



# THE WYSIWYG



March 2020

Volume 32 Issue 3

## STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385  
Sterling Heights, Michigan 48311-0385

### MAIN MEETING: TUESDAY MAR. 3

**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.)



#### IN THIS ISSUE:

About SHCC	2
The President's Pen // Importance of Browser Updates	3
My Experience With a Subscriber VPN — Advantages, Costs, Pitfalls, Workarounds	4
Review: Grammarly	7
Free Software: Why Does It Exist?	7
More About Browsers	8
Bad Memories	9
Website Analytics	12
An International Ordeal	13
Web Page Reviews	13 & 14

### This Month's Main Meeting Topic:

## "Microsoft Excel Tips and Tricks Part 2"

will be presented by

**SHCC member Kat Benny**

Kat presented us with some Excel training last year, and she returns with even more spreadsheet smarts.

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**

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**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

Associate Editor	Rick Schummer
Door prizes	Don VanSyckel
Greeter for visitors	Jim Waldrop
Newsletter Publisher/Editor	Paul Baecker
Program Coordinator	Mike Bader
Publicity	Patrick Little
Publicity	Phil Reynaud
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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

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

**JUNE 2020**  
**2 - SHCC Main Meeting**  
 14 - SEMCO meeting

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

**JULY 2020**  
**SHCC — NO Meeting**  
 12 - 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)

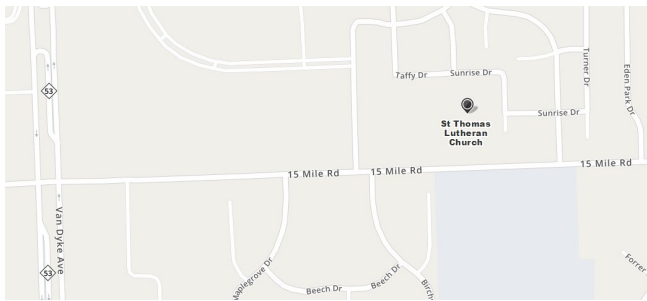
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## The President's Pen

by Don VanSyckel



Last month I announced that Baker College had informed me that SHCC could not meet at Baker College after May. Previously when Baker College was planning to move to Ferndale and dispose of the Clinton Township campus where we meet, the officers had surveyed a few sites to move to. Then Baker College canceled their plans to move to Ferndale and we didn't follow through with a move because there was no end in site at Baker. Now that Baker is once again moving forward with their plan to dispose of the Clinton Township campus, we have made arrangements to use a room at St. Thomas Lutheran Church, 8771 East 15 Mile Road, Sterling Heights, MI. (North side of 15 Mile about a third mile east of Van Dyke.)



Our March, April, and May meetings will be at Baker College, and the June meeting will be at St. Thomas Lutheran Church.

At St. Thomas we will be meeting in a large meeting / activity room. There are no fixed tables or chairs like MCC. There are plenty of tables and chairs for us to set up for the meeting and put away after the meeting. It's our choice if we want to set up the tables. Possibly one or two rows of chairs and then rows of tables with chairs or we can choose to have all tables-with-chairs rows. We will have lots of choices. Each row of tables pushes those chairs back about 3 feet further from the screen. The meeting room and most of the church is on ground level, so no steps are needed to enter or maneuver within the building.

St. Thomas has WiFi available for us to use. We tested this when we toured the facility and the speed was good, although we didn't do a speed test. The church has a 50" flat panel TV available for our use. In doing some research we discovered that in most venues like this a screen size of about 100" is most desirable. 100" diagonal is the same as four 50" diagonal screens or 4 times the size. For this reason the officers are considering purchasing a projector for use at our meetings. At first survey of projectors, we expect a satisfactory projector could cost up to about \$500. To put this in perspective this is about one year's dues for one third of the club's members. On the other hand, the rent at St. Thomas is less than Baker College, so even if we buy a projector we'll break even eventually.

There is a kitchen available to us but it comes with set up, tear down, and clean up. We've never needed a kitchen and I would prefer to not get involved with the clean-up part of using this one. But if a special occasion arises, we'll discuss it. This does not prevent the occasional candy or cookie drop in the meeting room, that doesn't use the kitchen. That has happened at Baker.

Just a note: Early last year, we plotted the locations of all the SHCC members by their zip codes. From this we calculated the geographic center of the membership. This is the spot where the sum of the driving distances of all the members added together is the minimum that it can be. The geographic center calculated to be on VanDyke Avenue a half mile north of Metro Parkway (16 Mile Road). St. Thomas is less than two miles from this point so the members as a whole will be driving less to come to meetings.

To sum up the move, there should be little to no impact on SHCC if we purchase a projector and get enough volunteers to set up and take down the chairs and tables. More details as they become available along with the opportunity to sign up for chair and table setup. If five people did this per meeting, everyone once a year would do it. Of course I don't expect everyone will volunteer but I'd be pleased if half of our members did.

This month we are pleased to welcome back Kat Benny for "Excel: Tips and Tricks 2". Kat did "Excel: Skills, Tips, and Tricks" last May which was very well received. So after many requests, she is doing round two. You don't want to miss this presentation — it will be very useful.

Last Month's Meeting:

"Second Copy, A Backup Program a Novice Can Understand" was presented by SHCC member Martee Held. Martee presented a type of product that everyone should use for creating backups of important files. Some lively discussions were sparked about various points in Martee's presentation. If you don't currently do backups you should. Talk with Martee about questions you have.



## Importance of Browser Updates

News and/or Opinion by Paul Baecker

Although the Mozilla Firefox web browser is a very trustworthy tool for accessing the Internet, stuff happens. As it does with other web browsers as well.

There was a significant security flaw in the Firefox browser early this year. It has been fixed in release 72.0.1. You can read about this and other security fixes in the Firefox browser here:

<https://www.mozilla.org/en-US/security/known-vulnerabilities/firefox/>

The Google Chrome browser is also susceptible to security flaws. You can see a list of fixes here:

<https://chromereleases.googleblog.com/search/label/Stable%20updates>

Other web browsers have their own security issues. As with Windows and Apple and Linux operating systems, updates are extremely important. Any browser updates need to be applied ASAP. Either set your browser to auto-update, or be vigilant about doing manual updates yourself.



