change was made, but quickly reconnected and continued to work; Dropbox, OneDrive, and Google Drive all reconnected and kept on synchronizing.

Running everything through a VPN is possible, but as I said, it's unlikely you actually need to; and which one to trust is also going to be a function of your specific situation as well.

This article is republished, with permission, from the Ask Leo! Newsletter.

Last Month's Meeting

Last month Deputy Jaime Martinez of the Macomb County Sheriff's office was to present "Identity Theft". Unfortunately Deputy Martinez was unexpectedly in the hospital so Deputy Keith Thome presented instead. This topic was timely and can help you avoid issues that can be both costly and time consuming. The presentation was well received by all in attendance.

I Feel The Need For Speed!

by Greg Skalka, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
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This quote from the 1986 hit movie "Top Gun" states what we all strive for in the end - faster and better. Though now thirty years old, this movie is still one of my favorites. At the time, it seemed to portray an exciting, high-tech world. Young naval aviators Maverick and Goose fly their F-14 Tomcat fighter jet off aircraft carriers and go supersonic, have mock engagements with "enemy" aircraft in the Top Gun Naval Fighter Weapons School and shoot down MiGs with guided missiles and sophisticated radars. Yet 1986 was a long time ago, before the commercial Internet, cell phones and a lot of the technology that we take for granted today. A lot of 1986 tech seems almost antiquated by today's standards. We have come a long way since then in many ways, but in other ways not so much, and progress has usually come at a cost.

The cost of the Grumman F-14 Tomcat fighter that Maverick piloted thirty years ago was around $38 million dollars. Today's new Navy-version Lockheed Martin F-35C Lightning fighter costs $337 million apiece. Though it is meant to perform the same job as the Tomcat, today's Maverick would have to dump Goose, as the F-35C is a smaller single-seat, single-engine plane. For ten times the per unit cost, Maverick would get tremendously better radars, weapons and electronics in the F-35C. Based on that, New Maverick should be able to easily shoot down Old Maverick's F-14. His need for actual speed may not be helped, however. Though the F-35C and other modern military aircraft have become more efficient over the years, the advertised top speed of the F-35 (1199 mph) is actually less than the F-14 (1544 mph). Sorry, New Mav!

Automobiles have seen progress in a lot of the same ways as military aircraft over the last thirty years. No, you can't shoot a missile at that guy that just sits there at the light though it has turned green, but our cars are now packed full of electronics and technology. They can't drive any faster, but they do cost a lot more.

The first new car I bought for my wife was a 1986 Ford Tempo, a five-passenger sedan with a four-cylinder engine. We had been married for a little less than a year, and were planning to start a family. We would need something a little bigger and safer than her old Pinto, and with more seating than my two-seat pickup truck.

Like the F-14, the Tempo had some electronics, but it was pretty basic by today's standards. It was the first car I ever owned without a carburetor, having electronic fuel injection (how high-tech!), which I hoped at that point was a mature technology, as I performed my own auto servicing. The entertainment system consisted of a dial-tuned AM/FM radio and cassette tape player. All the instrumentation was analog; the only digital readout in the entire car was the LCD clock in the middle of the dash. We bought a fairly basic four-door model, but there were not many options available in those days, anyway. I was able to find the purchase contract for the car after all these years (I really need to scan and/or shred the contents of that old file cabinet); we paid $10K for it brand new.

Fast-forward 30 years, and my wife just got another new car (unfortunately not the second new car I bought her). She now drives a 2016 Hyundai Tucson Eco. It is a compact SUV and so is a little bigger than that Tempo was. Unlike the Tempo, it is loaded with electronics and high-tech stuff. The 1.6L Turbo four-cylinder engine is a little smaller than the 2.0L engine in the Tempo, but is completely electronically controlled and has better performance (power and gas mileage). Our Tempo had a five-speed manual transmission. The Tucson has an electronically controlled seven-speed dual clutch transmission. For better fuel economy, the transmission, essentially a manual transmission, has standard clutches, instead of a fluid torque converter. The clutches and transmission are controlled and actuated electronically, so to the driver it acts like an automatic transmission.

