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THE WYSIWYG

September 2018

Volume 30, Issue 7



An International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385

MAIN MEETING: TUESDAY Sept. 4

7:00 PM

(doors open at 6:30 PM)

Baker College

34950 Little Mack in Clinton Township.

Located at the southeast corner of Little Mack Avenue and 15 Mile Road (Enter at the main entrance on Little Mack Ave. The meeting room is then straight ahead.)



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This Month's Main Meeting Topic:

**“Amazon's Web Site From A Seller's Point Of View”
presented by member Paul Baecker**

New Location And Time For The September Meeting And All Future Club Meetings.

Guests and visitors are welcome. People can attend any SHCC meetings during two consecutive months before deciding to become a member or not. 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

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CLUB WEB PAGE: <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>

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Firefox	Don VanSyckel
FoxPro	Rick Schummer
General Computer Questions	Jack Vander-Schrier
Hardware	open
MS Publisher	Rick Kucejko
MS Word	Rick Schummer
Spreadsheets	Rick Schummer

SHCC Coordinators:

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Associate Editor	Paul Baecker
Door prizes	Don VanSyckel
Greeter for visitors	Jim Waldrop
Newsletter publisher	Rick Kucejko
Program Coordinator	Mike Bader
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2018 SHCC Officers

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

Four Month Meeting Schedule:

SEPTEMBER 2018

4 - SHCC "Amazon's Web Site From A Seller's Point Of View" presented by Member Paul Baecker

5 - COMP meeting
 9 - SEMCO meeting

OCTOBER 2018

2 - SHCC Main Meeting
 3 - COMP meeting
 14 - SEMCO meeting

NOVEMBER 2018

6 - SHCC Main Meeting
 7 - COMP meeting
 11 - SEMCO meeting

DECEMBER 2018

4 - SHCC Main Meeting
 5 - COMP meeting
 9 - 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
 Reciprocating: Yes

South Eastern Michigan Computer Organization (SEMCO) (new location)

Time: 2nd Sunday at 1:15PM
 Place: Bloomfield Township Library, 1099 Lone Pine Rd., Bloomfield Hills, MI 48302
 Web page: <http://www.semco.org>
 Reciprocating: Yes

Royal Oak Computer Club

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

Newsletter submissions are due 10 days before the club meeting, but the earlier the better. They should be sent to :
newsletter@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org

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The President's Pen by Don VanSyckel



Wow September already. I hope you had a good Summer. First I want to inform everybody that SHCC has moved. The new location is Baker College in Clinton Township. The college is located on the southeast corner of 15 Mile Road and Little Mack Avenue. The room is located in the building that faces Little Mack Avenue and has "Baker College" in large red letters above the entrance. There is parking in front of the building and both north and south of the building. There is plenty of parking and most of it is closer than the parking was at MCC.

When you enter the building go straight across the lobby and into the Community Room, which is where we will be meeting. Yes, everything is on the ground floor. The room seats 36 at tables and if we fill those, there are extra chairs. We will start at 7:00PM and open the room at 6:30PM, Note the time change: 30 minutes later. We have the room until 8:45, so we'll end the presentation, do door prizes, and clear out by then.

If you're running to the meeting from someplace else, there are many fast food places within a couple miles of the college. Also, the student center is off the right side of the lobby, and they sell various food and drink items.

See you at Baker College in September.

One of the reasons that prompted the change to Baker College is finances. To recap, SHCC is 30 years old this November. For the first 15 years SHCC membership went up every year. Then for the last 15 years SHCC membership has been going down. Obviously we gained more members than we've lost since we started at zero, and we still have 60 members. But looking ahead, even the cut in room

rent will help only so long, It was voted at the June meeting to put forward a constitutional amendment to increase dues by \$5. The last time dues were increased was in 1994, so no one can say our dues are spiraling out of control.

Current constitution:

ARTICLE VIII. DUES AND FEES
Section 1. The annual dues for membership shall be \$25 per year with electronic newsletter, and \$45 per year with paper newsletter.

Proposed change:

Section 1. The annual dues for membership shall be \$30 per year with electronic newsletter and \$50 per year with paper newsletter.

Per the constitution this is the proposed change being submitted in writing. The change will be voted on next month and go into effect on passing. Hint: renew your membership in September or October if you want to save \$5. It doesn't matter how many months you have left. We will just extend from then.

This month we are eager to kick off our new digs with a presentation by SHCC member Paul Baecker. Paul will share his experiences with selling books, CD's/DVD's and puzzles on Amazon to raise funds for his local library.

See you the day after Labor Day at Baker College in Clinton Township.

Door Prizes

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

James Waldrop won a computer flat screen monitor

Tom Allen won CD's

Bill Appleberry won an office 2013 manual

Paul Baecker won CD's

Mike Bader won a computer flat screen monitor

Ralph Osinski won a CD/DVD case

Evelyn Cherson won a universal tablet case

Louise Manning won a set of screw drivers

Martee Held won a power strip

Ken Belbot won a flashlight

Don VanSyckel won a wireless mouse



Last Month's Meeting

Mr. Tom Allen presented "Cutting the Cord and Changes in the New TV Standards". This was an excellent meeting topic, very timely with cable prices continuing to spiral up. Consider dumping cable TV and getting your content via the Internet.



