



# THE WYSIWYG



January 2020

Volume 32 Issue 1

**STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB**

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, Michigan 48311-0385

**MAIN MEETING: TUESDAY JAN. 7**

**7:00 PM**

(doors open at 6:30 PM)

**Baker College**

**34950 Little Mack Ave.**

**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:**

**"Great Free Programs for Windows PCs, MACs, and Raspberry Pis"**

**will be presented by Jeff Pynnonen**

- Mr. Pynnonen will demonstrate:
- Libre Office (office suite)
- GIMP (graphics suite)
- Inkscape (vector graphics suite)
- Sonic PI (music suite)

These programs are available for Windows PCs, MACs, and Raspberry Pis. Learn the program on one type of computer and use it on other types. Using these programs will enable you to do most things you need to do with your PC.

This promises to be an exciting and informative presentation.

Guests and visitors are welcome. People can attend any SHCC meetings during two consecutive months before deciding whether to become a member or not. July and August don't count since there is no main meeting in those months. 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: \$30/YEAR**

**CLUB ADDRESS:** PO Box 385, Sterling Heights, MI 48311-0385  
**CLUB E-MAIL ADDRESS:** [Info@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org](mailto:Info@SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org)  
**CLUB WEB PAGE:** <http://www.SterlingHeightsComputerClub.org>

## 2020 SHCC Officers – Thanks to all!!!

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### Resource People

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

### SHCC Coordinators

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Door prizes	Don VanSyckel
Greeter for visitors	Jim Waldrop
Newsletter Publisher/Editor	Paul Baecker
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### Club Dues Amounts

The club dues were increased to \$30 per year at the November 2018 meeting.

This includes a digital version of the newsletter sent monthly, except for July and August, when the club does not meet.

A paper version of the newsletter is available in place of the digital newsletter, for an additional \$31 per year. (increased at March 2019 meeting)

Associate memberships, for a second member of a household, remain at an additional \$15 per year.

### Four-Month Meeting Schedule

**FEBRUARY 2020**  
**4 - SHCC Main Meeting**  
 9 - SEMCO meeting

**APRIL 2020**  
**7 - SHCC Main Meeting**  
 12 - SEMCO meeting

**MARCH 2020**  
**3 - SHCC Main Meeting**  
 8 - SEMCO meeting

**MAY 2020**  
**5 - SHCC Main Meeting**  
 10 - SEMCO meeting

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

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## The President's Pen

by Don VanSyckel



The last couple of months I wrote about the Voice Over IP (VOIP) phone system we use at our home. I continued because I had received several questions about. So I will continue this month with more detail about some of the features. These features are all included in the base monthly charge for the CallCentric service:

- \* Caller-ID and caller-ID-with-name are available - The advantage speaks for itself.
- \* Answering machine function is on their hardware - This feature is handy and can be reached from anywhere. If one caller isn't done with their message, a second caller doesn't get a busy signal misleading them into thinking you're actually home, on your phone, and ignoring their call.
- \* Log of in-bound and out-bound calls - This log can be viewed on-line or downloaded in a CSV format (loadable into a spreadsheet). I save the logs on a quarterly basis and they come in handy occasionally.
- \* Up-loadable address book - This phone book is available on line and names in this can be used by the caller-ID-with-name feature to substitute the name in the phone book into the caller ID with name.
- \* Detect "anonymous" calls - Once an anonymous call (no caller ID info) is detected, you select one of nine methods of handling the call. I have these set to a busy signal; let those telemarketers waste their resources calling over and over again. Other choices include an error message, a disconnect message, forwarding, and voice mail. Any of these do not ring your phone.
- \* Any specific calling phone number can have specific handling instructions - Handling includes do busy signal, do out-of-service, and go directly to the answering machine. Think about the possibilities: set that annoying caller to do busy signal, so they try over and over again and your phone never rings.
- \* Call-filtering - The caller is challenged to press a random number 0—9, not always the same. Robo calls don't make it through this, yet all people calls go through after pressing the spoken number.
- \* Call-filtering enhanced - You can specify that phone numbers in your address book are put through immediately and not challenged to press a number. So anyone in your address book goes right through.
- \* Call-forwarding - This feature can be set up a couple of ways. First you can call forward every call to another phone number such as during vacation you can forward to your cell phone. Another method is to call-forward on

no answer after X rings. This gives you the opportunity to answer your phone when you're home and have calls go to your cell phone when out of the house.

- \* Three-way calling - Talk with two other people on their two phones together at one time. You do the connecting, so it's you making two calls simultaneously.
- \* Quiet time - Schedule calls to not ring the phone and go right to the answering machine. Can be handy if you don't want to be disturbed. Best when scheduled in an on-going manner, as opposed to a few hours here and a few hours there. This feature can be prioritized with other call treatments such as doing this after the anonymous calls are handled.
- \* Email alerts - As specified for calls and/or voice messages. Whether your email is on your PC or your cell phone.

I do have an add-on; not via Callcentric, it's hardware. I've added one UPS (Uninterruptable Power Supply) for the phone adapter, the cable modem, and the router which are co-located. This way when the power blinks (as with a brief brown-out) the electronics don't have to reboot and reset. For instance if rebooting the router needs the cable modem to finish rebooting first. Then the phone adapter needs the router to finish rebooting before it does. So all in all, it's simpler to have the three of them on a UPS. I considered a UPS for the phone base unit. Since it's located in the kitchen, I was challenged where to put a UPS because I don't want it on the kitchen counter. Since the phone base unit reboots quickly and has no dependencies on other electronics, I decided a UPS wasn't needed.

Last Month's Meeting:

**"How to Create a Dual Boot for Windows 7 and Linux"** was presented by Paul Cozort from SHCC.

With Windows 7 reaching end of Microsoft support in early 2020, many people are moving to another Operating System (OS).