## My Experience With a Subscriber VPN – Advantages, Costs, Pitfalls, Workarounds Part 2

By John Krout

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In part 1 (last month's WYSIWYG), you learned about the need for VPNs and how a VPN secures your Internet communications. Also Part 1 identified several VPN services that are highly rated, including the one to which I subscribe, IPvanish.

This part explores some of the complications and workarounds that I have encountered.

### REAL LIFE VPN IMPACT

As of late September 2019, I have a VPN installed on my laptop computer, two tablets, and my smart phone. As was the case at work, the VPN at home does not seem to impose any noticeable slowdown on those devices.

I use my second tablet primarily for its Roku app, which is a remote control for my Roku Premiere video streaming box. When I installed and used the IPvanish VPN app on that backup tablet, the Roku app was no longer able to communicate with the Roku box on my home network.

Why did that happen? The tablet could not search the LAN for the IP address of the Roku box. This may be because the tablet communications were encrypted and our home LAN router was not.

This led me to learn about another aspect of subscriber VPNs.

### SPLIT TUNNELING

In operation, a VPN connection is sometimes referred to as a *tunnel*. That simply means the communication is hidden by encryption, as if concealed inside a tunnel, and cannot be read or understood by a Man in the Middle.

Split tunneling is a feature of the IPvanish app for Android. Many other VPN services offer split tunneling in their apps.

The idea of split tunneling is that you can configure the VPN client app so that, for example, communications by a particular app on my tablet or phone should *not* be encrypted, not sent through the "tunnel" to the VPN server. Apps exempted in that way are *split* away from the encryption tunnel.

Split tunneling is configured on an app by app basis. Lucky me, the Android VPN app for IPvanish enables split tunneling, so I told the VPN app to exempt the Roku app. That way, I can use the app to control the Roku box even while the tablet is otherwise connected to the IPvanish VPN.

Later on, I set up split tunneling for the Roku app on my smart phone. At that moment, when I applied the config change to implement the split tunneling, my smart phone VPN app was already connected to the VPN. I learned that for the IPvanish VPN client, it is best to set up split tunneling while the VPN app is *not* yet connected to the VPN. I tried when the VPN client app is connected to the VPN; the VPN client app then told me it had to disconnect and reconnect the VPN in order to implement the config change for split tunneling.

I started thinking about other types of in-home communications on a home Local Area Network. The Internet of Things (IoT), meaning lights and appliances connected to your router, is one example. For a control app to communicate with those devices from a phone or tablet running a VPN client app, the control app would have to be split tunneled.

### LAN PRINTERS AND VPNS

There is one very widespread present-day LAN use that will require split tunneling: I have my printer connected to my home router, so that computers around the house can print.

The initial issue I have is that the Windows VPN client application from IPvanish does *not* permit split tunneling as of September 2019. The IPvanish help desk says the company is working on adding that feature. So I have to wait for IPvanish to update their Windows VPN client app.

If you choose a different VPN service, and you have a printer connected to the LAN at home, make absolutely sure that their VPN client app for your personal computer supports split tunneling, whether it is a Windows box, a Mac box, a Linux box, or a ChromeOS box.

The second issue is that there are a *huge* number of personal computer applications that can print. Examples include all Microsoft Office applications, all LibreOffice applications, all web browsers, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Notepad, Wordpad, graphics image editors like Adobe Photoshop, general printing applications like PrintMaster (invitations, birthday cards, banners, et cetera), desktop publishing applications, and so forth. It is fairly difficult to identify valuable desktop applications that do *not* include the ability to print.

Because split tunneling is so useful, I am researching other subscriber VPN services and their VPN clients' abilities to support split tunneling. I will report on that in a later article.

**DO NOT SPLIT TUNNEL THAT WEB BROWSER!**

Now, of all the myriad of applications that can print, the one that is most often the target of snooping and therefore most in need of a VPN is a Web browser. Don't set the VPN app to split tunnel that browser.

If you habitually print one or more web pages using your Web browser, there are a couple of ways to work around that problem while connected to a VPN. The easy case is to connect the computer to the printer using a different method. Most, but not all, printers can be connected to computers by a USB cable.

The two following suggestions are provided in case you cannot do that.

For the special case of downloading and printing PDF files, you can download each PDF using your Web browser. In the VPN client application, apply split tunneling to **Adobe Acrobat Reader**, which is far less risky than applying it to your web browser. Then use Acrobat Reader to load and print the PDFs.

For the more general case, when you need to print Web pages, you can print each Web page through a PDF print driver such as Microsoft Print to PDF or PDFCreator or PDF995. Those drivers create a PDF file instead of sending output to a printer. Then you use the same technique: apply split tunneling to Adobe Acrobat Reader, then use Acrobat Reader to load and print the PDFs to your LAN printer.

Sounds too complicated. But wait, all is not lost.

**A MORE COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION**

Some VPN services also allow you to install a VPN client on a *home router*. What are the advantages of that approach? First, the router connects all of your devices to the Internet via a VPN server, so long as those devices are at home and connected to the home LAN, either by ethernet or by Wi-Fi. Second, the router VPN client will do the work of VPN client encryption and decryption for all of your devices.

Using this approach, your devices at home need not run a VPN client. Effectively, your device count at home, from the viewpoint of your VPN service, is **one**: the router itself, which handles all VPN encryption and decryption for all your devices. Therefore, the home router must contain a fast CPU and a good amount of RAM and will be expensive.

When all devices use a home router VPN client, your devices at home can communicate with a LAN printer.

When all devices use a home router VPN client, your devices at home can act as the remote control for a Roku box and run an app to control home lights and appliances.

I must say that the installation process for a VPN client on a router is complex and not for newbies. It often involves installing a third-party app called DD-WRT on the router as a prerequisite. I watched a YouTube video of how to do the installation for the NordVPN router client, and the process looked daunting to me.