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

Why Do Windows Updates Mess Up My Computer?

From the Ask Leo Newsletter

Why do some of Microsoft Windows' updates mess up a computer? I had one update that added a sign-in password when I had never used a password. That computer had nothing on it that was needing to be secure. I never keep important information on a computer. It took "me" three weeks to find out what the password was. Microsoft would not help me for 30 days. This was a computer that I used for my work ... and the only computer I had. Two weeks backs (or about) Microsoft did another update. This time it screwed up my computer terribly. It messed up my BIOS. I was able to figure out how to reset BIOS. It also messed my signing into Windows. This time I did have a password. It would not accept this password. It kept asking for my Microsoft account password. I put that account password into the sign-in box and it would not take it. After days of trying to fix it, I decided to go with Linux. So I burned a CD with Linux Mint. It would load up the "live CD" would when I tried installing Linux to my HD it froze my computer. I tried a number of times. I even downloaded another copy of Linux Mint and it still did the same thing. I would be willing to take my computer to a geek and pay to have it fixed, but I am sure I can buy a new computer for about twice the price I would be charged to fix

this one. I hope you will advise your readers what you would do in this case.

There are a number of issues here, and a perhaps a misconception or misunderstanding or two as well. Since so many people come to me with similar (though never exactly the same) scenarios, let's look at the individual issues.

It's not your fault, but...

I'm reluctant to say this, because a lot of the answers to the problems incurred by Windows Update can easily be inferred to be "victim blaming" — meaning the answers seem to blame the user. Some of what follows runs the risk of doing so.

Let me be very clear: even if you did something "wrong" that contributed to the problems you experienced, *it's not your fault*. Things simply shouldn't be this hard, this confusing, and this easy to have go wrong. Microsoft and Windows — heck, even the entire industry — can and should do a much better job of making things easier.

They need to make it harder to get things wrong.

So when I say, "You might have done 'X' to cause 'Y'", what I'm really saying is that you were likely *led* or *misled* (or even *encouraged*) to do 'X', either out of confusion, frustration, or a not-particularly-hidden-agenda on the part of Microsoft, which then led to some of the problems you experienced.

It's not your fault, even though it might have been due to your actions.

Adding a sign-in password

Some recent updates to Windows have been more "major" than others. What's quite surprising to me, and frustrating to users, is that it's not uncommon for some configuration settings and customizations to be lost.

Apparently, the ability to sign in without a password is often one of them.

On one hand, it's a setting I would not want to have reset, simply to avoid the very experience you had. On the other hand, I can understand it as a design decision on Microsoft's part. If they needed to update something relating to the log-in process, I would much rather have them elect to force a password requirement than the opposite. (Imagine a machine that required a password suddenly booting up without one — the security ramifications are horrific.) The setting should be preserved, but if there's going to be a mistake, they made the right (or "least wrong") mistake.

The lesson here: your account has a password, even if you don't have to type it in all the time. *Know what that password is*. There are other valid scenarios where you might be required to type it in.

Messing up a BIOS

Your computer's BIOS is part of the computer's hardware, and not something that Windows, Windows Update, or any software running on your machine is supposed to be able to change.

So I don't believe Windows Update "messed up" your BIOS. This is especially true if your machine has not a BIOS, but UEFI — the newer, more secure BIOS replacement.

However, I think it's very possible a BIOS *setting* was accidentally



changed as part of the frustrations and attempts to log in you described. This would have been prior to the machine even booting into Windows. It's quite possible for a misconfigured BIOS setting to render a machine unbootable or otherwise appear "messed up".

Resetting the BIOS was exactly the right thing to do to get past this issue. (You're actually somewhat lucky in that you could — not all machines have resettable BIOSs.)

Microsoft account

Microsoft has been encouraging Windows 10 users to log in with a Microsoft account since the day Windows 10 arrived.

And by "encouraging", I mean nearly ramming it down our throats.

That ramming is fairly passive aggressive. For example, it's trivially easy to switch to using a Microsoft account for login by performing some other seemingly unrelated activity. It's very easy to *accidentally* agree to it by signing in to OneDrive (or just about any other Microsoft software running on your machine that uses a Microsoft account). The wording is in small print, and that there is an alternative (sign in to the software without changing your Windows sign-in) is not often made clear.

To be fair, there are many, many reasons that using your Microsoft account to sign in to Windows is a good thing. I actually recommend it. For example, you can reset your (possibly forgotten) password from any other machine connected to the internet. And it does automatically sign you in to all those Microsoft utilities you might have, like OneDrive, Skype, and others.

But it should still be a clear and obvious choice, and never an accident — and accident is exactly what I think happened here.

Bootling Linux

Windows Update should do nothing that would prevent a machine booting into, or installing, another operating system. Period.

However, it's easy to (again, accidentally) make configuration changes to BIOS that might prevent a machine from booting. And booting a UEFI-enabled machine can be particularly frustrating and troublesome, particularly since each machine is different.

I've run into problems installing Linux on a clean machine only when I accidentally downloaded the wrong version — 32 bit versus 64 bit (and, if memory serves correctly, UEFI-enabled or not).

Without knowing more details, it's hard for me to speculate what went wrong. About all I can be confident of is that it's unlikely to be the result of Windows Update.

