



THE WYSIWYG



October 2020

Volume 32 Issue 8

STERLING HEIGHTS COMPUTER CLUB

PO Box 385

Sterling Heights, Michigan 48311-0385

**MAIN MEETING: TUESDAY OCTOBER 6
7:00 PM**

Same day/time as usual
Location: Your house,
Video conference

See *The President's Pen* on page 3 for details.
(Please use your real name when you log in, just as we all do
when we attend our in-person meetings.)

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This Month's Main Meeting Topic:

“Troubleshooting Your Computer”

will be presented online by
APCUG Speakers Bureau member

Judy Taylour

* * * * *

Hope to 'see' you there!

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

2020 SHCC Officers – Thanks to all!!!

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Greeter for visitors	Jim Waldrop
Newsletter Publisher/Editor	Paul Baecker
Program Coordinator	Mike Bader
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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

NOVEMBER 2020
3 - SHCC Main Meeting
 8 - SEMCO meeting

DECEMBER 2020
1 - SHCC Main Meeting
 13 - SEMCO meeting

JANUARY 2021
5 - SHCC Main Meeting
 10 - SEMCO meeting

FEBRUARY 2021
2 - SHCC Main Meeting
 14 - 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

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The President's Pen

by Don VanSyckel



We continue to have a remote meeting since group meeting size is still limited. When we can, we'll have live meetings at the new location, St. Thomas Lutheran Church. The church is located in Sterling Heights on the north side of 15 Mile Road about 1/3 mile east of Van-Dyke Avenue.

Officer elections are next month, November. Office responsibilities and duties have been emailed out. You can nominate yourself or email a friend and have them do it. Currently there is no nominee for secretary and one for each of the other three positions.

I continue to use my Tablo and Roku. Just a reminder, the Tablo is an over-the-air recorder for TV broadcasts and the Roku is a streaming media player that connects to the TV. In this case the Tablo streams to the Roku which puts the content on the TV via an HDMI cable.. The good news about the Tablo is it does a good job recording over the air broadcasts. The bad news is commercial over-the-air channels all have commercials injected into the program. Tablo now offers a "commercial skip" feature. This feature is a small upper to the channel guide subscription so I thought I'd try it. Commercial skip operates by the Tablo analyzing the content, and when a commercial is detected the Tablo instantly scans through the commercial to the program and picks up there. The length of the show is shorter due to skipping all of the commercials.

What you see when viewing is a flash of the beginning of the commercial and then the program continues. This has eliminated the need to fast forward through the commercials; you can simply watch with no need to pick up the remote. There are some issues from time to time with a program being labeled that the signal wasn't good enough for commercial skip to operate. This seems to be more prevalent on a couple of the local non-network channels. All in all the feature works good enough to continue subscribing to it.

This feature appears to be executed during playback, so there is no reduction in disk space required for a recording. In reading the vendor's info about this feature, reference was made to using a receiver in the signal processing for commercial skip. So if you have a dual receiver unit like I have and your Tablo happens to be doing two recordings at the time you are doing a playback, the playback will not be able to use the commercial skip feature.

If I knew then what I know now, I would have gotten the 4-channel unit. I don't watch TV live at all, everything I want gets recorded and I watch at my own time and in a shorter time with commercial skip. With my 2-channel unit there were a few times when I tried to record three things at once but the scheduler warns you of the conflict and I took care of the issue. Many shows are shown more than one time and I selected a showing at a different time and that was the end of this issue. The 4-channel would enable three

recording and playback with commercial skip all at the same time. Playback without channel skip can be done anytime, no receiver needed. I believe from what I've read that there can be more than one play back session but haven't tested how many playback sessions can be done at one time

This month "Troubleshooting Your Computer" will be presented by Judy Tylour from Association of Personnel Computer User Groups (APCUG). This is your chance to get tips not only to fix your PC issues but to possibly keep your PC from having issues. We begin at 7:00 PM and this remote meeting will have some time at the beginning for officer nominations and discussion like we have at live meetings. See you, sort of, Tuesday.

Last Month's Meeting:

Last month John Kennedy of Association of Personnel Computer User Groups (APCUG) presented "Free and Alternatives to Free Software". John's excellent presentation was well received and was very informative.



Did You Know...?

News and/or Opinion from the Editor

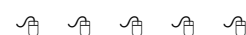
Zooming in and out of the screen of a browser or program can improve the visibility of what you are viewing on your computer's screen. Either you see more of a screen by zooming out, or you see small content detail enlarged for ease of reading by zooming in. Some of the images in these WYSIWYG newsletter articles are small to allow room for sufficient supporting text in the articles, but the reader can zoom in to view the distinct details of the images.

Perhaps a majority of programs have a zoom option, accessible through buttons or slider bars of various sorts. For some of us, locating the button or bar with a mouse can be frustrating, and then clicking it or rolling it or sliding it to get to your anticipated setting adds even more insanity.

But my chosen method for zooming in and out is to hold down the Control (Ctrl) key on my computer's keyboard (many computers have two Ctrl keys) and rolling the scroll wheel on the mouse. Roll the scroll wheel one direction to zoom in, or the other direction to zoom out. No buttons or bars to search and peck for. Release the Ctrl key when you're done zooming.

In some instances other things happen, such as doing this in Windows' File Explorer will change the display of the contents from icons to tiles to details.

Of course, the scroll wheel does what it's name indicates....scrolling up and down web pages, documents, PDF files, spreadsheets, images, etc. But perhaps this extra functionality will add some spice (or just speed) to your computing experience!