This strikes me as an opportunity for a **user group lab**: work on the installations together during a user group meeting. It would require you to bring your home router to the lab meeting.

Some VPN services even sell routers with the VPN client pre-installed. I think this is probably the best alternative for most folks who want to use a VPN client on a home router.

IPvanish publishes a list of router makes and models on which their router VPN client is known to be installable and is known to work. The list as of September 2019 includes high-end, expensive Linksys routers, Asus routers, and Netgear routers. I checked out the prices of those routers: the lowest I saw was about \$150. With the VPN client pre-installed, the price would increase.

When you are away from your home router, yes, you will still run the VPN client on your phone, tablet or computer. But typically you won't bring your Roku box or printer or your lights and appliances along with you.

**ARE THERE WEB SITES THAT ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE WHEN YOU USE A VPN?**

At some point in 2019, I read an article published in a user group newsletter which briefly described VPNs. The author made a broad claim, without details, that VPNs *prevent use of video streaming services and financial web sites*. The VPN service was not specified, the streaming service was not specified, the financial sites were not specified, and the browser and operating system used by the author were not specified. Perhaps the author was using a home router running a VPN client. Again, no details were provided.

As I was wrapping up this article series, I went looking for that article. I could not find it. That claim was *questionable*, in my opinion. The traveling public use those sites on the Web all the time while on the go, even overseas. Netflix in particular encourages use by travelers.

More generally, subscriber VPN services address *how* users access the Web, and do not act as content censors. Well, I admit VPNs of some corporations and government agencies block certain types of web content that they deem unrelated to work. And I suspect in some small countries the local banks lobby the government to prohibit access to foreign banks through the Web, a simple protectionism for the local banks.

But that is another big reason why VPNs exist: to enable connections to foreign web sites with powerful security so

that government snooping does not know what you are accessing on the Web. The only IP addresses the snoops can see are those of your device and the VPN server.

So, as soon as I got my IPvanish account set up and I got the VPN client app installed on my laptop computer, I started testing access to financial web sites for the accounts I use, my stock brokerage, my credit card banks, and my checking account bank. I also tested watching a video on the Netflix web site.

Here's how I did that test.

First, I connected to an IPvanish VPN server in the Boston Massachusetts area. I accessed all those sites and kept track of what happened.

Second, I connected to an IPvanish VPN server in the London England area. Again, I accessed all those sites and kept track of what happened.

My tests used a Toshiba Satellite laptop running Windows 10, and the Firefox web browser.

The results appear in this illustration:

Service	Service type	Boston VPN server	London VPN server
Netflix	Video streaming	Success	Success
www.Citicards.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.Americanexpress.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.usaa.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.bankwithunited.com	Checking account bank	Success	Success
www.schwab.com	Stock brokerage	Success	Success

In short. I found that Netflix worked, my three-credit card bank web sites worked, my stock brokerage web site worked, and my checking account bank web site worked. That was true even when accessing those through the London England VPN server.

I did learn also that Netflix and my stock brokerage site both require that I enable cookies. I did that. I also have my Firefox browser set so that, when I shut down Firefox, it deletes all cookies that were created by web sites during its current use.

Cookies are one way that snooping is implemented. But there are also good cookies.

Cookies are used to "remember" your login ID on various web sites such as email, Amazon.com, and geocaching.com, so that you need not log in again when you revisit the sites.

Cookies are also central to the way retail shopping and bank transactions are handled in your Web browser.

So the lesson is: set up your browser to allow sites to install cookies, so you can shop and use the bank and stock brokerage sites.

To avoid keeping bad cookies, I set the browsers to de-

lete *all* cookies installed during the current Web browser use (aka a "session"), when I shut down the browser, after shopping or banking is done. That way I throw out the bad cookies, but I am forced to discard the good cookies, too.

And shut down your browser promptly. Don't let it run for days at a time.

The regrettable side effect is that I must log into Yahoo! email, Verizon email, geocaching.com and Amazon.com every time I use the browser to access those sites. I can even checkmark the web site login box saying 'remember me'. The remembrance works until I shut down the web browser and the cookies get purged. I am willing to live with that side effect.

Is my test a *comprehensive* test? No. I do not have an account for every bank and every stock brokerage in the US. Nor do I have an account with every VPN service. So a comprehensive test is just about impossible.

But I think my test results provide good news. Not every VPN service causes such problems. Not every browser causes such problems. Not every web site experiences such problems.

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

{Ed. note: The debate about whether to keep or trash cookies is as old as the debate about whether to keep a PC on all of the time or turn it off at the end of the day. But you don't have to have a keep-all or trash-all mentality with respect to cookies. Some free tools like Ccleaner allow you to selectively protect some cookies while deleting all the rest of them, instead of having the browser control their demise. In the case of Ccleaner (which I run each day before I turn off any of my PCs), on the Options page of the software, in the Cookies section, there are two windows for cookies that the tool finds on your PC. The right window can include cookies that you want to KEEP, while those in the left column will be deleted when you click the "Run Cleaner" button on the main screen.}



## Door Prize Winners!

February 2020

Jesse Cwalina — CD/DVD tote case  
 Paul Baecker — Atomi wall outlet  
 Tom Miller — Super glue  
 Sharon Patrick — Bongo cable ties  
 Mike Bader — Hard drive  
 Evelyn Cherson — Digital timer  
 Pat Little — DVD spindle  
 Ed Zeremba — Sharpie pens  
 Paul Cozort — DVD spindle

## Review: Grammarly

By Matt Batt, President  
The Computer Club, Florida  
The Journal of The Computer Club  
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I always thought I was a decent writer. I know that I write in the passive voice too often, but I always try to keep my sentence structure correct and my sentences easy to read.

Recently, I discovered a piece of software called Grammarly. It reviews your writing and finds typos, spelling errors and grammar mistakes. It's quite effective. It's like a proofreader on steroids. Some days, it's quite humbling.

[Grammarly](#) comes in a free or paid version. The free version contains most of the features of the paid version. The free version of Grammarly is more than sufficient for the kind of writing that most of us do with emails, letters, and articles. The paid version gives you an advanced grammar checker, a plagiarism detector and detailed information about each of your grammar mistakes.