Buying a new machine

You never need to purchase a new machine to fix a software problem. Software — all of it — can be erased. Reset your BIOS and reformat the hard disk, and any problems related to software issues are, *by definition*, removed.

Given the state of your machine, that's exactly what I would do: reinstall the operating system of choice (be it Windows or Linux) from scratch. I might even go so far as to wipe the hard disk first, just to ensure there are absolutely no leftovers. Any pre-existing software-related issues would be gone. (And, yes, the cynic in me points out that they might be replaced with new software-related issues relating to whatever you chose to install. But that's true of a new machine as well.)

So I cannot advise getting a new machine. Unless there's an actual, unrelated issue with the hardware itself, there's honestly no need.

But I do understand that getting a new machine can often *seem* easier, and can also serve as an excuse to upgrade to newer hardware simply because you want to.

Windows is amazingly complex

Complaining about Windows and Microsoft is particularly easy after you've been through an experience like this. And as I said, none of this is your fault — it should be easier. It should be more bullet-proof. *It should just work.*

But I want to end by offering a little perspective.

It does "just work" for most people.

Yes, you hear from a lot of people who have problems. Based on what you hear, it might be easy to conclude that this is the Worst Windows Ever, and that everyone (meaning, literally everyone) running Windows 10 is having problems.

That's not the case. For *most* people, it works. They have no reason to complain, so you don't hear from them.

For example: I've been dealing with Windows 10 (and installing and reinstalling and reinstalling) for a couple of years, in what I consider to be challenging, non-standard environments, and I've yet to experience a Windows Update problem that didn't resolve itself without my needing to do a thing (other than keep Windows Update enabled).

"Hey, Windows updated and it worked!" isn't news, so you won't hear it often. We hear disaster scenarios when people go looking for help and make the headlines.

Again, I'm not trying to minimize your experience — it was awful, wasn't your fault, and shouldn't have happened. What I am saying is that Windows is incredibly, unimaginably complex, and has to

run on an uncountable variety of hardware configurations. That it works as well as it does, for the vast majority of its users, is an amazing accomplishment.

Could it be better? *Of course it could.*

Protection

The usual advice about avoiding scenarios like this rings hollow: slow down, pay attention to messages (even the small print), and don't panic when things go wrong, since all that makes it easier to make mistakes. Yes, these mistakes shouldn't be easy to make,

but as we've seen, they are. It's not your fault.

Instead I'll fall back on my go-to answer: backups.

System image backups — while not something that would have prevented every problem you encountered — would have allowed an easy return to a pre-“messed up” state in many of the scenarios you experienced.

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



A Tale Of Two Printers

by Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
www.uchug.org president@uchug.org

It was the best of times, it was the worst of times . . .
 It was time to buy a new printer.

It seems that all the traditional computer input/output devices are falling out of favor. The rise in popularity of the tablet computer and now especially the smartphone have played a major part in this. The previously iconic combination of desktop computer, monitor, keyboard, mouse and printer has not been the norm in the personal computer / tech world for some time. The laptop or notebook PC, which generally eliminates the need for a separate display, keyboard and mouse, has been out-selling the desktop for quite many years already. Now the ultra-portable smartphones and tablets, with their integrated touch-screen displays, have surely put monitor, keyboard and external pointing device sales in a steep decline.

Printer sales are also declining. I'm like most people in wanting to cut back on the amount of paper in my life, both to reduce clutter and help the environment. I'd much prefer a paperless life, where my bills and financial statements come as downloaded pdfs, rather than hard copies

in the mail, and my file cabinet of personal and financial data is a USB external hard drive. Smartphones are helping in this trend. More and more, tickets, coupons and other identifying documents are being accepted when displayed on a smartphone or tablet screen, instead of having to present a physical piece of paper (barcodes have also helped make this happen).

While my goal is to eliminate my home file cabinets by scanning my existing paper documents and insisting on electronic documents in the future, there are still times when I do need to print. Some of the continued interest in computer printing is probably generational. I still own printers; my adult children do not. Just as most millennials have “cut the cord” in their switch from cable TV (or televisions in general) to streaming content from the Internet, they have also abandoned the personal printer. My son and daughter, both in their late 20's, each still own a laptop in addition to their smartphones, but have no interest in having a printer. They have no need to print photos, preferring to post them

online or display them on their phones. The few hard copies they need to make can be printed at work, or at the copy center at Staples or Office Depot (or at Dad's house).

I started my work life in the early 1980's, so I've witnessed the evolution of the personal computer and the personal printer. I've owned dot-matrix and daisy-wheel impact printers, as well as ink jet and laser printers. When my children were young, they had their own individual printers and desktop computers for school work, resulting in four printers in the house. Every computer needed its own printer as each stood alone and disconnected in the days before the Internet. Since the development of modern home networking and networked printers, my wife and I have been sharing a single printer for the past eight years.

The HP OfficeJet Pro 8500 all-in-one network printer I bought for my wife in 2009 has always resided in the downstairs bedroom that is her home office. She uses it weekly to print stock lists for her job as a retail seed merchandiser. It is a printer / scanner / fax machine in one unit, with a single-sided scanner feeder in addition to flat-bed scanning capability (it can automatically scan a stack of pages on one side only). It can also automatically print double-sided to save paper. It has a wired Ethernet connection to my home network, so I can print to it from my “office” upstairs. It is not so useful for me to run downstairs to scan, so I have kept my old USB flat-bed scanner in my office.