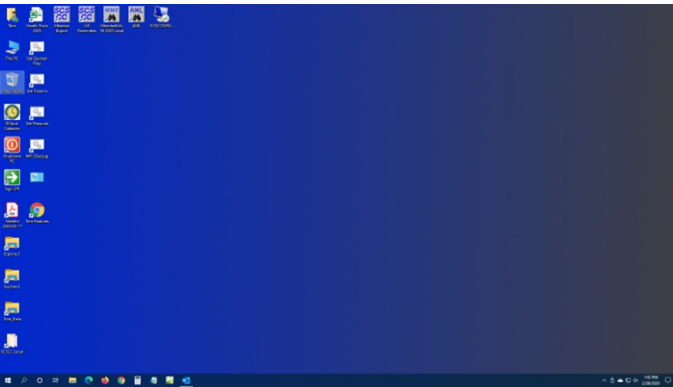


Tuning Up Your Windows 10 Start Menu

By Tom Burt, Vice-President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
www.scscclub tomburt89134@cox.net

Windows 10 was originally released in July 2015. It's latest major update is Ver.2004 – this article is written using the Fall Ver.1909 update. Originally, I had mixed feelings about Windows 10's new hybrid "list and tiles" Start menu. However, I gradually came to like it as a way to declutter my desktop and actually make it easier to find things. Here's a screenshot of my desktop today:

Tom's Windows 10 Desktop:

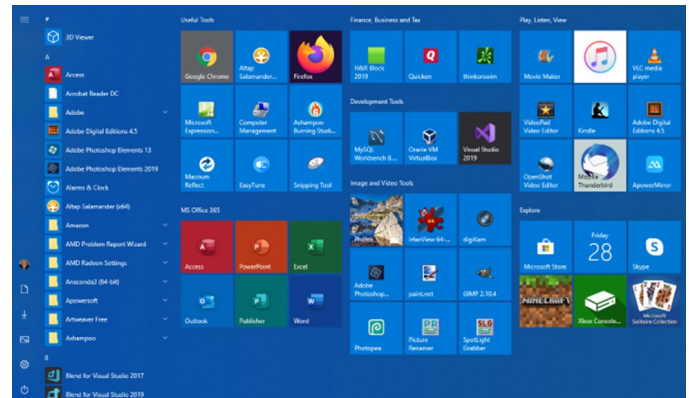


The exact details don't matter. As you can see, I have about two dozen icons on the desktop that I use to launch applications, access data folders, or run command scripts. Over four years of using Windows 10, I've steadily reduced the original number of desktop icons by half. However, even now, when I'm working intensely and need to start an application while I have others running, it gets irritating. Often I have to minimize or move those other apps to uncover the desktop icons so I can double-click the one I need to launch the new app. Also, to launch from a desktop icon I need to double-click it – something my aging fingers no longer do well. (Note - I prefer not to use the "single click to open" setting - too many misfires.)

The Windows 10 Ver1909 Start Menu is the best incarnation yet and helps me with some of the above issues. You can open the Start Menu by clicking the flag icon at the far left of the taskbar or by simply pressing the Windows key. Following is a screenshot of my current Start menu:

Tom's Windows 10 Start Menu:

I have stretched the Start menu out to allow three 3-column groups and have all my tiles sized to the medium, square size. In this layout, I don't need to scroll to find a particular tile. The tiles are grouped and labeled along functional lines, such as "Useful Tools," "Image



and Video Tools," "Finance, Business and Tax," "MS office 365" and others. The app tiles I use most are at the top left.

To launch an app, I just press the Windows key to pop open the Start menu, and then click the tile of the app. The app starts up and the Start menu closes back up. I no longer need to uncover desktop icons and double click. Tiles are especially nice on hand-held touch screen devices.

Down the left side of the Start menu is the standard complete, alphabetical list of all installed programs. You can right-click on any program in the list and choose "Pin to Start" to add a tile for that program to the array of tiles. You can then drag the tile to wherever you want it in either an existing group or a new group. You can right-click the tile to adjust its size too small, medium, wide or large. The wide and large sizes are useful for "modern" apps that animate their tiles with "live" content. News and Weather apps are examples. The medium tiles display the app's name and an icon.

You can adjust the width of the Start menu by opening it, positioning the mouse cursor over the right edge until the cursor turns to a double-arrow, and then dragging to the right (to widen) or to the left (to narrow). Tile groups will automatically move to fit the new shape of the Start menu window. You can adjust the height of the Start menu by opening it, positioning the mouse cursor over the top edge until the cursor turns to a double arrow, and then dragging up or down.

You can rename tile groups by clicking the space just above the group and then typing a name. You can move entire groups around by clicking and dragging the group's title space.

To remove a tile from the Start menu, right-click it and select "Unpin from Start". That program will still be listed in the Start menu's left-side list of all installed programs. I got rid of quite a few of the Windows default tiles for apps like Candy Crush that I never use.

(Continued on page 7.....**Start Menu**)

Protect Your Computer Against Power Outages

By Matt Batt, Past President
The Computer Club

www.scccomputerclub.org attbatt@gmail.com

The two main causes of damage to computers, TVs, modems, and other sensitive electronics are a sudden loss of power and power fluctuations. Basic power strips do not protect your PC from any sort of electrical fluctuations; surge protectors can protect against power surges, but they offer no protection against drops in line voltage or loss of power.

To protect your computer against power outages or voltage fluctuations, you need a battery backup. UPS (*Uninterruptible Power Supply*) units are basically surge protectors that contain a battery inside. In the event of a power failure, your computer will seamlessly switch over to battery power and continue to run. This gives you time to shut down your machine without any damage.

Many UPS units come with software that can detect when the unit switches to battery power and shut down automatically in your absence.

There are many different UPS offerings on the market. There are small units that can keep a desktop computer running for 5-10 minutes or longer, more expensive units that can keep multiple computers running for hours.

The most important step in choosing a UPS is to buy one that has enough power to give your computer system enough time to shut down properly. While it is possible to calculate the power usage of a computer system by analyzing all of its components, for purposes of this article we can estimate the requirements of a typical computer user in our club.

UPS systems are rated VA (Volt-Amperes). Ignore how it is calculated, but a typical low-end desktop needs a UPS rated at about 480 VA while a high-end computer with a high-end video card would need a UPS rated as high as 1200=1500 VA.

Two types of UPS units have an application to home electronic systems:

The least expensive is a Standby UPS. This type of unit charges its battery and waits. When the power cuts off it will automatically switch to the battery for backup power. The switch takes milliseconds and is fast enough so that most electronics do not shut down.