There are several ways to install and use Grammarly: I installed Grammarly as an extension to my Chrome browser. This is the easiest way to get started with it. It is available from [www.grammarly.com](http://www.grammarly.com). Once I installed it, Grammarly was available to check my emails that were composed using the Gmail website online. This chrome extension also works with other online email and document editors.

I installed the [Grammarly desktop app](#). The way to use the desktop is to copy and paste what you have written into Grammarly to be checked. Another option is to click on Import and upload a Microsoft Word document directly into Grammarly.

I also installed the [Microsoft Office add-in](#) so that Grammarly was active for Microsoft Word and Outlook.

My usage is simple. I use the Word add-in to check documents that I write and the Chrome add-in to check my emails. I won't tell you how many errors have been caught, but I'm very happy that Grammarly is there for me.

I recently got to take a book that had been already published and proofread by professionals and run it through Grammarly software. Grammarly pointed out many errors of style and some serious grammar errors. Both the author and I were very impressed.

Grammarly extensions are available for the Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Edge browsers. It is also available for both the iPhone and Android platforms.

Try it, you'll like it.

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



## Free Software: Why Does It Exist?

by Bob Rankin  
<https://askbobrankin.com>

A reader asks: I've used Libre Office and other freeware programs for a long time, and I think they're brilliant. But I'm still not sure why they even exist! Can you tell me why all of this good software is free, and what is the motivation for those who create free software? Read on for my answer to this interesting question...



### Free Software: Where Does It Come From?

You've asked a good question, which for me brings to mind an old cliché: "There ain't no such thing as a free lunch." But when it comes to free software, it does seem to defy this maxim, at least in many cases. If you've already read my articles [Seven Free Software Downloads](#) and [Seven MORE Free Software Downloads](#), you've learned that there are some excellent free programs that rival the quality and features found in expensive commercial alternatives.

So why do people spend their time creating free software, and making it available to the world, via the Internet? Presumably, they could create this software, sell it, and have a few extra dollars in their pocket. But it turns out there are some very good reasons to "give away the store" when it comes to software.

Some freeware is created by passionate people who just love computer programming, and believe that software should be free. Richard Stallman, Linus Torvalds, and a small army of volunteer programmers have spent the past twenty years creating the GNU/Linux operating system, and tons of applications to go along with it. The Free Software Foundation promotes the notion that not only should software be free of charge, but the source code should also be freely available ("open source") so others can study it, learn from it, and improve upon it.



### Free Software

Linux in its many forms is a now bonafide alternative to running Microsoft Windows, and those who choose this route can save many hundreds of dollars. Ubuntu is one of the most popular Linux distributions, if you're interested in trying it out.

A related point is that some people love to hate Microsoft, Apple, and other big software companies who create mass-market software solutions and make lots of money selling it. They have computer skills, so they develop free software to create an alternative. Maybe they

*(Continued on page 11.....Free Software)*

## More About Browsers

By John Fair, Vice President  
Computer Users of Erie, PA  
The CUE newsletter

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Our Erie, PA club had this presentation at a recent meeting: "About Web Browsers". If you access the Internet, you use a web browser. Which one are you using? Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, Edge? Did you know you can have more than one on your device? Besides viewing a page on the Internet, what else should you want your browser to do and how do you make sure that happens? We'll look at the popular web browsers, but there are other browsers out there. What are their strengths and why would you want to use them? We will explore security, cookies, cross-site tracking, hiding your identity, and more.

If you open a website you are using a browser. Your computer or mobile device came with a browser installed, but is it the "right" one or the only one you should use? Why would you consider installing one of the other browsers? Since our program "About Browsers" in March I have continued reading more articles describing the latest browser news and I wanted to share some of my research and opinions.

Browsers are more complex and powerful than most folks appreciate. Their components include front end and back end user interfaces, networking, data storage and engines for rendering and executing Java Script. A web server that you contact by typing a web address into the front-end user interface or clicking on a link responds by sending your computer a string of information that your browser must turn into a web page. The rendering engine of the browser reads the content which contains HTML and CSS code to create the image you see on your screen. The Java Script interpreter allows you to change what you see on the screen.

Browser function also includes encryption and decryption. If the site provides secure communication by public-key encryption (the "s" in https), the browser checks for a valid certificate issued by a trusted source. Once validated, the browser creates a password, encrypts it and sends it back to the server to be decrypted with the server's private key and then the secure communication begins using the shared secret password. All in the virtual blink of an eye! Look for the https with any website that asks for personal information.

Probably because of the complexity of modern browsers and the difficulty for each to be compatible across all web sites, the number of different browser engines in use has dwindled over time. Apple uses WebKit in the Safari browser for computers and will allow only WebKit to be used for any browser installed on mobile devices. Chromium Blink, a fork of WebKit, is the foundation of

the Google Chrome browser as well as Microsoft Edge, Opera, Vivaldi, Epic, Brave, and a number of minor players. Firefox and Tor use the Quantum engine. These browser engines are all open source but the bells and whistles that distinguish each browser may not be. Although Internet Explorer (and its proprietary engine Trident) at one time dominated with a 95% market share, IE is being discontinued by Microsoft and with obvious implications for support and insecurity. No one should be using a version older than the current IE 11 and even that version has had recent security problems. Microsoft is replacing IE and the original Edge with a Chromium based version of Edge, soon to be released.

Full disclosure, I am an Apple device user and as such have become accustomed to using Safari. I realize that Safari is not the best browser and it is not compatible with all features of some websites. For example, I have been frustrated when filling out a form on a website only to find the "submit" button does not work. If I open Chrome or Firefox on my Mac, I have no such problem with the same website. So if you are an Apple person, the easy answer to the question of how many browsers you should have is more than one. (I have four browsers installed on my Mac: Safari, Chrome, Firefox and Brave.) In fact, my answer to all users whether Apple, Windows, Android or Unix is the same: have more than one browser.