I still have an old HP Deskjet 5650 printer and an Epson Stylus Photo R340 printer in my office, but I've not used either in over eight years and should probably get rid of them. The Deskjet is old and slow, and I get better quality for the few photos I need printed by going to the photo center in Costco, rather than using the finicky Epson. I also have a Samsung ML-2510 low-cost black laser printer, but I don't use it

much. Laser printers use heat to fuse powdered toner to the paper, and this printer seems to generate quite a lot of heat. I can feel an excessive amount of heat coming off the top of the printer when it has been on for just a few minutes, so to reduce energy usage (and fire risk), I only leave it on long enough to print.

One thing I have always wanted in a printer is the ability to print on 11" x 17" paper. I have this capability at my work and find it is really useful when printing CAD drawings and diagrams, as well as large spreadsheets. Another useful feature I've been looking for is the ability to scan double-sided originals automatically (this is a special feature of the scanner's document feeder). Late last year I saw an HP OfficeJet 7740 all-in-one printer advertised with a great price at Fry's; it had both features, so I bought it as a birthday present to myself. I planned to set it up in my office in place of my scanner, so I would have printing and scanning at hand. Unfortunately, my life is often too busy, and so this new printer sat in its box for most of 2017.

Over the years, the HP8500 printer served us well with few issues. Occasionally the print quality would drop, with blank streaks in the printed output. Using its diagnostic software to clean the print heads usually solved the problem, though with time multiple and more frequent cleaning cycles were needed. Finally, this spring, even three head cleaning cycles didn't completely restore good print quality, and the HP diagnostic software reported that new print heads were needed.

With most HP printers I'd owned, the print heads were part of the ink cartridges, so you got fresh heads with each cartridge replacement. With the HP8500, the ink cartridges were just ink reservoirs; the heads were separate replaceable modules. Despite their supposed simplicity, the HP940XL ink cartridges it

used still cost around \$100 per set (three color cartridges and one black). Even though the two print head modules cost around \$80, I was happy enough with the performance we had gotten out of the printer over the eight years we had used it, and so bought a set.

Replacing the heads was easy to do, and at first solved the problem completely. The print quality was once again excellent. A month later, however, the printer abruptly stopped working. It gave an error message that no heads were installed, thus it refused to print at all. I tried removing and reinstalling the heads, with no improvement. Only then did I go online to search on this fault and found many other users with the same problem after replacing heads. The only solution reported by these users was to temporarily reinstall the old print heads until they were recognized, and then swap the new heads back in. Even this was not often a permanent solution; some reported having to perform this swap periodically. Since I'd listened to my wife and thrown the old heads away right after installing the new ones, this solution was not an option. Because a new printer's cost was not much more than another set of heads for this one, it was time to go shopping.

My wife of course needed to print for her work activities the next day, and it was too late to get her a new printer that evening. Fortunately, I had the new HP7740 printer I had bought for my own use but had not set up yet. The setup for this network printer was far easier than the old HP8500 was eight years ago. Once the new printer was

powered and connected with an Ethernet cable to my home network (it could also connect via Wi-Fi), the printer software and drivers could be installed easily from the HP website. The software automatically searched for the printer on my network and configured everything. Creating an HP printer account on their site allows you to obtain an email address for the printer. Any emails sent to that address are printed (up to 10 MB and up to 10 attachments), making it easy to print remotely or from any device that can send emails, including smartphones, tablets and Chromebooks. I installed the software on her computer as well, so we could both use my new printer.

Later that week we went printer shopping for my wife and bought an HP OfficeJet Pro 8715 from Costco. It had all the features of the HP7740 but had only one paper tray for 8.5" x 11" paper. It was just as easy to set up and, as a bonus, it uses the same HP952XL ink cartridges as the 7740. I set it up in place of the broken HP8500 in her office, and she has been happily printing ever since.

Our old HP8500 served us well for many years. These two new printers provide many new capabilities and are easier to set up and use. Hopefully we can look forward to many years of good use out of them as well.

It is a far, far better printing situation than I have ever known.

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



Wi-Fi Dead Spots? - Try A Wi-Fi Extender, Or Maybe A Mesh Network

by Phil Sorrentino, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
 philsorr@yahoo.com / Philsorr.wordpress.com

If your home is very large or if there are many walls between your router and the location at which you want Wi-Fi access, you may have Wi-Fi dead spots. Your Wi-Fi signal, as all electromagnetic emanations, is diminished by distance and by certain intervening objects, such as walls. (Your specific Wi-Fi capability is dependent on many things, but a typical Wi-Fi router, using the 2.4GHz band and 802.11n, can work 100 to 150 feet with no intervening objects.). Not to get very technical: for distance, the signal drops off proportional to the inverse of the square of the distance; and for intervening objects, the loss getting thru the object is dependent on the type of material and its density; metal may stop the signal dead in its tracks. So, if there is a line-of-sight back to the router, dead spots are probably far from your router. If there is no line-of-sight back to the router, you might have dead spots wherever the signal encounters a lot of loss going thru walls and objects. (I have seen a reference to Wi-Fi as being a "3 wall solution", meaning that the signal may get through no more than three walls, so if you have a spot more than three walls away from the router, you will probably have a dead spot.)