One good choice is to install Linux on your Windows 7 PC. The installation process will carve out a place on the hard disk to house the Linux files. Then when you boot the computer you will be given the opportunity to choose either Windows 7 or Linux. The thought is use Linux most of the time, particularly when surfing the web, but if you have to, you can go back to the Windows 7 applications and data.

*{Ed. note: Seriously consider using a UPS with all of your delicate devices, such as PCs, routers, audio systems, TVs, speaker systems, chargers, etc. to protect them from brownouts, blackouts, and "dirty power".}*



## Here's Why Your Internet is Slow Sometimes

By Bob Rankin

<https://askbobrankin.com>

A reader asks: 'I notice that my Internet connection seems to slow to a crawl at certain times, for no apparent reason. Is it likely that I have a virus, or are there other possible explanations for the slowdowns?' Yes, several! Read on...

### Diagnosing a Slow Internet Connection

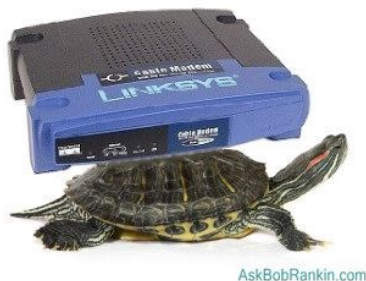
Unfortunately, intermittent problems can be difficult to diagnose, because they are not easily reproducible. Many different things can cause your Internet connection to slow down. Some of them are within your control, but many are not. Here are some of the common causes for slow Internet connections.

Too many users sharing one Internet connection can slow everyone to a crawl. If you are sharing a connection over a home network, you may experience slowdowns when others in the house are using Youtube, streaming a movie, or playing a graphics-intensive online game. If you have a cable modem, you are sharing a connection with other households in your neighborhood. If the slowdowns happen between 3pm and 4pm, around the time that kids are getting home from school, or weekday evenings between 8pm and 10pm, it's likely that your cable TV company has oversubscribed the equipment that serves your area. Note that a fiber-optic solution such as Verizon FIOS will not be susceptible to this type of problem.

An unknown program may be downloading or uploading data in the background without your knowledge. It might be something innocuous, like a backup operation, Windows Update, or it could be a virus, trojan, or other type of malware program. If your computer is ensnared in a botnet, it could be pumping out volumes of spam without your knowledge. See [What Is a Botnet?](#) for more on that. Scan your system with anti-malware software to uncover such problems.

Outdated software can result in a slow Internet connection. Make sure your operating system is up to date with the latest bug fixes and security patches. Visit the [Windows Update website](#) and see my related article [Keep Your Software Updated](#) (or else...) to make sure everything is up to date.

Another possible issue could be a data cap. Some ser-



AskBobRankin.com

vice providers will "throttle" your connection speed if you exceed your monthly allotment of data. This happens more often on mobile phones and satellite Internet connections, but can also happen on wired home Internet service. Check with your service provider if you think your speed may have been slowed down due to a data cap issue.

### Checking Under The Hood

You can check your Internet download and upload speeds with [Speedtest.net](#). You may find out that your actual speed is much lower than what you service provider has promised!

A slow Internet connection may be part of an overall PC performance drop. Your computer may need some general maintenance. My tips on [Seven Free PC Maintenance Tools](#) will help you find software to use for those tasks.

A misconfigured router may slow down your connection. Reboot the router to see if that will clear up the problem. You can also try resetting the router to its factory defaults and configuring it all over again. Networking hardware is pretty durable but a router or network adapter can fail. Often hardware dies a slow death, with gradually slower connection speeds being one of the symptoms. Try a different router or network adapter to see if that helps. I had a cable modem that just seemed to get tired after running for a few days. Turning it off and then on again solved my sluggish Internet connection problem, and after I got a replacement from the cable company, the problem was gone for good.

There may be a problem in the wire connecting your home to your ISP, or in the configuration of your ISP's equipment. Ask your cable or telephone company to conduct a line test. This may require scheduling a visit from a technician.

Sometimes there are traffic jams on the Internet; there's not much you can do about those. If some websites load speedily while others are slow, it could be there is a bottleneck between you and the slow-loading sites. Or the site you want to access could be bogged down with too many visitors. You just have to wait for the problem to be fixed, or try at some other time of day.

Slow Internet connections on mobile devices such as an iPad or smartphone are almost always caused by heavy network traffic or weak cellular signal. There's nothing you can do about network traffic except wait for it to subside. Moving outdoors and away from tall buildings can help you get a stronger signal. Satellite Internet connections can be affected by heavy rains, thunderstorms, and solar activity.

***This article is republished, with permission, from the Ask Bob Rankin web site.***



## Cell Phone Collusion

By Jim Sanders, SIG Leader  
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For several years, I have noticed a few ads for cell phones that said they included an FM radio. By that I mean the actual electronic hardware that allows the cell phone to be used as a transistor radio and tune in to the local, over the air, FM radio broadcasts. I regretted that it was never the phone that I had, nor one with the FM radio tuner feature, whose other features fell short of acceptable. For a long time I have thought that having the FM radio feature in my cell phone would be very nice. I could tune into my favorite music station without having to install some streaming Application. I would not have to worry about streaming music using up my online data allocation. With it, if I lost a cell phone tower connection, it wouldn't matter. And potentially, in any kind of an emergency, I might be able to receive an FM radio broadcast when there was no cell service available.

Having received an email that suggested I read an article in their electronic magazine, I opened it. After reading the article, I noticed in the "You might also be interested in" section of the page, an article titled: "Samsung enabled FM radio on US unlocked Galaxy S9 and S9+ with ...". The opposite of unlocked, of course, is locked.