The Tucson has a digital dash display, as well as a center display for the entertainment system. It has an integrated digital AM/FM radio and satellite radio, and can play digital audio files on memory sticks plugged into the dashboard USB connector. It of course has Bluetooth to integrate your smart phone into the sound system and display. It has a lot more capability than the old Tempo and should be more reliable, but it also cost around $25K, and can't really get you there any faster.

It seems funny to think about it now, but in 1986 Maverick and his friends had no Internet and no cell phones. A movie about Navy pilots today would no doubt show them on their smart phones all the time. The only phone scene I recall from Top Gun showed "Wolfman" on a pay phone, a piece of technology you would be hard pressed to find today. The World Wide Web was born in 1991, with dial-up commercial Internet access starting in 1992. I remember as UCHUG secretary sending my meeting minutes to the edi-

tor, then he, via a dial-up connection to a BBS (bulletin board system). That 56K modem seemed fast back then, but as the Internet became more popular and filled with features, we all felt the need for more speed.

I found some old bills that showed I had EarthLink High Speed Internet through Time Warner Cable in early 2004. I don't know how fast it was then, but it cost $42 per month. Over the years, TWC hid the cost of my Internet access in a "bundle" with TV. Adding in DVRs and other charges, my total bill grew to be around $170. I did see an increase in speed over those years; my access got up to 17 Mbps download, 1.2 Mbps upload, which is pretty reasonable. Still, the bill seemed high and only seemed to go one way - up.

My parents have been complaining about how slow their computers have become over the last year. My dad thought their computers were just getting old and had bought a new one for my mom, but when I was there to help him set it up for her and performed an ISP speed test, I found their real problem was a slow Internet connection. Their basic DSL service was only giving them 1.7 Mbps download and around 200K upload. At those speeds, a Yahoo home page filled with photos and other fluff took a minute or more to load. It was like being back in the days of dial-up.

After researching their ISP's current DSL plans, we found they could up their speed considerably for not much more cost. Their old house phone wiring limited them somewhat in how fast a service they could get, but in the end they were able to increase access to 15 Mbps, which made their old computers work on the Internet just fine. Sometimes a little speed is all you need.

Meanwhile, my wife was approached by someone from AT&T, who reminded us that they had pulled fiber up our street a few years back, and now that they had bought DirecTV, they could offer much faster Internet and satellite TV for a lower combined cost. In the end, we saved $40 per month and got better TV, a tremendously bigger DVR and 50 Mbps download, 5 Mbps upload Internet. Finally the speed I need!

The switchover was not without its issues, however. The change to DirecTV was easy and problem-free. The Internet access was a bit more challenging. Though they claim to have fiber in the box in my front yard, it still must come the 20 feet into my garage on buried twisted pair phone lines. It took two separate installation visits, but they were somehow finally able to get the 50 Mbps they promised (and I checked it) out of their box in my garage (where the phone line comes in). Unfortunately, their equipment was a little different from what I was used to. I had previously used a TWC cable modem, followed by my own router. Since I have network cameras and network hard drives that require specific router settings to work, I wanted to continue using my old router as configured. Unfortunately, AT&T supplies a combination DSL modem / router with this service, and I could not figure out a way to bypass the router.

I tried many times to configure things so I could connect my router's WAN input to their router's LAN output. I was able to set this up with a spare router, but was unsuccessful in doing so with my old router. I finally gave up on my old router and tried to use the router in the AT&T box. After playing with the settings in their router for a few days (port forwarding was required), I was able to get almost all of my home network working.

I still have a few network items to clean up, but I'm finally getting their advertised service speed and saving money. Now when I feel the need for speed, I have it. So far it seems fast enough (though not fast enough to "take my breath away"), but is anything really enough in the long term?