So, if you have a dead spot, or dead spots, you may want to think about a Wi-Fi extender (a simple solution), or even a new "mesh network" (a more involved, more expensive solution). A Wi-Fi extender is a device that may look like a router, but is a receiver and transmitter. It receives the Wi-Fi signal and immediately retransmits the signal. The retransmission may then be received by a device that is in a dead spot of the original signal (but not in a dead spot of the extended signal). The Wi-Fi extender simply extends the area that the Wi-Fi signal may be re-

ceived. When you set up an extender, you do have to make sure that the Wi-Fi extender is not placed in a router dead spot. If the Wi-Fi extender can receive the router signal, it will retransmit it and devices that can receive the extender's signal will be included in the Wi-Fi network as if they got the signal directly from the router. Wi-Fi Extenders can be purchased for anywhere from about \$50 to \$200, depending on features and capabilities. You may even find one below \$50 if you wait for a sale; I found one for \$25 and it seems to do the job quite well. If you are interested in reviewing some possible choices, just Google "Wi-Fi extender reviews" and you will find a good number of reviews based on price, features, and specifications. So that is the easy (and less expensive) solution, and probably the one you will want to try first.

The other solution, the Wi-Fi Mesh Network solution, is more involved and usually much more expensive. A mesh network may be \$200 to \$400, or more. Basically, a Mesh Network is a communications network made up of many nodes (access points), organized in a highly-interconnected grouping where all nodes cooperate in the collection and distribution of data in the network. Each node is a router and an access point for your devices. The size of the area to be covered will determine how many nodes you would need to install. (One recommendation I saw was to install a node every 50 to 75 feet, but that depends entirely on the shape of the installation area.). From Wikipedia, "Mesh" refers to a rich interconnection among devices and nodes. Wi-Fi mesh networks consist of routers and devices that use the network. The devices are typically the lap-

tops, tablets, and smartphones you have in your home. The mesh routers (access points) send messages to the devices and other routers. The routers are placed in an arrangement so that each one can send and receive from at least one other router. The more routers that can send and receive messages from many other routers, the more robust the network will be. (Though I have seen some indications that there may be some practical limits as to how many nodes can be used in a home mesh network.). A mesh network is usually highly reliable due to its multiple redundant paths to a device. If one node is inoperable, the other nodes can still communicate with each other directly or through one or more of the other nodes. This type of network can be very dynamic, much like the Internet itself. (The Internet topology and design allow for messages to be re-directed around nodes that may be inoperable, so that a message always arrives at its intended destination. Though, this may be hard to believe if you have ever had an unexpected and unexplained temporary problem with an Internet session.).

From reviews I've seen, a mesh network may be a great solution for a large home or a home with multiple levels. If a mesh network seems to be a solution for you, do a little research before you jump in. Google the term "Wi-Fi mesh network" and look at some of the reviews. You will find many of the router manufacturers you are familiar with, like Linksys and Netgear, but you will also find some new names such as Eero, Luma and Amped Wireless, as well as Google. So, if you think you have dead spots in your Wi-Fi setup at home, you may want to give one of these two possible solutions a try.

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How Do I Know If My Machine Is Free Of Malware?

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

How do I find out or know that my computer is free of keyloggers? Would Windows Defender or MalwareBytes find them if there are any, or do you have a referenced article on the topic where I can read about it? Understand that this is the biggest security concern I have about my computer nowadays.

How do you know your computer is free of keyloggers? You don't.

It's not the answer most people want to hear, but it's the true bottom line.

There are a few reasons for it, which I'll discuss, as well as what you and I need to do in the face of this rather grim reality.

A quick note about keyloggers

Be it "keyloggers" or the ever-popular "ransomware", some terms seem to get people's attention more than others.

We need to be clear about something: there's nothing special about keyloggers, and there's nothing special about ransomware. The names describe what they *do*, not what they *are*. What they are is very simple: they're just forms of malware.

What they do once they arrive might be interesting or severe, but the fact that *they are malware* warrants our attention. Like *any* form of malware, the most important thing to do is to prevent them from getting on your machine. The second most important? Detection and removal.

But this applies to all malware.

Proving a negative

There's no way to absolutely know or prove that your machine doesn't have malware.

Looking for malware and not finding it isn't enough — there's no guarantee your anti-malware tools know all the malware to look for, or all the ways that malware could hide.

No anti-malware tool is guaranteed to catch every possible malware. None. By definition, the creation of malware is always ahead of its detection. Even the very best anti-malware tools are always playing catch-up.

If you run a zillion different anti-malware tools and they all come up empty-handed, this doesn't *prove* you have no malware. All it says is that it's highly unlikely...

... which, pragmatically, is the best we can hope for.

Staying safe, without proof

The best you and I can do is to stack the deck in our favor.

Make it difficult for malware to arrive. That means not installing untrusted software, not opening random attachments, making sure your firewall is doing its job, not falling for phishing attempts, running good security software, and more.

Make it likely that any malware that makes it through will be caught. That means making sure

you're running up-to-date security software and that it's scanning appropriately.

Make it possible to recover quickly with minimal impact if something isn't caught immediately. That means backing up regularly.