A long story as to why, but I recently signed up with AT&T for a special deal they were offering. To wit, buy one Galaxy S9 and get one free if you sign up with us for two years. As a rule, when you sign up with a carrier for that kind of contract your phone is "locked" to their service. To me, that implied that I have a Galaxy S9 phone that has an FM tuner that I can use. That thought made me happy, but at the same time, a little confused. The last time that I had looked at the specifications for a Galaxy S9 phone, FM radio tuner was NOT on the list. So I went to AT&T online support

to ask about it. I searched for AT&T online help and got this URL: <https://www.att.com/devicehowto/index.html#!/?make=Samsung&model=SamsungG965U>. The page title is: AT&T [Wireless Support](#), [Devices](#), [Samsung](#), Samsung Galaxy S9 / S9+.

When I got there, a line said: "How can we help you today?" I typed in "FM Radio." The response was: "We searched for 'FM Radio' in Device Support and didn't find anything." Per the instructions, I shortened it to just 'Radio', but got the same response. I tried multiple variations of the search, but the circle always came back to we don't admit to knowing anything about FM radio.

I then clicked on the online chat function and got Steve.

Steve: Hi! My name is Steve. How can I help?

Steve: Jim nice to meet you Please let me know how can I help you today?

Jim: I am tired of going in circles looking for how to use the hardware FM Radio in my S9.

Steve: Sure I can help you with that. Allow me a moment please.

Jim: I am looking at websites that say the S9 has the FM radio tuner hardware but not how to use it/activate it/turn it on.....

Steve: Got it, first you need to have (wired) headphones or earbuds as they work like an antenna.

Steve: I'm not sure about the steps.

Steve: Allow me a moment please.

Jim: I got the antenna part already. Even found one page that had a screen shot of the tuner.

Steve: But that's not something you download. It is supposed to be preinstalled in the phone.

Steve: I'm having issues with the tools.

Jim: Pre-installed, after-installed, I don't care. I just want to learn how to have it! When the auto (*online*) support asks what do I want help with and I type FM Radio or just Radio, it says it never heard of that and runs in circles. Somebody needs to fix that piece of stupidity.

Steve: Gotcha.

Steve: One moment please.

(While waiting, I went back and copied the article I had found.) Jim: 6/26/2018 *If you're a per-*

*son who loves FM radio and owns an unlocked variant of the Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+, you'll be happy to know the handsets are now enabling support for FM radio reception after their most recent updates. There was a bit of confusion earlier in the year when Samsung debuted its Galaxy S9 and Galaxy S9+. The firm advertised that FM reception was indeed a feature on both devices but failed to give details that it was only going to be available on carrier-branded units. This left those that purchased the unlocked model without the ability to tune in to the radio. While it probably wasn't a huge issue, it is good to see that Samsung has finally resolved the problem after three months.*

Steve: Yes I double checked that on Internet as well.

Steve: I'm checking the manual but doesn't show me any info about it.

Steve: Have you checked directly with Samsung, Jim?

Jim: NO, I haven't. I didn't buy the phone from them, I bought it on a two-year contract with your employer.

Steve: Thanks for clarifying.

Steve: Not really. I'm even checking on Samsung's website and doesn't show me any info about it.

Steve: Is the phone updated, Jim?

Jim: It has been updated to Android 9.

Steve: Allow me to connect you with our Tech Support Team so they can better check this

Steve: Is that okay with you ?

Jim: Sure, anything to get an answer.

Steve: Thanks, please keep the chat window. This might take few minutes.

Jim: I will do that.

Steve has left the chat.

You are being transferred, please hold...

Steve: We are currently experiencing very high chat volumes which may cause long delays.

An agent will be with you as soon as possible.

==== quite a bit later =====

Agent Regina enters chat.

Regina: Hi! My name is Regina. I'm happy to help! Please give me a moment to review your request.

Regina: No worries. I can help you with that.

Can I have your name and wireless number please?

Jim: Jim Sanders 714-xxx-xxxx

Regina: Thank you.

Regina: Jim, I understand that the issue is with the FM radio in the Galaxy S9 device.

Regina: I can completely understand your concern.

Regina: As this is the issue with the device application, it should be resolved by the Samsung team.

Jim: I am not concerned. I just want instructions from att on how to use a feature of my S9 phone.

Regina: I understand that.

Regina: I will help you with the instructions.

Jim: That's nice because as noted before, when one types in FM Radio or just Radio, the 'what can we help you with' screen says, "say what?" and runs in circles. That all by itself blows.

Regina: Usually FM radio apps will be paid apps.

Jim: We are talking about FM tuner hardware that is already in the phone. The same as if you turned on your transistor radio and started tuning to your favorite music station in your locality. DO you have to pay for that?

Regina: Generally, you will need to pay for the FM.

Regina: It will not be free in the Galaxy phones.

Jim: I think you should transfer me to a supervisor as it is clear you are not sufficiently technically knowledgeable.

Regina: Sure, Jim.

Regina has left the chat.

==== another wait =====

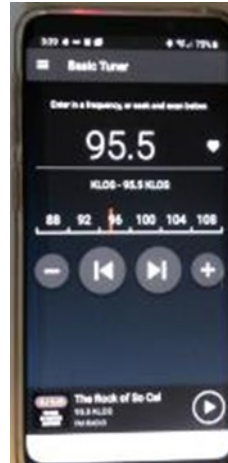
I then spent over a half hour chatting with the "supervisor" and largely got the same run-around. At one point I said that if AT&T is going to advertise a cell phone that has an FM radio tuner, they should support how to use it. He wanted proof that AT&T had advertised a radio with that feature, and I found one for a radio made by ZTE. We went around and around about whether or not it was AT&T's obligation to support the radios in the cell phones that they sell through agents like Best

Buy. I pointed out they provide support/help with lots of other features of the phones they bundle with their service. He continued to maintain that it was not AT&T's responsibility, and that I should go talk to Samsung using the 800 number that he supplied.

So I did that. I spent quite a bit of time on the phone with a very nice Samsung representative that tried quite hard to be helpful. He agreed that yes, the Galaxy S9 does indeed have an FM tuner built into it. That it appeared that Samsung has a program that interfaces with the FM tuner chip, but does not install it on phones that are shipped to the United States. He said that the program/app looked like it had to be installed at the factory and he could find nothing about installing it later on.