Which of the available browsers to install is a deeper question. Chrome has about a 2/3 market share of all browsers worldwide and it has a huge library of extensions to add functions and features to the basic browser. Google, however, has a history of harvesting and monetizing your information which makes some users limit their use of Chrome. Firefox, a product of the not-for-profit Mozilla Foundation, is designed for security and privacy as outlined in the Mozilla Manifesto (suggested reading). I have both on all my devices, and I currently favor Firefox Quantum.

In addition to the focus on privacy and security, here are some features I like about Firefox for a computer. The newer code in the Quantum engine is designed to make use of multicore processors rather than the single core used by Chrome. As processors gain more cores, the browser will work faster. Chrome also uses more RAM and slows as more tabs are opened. While the speed of both browsers is initially similar in most tests, Firefox is designed to gain speed as CPU technology improves. Also, as a traditionalist, I like the ability to add a separate search bar since I was never a fan of combining url and search functions in the same bar. I like taking screenshots and that function is built into Firefox, but then again, it is built into the Mac OS. Reader View and Pocket are built in, not ad-ons. Like Chrome and Safari, Firefox can be synchronized across devices so that bookmarks I add on my Mac as well as search history automatically appear on my iPad

and iPhone. By the way, if you are weary of the ad-supported search results that appear at the top of a Google results list, you may want to look into DuckDuckGo as your search engine as I have in Firefox. Try them both and you will be surprised at the difference in quality of results. You also won't see the mysterious ads for products you researched as happens with Google.

You should carefully choose from the many extensions or ad-ons for either of these browsers and here are ones that remove distractions and enhance privacy and security. uBlock Origin is favored over Ad Blocker to limit advertisements. You may choose to "white list" some sites that object to the use of ad blockers of any type. My opinion: if they didn't have such obnoxious ads, perhaps I wouldn't be motivated to use the ad blocker in the first place! HTTPS Everywhere is a great extension to force secure connections when available. Browsers may have a similar sounding function built in but are less assertive. Privacy Badger is the recommended tool to prevent third party tracking. Privacy Essentials by DuckDuckGo also prevents tracking but has the additional feature of giving the site a privacy grade as well as blocking trackers. I have all four installed on both Chrome and Firefox and they do not interfere with each other. Users have reported no interference in any of the forums I have visited.

There are a handful of other add-ons or extensions that I believe enhance everyday functionality. I installed the Last Pass extension in all browsers so I can use that password manager. I recommend using a purpose-built and maintained password manager rather than a similar function that comes built into a browser. Just Read provides the same functionality to Chrome as Reader View which is built into Safari and Firefox. It provides a clean text without clutter and ads and is great for printing an article. Wikiwand reformats Wikipedia pages for a more modern, easier to read look in either Chrome or Firefox.

Finally, make sure your browser is set to automatically update itself. These updates are necessary for security. Both Chrome and Firefox may receive updates every several days to block vulnerabilities and keep current the information needed for proper functionality. If the browser you are using has only monthly updates (IE was known for this), it is an inviting target for exploit by hackers.

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



## Other Computer Clubs

**U** pdated info about other computer clubs in our area (whether with physical meetings or online meetups) can be viewed on the "Other Computer Clubs" page of your SHCC web site.

## Bad Memories

By Greg Skalka, President  
Under the Computer Hood UG, CA  
www.uchug.org president@uchug.org

**W**e are our memories. Our personalities and identities are tied to the information stored in our brains. We are who we are due to our memories of experiences, remembered preferences and lessons learned over our lifetimes. Without our brain's ability to store and retrieve memories, we could not learn, improve ourselves or differentiate ourselves from others as individuals.

Almost everything we do has to be learned, and thus remembered in some type of memory, and there are several types used by our brains. Some things, like the beating of our hearts or breathing, may not relate to memory, as we don't have to learn these things. A lot of other physical things, from simple things like walking or picking up objects to more complex activities like riding a bike or speaking, require memory, as we must learn them, as opposed to being born with these capabilities. These are attributed to what we sometimes call "muscle memory", something we remember how to do but don't consciously have to think about. We also appear to have a "scratchpad" short term memory, which can be used to store a small number of items (5 to 9) for a short time (maybe 15 to 30 seconds). This is what we use to remember a phone number read to us; without some reinforcement the information quickly bleeds away.

In more complex learning and in remembering experiences, the mind uses short term memory and then converts some short-term memories to long term. Long term memory is usually defined as memory lasting longer than 30 seconds, although long term memory of the last few days or years is also often referred to as short term memory. In some cases, injury or disease can affect memory, especially short-term memory. General aging, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, brain tumors, blood clots and infections around the brain, head injuries and substance abuse can all cause short term memory loss. A common situation in these cases is a person that can remember in great detail events and people from 20 years in their past but is unable to remember recent events or people known for a short time.

Amnesia is a form of memory loss where the subject retains their identity and basic motor skills such as walking and speech but loses some memories or the ability to form new memories. One very common type is infantile amnesia, in which you cannot remember the first three to five years of life. In retrograde amnesia, you lose previously created memories, typically starting with most recent ones. Diseases like Alzheimer's gradually cause this type of amnesia. With anterograde amnesia, new memories cannot be formed. This can be a temporary condition, as in a black-out from excessive alcohol consumption, or permanent, when due to a brain injury.

The 2000 movie "Memento" portrays anterograde amnesia.

A good friend recently told me about an incident he had not long-ago involving memory loss. He went to the gym after work one day as he was in the habit of doing, but he does not remember what he did there on that visit. His wife was called to the gym by the manager, out of concern that something was wrong with my friend. The manager said my friend was looking for his gym bag and had repeatedly asked for the manager. He had asked for the manager's name several times during their interaction, even though the manager told it to him each time. Concerned that he'd had a stroke, my friend's wife took him to the emergency room, where after extensive testing it was found he had experienced TGA, or transient global amnesia. For about an hour and a half, my friend's brain made no short-term memories. Although he could otherwise function and knew where he was, he could not remember anything of his time at the gym or why he was there and was confused by it. He could remember his past and recognized his wife, but still has no recollection of events at the gym that day. It is not known what causes TGA, though it seldom results in a repeat incident.