For a higher cost, you can get a unit with Automatic Voltage Regulation (AVT) that corrects power fluctuations without switching to battery power. This feature protects you from instabilities in line voltage often experienced in lightning storms.

There are a few other considerations to note;

Some units include software for your computer that senses when the UPS switches over to battery power and can automatically initiate the shutdown process.

UPS units generally have a mix of power/surge protected and surge protected only outlets. Make sure that there are enough outlets for your needs.

Some UPS units include surge-protected/filtered ports for your Ethernet and Coax cables. Personally, I don't use these as I've had problems with ethernet cable performance degrading through a UPS.

Be sure to get units that have user-replaceable batteries. UPS batteries last 3-5 years. When a battery fails, you'll either need to buy batteries or but a whole new unit.

I've used Cyberpower and APC UPS units and they all worked as advertised. The two pictured below from Amazon both have shutdown software and replaceable batteries. The APC is rated at 500VA and costs \$55.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and two with just Surge protection. It's the model I use on most of my computers and TVs. The Cyberpower has AVR, is rated at 1000VA, and costs \$109.00. It has 5 outlets with Battery backup and four with just Surge protection. I use one like it for my main computer, Internet mode, router, and my phone system.



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

(Ed. note: Tripplite is another quality brand of UPS units. The latest UPS I bought is an APC unit with 7 power outlets: 5 have battery backup and surge protection and two have only surge protection. The small power strips that people buy because they say "surge protection" on the box label have surge protection for refrigerators and laundry appliances. For computers, phone chargers, TVs, stereo equipment, even CPAP units, 'power strips' offer no protection from damage to the delicate components inside them. Also, your power utility company delivers "dirty power" to everyone, with a constant multitude of small surges and spikes, which deliver unnecessary heat to your devices and that causes damage. Protect your expensive electronic devices and give them longer lives by connecting them to UPS units. Every PC, TV, and the stereo system in my home is connected to individual UPS units. A HIGHLY recommended investment!)



How Not to Send Your Email to a Bunch of People (or Just Reply to Sender)

By Lou Cioccio, Board Member
Computer Users of Erie CUE Newsletter
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This happens to me and probably happens to everyone at one time or another, whether we are professionals or just "regular" people. In business situations your email, when sending, will have the following:

TO:

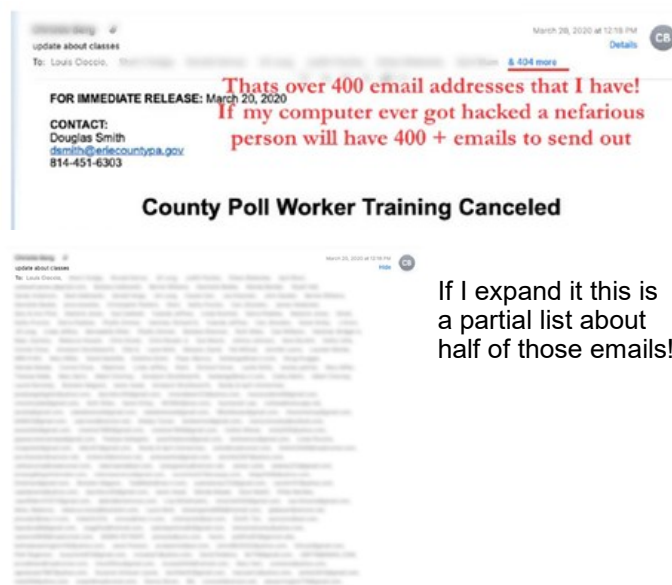
CC:

And maybe **BCC:**

The TO: is sent to the person you are sending to or replying TO: (this IS important, for you need to be aware of Reply TO: or Reply TO ALL:). Sometimes someone makes a foolish mistake or broke a mail etiquette rule, and you want to tell him/her but not embarrass the person, so you need to Reply TO:, not Reply ALL:, otherwise, you are correcting the person amongst his/her peers.

This is one thing I had taught my junior leaders in scouts and also how I handled it when I was an NCO in the Army. As long as it's not a life-threatening mistake, you do not have to make an example to their peers!

On to emails. Here is an example of a person sending an email to a bunch of people rather than having them hidden in BCC, otherwise known as Blind Carbon Copy. Those of you who are old enough will remember Carbon Paper!



If I expand it this is a partial list about half of those emails!

So, when replying, STOP, make sure you are not replying to the whole Enchilada, only to ONE person.

So I hope I did not offend anyone but at least you know and are aware of the difference to Blind Carbon Copy when you do not want to share an address or have something private to say but are letting others know that you sent this email out.

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



Trying to Set a New Password

Discovered somewhere by the Editor

Have you ever had this debate with your operating system?

- WINDOWS: Please enter your new password.
- USER: carrot
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must be more than 8 characters.
- USER: boiled carrot
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must contain 1 numerical character.
- USER: 1 boiled carrot
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password cannot have blank spaces.
- USER: 50damnboiledcarrots
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password must contain at least one upper case character.
- USER: 50DAMNboiledcarrots
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password cannot use more than one upper case character consecutively.
- USER: 50DamnBoiledCarrotsShovedUpYourButtIfYouDon'tGiveMeAccessNow!
- WINDOWS: Sorry, the password cannot contain punctuation.
- USER: ReallyPissedOff50DamnBoiledCarrotsShovedUpYourButtIfYouDontGiveMeAccessNow
- WINDOWS: Sorry, that password is already in use.



Findings on “Windows 10 Storage” News and/or opinion from the Editor

An article about Windows’ Storage options, including using *Storage Sense*, is in the *WebPageReviews* on page 13.

This caused me to investigate. But I was somewhat surprised at what I found about the storage stats for my Windows 10 computer. Clicking on Start, Settings and then Storage, I was welcomed with this window (showing here the right pane only).

The first section “Apps and Features” is self-explanatory.

The second, “Other People” — well, I have only one account on this PC, but I COULD add more accounts if I chose to. Is this 4GB of wasted space? Hmmm....