Further research revealed that the FM radio receiver function is built into the QUALCOMM modem chip that a lot of cell phone manufacturers use. That function is free to the cell phone manufacturer whether they care to use it or not. No extra charge! I normally don't care much for conspiracy theories, but I ran across a few more web pages that had a cynical article that suggested that AT&T and other carriers don't want to mention the feature as it would diminish their revenue from streaming music data usage. When you go to the [www.samsung.com](http://www.samsung.com) site and look up the specifications for the Galaxy S9, there is a long, long list of features, but NO mention of FM radio. Is there collusion between Samsung and the American carriers to influence the results in the market? The American people have a right to know! The FM radio stations of America should demand the Congressional Oversight Committee add this to their list of investigations.

On the BRIGHT SIDE, my research found two things that surprised me. First, there is an app on the Google Play Store that has been there quite a while called *NextRadio*. It does exactly what I need, and that AT&T refused to acknowledge exists. NextRadio has two modes of operation: the basic tuner screen (see photo) and a radio station logo screen. The tuner screen allows you to enter a frequency directly.



The tap on a logo screen (with call sign and frequency) is determined by the ZIP code you enter. NextRadio



used to do streaming but stopped in Jan. 2019. Second, there is a list of 222 phones that the APP works on. The list is at: <https://nextradioapp.com/>. On the DARK SIDE, (well, disappointing anyway) several non-geek friends of mine treated the knowledge that their

phone has a FM Radio tuner with an "OK, so what, ho-hum, who cares, my streaming works great" attitude. Meanwhile, I am enjoying listening to my favorite FM music stations even if I have to use the wired earbuds instead of my blue tooth headset.

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



*{Ed note: In the Web Page Reviews (page 14) there is a link to an article about offline no-WiFi radio apps for your phone, depending on the features and capabilities of your particular device and your physical location.}*

## Door Prize Winners!

### December 2019

Sharon Patrick — Flash drive  
 Jesse Cwalina — CD jewel cases  
 Sue Sullivan — Power strip  
 James Waldrop — Storage box  
 Tom Miller — USB extension cable  
 Mike Galat — Tripod  
 Pat Little — DVD spindle  
 Edlynn Rehn — Screwdriver  
 Paul Cozort — Sharpie markers  
 Richard Katnik — Umbrella  
 Ralph Osinski — Printer cartridges  
 Rich Monk — Umbrella  
 Andrew Galat — Windows book  
 Bill Appleberry — Cable router/switch

## Microsoft's AARD Code

by Jim Sanders, Director,  
North Orange County Computer Club, CA  
Orange Bytes [www.noccc.org](http://www.noccc.org)  
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**D**éjà vu all over again????

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia, Windows 3.1 was released April 6, 1992. At that time, one had to boot to Microsoft's DOS (disc operating system) and then load Windows. In January of 1992, DR-DOS (from the software company Digital Research) was being wildly accepted as a better DOS than Microsoft's MS-DOS. Not liking the loss of market share, Microsoft (led by Bill Gates) decided to sabotage the competition.

The *AARD code* was a segment of code in a beta release of Microsoft Windows 3.1 that would determine whether Windows was running on MS-DOS or PC-DOS, rather than a competing product such as DR-DOS, and would result in a cryptic error message in the latter case. This XOR-encrypted, self-modifying, and deliberately obfuscated machine code used a variety of undocumented DOS structures and functions to perform its work, and appeared in the installer, WIN.COM, and several other executables in the OS.

The AARD code was originally discovered by Geoff Chappell on 17 April 1992 and then further analyzed and documented in a joint effort with Andrew Schulman. The name was derived from Microsoft programmer Aaron R. Reynolds (1955–2008), who used "AARD" to sign his work; "AARD" was found in the machine code of the installer. Microsoft disabled the AARD code for the final release of Windows 3.1, but did not remove it, so that it could have become reactivated later by the change of a single byte in an installed system, thereby constituting a "smoking gun".

DR-DOS publisher Digital Research released a patch to enable the AARD tests to pass on its operating system in 1992.

The rationale for the AARD code came to light when internal memos were released during the United States vs. Microsoft Corp. antitrust case in 1999. Internal memos released by Microsoft revealed that the specific focus of these tests was DR-DOS. At one point, Microsoft CEO Bill Gates sent a memo to a number of employees, reading "You never sent me a response on the question of what things an app would do that would make it run with MS-DOS and not run with DR-DOS. Is there [sic] feature they have that might get in our way?" Microsoft Senior Vice President Brad Silverberg later sent another memo, stating: "What the [user] is supposed to do is feel uncomfortable, and when he has bugs, suspect that the problem is DR-DOS and then go out to buy MS-DOS." Following the purchase of DR-DOS by Novell and its

renaming to "Novell DOS", Microsoft Co-President Jim Allchin stated in a memo, "If you're going to kill someone, there isn't much reason to get all worked up about it and angry. Any discussions beforehand are a waste of time. We need to smile at Novell while we pull the trigger."

What had been DR-DOS changed hands again. The new owner, Caldera, Inc., began a lawsuit against Microsoft over the AARD code, Caldera vs. Microsoft, which was later settled. It was believed that the settlement ran in the order of \$150 million but was revealed in November 2009 with the release of the Settlement Agreement to be \$280 million.

Today, few people are aware of the above piece of history. Having shot, killed and buried the competition, when MS was assessed the DR-DOS funeral fee, instead of crying all the way to the bank, likely it was with a smile and a smirk about what had become chump change to MS.

### What's the point?

Achieving commercial success by making "shrewd business moves" is often applauded by Wall Street, even if they are unlikely to win any "nice guy" awards. As noted on Wikipedia, [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft\\_litigation#Caldera\\_v\\_Microsoft,\\_the\\_DR-DOS\\_episode](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_litigation#Caldera_v_Microsoft,_the_DR-DOS_episode) was not an isolated incidence. Indeed, current Windows 10 events reminded me of this history.