I've since learned that another friend's wife had a TGA incident about 20 years ago. Hearing about these incidents and the stories my sister has told about her mother-in-law's Alzheimer's makes me wish there were some way to back up our human memories. I guess the closest we can get to that now is to take lots of photos and videos of our lives.

Computers and other tech devices also rely on memories to function, and there are a number of parallels to humans in the way memories are used and the problems they have. There are different types of electronic digital memories, and they are used in computers in different ways.

The two main types of digital memory are volatile, which retain their information only as long as power is applied to them, and non-volatile, which retain their information even without power. Volatile memories include both types of RAM (random access memory): static (SRAM) and dynamic (DRAM). Non-volatile memories include Flash memory (USB Flash drives and solid-state drives or SSDs), magnetic hard drives, floppy disks and optical discs. Memory is located in many places in most computing devices, including small blocks of high-speed cache RAM inside the microprocessor component, fast DRAM modules for main memory, SSD modules or magnetic hard drives for main OS / program / data storage and peripheral removable storage (USB, floppy and optical discs).

Just as with humans, computers and tech devices without memories cannot function. It is the information stored as operating systems, apps and data in our tech

devices that give them their "personalities" and capabilities. A computer or smart phone with blank memory devices is just an empty, inert shell.

Memory failures can cause big problems for computers, as they do for humans. An unreliable main memory DRAM module can result in errant program operation and computer crashes. SSD or hard drive failures can mean data loss, programs that won't load and OS crashes.

Our electronic digital memories give us two advantages over our human memories - the ability to easily replace faulty components and the ability to back up our data, so faulty components don't result in a serious loss. Important data in non-volatile memory devices should be backed up or copied to other devices, so that a failure of the original device can be easily corrected by replacing the device and restoring the data from the back-up copy. Bad volatile memories like DRAM modules can easily be replaced so computing can resume.

I got my first camera in grade school and have always enjoyed taking photos. I have taken quite a few over the years, and the quantity increased greatly once I got a digital camera and no longer had to worry about the cost in film and developing each shot represented. I now take thousands of digital photos and hours of digital video each year. It does provide that additional assist to my memory when I want to know when an event occurred, as I can check the date stamped on my slides or photo prints or the time/date stamp in my photo jpeg files.

Having digital photo files is great, as they don't degrade and can be backed up, but over the years the file size of photos has greatly increased. My first digital camera was just 1 Megapixel, and the photo files were only about 100 KB each. My latest camera takes 18 Megapixel photos, resulting in 10 MB files each. Such large files make great photos, but they have become difficult to share, at least in their full-size form. These files are really too big to email as an attachment, and while I have often put them up on a file sharing site to allow others to download, some folks I send them to have problems getting them. Even for those tech savvy recipients, downloading 30 GB of data can be a pain.

My son was recently married, and I took a number of photos and videos of the event and days surrounding it that I wanted to share with relatives. I wound up with about 20 GB of data to share. Since this was a one-time event with files going to only about eight recipients, some of which were out of state, I decided the best way to share was to copy the files to relatively inexpensive USB flash memory devices and give them out in person or mail them.

All I needed was about ten 32 GB Flash drives, which could be had for around \$8 each. I had previously bought some loose Patriot 32 GB drives from Amazon;

these came in a cardboard envelope. I needed more, so I also bought some from Fry's Electronics; I got 32 GB individually packaged Samsung drives for about the same price on sale.

Our group's board meeting was just a few days after I bought the Fry's drives, and so I told the board about my need for USB Flash drives and the purchases I'd made. Our vice president then warned me about buying Flash drives online, as the quality can sometimes be poor. He claimed that parts that fail manufacturing tests can be intercepted from the dumpsters and sold online as "good" drives. I thought that unlikely from Amazon, but I soon found our VP's warning to be credible.

A few days after the board meeting, I started copying the files onto the USB Flash drives. I had used some of the Amazon drives and had only one left, and so started with it. During the copy process, however, it stopped and said the drive was full. I was only copying 20 GB onto a 32 GB drive, yet it had stopped with only about 4 GB put onto the drive. Windows File Explorer indicated the drive was 32 GB in size, but with only 4 GB on it, it said it had 27 GB of used space and 4 GB free. Something was definitely wrong with this drive. I recalled no problems with the others I'd bought in this Amazon batch, but also recalled that I had only put no more than 2-3 GB on any of them before giving them out.



Bad Drive

I pulled out my Fry's drives and all worked fine with the full 20 GB of files. I considered that it was possible that my Amazon drives could have been "counterfeits" pulled from the manufacturer's dumpsters and resold; after all, they came in unconventional (meaning no) packaging. The Fry's drives were shrink-wrapped onto cardboard holders, and so were more likely to have gone through the manufacturer's full process.

It is unfortunate that the Fry's drives are sold with additional packaging that winds up in the landfill, but it may be an additional indicator of an authentic, fully functional product.

*{Ed. note: Of course, the article does not suggest that Patriot or Samsung flash drives are of poor quality. It just points out caution as to their source of purchase.}*

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



*(Free Software.....Continued from page 7)*

feel like this is their way of "sticking it to the man" or helping to level an uneven playing field. Many of these folks would also identify themselves with the Linux and open source crowds, and would rather eat dirt than allow their computers to be "defiled" by commercial software.

For some, creating software is an enjoyable hobby, other freeware programmers may be retired, bored or altruistic. Others do it because they needed a tool to solve a particular problem, and they decided to create it themselves. For these people, sharing their work freely on the Internet, and interacting with users who appreciate their software, is all the reward they need. Others create free software in order to build credibility, perhaps for future job opportunities.

Back in the mid 1980s, Jim Knopf (aka Jim Button) and a few others pioneered the shareware concept. He developed a database program called PC-File, and distributed it by mail on floppy disks, asking for a voluntary payment of \$25 if users liked the program. Within a few years, he had built a multi-million dollar company, before the Internet was widely used. No Strings Attached...