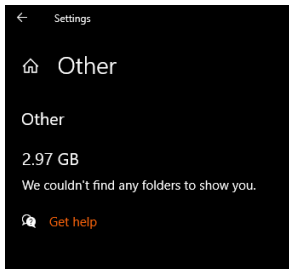
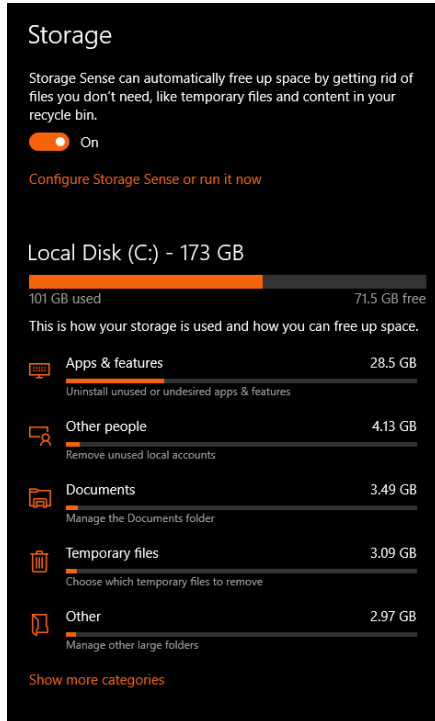
Third, “Documents”, takes me to my *Documents* folder. Fourth, “Temporary Files”, is worth my attention to keep unnecessary files from clogging up the PC’s drive.

The last option, “Other”, is particularly confusing. “Manage other large folders” it is telling me. So, I clicked on it and this window is the result.

What?? “We couldn’t find any folders to show you.” So, am I wasting 2.97GB of valuable drive space for nothing??

The real point here is that although Windows 10 offers you hundreds of configuration features, options and settings, some may or may not work in your computer’s specific environment. Investigating new ones in the huge “Settings” collection may offer you new things to do with your PC or new ways to control the Windows 10 operating system and your computer, but be cautious of what settings you choose or change. Make short notes about what you select, so that you can back-track and undo it if it goes haywire or just doesn’t give you the results you expected. Also, entering a search phrase like ‘*what is “this is how your storage is used” in windows 10*’ or ‘*windows 10 storage settings*’ into a search engine will probably reveal insight into how what you see is determined and how to work with it (in this case, *storage*). Try to use some of the specific text that you see in the setting that you are investigating.

You will surely not be the first Windows user to make the same inquiry.



(Start Menu.....Continued from page 4)

To add a tile/icon to the Windows Taskbar, right-click either the tile or the program name in the program list. In the pop-up menu, hover the mouse over the “More” option to get a second pop-up and choose “Pin to Taskbar.” After the icon appears on the Taskbar, you can drag it left or right to where you want it to be permanently.

You can also add desktop (or other) shortcut icons to the Start menu’s tileset. Just right-click the desktop shortcut and choose “Pin to Start”. This will create a new tile on the Start menu that points to the app or folder targeted by the original desktop shortcut. You can then remove the original shortcut from the desktop. This can help to further declutter your Windows desktop.

You may have noticed that my Start menu is colored differently than the Windows 10 default. It’s easy to customize the Start menu’s color. Go to Start > Settings > Personalization > Colors and then, under “Choose your accent color,” pick a color from the Windows color palette or click the + icon to choose a custom color. The accent color is used as the color of window title bars and as the background for the Start menu. The background color of the tiles is also colored to complement the accent color.

So that’s a quick summary of things you can do to make the Windows 10 Start menu work better for you!

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



“Well, that’s it. I have visited every website on the Internet. Now what will I do with my time?”

Thinking of Buying a New Router?

By Jeff Wilkinson, President

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

www.scscclub

pres.scscclub (at) gmail.com

Purchasing a new router can be an intimidating task. Trying to decide what you need and how to make the correct selection from the myriad offerings can certainly use some clarification. Having just gone through this experience, I thought I'd offer some guidelines.

If you have a modem/router supplied by your internet service provider and you are tired of paying a rental fee each month, you may also want to consider purchasing your own modem and router.

Overwhelming as it can be, let's see if we can sort it out. Your router is the central hub of your home network. The internet connection is input to the router from the cable modem and the signals are "routed" to your devices by either direct (wired) connection or Wi-Fi. You will want to choose a router that is powerful enough and has enough features to service all your current devices and has some expansion or growth capacity for future needs.

A first step would be to estimate the number of devices you expect to connect to your network via Wi-Fi – such as your smartphone, laptop computer, a streaming device like a Roku or Amazon Fire TV, Wi-Fi thermostat, newer IoT appliances, and Kindle devices. Next look at the size of your home and the locations where you will be using any of the wireless devices. If your home is over 2,500 square feet, you may want to consider a mesh wireless system. That requires multiple devices and can become expensive and is generally not needed in our community (Las Vegas). Expensive doesn't always mean better!

Then consider the location of your internet connection, where your cable modem is located, or where the internet connection enters the residence. This is the location where you would most likely locate your router and you would want it to allow for strategic placement of the router. Up high rather than on the floor is desired. Open surroundings rather than behind equipment or in a cabinet would also be preferred.

Looking at routers and their advertised specs, they often sum up speeds of the various bands which is a meaningless number for all practical purposes. If the top speed from your Internet Service Provider (ISP) is 100 Mbps, having a router capable of 800 Mbps is not necessary. An AC750 would work well for a single user.

You will want to look at routers with an "AC" prefix on the model number, AC750, AC1750, AC1900, etc. The AC prefix indicates WiFi-5 standards and AX indicates WiFi-6, which is the current latest standard but can be a

bit pricey. Many of your current Wi-Fi devices won't support the AX standard. The iPhone 11 and Samsung Galaxy S10 are exceptions.