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Browser Pop-up Scams

By David Kretchmar, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV
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Windows 10 has proven itself to be the most secure Windows operating system ever, so hackers seem to be turning to another vulnerability. Browsers (Internet Explorer, Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome) are becoming a prime target of scammers.

If you are at all adventuresome exploring the Internet, you probably have had a browsing session interrupted by a pop-up visual often accompanied by an obnoxious audio warning to the effect that your computer has been infected and you must call a toll-free 800 (or 8XX) number to prevent something terrible from happening to your hard drive or data.

This warning is bogus; often this "threat" can be deleted by simply closing your browser.

To protect yourself from serious malware infection, you must be careful about how you close a pop-up window. Specifically, you should never click anywhere in a pop-up window. Even buttons labeled "Cancel" or "Close" or a red-X button in the upper-right corner are dangerous to click; doing so could trigger an infection.

To safely close a pop-up window, locate the button in your Taskbar that represents your browser. Also, look for other highlighted icons on the Taskbar; the button and the pop-up will usually have a similar name. Right click on the button and select Close.

If that doesn't work, you need to use the Windows Task Manager to close the pop-up. Simultaneously press the CTRL, ALT, and DEL keys, and, from the resulting window, select "Task Manager". In the Task Manager, under the Processes tab, highlight your browser application and click the End Task button. It is probably a good idea to close all applications except the Task Manager, unless you are comfortable identifying non-problem items.

Occasionally you will have to power down your system to remove the problem, either by holding in the start button on your computer for 10 or so seconds, or unplugging your tower. If the problem occurs on a laptop computer, naturally the battery must also be removed to completely power down the computer.

What has happened to the system? Usually the pop-up described above does no lasting damage to your computer. It is "only" a URL (Internet site) function with some unique properties. The purpose of the URL function, which you experience as a pop-up, is to frighten the user into calling the toll-free number. A con-man (it seems to usually be a male) probably on the other side of the world will attempt to extract as much money and data from you as possible to remove the threat.

Usually the scammer will attempt to get the caller to initiate a remote connection to the victimized computer. The remote connection can then be used to make it appear that the scammer is examining your system and often additional software, such as a Citrix program, which is a legitimate application, is loaded into your system to increase the scammer's control of your computer.

Never call any phone number that appears. The scammer might trick you into granting them remote control of your computer. This might, enable them to install a "backdoor", granting scammers the unfettered ability, now and in the future, to harvest any or all the information contained on your system, to be used for any purpose. Never allow anyone you don't know to remotely log in to and use a computer that you own and control.

Inevitably the scammer discovers some terrible problem with your computer. You are informed that you will be required to pay a substantial fee to have the problem removed and/or prevent future problems.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

Netiquette: Forwards

Contributed by Melanie Birnbom, Century Village Computer Club, FL
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It is important to use good manners when forwarding e-mails. Now and again, we all see an interesting message that we might want to share with friends, so we forward it along.

However, other folks practice mass-forwarding. They forward every joke, prayer chain, political e-mail, funny image, urban legend or anything else they can get their hands to everyone they know, including people who are business contacts. That many messages can clog up already full inboxes. It also makes people less likely to notice an actual important e-mail from you.

Always avoid sending items like forwards to your friends' work e-mail addresses.

Some examples of emails that should be forwarded using caution are:

Think back to the days of phone calls and letters. You might call someone up or write them a letter if you saw something interesting, but would you make seven separate phone calls in a day or write seven letters?

One way to be sure you aren't bombarding your friends is to ask if they want to receive fun forwards or not. But don't be offended if they say they don't have the time. Or consider combining the information into one e-mail featuring the best things you've seen recently. That takes a little copying and pasting, but a lot of folks actually do that. It's a convenient way for friends to enjoy things you want to share.

Another considerate thing to do is not to use a "send all" function or go down and select everyone on your list of contacts.