What am I talking about? Two of my favorite, free, programs. The first, **Irfanview**, is a free program that I have praised for years. While primarily a program that displays, manipulates and converts an amazing range of still image file types, it also addresses a few audio and video file types. In addition, it contains a number of utility routines that I frequently use. It crams an impressive amount of functionality into a relatively small amount of program code. Amongst which is a Slide Show routine with many options. Copy Shop, which scans and prints a document in one continuous pass. Single and batch scanning routines. Screen Shot cropping. And a really fast-to-load-and-play image viewer and MP3 player. Those are a few examples of its array of capabilities. Much more information is available on Wikipedia: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IrfanView>. A more awe-inspiring comment on its range of functions has to do with keyboard shortcuts. Depending on which routines are in use, there are close to two hundred, that's 200, keyboard shortcuts. And, yes, I know how hard it is to remember 20 keyboard shortcuts, much less 200. But if I use an application a lot, some are worth remembering. One Windows 10 keyboard shortcut that I find myself using a lot is the Windows key + d command. That takes you back to the desktop, regardless of how many windows you have open or which one is active.

The second free program is **VLC media player**, AKA 'VideoLan media player', commonly referred to simply as VLC. Best known as the premier player of most ex-

isting video file types. Less well known is its ability to play a very large number of different audio file formats. If you don't already use this program, or at least know about it, you should visit: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VLC\\_media\\_player](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/VLC_media_player). There, you will learn what the 'C' in VLC stood for. You will learn about its 22-year history, evolution and the long list of formats and platforms it supports. If you Google VLC reviews, you will find that they are overwhelmingly both effusive and positive.

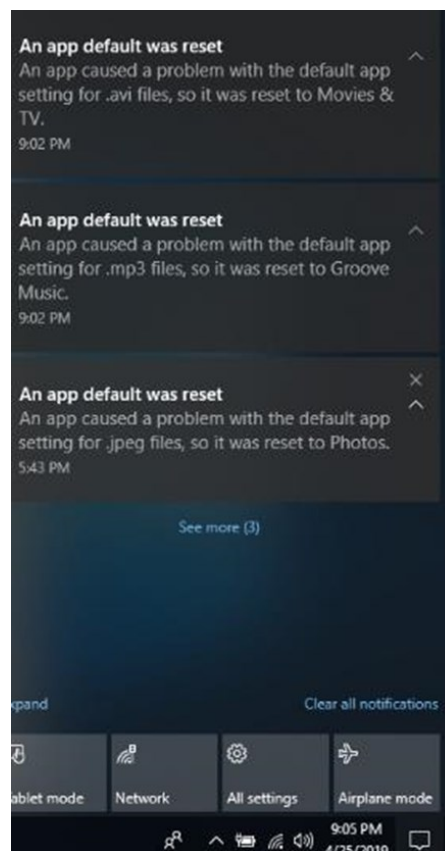
Both of these programs, and several others, have been around for years. Both have been coded by some very smart people. VLC in particular is a Free and open-source software program. A full definition and explanation of that description is available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free\\_and\\_open-source\\_software](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Free_and_open-source_software). Basically that means that the smartest (granted, and dumbest) programmers in the world can look at the source code for VLC. They can and do, find errors, coding that can be improved, submit additions to VLC and/or simply look for inspiration in some very clever code.

#### How does that relate to AARD code?

These two programs, and others, have been subject to an interesting occurrence in Windows 10 for some time. Say for instance that you are at a friend's house and he/she wants to show you a recently taken picture. You are impressed with the fact that almost as soon as you heard the second click on the icon, the picture is displayed on the screen. That's fast! She then shows the several ways you can quickly navigate between displayed files in a folder, zoom in/out, rotate, crop, etc. So when you get home, you Google 'Irfanview download.' You learn that it is available from a lot of download sites, including the authors. One of them will likely be [www.MajorGeeks.com](http://www.MajorGeeks.com), my personal favorite, and you will notice there are two parts to Irfanview: the main program and Irfanview plugins, which is much larger. You see each one is available in both 32 bit and 64-bit versions. You download both in the version that matches your OS, install the main program, install the plugins, and run the program.

One of the setup screens lets you choose which file types will be associated with Irfanview as the *default application*. Choosing 'All' works well. Windows will go through your files and change the icon by the file name to the Irfanview icon. With the program up and running, you double click on a .jpg file and up pops up your picture. A little while later, a little box pops up in the bottom right corner of your screen. If you notice it at all, you hardly have time to read it before it disappears. If you click on the messages icon at the right end of the taskbar it will show up there. It will open and display the message one time and then go away. This is what you might have missed:

After that message popped up, Windows went back through your files and changed the icon next to your jpg pictures to the icon for 'Photos.' The same type of thing happens with the MP3 files and the video files.



You can go into settings and change it back to Irfanview, or VLC, or whatever your favorite program is that suffered the same fate. Soon after you do that, or perhaps not till after you re-boot, Windows 10 will pop out the "An app default was reset" window and change everything to: THE MICROSOFT DEFAULT APP.

Now, if you have been a computer geek for a few decades, like me, you suspect the only problem my Irfanview app and the other apps caused was hav-

ing the audacity to install themselves as a default app in competition with the Microsoft app. It strikes me that there is some similarity between what is happening now in Windows 10 and what happened to DR-DOS in Windows 3.1. There is one notable difference between the two scenarios: with the AARD code, a phony error code was generated. With Windows 10, there is no error code. The implied message is: "We are Microsoft, trust us, when we say your APP caused a problem, there is something wrong with your APP."

To paraphrase the internal memo quoted in the AARD finding: : "What the [user] is supposed to do is feel uncomfortable, and when he has bugs, suspect that the problem is (with his APP) and then stick with the default Microsoft APP." That is exactly what I would guess a huge number of Windows 10 users have done. This URL is just one of several where users were complaining.