The numbers after the prefix give you a rough sense of the combined speeds of each of the router's bands - typically 2.4 and 5GHz, and perhaps a second 5GHz band if we're talking about a tri-band router. Since a device can only use one band at a time the number is not all that relevant and is a theoretical number achievable in a controlled lab environment, maybe. Of course, your speed will vary!

For the typical user in our community, someone who uses the internet to check email, surf the internet, buy online occasionally, and has a smartphone, a dual-band router can be had for under \$100. I don't think our internet speed will increase much from where it is today given the infrastructure upgrades required, so a superfast tri-band router is generally not needed, although that is what I wound up with.

The common manufacturers are Netgear, Asus, D-Link, TP-Link, and Linksys but there are many others. A router should be easy to set up and require little to no maintenance. You can read users' reviews at many web sites to help you make a decision.

Routers are fairly easy to install and setup. Many come with Apps for your smartphone which can guide you through the process. We also have club members who can help install and set up a new router.

So, in conclusion, a router upgrade can be a major improvement to your home network.

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

{Ed. note: This fine article doesn't cover a prime reason for installing your own router — security. Your ISP always has access to the modem/router that they supply to you, and you never really know how well it is protected from outside access attempts (hackers). With your own router added to your home network, YOU have total control over your network's security because only YOU know the ID and password that you apply to the router device. Nosey ISP employees as well as hackers get stopped cold. These days, with ever-increasing online threat opportunities, this is a very sensible investment.

See the WebPageReviews on page 14 for a link to another article on how to choose a router. And on the SHCC web site, in the Web Page Reviews section, select "Reviews by Key Word", then in succession "computers", "hardware" and "router" to find web links to other articles about routers.}



Recover Your Wi-Fi Password

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
www.scscclb.com dkretch@gmail.com

Computer users often seek technical support when they are unable to access the Internet via their home wireless system.

First, the technician will usually walk the user through the reset procedure for the router or router/modem (turn them off and on). If that does not fix the problem and it is determined the router is putting out a good signal, the subsequent conversation often goes something like this:

Technician: What is your password for your router?

User: I don't have a password.

Technician: If your router is not secured (i.e. password protected) you should be able to connect to it.

User: I don't have a password. I just click on the Google (or another browser) icon and get online.

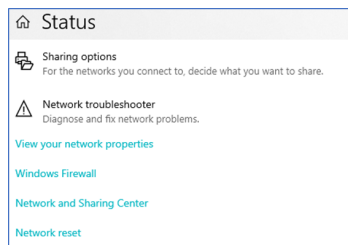
At this point, the Technician explains to User that the Wi-Fi password is stored on User's computer and that a few steps are required to access that password. The technician might guide the user through a process to recover the password using the following procedure.

If the computer connects to the Wi-Fi automatically...

With the latest version of Windows 10, Microsoft has buried the Wi-Fi password on a computer more deeply than with prior versions of Windows. You can still find your Wi-Fi password using the following procedure:

Find your way to the "Wireless Properties"

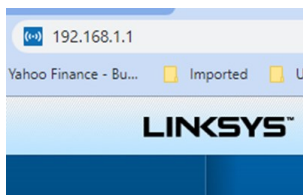
Right-click on the Internet access icon on the right side of your Taskbar then click on "Open Network and Internet Settings." Click on "Status" then click on "Network and Sharing Center."



Under "Internet" click on your network name (in blue) then click on "Wireless Properties." Under "security" you can see the hidden password after you click on "show characters."

If you only own a smartphone/tablet or have a PC which has not stored the Wi-Fi password...

Log in to your router as an administrator. You can access your router by entering its IP address into your browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. You can re-search the default IP address of your router by Googling "IP address [brand name of your router]. Every router I've dealt



with had an address of "192.168.X.Y." The most common value for both X and Y is the number 1. If that does not work, try substituting the numbers 0 or 2 for X.

After you've logged in, you should be able to find the Wi-Fi settings on the Administrative pages of your router. There you can look up your Wi-Fi password.

If you are like many people...

The Wi-Fi password is written on a sticker on the back of your router. This is how I usually set up home routers and it might be a good thing to do after you have recovered your Wi-Fi password.

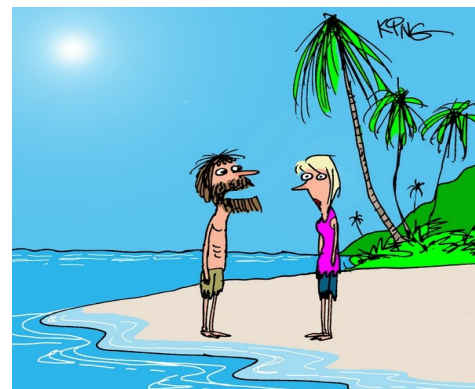
This is a simple but effective strategy since it is so easy to find.

A burglar would have to break into your home to steal your password, and they probably would focus on more tangible items.

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

{Ed. note: Naturally, you can use any browser (Firefox, Opera, Safari, etc.) and any search engine (Google, Duckduckgo, Bing, etc.) to search for your router's IP address on the manufacturer's web site. Or consult the documentation that came with your device.

The default password for every router is readily available on the web (often it is 'password' or 'admin'). So when you install your own router, it is very wise to change that password to something that you will remember. If you forget the router or network passwords that you assigned, and nothing you do helps you regain that access, every router has a very small reset button (on the back or bottom of the device). Hold it in for about 10 seconds and it resets the router to its original out-of-the-box settings. You can then reset the necessary security settings as you did when you bought it.}



"Don't think of this as being stranded on a deserted island. Think of it as living in one of our favorite screensavers."

Not Another Sunset!

By Greg Skalka, President
Under the Computer Hood Users Group
www.uchug.org president@uchug.org

I have seen the sun set on a lot of technology. As tech improvements are made and new innovations come to market to brighten our days, the old devices, systems, and ways of doing things often slowly pass over the horizon and out of sight.