Think carefully about whether or not the person will really be interested. This is also where you can make specific lists of folks to receive jokes or political e-mails after you check with them to see if they are interested.

Social media, such as Facebook, is a great outlet for sharing news stories and jokes. There's less likelihood of some type of important communication getting buried in a pile or forwards and it was specifically designed for sharing that type of information.

This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups.

SHCC Emergency Cancellation

Sterling Heights Computer Club meets at Macomb Community College (MCC). We will meet if MCC is open and will not if MCC is closed. MCC closure is announced with other school closings on many local TV and radio stations and on their web site. All members of SHCC have an email address. One of the SHCC officers will send an email to the addresses SHCC has on file alerting members to the event cancellation. If your email is broken, call an officer; don't leave a message, call another officer if you don't talk to someone live. It is your responsibility to keep the email address you have listed with SHCC current.

WYSIWYG WEB WATCH (www)

by Paul Baecker webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org

This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing, and free content, with no overbearing pressure to purchase anything. Club members are encouraged to submit favorite sites (a description is optional) to the e-address noted above, for inclusion in a future WYSIWYG issue. Also check the SHCC web site ("Web Page Reviews") for previous gems.

A full screen, 360-degree image lets you virtually travel to some of the most beautiful sites in the world, and the ability to look in any direction. 80+ locations visited here.
http://www.fullscreen360.com

Comprehensive guide to the national parks, national monuments and natural landscapes of Western and Southwestern USA.
http://www.americansouthwest.net

"Drench" the board with a single color to win the game, and move to progressively more challenging designs. Use the buttons to change colors.
http://www.flashbynight.com/drench/

Concerned about the security of your Wi-Fi connection? You should be. Follow these steps and you'll be in a wireless Fort Knox.
http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2409751,00.asp

Free tool to split or merge PDF files safely on your computer (not online).
https://sourceforge.net/projects/pdfmerge/

This Russian site offers an extensive automobile encyclopedia of common and very rare domestic and foreign auto brands, from the late 1800s to the present. Of particular interest: the "Twins" and "Mostly" menu options. Use Google Translate where necessary.
http://en.wheelsage.org

The very young Louisville Leopard Percussionists play some Led Zeppelin tunes.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JYuOZnAqQCY

You ARE being watched. Private and state-sponsored organizations are monitoring and recording your online activities. "privacytools.io" provides knowledge and tools to protect your privacy against global mass surveillance. This deserves your attention.
https://privacytoolsio.github.io/privacytools.io/

Where is the red? A game of visual skill.
https://butchersworkshop.com/witr/

More and more people are going cellular. Should you keep your landline?
http://tech-moxie.com/should-you-keep-your-landline/

When you are shopping for a replacement TV, should you buy a Roku Box or a new Smart TV?
http://www.guidingtech.com/61986/roku-or-smart-tv/

Ad blockers – for better or worse? An opinion about ad blockers for browsers and mobile devices.
http://www.wonderoftech.com/ad-blockers/

Create an origami battle tank. Create a few more and have your own skirmish.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sn0EVsRh8IY

Visual and auditory speed of sound phenomenon viewed through the flight of F-14s, standard and Blue Angels F-18s, plus the SR-71 and an Atlas Rocket launch. (3 min. video)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gWGLAAYdbbc

Turns your PC into a fully-featured music recording studio, with a sequencer and a collection of sounds, loops and virtual instruments to play with. Previously at cost, now free.
http://www.magix.com/us/music-maker/free/

50 different types of ruled paper, customized to your preferred line spacing, margin sizes, the color of the ruling lines, and so on, and then downloaded as PDF files.
http://incompetech.com/graphpaper/

A U.S. court decides that name searching in a web browser makes YOU a suspect. What should you be doing now to protect your digital signature?
https://www.bestvpn.com/edina-warrant-google-search