The principle of reciprocity is a strong motivator in humans. Some software developers hope you'll like what you see, and buy their paid version with extra bells and whistles. Or maybe it's a "loss leader" which gives them the opportunity to introduce you to other commercial products. If you've used a free program, and found it to be very useful, you are understandably more likely to purchase a related product from the same vendor, or perhaps make a small donation to support the work of the author.



IrfanView

A good example of this is IrfanView, the popular graphics editor. It was created by Irfan Skiljan, an unassuming programmer from Austria, and the program is free for personal non-commercial use.

The author asks that commercial users register and make a donation of 10 EURO (about US\$11), and he also accepts donations from grateful users who wish to support the project.

There are also many excellent free antivirus programs, such as Avast and AVG, that are used by millions of people worldwide. Each of these software vendors offers a paid version that offers extra features and support options. But there is no requirement to upgrade, like you see with some "30-day free trial" software packages. I applaud this model, because it allows people to get software they need, and pay only if they decide to upgrade.

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## Website Analytics

By Jeff Wilkinson, President  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV  
Gigabyte Gazette [www.scsccl.com](http://www.scsccl.com)  
[pres.scsccl@gmail.com](mailto:pres.scsccl@gmail.com)

Data gathered from website logs can provide a vast amount of data about how users interact with a website. Examples include the entry points of each user, which give an indication of how the website was found, to the exit pages, which give an indication of the effectiveness of your website. Using this valuable data allows optimization of a website to achieve its stated goal.

**Google Analytics**, which is part of any Gmail account, offers many insights into website visitor behavior. By inserting a small bit of code on a website, you can begin to gather basic data. The data can be further refined by setting various goals, such as subscribing to a newsletter or viewing an announcement page.

With Google Analytics you can view behavior patterns of your visitors and use the information to fine tune your website. While the expected progression or path through a website may be perfectly clear to the web designer, observing the data can reveal entirely different behavior. A website has a specific purpose when created and it just makes sense to be able to measure the progress towards that goal. An ecommerce website has specific goals and wants clear intuitive paths through the website to those goals. With analytic data, pages can be fine-tuned to help guide the user and make a purchase decision easier.

Analytics allow collection of data over time based on a myriad of parameters. For instance, you can tell which page visitors to a website entered the site and which page they exited, how long they stayed on each page and what page they went to next. If visitors landed on a page and immediately exited your website that could indicate an issue with that page, but if they landed on a page and immediately went to another page within your site to complete a call to action that would be important data to have. You could then experiment with different words and phrases and measure their effectiveness in guiding users to a desired web page.

If you have ever purchased items online, you have certainly noticed how some sites make it extremely simple to purchase while others are not so easy. Amazon.com is a good example of a finely tuned website that makes shopping and completing a purchase very easy. This is the result of constant attention to the feedback provided by analytic data and modifying pages to make a purchase as easy as possible.

I recently was researching a Samsung Blue Ray player I own and searched on the part number in both Google

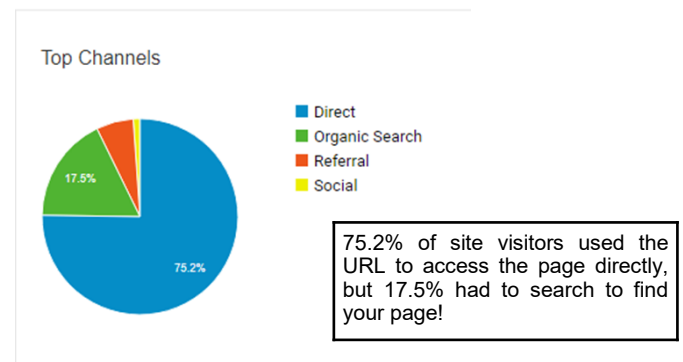
shopping and eBay. The next day I began receiving email marketing material for various products with portions of the part number I was searching for! How did they know? —> **Analytics**.

United Parcel Service has developed their own in-house analytical software to use the data gathered from multiple inputs to refine routing and delivery times. Analytic data is an important aspect of the parcel delivery business and a factor in profitable yet competitive pricing.

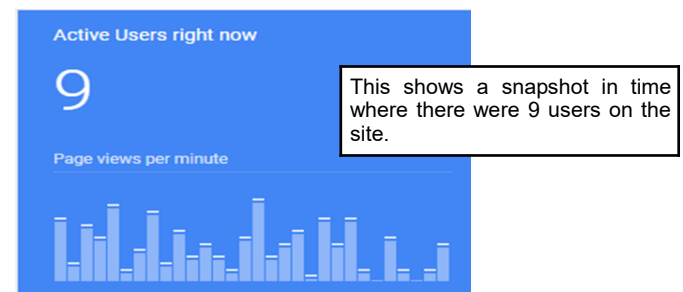
Gathering and interpreting analytic data can be a daunting task with overwhelming amounts of data that can easily be misunderstood, or it can be an extremely useful tool in examining the effectiveness of a website. Taken in small steps the insights revealed are very valuable.

Here are just two examples of information that Google Analytics can capture and display.

### Google Analytics Website Entry Report:



### Google Analytics Active Users Report:



{Ed. note: This article is written from a web site owner's point of view. As a web surfer, if you choose to NOT be tracked by Google Analytics in this manner, you can do a few things. Do not use Gmail (or any other Google services). Additionally, install the free "Ghostery" (or similar) tool into your browser to prevent Google Analytics (and thousands of other trackers) from tracking and analyzing and selling your movements on the web.}

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## An International Ordeal

News and/or opinion from Paul Baecker

Several people expressed amazement at the story of the medical ordeal that my wife recently went through, so I thought I'd briefly describe it here.

She went on a trip to Italy last Fall with a 40-person tour group. Six hours after landing in Rome and bussing to Assisi, she slipped on wet pavement and shattered her right femur on Oct. 3. She had surgery four days later to repair the break with a metal plate and a dozen pins/screws in an Italian hospital, and spent 14 more days there. She could not travel to the U.S. for the surgery due to the danger of blood clotting caused by exposed bone marrow. During the stay at the hospital, they introduced a hematoma into her surgical leg's foot through reinsertion of an IV needle each time it slipped out (without replacing the needle!!!). Others have confirmed her experience that Italian hospitals do not supply towels, cutlery, even cups for beverages. Family members are expected to supply these daily needs, and you are expected to know someone who can acquire bottled water outside of the hospital. They did a very poor job of attending to the foot infection, and it wasn't until she returned to the U.S. that she got the necessary medical attention for it to start its healing.