In most cases this is a good thing, bringing many benefits, but there are rarely any downsides, however minor. With a lot of innovations, there can still be some advantages to older ways. Young people today don't know what it is like to get up from the couch, walk to the TV and turn a knob to change the channel, yet with all that convenience, the remote control can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Another thing many don't remember is having to manually defrost a freezer. Self-defrosting technology saves labor but uses more energy. Automatic transmissions in automobiles made driving easier for everyone but provided poorer mileage until the technology improved. Now many automatic transmissions are manuals with a computer doing the shifting, and it is hard to find a new vehicle with a true manual transmission. A true manual can still be an advantage, however, since when so few today know how to operate them, they are less likely to be stolen or carjacked. A lot of tech innovations improve our lives in almost all aspects, and there seems little reason to retain the old ways.

Computer technology has improved greatly over 40 years. It would be hard to argue that we would be better off today with no Internet and non-portable devices controlled through a text interface or rows of switches, with large monochrome displays that can't show graphics. All the changes we've seen, from the DOS command line prompt through ten or more versions of Windows, all the versions of Apple products, from the stationary desktop through laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, smartphones, and watches, have meant that a lot of products have seen the sun set on them over the years. In most cases, we run enthusiastically towards the rising sun of new products and capabilities. In a few cases, though, it seems major tech players want to push our still useful and valued technology off a western cliff into the abyss of obscurity before we are willing to part with it, all in the interest of ringing up new sales.

I live in the Wintel (Windows-Intel) world and have seen many products and operating system sunsets. DOS was revolutionary, but Windows graphics and mouse use made leaving it easy. Windows XP was a great OS; I'm writing this on a 15-year-old PC that still runs fine (without an Internet connection), with an early version of Microsoft Word that has all I really need. MS Office is one case where I feel Microsoft has been adding "features" and changing versions primarily to squeeze

more money out of users. There have been some nice feature improvements over the years, but a lot of the recent changes have been to the user interface, which I feel was just fine as it was. I'm tired of companies that feel they need to change the look and feel of their software to justify new versions and fees. I especially don't care for the idea of "subscription" software (like Office 365), where I feel I've just become a revenue stream to some company.

I know some will say I should perhaps switch to Linux, or at least to open-source (and free) office productivity software, but I unfortunately still live in a working world, where I must use my employer's MS OS and Office.

I prefer not to cloud my sadly-limited mind with having to be fluent in multiple ways of doing things. I have the utmost respect for multi-lingual people, as I have really only ever spoken English, and I often don't feel I've mastered the one language.

I had a good run with Windows 7 and was sad to have to plan last year for its January 2020 security sunset. A year ago, my wife and I were running three Win7 computers (a desktop and two laptops), three Chrome OS devices (two Chromebooks and a Chromebit), a Win10 computer I hardly used, a couple of tablets, an Android Smartphone and an iPhone. I'm still transitioning to Windows 10; while my wife is happy on her new Win10 desktop, I'm still setting up the new Win10 laptop I bought myself. I try to be good and use my old Win10 computer, but like an unmotivated dieter, I still briefly cheat from time to time and reconnect the network cable on my old Win7 laptop.

I've come to terms with Windows 10, having had to use it at work extensively. The Win7 security end-of-life deadline turned out to be a boon for Microsoft and computer makers, at least in regards to my family. It caused me to buy two new desktops (I bought my mom one as well) and a laptop I might not otherwise have been in the market for. It is nice to have new, faster and better equipment, but I resent being forced into things by the deadlines of others.

While I grudgingly use Microsoft's products, I also chose devices running Google's Chrome OS to add to my tech stable. I bought my first Chromebook, an Acer Chromebook 11, in 2015. The following year, I bought an Acer Chromebit stick computer. Chrome computers are inexpensive (at least the ones I buy are), quick booting, and very portable. They are great for going on the web and for reading and light writing tasks but are too underpowered for much else. I found my Chromebook was great for web browsing, reading the newspaper, and a wonderful travel accessory. I bought a second Chromebook, a Samsung XE501-C13, in a 2018 Black Friday sale simply because I loved my first one so much I wanted to have a spare.

Photo 1: Acer and Samsung Chromebooks



Google started out of the gate with what Microsoft only went to with Windows 10 — forcing automatic OS updates on the user. Google's Chrome OS updates are small and quick, so you hardly notice they have happened. They have seldom changed the look or features, sticking mostly to security, and I don't recall hearing of anything breaking as the result of an update. Microsoft of course earned disdain from early Win10 users with forced OS updates happening at inopportune times, taking a long time and breaking existing capabilities.

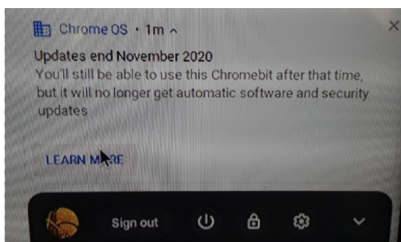
I use my Chromebooks every day, but my Chromebit has seen little use. It is plugged into an HDMI port on the back of our smartTV. I bought it a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse and thought I could surf the web with it like my Chromebooks, but my old eyes have problems with the small text at normal TV viewing distances. It is good for watching YouTube videos, but we don't do a lot of that. Since COVID, we have been using it every Sunday morning, as our church now broadcasts services on YouTube.

It was on one of these Sunday morning Chromebit viewing sessions that I noticed it had an odd notification: "Updates end November 2020"! With dismay, I started to research this issue. It appears Google has set up a security sunset date for each model of Chrome OS device. This was not well advertised, so users often only find out near the end of their device's security lifetime.

Photo 2: Acer Chromebit stick computer



Photo 3: Google Sunset



Notice it turns out all Chrome OS devices have a set date be-

yond which no more updates will be provided, the Auto Update Expiration (AUE) date. The auto part of AUE doesn't mean much, as I didn't find any evidence you could manually update the OS after that date either. Google provides information on this at www.google.com/chromebook/older. It is not clear if the manufacturers have any input into this date, but Google certainly appears to, as there is evidence they can change it.

Google emphasizes that this does not prevent the use of the Chrome OS device after the AUE date, but the device will stop receiving Chrome OS and browser updates. These updates include:

- "Security updates, bug fixes, and new features for Chromebooks. Existing features may stop working."
- "Support for certain apps and extensions that require specific Chrome OS or browser versions."