Fan blog for sharing information, articles, and news about Linux, Ubuntu, and free opensource software.
http://www.ubuntubuzz.com

Collection database of census records, death/marriage/birth records, DNA testing, immigration and military records.
http://www.mooseroots.com

Large collection of Canadian trains, cabooses, stations, artifacts, scrap yards, maintenance equipment, bridges/trestles, much more.
http://yourrailwaypictures.com

View the world through live webcams -- beaches, city views, landscapes, more.
https://www.skylinewebcams.com

How to rescue your PC from ransomware.
http://www.pcworld.com/article/2084002/security/how-to-rescue-your-pc-from-ransomware.html

From classics to supercars, restoration projects to road tests, Jay Leno's Garage is the place where Jay shares his passion for all things automotive. Check out the Garage for videos, blogs, games, photos and more, updated daily.
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQMELFlXQL38KPm8kM-4Adg

Setting up a Windows / Linux Mint Dual Boot using MBR.
https://www.ghacks.net/2017/02/22/setting-up-a-windows-linux-mint-dual-boot-using-mbr/

Download the "Official User Guide for Linux Mint 18.0 Cinnamon Edition".
https://www.linuxmint.com/documentation/user-guide/Cinnamon/english_18.0.pdf

How to have a Linux home server on the cheap.
http://www.pcworld.com/article/3184925/linux/how-to-have-a-linux-home-server-on-the-cheap.html

"Hacking of America", a short video on ransomware. (4 min. video):
http://www.today.com/video/hackers-want-to-hold-your-data-for-ransom-here-s-how-to-stop-them-899367491901

FTC warns on "Can you hear me now" robocall: Hang up!
http://www.networkworld.com/article/3183579/security/ftc-bbb-warns-on-can-you-hear-me-now-robocall-hang-up.html

4 ways to bolster your online privacy (Tor, Duckduckgo, VPN, Google privacy).
http://www.pcworld.com/article/3139310/security/4-ways-to-bolster-your-online-privacy.html

Being a senior citizen (even at 50) has its perks! This site lists many organizations that help seniors get discounts on all sorts of purchases. Don't feel embarrassed to ask for discounts; they are yours for the taking.
https://www.couponchief.com/guides/retail_savings_for_baby_boomers

The three laws of smart PC backups.
http://www.pcworld.com/article/3185841/computers/the-three-laws-of-smart-pc-backups.html

One of the most dangerous forms of ransomware ("Cerber") has just evolved to be harder to spot.
http://www.zdnet.com/article/one-of-the-most-dangerous-forms-of-ransomware-has-just-evolved-to-be-harder-to-spot/

6 easy ways to keep your Android phone secure.
http://www.pcworld.com/article/3187451/android/6-easy-ways-to-keep-your-android-phone-secure.html

Congress has repealed the FCC's rules protecting your online data. What's it means for you? (Even another good reason to subscribe to a quality VPN service.)
https://www.cnet.com/news/congress-just-killed-the-online-privacy-rules-now-what-faq

How to build your own Raspberry Pi NAS (Network Attached Storage).
http://www.techradar.com/how-to/computing/how-to-build-your-own-raspberry-pi-nas-1315968

How to create a bootable Multiboot USB for Windows and Linux.
http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/bootable-multiboot-usb/

Do you know how secure your digital identity is? Take this digital security quiz.
http://simplisafe.com/resource/digital-security/

Take a virtual tour, as well as a video tour, of the first custom-built jail in England, 230 years ago.
https://www.hambleton.gov.uk/prison/site/index.php

How to share USB over Wi-Fi.
http://www.flexihub.com/usb-over-wifi.html

NOTE: Many of the links in the digital newsletter connect to the Internet if clicked. For those that do not, copy and paste the link into your Internet browser.

World Wide Web Column on the Club Web Site

Check out the WebPageReviews section on the club's web site. You can see past web sites reviewed in this column on our club web site. They are arranged into various key word categories to help locate a specific site.