Ultimately, it all boils down to the set of rules and admonitions folks in my position have been preaching for years...

... rules and admonitions I've laid out in what I consider to be my single most important article: *Internet Safety: 7 Steps to Keeping Your Computer Safe on the Internet*.

Even getting out of bed is risky

I wish I could offer you a 100% guarantee — a way you can be completely certain your machine is free of malware and all is well.

I can't. Just like we can't guarantee that we won't get hit by a bus or fall down the stairs.

All we can really do is stack the deck in favor of our safety. Look both ways before crossing, hold the handrail, and stay safe online.

There are no guarantees. But, while you should never reduce your vigilance, you can absolutely reduce your concern and carry on using your technology in all the wonderful ways it was intended.

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

Device Power Options

by Jim Cerny, Sarasota Technology Users Group, Florida

On – Off – Shutdown – Sleep – What are all these power options? Today our computer devices usually have several choices for “power”, even the “off/on” switch does more than just turn your device on or off! Many devices today – especially devices that use batteries – give us more choices about how we use the power we have available. One of the best ways to learn the options for your device is to use Google – enter “power options for my iPad” for example. You will be surprised at what is available. Here we will look at the usual basic power options used by most devices (iPads, iPhones, Windows computers, laptops, etc.).

The main power button, the one you use to turn your device “on” or “off”, is really only putting the device in or out of “sleep” mode. Sleep mode uses very little power and allows your device to keep your recent activity in memory, so you can easily resume where you left off when you return (by hitting the same button to turn it back “on”). This is a good thing for most devices, especially phones, because you will still get incoming calls and messages, etc.

To turn your iPad or iPhone device completely off (also known as “shutdown” or “power off”) you need to HOLD DOWN the off/on button until you see “slide to power off” on the screen. Slide where indicated and your device will be completely off. You will use NO battery at all and you will NOT be able to get a call, text messages, or alarms until you turn it back on. To turn your iPad or iPhone back on from “power off” you need to HOLD DOWN the off/on button until you see a white apple on the screen. Release the button and wait for your device to power up. Other power settings for your iPad or iPhone are in “Settings” then “battery” or “Display and Brightness”.

For Windows computers and laptops, touch (or left-click) on the “Windows” button at the far left of the taskbar and then touch the power icon symbol (a circle with a short vertical line at “noon”) and then select “shutdown”. To turn your Windows computer back on, just hit the start button. A complete shutdown or power down is good for your device because when you power it back up it does a good check of everything to make sure all is working as it should.



The “power” icon



The “settings” icon



The

“settings” app icon for iPads and iPhones



The “battery” icon showing power level

Laptops have several more power options. You can find these options in the control panel or enter “power” in the search box to find “power and sleep settings”, or ask Google how. Here you can adjust your settings as to how long (minutes) your screen stays on with no activity before going to sleep. But you can also select power options for when your laptop is running on the battery or plugged into the power outlet. You can also select what happens when you close the lid of your laptop. (When my laptop is at home it is connected to a large monitor screen, so when I close the lid of my laptop, I want it to “do nothing”). The “restart” option will shut down your Windows computer and then boot it back up right away.

Other possible options for devices include what to do when your battery gets low on power, adjusting the brightness of your screen, even slowing the speed of your device. There seems to be an option or setting for just about anything these days. You need not concern yourself with most of the power options available unless you are using your device

many hours a day and frequently see the “low battery” message. Another easy solution to being low on power is to buy and charge up an external power pack. This can come in handy for long airline flights when you will not be able to plug in to recharge your device. But then again, maybe putting yourself into “sleep mode” could be for the best anyway!

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Presenters Wanted

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.



Alexa .. What Can You Do?

by Phil Sorrentino, Newsletter Contributor
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Alexa is a Digital Assistant. If you have access to an Amazon Echo or Amazon Echo Dot, ask Alexa "What can you do?" Alexa will tell you "A lot. You can tell me to turn up the volume, play music, create a To Do list, or look up a topic on Wikipedia." Finally, it will suggest, "To find out more, check out the Things to Try page in the Alexa App." (If you don't have a de-



vice, befriend someone who has one and give it a try.) When you go to the Amazon Echo App and choose Things to Try, you will see quite an impressive list headed by "What's new?" (new things Alexa can do), and Echo Show (an ad for the new Echo Show device). And 28 more topics, alphabetically arranged, starting with "Ask questions," "Calling and messaging," and "Check your calendar." These are many of the things that you can try after you get over asking: "Alexa, what is the temperature," "Alexa what time is it," and "Alexa, tell me a joke."

A Digital Assistant is a complex piece of software that can perform many tasks or services for the user. A Digital Assistant typically includes access to large databases and includes Artificial Intelligence (AI) capabilities. The Digital Assistant software runs on a Server, aided by the App running in the local device (smartphone, computer or dedicated device like the Echo). Remember Client-Server Technology? Digital

assistants typically are voice controlled and provide verbal and/ or action results (like answering a question or turning a light on or off). Amazon's Alexa is just one of the digital Assistants that are finding their way into regular use. Others that you may be familiar with are Google's "Ok, Google," Apple's "Siri," Microsoft's "Cortana," and Samsung's "Bixby."