I looked up the AUE dates for my three Chrome OS devices. To find the AUE, go to settings, then at the very bottom of the left panel, select "About Chrome OS." Select "Additional details," and in the "Update schedule" section the AUE will be shown. I found mine were:

Asus Chromebit - November 2020
Acer Chromebook - September 2021
Samsung Chromebook - June 2022

This means I'll lose updates on the Chromebit in about 6 months, and I have only a year or two left on my Chromebooks. Now I'm getting that same sinking feeling I get with Microsoft.

I found out a bit more about the AUE from some articles on Chrome enthusiast websites (chromecomputing.com and chromeunboxed.com). According to these articles, Google originally set the AUE dates based on an assumed five-year device life expectancy. The supposed goals were to keep the Chrome OS from having to maintain compatibility with older hardware, keep its reputation as a fast and reliable OS intact and incentivize hardware manufacturers to continue to create new Chrome OS products. They said Google changed to 8+ years of update support for products, starting with those released in 2020. Additionally, Google may be extending the AUE date for recent products to match their new assumed lifespan, so it is possible to find the prior AUE for a product extended.

If Google sticks with the five-year plan for my products, I will be disappointed, as that will make them more restrictive than even Microsoft. I bought the three Win7-installed computers I just retired from use between 2010 and 2012, meaning Microsoft allowed me 8-10 of operation with that OS before "forcing" me to change. I don't know if I'm careful or just lucky, but I've yet to have a computer fail; they always get retired (mostly unwillingly) first.

I guess I'll be looking for a new Chromebook come the Black Friday sales this year. And now every time I see my Chromebooks, in my mind I'll be hearing Elton John singing "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me".

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



Will Adding Memory Speed Up Your Computer?

By Bob Rankin

<https://askbobrankin.com>

If your laptop or desktop computer is slow or sluggish, the problem may be too little RAM (Random Access Memory). But “add more RAM” is not the solution to every case of poor performance, and buying more RAM than you need or can use is just a waste of money. Read on to learn the ins and outs of RAM memory and how much RAM memory is the “sweet spot” is for most computers...

Does Your Computer Need More Memory? How Much RAM is Right?

RAM is the memory in which a computer temporarily stores things it needs to access quickly for the task at hand. Don't confuse RAM memory with hard drive storage, which is where your computer stores programs, documents, photos and other files. When you turn off the computer, your RAM memory sits empty, but files stored on the hard drive remain.

Your web browser and certain parts of the operating system that are working to show you this page should be in RAM right now. When you open a document in your word processor, both the program and the contents of the document are loaded from hard drive storage into RAM memory. When you save a file or close a program, those things are removed from RAM to allow other processes to run.

When you don't have enough RAM memory, that's when things tend to slow down. This may happen if you have several programs open at once, or if one of those programs needs to open a very large file. Rather than displaying an “out of memory” error and giving up, your operating system creates “virtual memory” by using a special file on the hard drive. Programs can't tell the difference between physical and virtual memory, but you will.

It's the job of the operating system to move data between physical RAM memory and virtual memory in a way that maximizes efficiency. But all of that data movement involves reading from and writing to a hard disk drive. That slows everything down, because hard drive access is much slower than RAM memory access.

If the “disk activity” light on your PC is constantly flickering, you may need more RAM. I say “may” because a RAM shortage is not the only cause of excessive disk activity. The operating system does lots of behind the scenes tasks that involve accessing the hard drive. Damaged physical sectors on a disk, a corrupted file, or a mixed-up File Allocation Table are some other potential causes. You should run CHKDSK to find and fix such errors before buying more RAM. See my article on

[Windows Hard Drive Errors](#) for instructions.

The best indicator of the need for more RAM memory is if your computer noticeably slows down when you open multiple programs, or if there is a noticeable delay when switching between open programs. If you press the Windows key (sometimes called the Start key) on a Windows computer, and it doesn't respond immediately, that could be another indicator.



Windows has a built-in *Resource Monitor* app that can track RAM use, quantify the effect that low RAM is having on your system, and help you determine what is chewing up that valuable resource. My article [Is Low Memory Boggling Down Your Computer?](#) goes into more detail on that.

On a Mac, you can [check to see if your computer needs more RAM](#) in Activity Monitor. In the Activity Monitor app, click Memory, and the Memory Pressure graph will show if your computer is using memory efficiently.

How Much and What Type?

How much more RAM to buy depends on several things, not just the price of RAM.

Whether you have a Windows or Apple computer, RAM usually comes in the form of black chips soldered onto a rectangular green circuit board with (typically) gold connectors along one of its long edges; this is called a “stick” of RAM. Your computer has a fixed number and type of slots into which RAM sticks can be plugged. These factors limit total RAM capacity and the increments in which you can add RAM. You'll need to find the RAM specifications for your particular make and model. The manufacturer's website or a visit to the [Crucial Advisor tool](#) can help you determine how much and what type of RAM your system can use.

The type of operating system you are running also matters when it comes to buying RAM. A 32-bit version of Windows can use a theoretical maximum of only 4GB of RAM. In practice, some RAM is needed by Windows, leaving about 3.1GB for user applications. So if you have the 32-bit version of any Windows edition, don't bother going beyond 4GB of total RAM; the rest will go unused. To find out if your computer is running a 32-bit or 64-bit version of Windows, click the Start button, right-click Computer, and then click Properties. (And yes, even Windows 10 has a 32-bit version.)