<https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/all/windows-10-issues-with-setting-photo-viewer/5ec485ad-199f-4d7f-880a-42039ac3b4cf>

While at that URL and others, there are a number of useless suggestions and a couple of workarounds that do work, one thing stands out by its ABSENCE. "Your APP violated Microsoft Windows 10 programming guidelines by doing this..... and causing error code xxxxx." Another thing that seems odd, the following URL is dated February 23, 2016:

[https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows\\_10-start/an-app-default-was-reset/cee24e42-f55e-47e7-b88c-30698f8b6706](https://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_10-start/an-app-default-was-reset/cee24e42-f55e-47e7-b88c-30698f8b6706)

Consider that last week (in mid-2019) I did a clean install of the latest release of Windows 10, version 1809. When I ran that installation, and installed the latest versions of Irfanview and VLC, that is the installation from which I obtained the above screenshot. That means that at least THREE YEARS have gone by since "An app default was reset" started showing in Windows 10. Can anyone honestly believe that considering the sheer number, quality, and experience of the programmers writing, reviewing, and donating to the VLC code, that if Microsoft told them what "problem" the VLC app (and the other apps) actually caused, it would have been fixed years ago!

So how do you fix this issue? Windows 10 will not let you go to Settings, Apps, and select Groove and choose uninstall. I tried that! So I Googled the problem. As I am sure you are aware, how you word a query in Google {*Ed note: or in any search engine*} can result in very different answers. I don't remember how I worded my question, but one of the first responses referenced using Powershell and displayed the command lines to uninstall Groove Music. I cut and pasted the lines into Powershell, and uninstalled Groove Music, Photos, and Movies&TV. When there was no MS default music app to reset itself to, Windows 10 stopped complaining about the Irfanview MP3 music player, and the Irfanview MP3 music player continued to function just fine. Ditto the other two, and I was happy. My immediate problem solved, I stopped researching the problem.

While writing this article, I did some more Googling of the subject and was impressed with the number of different apps the complaints were about, the huge number of complaints overall, the length of time the issue has existed, the number of times non-functional or silly solutions were presented, the few workarounds that actually work, and the length of time that MS has seemingly stonewalled the issue. One find of possible interest to those that are skittish about editing the Registry or using Command lines, checkout this URL: <https://www.thewindowsclub.com/stop-windows-10-resetting-default-apps>.

There you can download and run a free program called "Stop Resetting My Apps" that deals with six of the more frequent complaints. The reviews I looked at were mostly favorable. Caveat emptor, do your own due diligence.

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

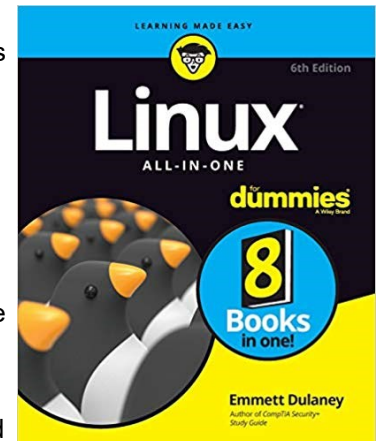
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## Linux All-In-One for Dummies

News and/or Opinion from Paul Baecker

At our last club meeting, we were presented with a fine tutorial for installing Linux beside Windows (a 'dual-boot' configuration) on a Windows PC. The main goal was to demonstrate how you can continue to use Windows 7 (after Microsoft *totally* stops supporting it on Jan. 14, 2020), and still be able to access the Internet, at least as safely as before, using Linux.

The web is full of articles and videos on all aspects of selecting, test-driving, installing, configuring, and using Linux. Here is an opportunity to download the "Linux All-in-One For Dummies 6th Edition" e-book, in PDF format, so that it is easy to view with so many free PDF reader applications out there (including Adobe and Foxit Readers). Although it is copyrighted 2018, the basics of Linux do not change substantially with each release, so the content of this book is still quite applicable.



This 561-page searchable e-book covers everything from Getting Started With Linux, through describing Linux desktops and distributions (versions), and Networking, accessing the Internet, and on to Administration, Security and the more-advanced Scripting topic. There's something for every Linux user here, even novices.

And the price is right — it's free for as long as it's available at this *UploadsHit* site:

<https://uploadshit.com/folder/29/tradepub.com>

Among the several downloads available on this web page, select this one:

**Linux All-in-One For Dummies 6th Edition w\_wile274.pdf**  
(File size is 19.67 MB.)

Feel free to virus-check it before opening it on your PC.

And don't forget to thoroughly clean the cookies from your Windows PC each day (using something like the free Ccleaner application, <https://www.ccleaner.com>). Be aware that no *single* tool can clear EVERY web cookie and tracker from your PC, so use more than one.

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The first computer dates back to Adam and Eve. It was an Apple with limited memory: just one byte, and then everything crashed.

## How to Clean Your Dirty Laptop

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV  
Gigabyte Gazette  
[www.scsccl.com](http://www.scsccl.com) dkretch@gmail.com

After being used regularly for months or years, our laptops accumulate dust, grime, skin oils, sneezes, and who knows what else. Your laptop is most likely due for a cleaning, and I'm going to pass along some suggestions on how to do it effectively without harming this delicate piece of equipment.

You know your laptop is filthy. You can see the dirt and grime on your keyboard. You might also be able to see grime accumulated on your trackpad. So, it's time for a cleaning.



A shining newly cleaned laptop is a joy to use; the keys are clean; the screen is free of smudges and splatters. These cleaning suggestions might also be useful if you buy a used laptop, since the previous owner doesn't always leave them in pristine condition.

### Your Supplies

You don't need much to clean a computer; rubbing alcohol, a mild dish detergent, soft lint-free cloths (microfiber cloths are ideal), Q-tips, and canned air.

Ninety percent or higher isopropyl alcohol is what you want, since it won't damage the internal components.

And if you have some particularly embedded dirt, a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser (or other melamine sponge) can also work wonders, though it should be an absolute last resort since it's abrasive and can



leave permanent scratches.