I am leaving out much of the frightening hospital 'care' details and my daily frantic phone calls to insurance companies and the trip organizer to get her released. Seventeen days after the fall, she was finally released from the hospital for a return flight to the U.S. on a Learjet air ambulance with a pilot, co-pilot, doctor, nurse, and a friend, which alone cost \$58,800 !! Fortunately, she had purchased trip interruption insurance WITH A MEDICAL RIDER when she booked the trip. This is the moral of this story: When you travel outside of the US, you would be very wise to buy sufficient insurance to cover any medical incidentals, including hospitalization and "repatriation" (travel back home). In her case, this trip interruption insurance cost ~\$350, and she was wise enough to add ~\$150 for the medical rider, which covers up to \$50,000 of medical necessities (beyond what our own insurance covers), plus up to \$250,000 for repatriation. The best \$500 she ever spent! A 15-hour door-to-door service, meaning the crew picked her up at the Italian hospital and delivered her to our chosen medical facility (Henry Ford Hospital West Bloomfield). No, she saw nothing else of Italy.

I can not stress the importance of having this medical coverage. You can do the simple math to realize our savings. As of late February, she is still getting weekly PT and using a walker while the "very complicated break" (as her U.S. knee surgeon describes it) heals.

That's just the short story version. Go to [FoxFlight](#) and visit their *Gallery* to see how she got back home.



## Web Page Reviews Overload

(Web sites that did not fit on page 14)

Detroit's salt mine: City beneath the city. (36 photos).  
<https://www.detroitnews.com/picture-gallery/news/local/michigan-history/2020/01/26/detroit-salt-mine-city-beneath-city/4523991002/>

How to start or boot Windows 10 into **Safe Mode** (useful for diagnosing problems, removing infections, etc.).  
<https://www.thewindowsclub.com/boot-windows-10-in-safe-mode>

How to disable **Quick Access** in Windows 10's File Explorer. (For some users, QA is just confusing.)  
<https://www.thewindowsclub.com/disable-quick-access-windows-10>

15 products that can be made from hemp, including a car. (From a "cannabis industry news" web site.)  
<https://420intel.com/articles/2018/04/23/15-products-can-be-made-hemp>

Have you considered purchasing an **OEM** edition of a hardware or software product? What are OEM products and why are they cheaper?  
<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/oem-products-cheaper-makeuseof-explains/>

Diagnosing a problem or making a configuration change on your Linux PC? Here's how to save the terminal output to a file in Linux.  
<https://www.maketecheasier.com/save-output-of-command-to-file-linux/>

How to clean up and tame **Quick Access** in Windows 10's File Explorer.  
<https://www.techjunkie.com/quick-access-windows-10/>

Some suggested Firefox browser extensions (aka "add-ons").  
<https://www.maketecheasier.com/best-firefox-web-extensions/>

3 ways to recover deleted photos on any Android device.  
<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/recover-deleted-photos-android/>

What is the **Windows Registry**, how it works, and what you can do with it. (Carefully....VERY carefully.)  
<https://www.howtogeek.com/370022/windows-registry-demystified-what-you-can-do-with-it/>

17 Android nasties spotted in **Google Play** store, totaling over 550,000 downloads. Always research apps before downloading them to your phone.  
<https://labs.bitdefender.com/2020/01/seventeen-android-nasties-spotted-in-google-play-total-over-550k-downloads/>



## 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.

What exactly happens when you turn on your computer?

<https://www.howtogeek.com/398493/what-exactly-happens-when-you-turn-on-your-computer/>

What exactly happens when you shut down or sign out of Windows?

<https://www.howtogeek.com/396277/what-exactly-happens-when-you-shut-down-or-sign-out-of-windows/>

Windows Registry demystified: What you can do with it.

<https://www.howtogeek.com/370022/windows-registry-demystified-what-you-can-do-with-it/>

Windows 7 is dead: How to stay as safe as possible after the security updates stopped on 1/14/20.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3513998/windows-7-is-dead-how-to-stay-as-safe-as-possible-after-the-security-updates-stop.html>

**Desktop Info** is a customizable system monitoring widget for Windows.

<https://www.ghacks.net/2020/01/26/desktop-info-is-a-customizable-system-monitoring-widget-for-windows/>

Report: Avast and AVG collect and sell your personal info via their free antivirus programs.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3516502/report-avast-and-avg-collect-and-sell-your-personal-info-via-their-free-antivirus-programs.html>

Avast defends data harvesting, plans to get users to agree to it.

<https://www.pcmag.com/news/avast-defends-data-harvesting-plans-to-get-users-to-agree-to-it>

Find the fastest DNS to optimize your Internet speed.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/find-the-fastest-dns-to-optimize-your-internet-speed-with-namebench/>

The Firefox web browser, like the majority of browsers available today, collects Telemetry data. You can browse the Telemetry that Firefox collects, and you can also easily choose to opt out of this collection (go to *Tools...Options...Privacy and Security*).

<https://www.ghacks.net/2020/01/28/browse-the-telemetry-that-firefox-collects/>

DuckDuckGo vs. Google: The best search engine for you.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/duckduckgo-vs-google-search-engine/>

**DocPad** is a highly customizable plain text editor for Windows.

<https://www.ghacks.net/2020/01/27/docpad-is-a-highly-customizable-plain-text-editor-for-windows/>

Why is it so much harder to lose weight as you get older?

<https://blog.fitbit.com/harder-lose-weight-older/>

How to clean up mashed up prints.

<https://davescomputertips.com/how-to-clean-up-mashed-up-prints/>

Everything you need to know about the browser cache.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/browser-cache-makeuseof-explains/>

**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.