A 64-bit version can address much more RAM; the exact amount depends on which edition of 64-bit Windows you have. If you exceed the limits below, you'll be wasting money:

Windows 7 Home Basic: 8GB
 Windows 7 Home Premium: 16GB
 Windows 7 Pro / Ultimate / Enterprise: 192GB
 Windows 8: 128 GB
 Windows 8 Pro / Enterprise: 512 GB
 Windows 10 Home: 128 GB
 Windows 10 Pro / Enterprise: 2TB
 Mac OS Catalina 10.15: 256 GB
 Mac OS X 10.9 or later: 128GB
 Mac OS X 10.8 or earlier 96GB

In general, 8GB of RAM is enough for most home computer users. You might get away with 4GB of RAM if you limit yourself to one open program at a time, and you generally have just one or two open tabs in your Web browser. Beyond those modest limits, you'll probably experience lagging performance. Online gamers, video editors, programmers, and people who work with large databases or spreadsheets may need more.

Is More RAM the Answer?

Adding more RAM is just one way to improve performance, and it's a fairly easy task, but it may be only modestly effective. One other thing that can really speed up older computers is to replace your hard drive with a solid-state (SSD) drive. When I bought my current desktop computer, the first thing I did was order an SSD drive to replace the standard magnetic hard drive that shipped with it. I opted for a 250GB Samsung SSD drive. It came with software called Samsung Data Migration, which made it super-easy to transfer everything from my existing hard drive, and make the new SSD my primary C: drive. The result was pretty dramatic. Startup time was reduced by more than half, programs open quicker, and everything just works faster.

A faster CPU will yield greater performance improvements, but that's a more expensive upgrade, and may not be possible. And sometimes, it's not your computer that causes sluggish performance. A slow Internet connection or a busy website can cause frustrating delays.

Regular disk maintenance, as well as keeping application software up to date will also improve performance, and is free. See my articles [\[FREE\] Tools to Tune and Optimize Your Hard Drive](#) and [Keep Your Software Up To Date \(or else...\)](#) for tips on how to do those tasks.

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



Web Page Reviews Overload

(Web sites that did not fit on page 14)

No hard disc drive (HDD) or solid state drive (SSD) lives forever. Here is how to check and monitor your drive's health.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3566868/how-to-check-and-monitor-your-hard-drives-health.html>

How to get rid of old files and clean up your PC with Windows' *Storage* settings.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3566560/how-to-get-rid-of-old-files-and-clean-up-your-pc-with-windows-storage-settings.html>

Microsoft offers two types of updates for Windows 10: "feature updates" and "quality updates". This guide explains the differences between the two.

<https://www.windowscentral.com/whats-difference-between-quality-updates-and-feature-updates-windows-10>

Microsoft ends all support (product and security) for its Office 2010 suite on October 13, 2020. Here are your options for using this office suite as well as others.

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/3481650/microsoft-ends-support-for-office-2010-october-13-2020-what-you-can-do.html>

Can data be recovered from a failed SSD? What you need to know.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/data-recovered-failed-ssd>

HardInfo (short for "hardware information") is a tool for Linux systems, that is able to gather information from both hardware and some software and organize it in an easy to use GUI tool.

<https://www.tecmint.com/hardinfo-check-hardware-information-in-linux/>

If you try to fix, upgrade (or even dare to open the case of) your smartphone, tablet, laptop, or other gadgets, does that act violate any law or void the warranty?

<https://askbobrankin.com/is-it-illegal-to-fix-your-own-gadgets.html>

If your computer slows down when connected to the Internet, try the tips in this article.

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/computer-slows-down-when-connected-to-internet/>

Unique and interesting stories throughout the "Mitten State" that are off the beaten path. Tales of tragic accidents, historic places and inspirational people that showcase Michigan's diverse history. A new finding every day. Subscribe for daily emailed tidbits.

<https://lostinmichigan.net/>

Web Page Reviews

by Paul Baecker — webwatch@sterlingheightscomputerclub.org



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

Educational software suite, including a large number of activities for children aged 2 to 10. (Windows, macOS, Linux, Android)

<https://gcompris.net/index-en.html>

Picking a wireless router that delivers fast and reliable Wi-Fi, as well as excellent coverage, is not an easy task. Learn what to look for in a router.

<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/things-consider-when-buying-wireless-router>

How to configure **AutoCorrect** your way in MS Office (Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, etc.).

<https://davescomputertips.com/how-to-configure-autocorrect-your-way/>

6 Alexa features you should turn off today for privacy and efficiency.

<https://www.cnet.com/how-to/6-alexa-features-you-should-turn-off-today/>

A **paraprosdokian** is a figure of speech in which the latter part of a sentence or phrase is surprising or unexpected in a way that causes the reader or listener to re-frame or re-interpret the first part.

<https://www.englishforums.com/content/humour/paraprosdokians.htm>

Best ways to print photos from your smartphone.

<https://www.techlicious.com/tip/best-ways-to-print-photos-from-your-smartphone/>

How to send pictures to a cell phone.

<https://www.wikihow.com/Send-Pictures-to-a-Cell-Phone>

You can transfer photos from an Android phone to your Windows 10 PC via the Your Phone app, or by just attaching the phone to the PC via a USB cable. iPhone users have to rely on third-party options (often iTunes).

<https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-wirelessly-transfer-photos-from-your-phone-to-a-pc>

Why you shouldn't use your ISP's default DNS server.

<https://www.howtogeek.com/664608/why-you-shouldnt-be-using-your-isps-default-dns-server/>

Web browsers are smart, but not all of their automation is perfect. They fail to update their cache sometimes and even going as far as displaying outdated data to users. This results in malfunctioning websites. This article shows how to clear (refresh) your browser's cache.

<https://www.fossmint.com/clear-your-browser-cache/>

Microsoft announces Flash end-of-support schedule: you can soon remove Flash from Windows entirely.

<https://www.ghacks.net/2020/0905/microsoft-announces-flash-end-of-support-schedule-you-can-soon-remove-flash-from-windows-entirely>

Latest iPhone update adds a new "warning dot" that alerts you whenever your microphone or camera is activated.

<https://www.the-sun.com/lifestyle/tech/1487788/iphone-listening-ios-14-update-microphone-active/>

The **Hanka Homestead Finnish Museum** is located on its original site in Askel, Michigan and was homesteaded in 1896 by a Finnish immigrant family. View history and over 100 internal and external building and site photos.

<https://www.hankahomesteadmuseum.org/>

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.