(Siri has been around the longest and appears to have the largest user base, followed by Google and Alexa.) All of these can provide answers to basic time and weather questions, and even basic information lookup questions. Alexa is unique in that it is accessed by use of the Amazon Echo, Echo Dot, or Echo Show devices, not by a computer or smartphone (though you need a smartphone to setup many of its capabilities). Google's Assistant, which is like Alexa, can be accessed by a smartphone (or tablet), and the Google Home device. The Google Home device is like the Amazon Echo device.

Going back to Alexa's list of "Things to Try," there are many things that can be very useful in your daily routine, such as Control of smart home devices, Control music, check your calendar, setting alarms, timers and reminders, creating ToDo and shopping lists. Some of these things are inherent and are part of Alexa, and some of these require additional support in the form of "skills." Skills are Amazon's term for additional support from a source other than Alexa or the Alexa App. To see a comprehensive list of these skills, just Google "Amazon Skills," and select "Amazon.com: Alexa Skills."

- Setting a timer is built into Alexa. All you have to do is say "Alexa, set a "Name of timer" for "number of minutes," for example: Alexa, set a "Cook the rice" timer

for "15 minutes." In 15 minutes, Alexa will announce "Cook the rice timer" is done." Alexa will continue to announce it until you acknowledge it by saying "Alexa, Stop." (I know battery operated kitchen timers are cheap and reliable, but you typically can't set them by voice.)

- You can also set Alarms for specific times, like "Alexa, set an alarm for 7 in the morning." The alarm, when it occurs, is a pleasant sequence of gentle tones. Again, to stop the alarm tones, just say "Alexa, Stop."

Another nice feature built into Alexa is the ability to create and maintain a ToDo list and a Shopping list. To add an item to the ToDo list just say, "Alexa Add "Item name" to the ToDo list, like "Alexa add Check the Oil" to the ToDo list. And similarly, to add something to the Shopping list, just say "Alexa, add "Food name" to the Shopping list, like "Alexa, add Butter to the Shopping list." After you make either of these requests, Alexa will respond and indicate that the item has been added to the requested list. Creating a list is all well and good, but the nice benefit here is that when you look at the Alexa App on your smartphone, your Shopping and ToDo lists are there and immediately updated. So, now your shopping list is available the next time you are at the food store, and your ToDo list is available when you get to a Home Depot parking lot and wonder why you drove there.

Another feature I found useful was the ability to check and maintain my calendar. Alexa can be set up to use many calendars, including the Google Calendar. Once the calendar is set up, you can inquire about the activities on your calendar just by saying "Alexa, what is on my calendar for today," or "Alexa what is on my calendar for the next two days." (Alexa can report the activities on your calendar for today, tomorrow, or even four days from now, but will not report activities that happened in the past.) You can even add items to your calendar

just by saying "Alexa add "Appointment" to my calendar," like "Alexa, Add "Dentist next Tuesday at 10 in the morning" to my calendar." Alexa will respond that the appointment has been added for the desired date and time. And just as you would expect, when you look at your calendar, on your smartphone or computer, you will see the new appointment. And of course, you can delete items using Alexa. And, you still have complete control over the calendar with your computer or smartphone.

Home automation is another area where Alexa can be very useful. Home automation can take the form of controlling lights, locks, thermostats, and a security system. To accomplish these types of tasks, an appropriate Alexa com-

patible device and a "skill" for that device will have to be set up. But, once these things are in place, Alexa (as well as your smartphone) can control those devices. I set up a tp-link, Alexa compatible, LED light and obtained the tp-link skill, and once set up I was able to control the light just by saying "Alexa turn on (or off) the living room lamp". (Very cool, sure beats the old X-10 control system.) Maybe an Amazon Echo or a Google Home can help you with some of your daily activities.

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depending upon your concern for privacy.

After clicking Next again, you are taken to a page where you pick an activation mode: "manual activation mode" or "voice activation mode." After that you are taken to a page where you can view or print the voice commands you can use. Then you move on to a page where you can choose to "Run Speech Recognition" at startup. Finally, you are taken to a page where you can choose between "Start tutorial" and "Skip tutorial," and the differences between the uses of each option is explained, and this ends the setup phase.

Now you can control the computer with your voice.

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



Windows 10 Start Menu (Speech)

by Lee Reynolds, Boca Raton Computer Society
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Do you talk to your computer? I don't mean swearing at it because it doesn't do the thing you want it to do. You should be able to have it find desired files on your computer, remind you to go to a doctor's appointment, play your favorite music, or even convert a certain number of kilograms to pounds.

How do you get your PC to do those things by voice commands alone?

You will need to configure Speech Recognition on Windows 10. You start this by getting into Control Panel (for example, typing the words Control Panel into the search box on the left side of the Task Bar.) You then are given several options to choose from, one of which will be "Ease of Access." Click on that and you are taken to a page which offers the options "Ease of Access Center" and "Speech Recognition."

When you click on Speech Recognition, you are taken to a

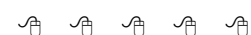
window where you will click on the option for "Start Speech Recognition." That takes you to a "Set up Speech Recognition" page where you again click on the tab at the bottom right for Next.

You are now taken to a page where you specify the type of microphone you will be using. When you click the Next button, read the information on the page and then continue.