Don't waste your money on specialty cleaners you see at big box electronics stores like Best Buy. They work just fine but no better than what you have at home.

### Start With the Inside

Starting with that dirt on the keyboard and screen might be tempting, but you should start with the internals. Canned air will blow dust and dirt everywhere, so if you started by cleaning the screen, you'll just end up having to clean it again after you've used canned air. Start by blowing out the dust, then move on to the outside.



You shouldn't have to open your laptop to clean the inside. Turn off the laptop, unplug the power cable and remove the battery, if it pops out (removable batteries are becoming a thing of the past). Give the canned air a quick burst away from the laptop to get rid of any condensation, and then start blowing air into any cracks and crevices: the keyboard, the vents and even the USB and other ports. Blow in short bursts, since longer sprays can cause moisture to accumulate inside your computer. You can also damage the fans by making them spin too fast.

You probably won't see a big change after doing this. The goal is to prevent dust buildup over time, which can cause your laptop to overheat and possibly spontaneously shut down. If you can see dust bunnies in the vents, you've let it go too long without a cleaning. If there is a dust bunny that you see is stuck behind the vent that

you can't dislodge by blasting it with compressed air, consult your user manual on how to open the case. Be sure you remember which screws went where for the reassembly; snap a picture or two of your laptops before opening the case for a reference and be super-organized with the screws as you remove them.

Smokers and pet owners should take special care to clean the inside often, since you're likely to experience much quicker buildup of dust, smoke, hair and other dirt.

### Wipe Down the Outside

Remember, when cleaning a laptop (or desktop) computer, you want to apply the cleaning product to the tool you're using to clean, never ever directly onto the computer. So, grab your microfiber cloth, pour a little alcohol onto it, wring it out so it isn't dripping wet, and wipe down the surface. Cotton swabs with alcohol are useful for the keyboard keys and the small spaces between them. (If there are marks that won't come off, you can try rubbing them with a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser or other cleaner very lightly, but again, they're mildly abrasive and this can alter the finish of the surface. It may take a few passes to get all that grime off, but once you do, you should notice a dramatic difference. If your laptop is particularly old, you may not be able to get rid of the shine on the keys; some of us may have worn down the top layer of plastic and even the letters on the keys. There's not much you can do about that.

You should be able to wipe fingerprints off your screen with a dry microfiber cloth. If you need some more



cleaning power, a slightly damp cloth that has been completely wrung out first, can help. Some manufacturers, including Dell and Lenovo,

even say you can use a 50:50 mixture of isopropyl alcohol and water, if need be, to remove really tough dirt. Just avoid household cleaners with harsher chemicals like ammonia or Windex on the screen.

### Get Rid of Bad Smells

Let's say you have a particularly terrible case of gross laptop, and even after the above steps, your laptop still carries the essence of whatever it has been exposed to. I've seen many laptops that smelled like smoke



and getting rid of that is a challenge or maybe impossible. Cleaning the surface can help, but a lot of those smells may also be inside the computer. For that, you can turn to a natural deodorizer: charcoal. Don't go digging through your grill for briquettes – cooking charcoal is different from activated charcoal. Activated charcoal is made with much more (micro) surface area to be more absorbent.

Another common item will do - kitty litter. Because most kitty litter formulas have activated charcoal in them to neutralize litter box smells, it's a great odor eliminator. Seal the laptop up in a bag or closable bin with a cup or so of the activated charcoal or litter and leave it for at least 24 to 48 hours. If you don't have a cat, people also had good luck with diaper pail deodorizers, which are neat little packets of charcoal you can throw away when you're done. The longer you leave the computer in the bin, the better.

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



## Final Thoughts on Windows 7 – Well, Maybe...

News and/or opinion from Paul Baecker

If you are planning to continue to use your Windows 7 PC after Microsoft stops supporting it on January 14, you should update the operating system (OS) before that date. Don't wait until the last moment — there are millions of users around the world with tens (or even hundreds) of millions of Windows 7 PCs that will smother the MS servers with update requests, and yours may continuously fail, and you will run out of time. Consider doing this task *at least* a week before the end of support. Even though you are not going to use Windows 7 anymore when you are surfing the web, it still makes sense to have the most up-do-date Windows 7 computing environment.

You may wish to continue to use Windows 7 because you have significant software you need to keep (such as a tax program, or a photo-editing tool that you particularly like, or a game or two), but after Jan.14 avoid accessing the Internet with it. Consider installing Linux on the same drive ('dual-booting'), so that you can still access the web from the PC. But you still should avoid accessing the web from the Windows 7 OS on *any* PC (the same logic applies to XP and Vista).

Click on the Start button, and type *windows update* in the search box to get to the update window. Then let the PC search for and install updates. (You know how to do this..... you've done it so many times before).

Also update the software that you use on the computer, such as your browser(s) (just in case you need to sneak  
(Continued on page 13.....*Final Thoughts*)

## What You Can and Can't Recycle During the Holidays

News and/or opinion from Paul Baecker

Many of our local communities have contracted with the [GFL](#) (Green For Life) company to handle our residential refuse collection needs.



In preparation for the Christmas holiday season, they have distributed their recommendations for what can and can't be put in your curbside recycling bin. This is their message to their customers:

The holidays are fast approaching, so let's take a quick look at what can and can't be put in your curbside recycling bin. There's a lot more waste this time of year and while we want to recycle everything, some things should not be put in your recycling bin.

**Holiday cards.** I love a handwritten note, so while many suggest you send e-cards, which is great, but to me it loses its personal touch. Most holiday cards are recyclable. Just try to avoid cards that are made with glitter!

**Wrapping paper.** Most wrapping paper is recyclable. Avoid foil, metallic and, again, glitter. As much fun as glitter is, it's just not recyclable. Remove ribbons. Tape is OK. Instead of wrapping paper, you can always opt for pretty boxes, or bags that can be used again and again! Or wrap in creative ways – use newspaper, old maps, pretty scarves or dishtowels.

**Bows.** The plastic/paper composite plus the glue to make them stick make bows difficult to recycle but they can always be reused. Ribbon is a tangler and can get caught up in the machines, so be sure to keep your ribbons and bows out of the recycling bin!

**Cardboard boxes.** 100% Recyclable. Thanks to online shopping, everyone has cardboard boxes. It's a great material to recycle because it's clean and easy to reprocess. Boxes should be broken down flat, 24" x 24" and can be bundled 12" thick if you have a lot.

**Candy wrappers.** Most candy wrappers are not recyclable. However, there are exceptions – like gelt foil wrappers. As long as they do not have any food residue they can be thrown into your recycling bin.

**Plastic Packaging.** If you have children, chances are pretty high that you are going to have at least one toy that is packaged and protected better than Fort Knox. Once you've broken through the cardboard, removed the hundreds of little wires holding it in place, the plastic

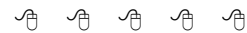
packaging can be put in the recycle bin. I remember the frustration well. Good luck!

**Candles.** Tradition dictates that Hanukkah candles should not be repurposed for any other use. If you celebrate a more secular holiday, you can use the leftover wax creatively. Great for fire starter, rub on the track of that stubborn sliding glass door, melt down and make your own tea lights. Look for clean candles made of beeswax, soy or coconut!

**Lights.** Twinkly lights are lovely but they do NOT go into your recycling bin. Check with local home improvement stores who will, sometimes during the holiday, take them back for proper recycling. (Some city/township governments have offered light-string recycling opportunities in recent years.)

The [GFL](#) web site lists the other types of clean materials that are and that are not recyclable. Let's all consider recycling as much as we can, while abiding by these recycling rules.

***This article's content has been obtained from GFL as a PSA.***



*(Final Thoughts.....continued from page 12)*

out onto the web to get something of utmost importance), any maintenance software (maybe Ccleaner, etc.), your backup tool, security software (it'll still be your best protection), PDF reader, A/V burning software, and other important stuff.

You want to have the cleanest and most secure OS that's possible, so run full scans with your anti-virus and anti-spyware products. If you use maintenance software, run it as well. You don't want to enter this final unsupported life in a compromised condition.

Then also make your last full-system backup, as it will be the best Windows 7 environment you'll ever have for the future. If your PC's hard drive fails, this is the only backup of the operating system that you can use on (and restore to) your PC. If it is of utmost importance to you, you might consider buying two external backup drives, and put a full-system backup on each one, since drives do fail. Backup any personal files to a flash drive each time you edit them.

Over time, don't be surprised if one or more of your programs stops working, because it needs to get an update to continue to work. And the publisher might not offer any more updates, or you don't want to risk going out to the web to get it. It's happened to me.

Ask around if you have questions or need help. Just plan ahead *now*. I am doing the same.



## Web Page Reviews

by Paul Baecker — [webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org](mailto:webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org)



This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing, and free content, with no overbearing pressure to purchase anything.

**Club members only** 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.

Also check the SHCC web site (“Web Page Reviews”) for previous gems.

Select from thousands of magazines from 26 countries to download for free in PDF format. Many popular titles as well as more obscure ones. Search by topic, month/year, title, or county. (If you get a timeout error message when attempting to get an issue, refresh the web page, or go back and select the document again — it should be successful.)

<https://magazinelib.com>

Offline no-WiFi radio apps for your phone.

<https://www.techjunkie.com/offline-no-wifi-radio-apps/>

If you ever see odd things happening to your PC, you might have a well-rooted malware infection. Having some of these rescue tools available on CDs or DVDs makes a lot of sense.

<https://www.msn.com/en-us/autos/news/best-antivirus-rescue-disks-of-2019-recover-your-pc-from-malware/ar-AADiGds>

Three ways to fix Windows 10 password problems: PINs, passwords, and local accounts

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3016405/three-ways-to-fix-windows-10-password-problems.html>

Some free and easy things you can do to dramatically reduce the number of robocalls you receive.

<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/its-time-to-put-an-end-to-robocalls-for-good-get-started-now/>

Is your charging cable killing your phone?

[https://askbobrankin.com/is\\_your\\_charging\\_cable\\_killing\\_your\\_phone.html](https://askbobrankin.com/is_your_charging_cable_killing_your_phone.html)

What happens to Amazon returns?

[https://askbobrankin.com/wow\\_what\\_happens\\_to\\_amazon\\_returns.html](https://askbobrankin.com/wow_what_happens_to_amazon_returns.html)

How Microsoft made it harder to create Windows 10 local accounts, but you still can do so.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3409788/how-microsoft-made-it-harder-to-create-windows-10-local-accounts.html>

How to clear cookies in Chrome, Firefox, Edge, IE, Opera and Safari. Do it often to reduce tracking of your Internet travels.

<https://delete.wiki/clear-cookies-chrome-firefox-edge-opera-safari/>

If you are using Avast anti-virus products (for example, Avast Online Security or Avast Security Browser), be aware of the privacy concerns raised in this article, which indicates that you are likely being spied upon.

<https://palant.de/2019/10/28/avast-online-security-and-avast-secure-browser-are-spying-on-you/>

Do you have unclaimed money waiting?

[https://askbobrankin.com/do\\_you\\_have\\_unclaimed\\_money\\_waiting.html](https://askbobrankin.com/do_you_have_unclaimed_money_waiting.html)

Your processor can handle billions of cycles a second, but it often spends a lot of time waiting for your drive to feed it data. To get optimal performance, you should get a good solid state drive (SSD). Here's how to choose the right SSD.

<https://www.tomshardware.com/reviews/ssd-buying-guide,5602.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.**

## Web Watch Column on the Club Web Site

Check out the **WebPageReviews** section on the club's web site. There you can see past web sites reviewed in this column. They are arranged into various *keyword* categories to help locate a specific topic or site.