After you perform the actions of setting up your microphone click Next again. You will be instructed to read the following text aloud, "Peter dictates to his computer. He prefers it to typing, and particularly prefers it to pen and paper." After reading that aloud, you can click on Next again, read the information on that page, and then again on the next page. You will be taken to a page where the title is "Set up Speech Recognition," and you now choose one of the two options of "Enable document review" or "Disable document review," which you choose between

SHCC Emergency Cancellation

Sterling Heights Computer Club meets at Baker College In Clinton Township. We will meet if Baker College is open and will not meet if Baker College is closed. Baker College 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; and 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.

This is the kind of information that all the sites you visit, as well as their advertisers and any embedded widgets, can see and collect about you. See if your system is leaking "WebRTC requests" or "DNS requests".

<https://ipleak.net>

Using optical illusions, this fun, first-hand look at your own versatile sense of sight reveals how evolution tints your perception of what's really out there. (19-min. video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mf5otGNbkuc>

Virtualbox VM in Windows 10 allows you to install another operating system on top of your native operating Windows 10 system. The virtual machine (VM), also known as the guest operating system, may grow due to files you have saved and other activities you've done inside that OS. Here's how to shrink a VirtualBox VM and reclaim lost space.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/shrink-your-virtualbox-vm/>

What is malvertising? And how does this affect my safe use of the Internet?

<https://blog.malwarebytes.com/glossary/malvertising/>

Truth in malvertising: How to beat bad ads.

<https://blog.malwarebytes.com/101/2016/06/truth-in-malvertising-how-to-beat-bad-ads/>

When adding a second SATA hard drive or a solid state drive to your computer, here are 5 things to consider when you install it.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-install-sata-hard-drive/>

The Associated Press reports that even if you have "Location history" turned off, Google is still tracking you, using their multiple services, like it or not.

<https://www.apnews.com/828aefab64d4411bac257a07c1af0ecb/AP-Exclusive:-Google-tracks-your-movements,-like-it-or-not>

Why you should stop using Ccleaner on Windows right now: The popular Ccleaner tool includes a new behavior, titled "Active Monitoring", which collects info about your system. Can you really disable it?

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/stop-using-ccleaner-windows/>

Facebook confesses: Buckle up, there's plenty more privacy lapses where that came from. Don't ignore these intrusions into your personal privacy and security!

http://www.theregister.co.uk/2018/04/27/facebook_sec_privacy_lapses

Faster Internet for FREE in 30 seconds. Seriously. (As always, just ignore the ads in videos.) (9-min. video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kqnrjgyEMc>

What's creepy and crawly in the world of insects? *Entomology Today* offers a bug's eye on the latest in insect research.

<https://entomologytoday.org>

How to send spam calls straight to voicemail on Android with Google Phone.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/send-spam-calls-voicemail-android/>

How to automatically end tasks while shutting down Windows.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/auto-end-tasks-shut-down-windows/>

Browse all issues of *Life Magazine* from 1936 through 1972 on the Google Books web site.

https://books.google.com/books?id=N0EEAAAAMBAJ&source=gbs_all_issues_r&cad=1&atm_ay=1935#all_issues_anchor

What a DNS leak is, and why I should care. And what to do about it.

<https://www.dnsleaktest.com>

Glider acrobatics — we've come a long way from balsa wood and rubber bands. (3-min. video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Aex06p3hFYE>

Do you find yourself unlocking your Android phone countless times each day? Smart Lock lets you choose situations where your phone stays unlocked for extended periods of time.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/how-to-set-up-smart-lock-for-android/>

Your interactive guide to the human body. View the various human internal systems in 2D as well as 3D.

<http://www.innerbody.com>

How to change your computer's name in Windows 10.

<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/how-to-change-your-computers-name-in-windows-10/>

History of the Mouse -- a light-hearted look at PC rodents. (10-min. video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6K-ATmU-NbU>

How to enable or disable *Boot Log* in Windows. When you are facing issues with Windows, there is a high probability that the drivers are the culprit. "Boot Log" collects this info for diagnostic purposes.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/enable-disable-boot-log-windows/>

Perhaps you don't realize that every time you speak to Cortana (in Windows 10) she keeps a recording of your voice on Microsoft's servers! Check what's being stored and see if you can delete any clips you'd rather not have lingering around.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/check-delete-cortana-speech-logs/>

SWOLE is an automatic diet planner that lets you plan your grocery list and your meals according to calories you need to consume, and has a food bank that shows the detailed nutrition list of all kinds of food.

<http://swole.me>

Avoid Google and Bing -- 7 alternative search engines that value your privacy.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/best-privacy-focused-search-engines/>

The *VPNFilter Router Malware* infection affects many brands of routers. Here's how to test whether yours is vulnerable to this threat, and if so, how to fix it.

<https://www.infopackets.com/news/10359/how-fix-vpnfilter-router-malware-and-test-if-vulnerable>

Comedian James Veitch shares a funny story about an attempt he made to try and unsubscribe from a grocery store email marketing list. (8-min. video)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dceyy0cX6J4>

Your interactive guide to the human body. View the various human internal systems in 2D as well as 3D.

<http://www.innerbody.com>

A list of 5 of the best Linux games to play in 2018.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/best-linux-games/>

How to mount an ISO file in Linux.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/mount-iso-file-linux/>

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.