Phoenix PC Users Group

NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side……………..Tue, Sep 18

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side……………..Wed, Sep 19

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

Fountain Hills………..Thu, Sep 20

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,
Fountain Hills

Presentation this month:

Always bring your Questions & future topics.
We'll provide answers, how to's, etc.

NEW

MEMBERS CHOICE -- You choose, at the beginning of each meeting, which subjects you want presented from a varied list of topics. We will have the material – You choose.. This month the list covers "Windows Live Movie Maker,"Windows 8", "Office versions 2007 – 13", "Making Tiny URLs" and Current PC News.

For date and time changes, check our website: phoenixpcug.org

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

The nights are getting cooler! Wow, it's been a long hot summer, seems six months long! Hope you all have had a good summer. Now it's time for fall and many things coming up. To quote AZACC President Katie Gertz's recent email:

"It's time to get focused again on what is happening in the technology world. Tech companies have been busy with new hardware and software. Everyone competing to get the best product out there first!

To name a few: Amazon released a new line of Kindles. Apple iPhones, iPods, and new iOS. Motorola has released a new RAZR Android phone. New tablets galore out there to choose from. And of course, Microsoft is releasing a new SURFACE tablet and Windows 8 on October 26th.

We have plenty of interesting topics coming for you as AZacc speakers. Our local speakers guide has been updated as well, so if we cannot provide an AZacc speaker per se, please utilize the local speakers guide for your meeting presentations.

We did have two different speakers lined up for October, but unfortunately, both have fizzled out on us. Not to worry, we are working very hard on getting speakers for the remaining months of our computer club season. And don't forget, we have the **Computer Technology Conference** next April to look forward to. This year's event will be even better than our inaugural year. More information to be forthcoming as we get closer.

Our first Sharefest meeting is scheduled for **October 20th** so please put that on your calendar to join me and the AZacc board to see what's in store for the coming year. Please be sure to check our **www.azacc.org** website often for important changes and updates. "

This month we are expanding the idea of featuring many topics for members to choose from as

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Sometimes a little more is too much. Take televised football. It started with a Monday night game in the National Football League (NFL). Then it went to Monday night football on Thursday night. All of that while there are still two, or even three, games shown on multiple networks on Sunday, the traditional game day. But all of the ballooning in the NFL has been overshadowed by the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA). So much in a hurry to get some television airtime, the college football season began with a Thursday night game and continued for four more nights in succession - all non-traditional times for college football. And worse, these games took place even before the students had returned to the campus! The picture of two teams playing before a few hundred fans in a stadium that could seat sixty thousand people was truly pathetic.

Sometimes an upgrade in software is a step back in efficiency. A new business/ educational software upgrade has been offered to companies and schools who have a package agreement with this major software provider at a very low price-compared to the retail cost. The software is chockfull of new features, multiple tool bars, and other frills of marvelous utility to a very few subscribers; but of doubtful use to the ordinary user for whom a computer is pretty much a fancy typewriter with a couple of other nice add-ons like spread sheets, and perhaps a little photo editing. It's back to the old one for us Luddites and curmudgeons.

Michael

well as our popular Q&A session. We will feature useful tips, solutions to common problems, important recommendations, etc. We had a great one day short course for students (anyone can attend) from College America on improving their computer performance. We hope to do that again soon. As always, bring a friend!

David

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

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GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)
- Tuesday, Sep 18, 2012
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 18)
- Wednesday, Sep 19, 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 18)
- Thursday, Sep 20, 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

REASONS FOR MOVING UP TO WINDOWS 7

Reasons for moving up to Windows 7
By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida
May 2012 issue, Sarasota Monitor
www.spcug.org
Pcugedit(at)verizon.net

Before we discuss the reasons for moving to a new Operating System (OS), we should consider why we would want to change the OS. After all, the OS is at the very heart of our computer's operation. If we are happy with the current operation, why change things, which could possibly lead to unknown problems. (The devil you know may be far friendlier than the devil that you don't know.) I think the reason is basically because technology does not stand still. Technology constantly improves and therefore changes. Don't we expect turn signals, power steering, power brakes, air conditioning, and even entertainment systems in our modern cars? Technologies change rapidly in their early stages and then slower as they mature. Automotive technology has changed quite a bit over the last 120 or so years, and is fairly mature now. (Think about all the automotive User Interfaces that have changed over time. Where is the high-beam lights control?   It's not on the floor any more, is it.) Home computers are only about 30 years old. One might say they are still in the early, rapidly changing, years. But, unlike autos in the 50s (remember planned obsolescence?). I think the change from XP to Windows 7 is not just change for change sake. There are some very substantial improvements in the Windows 7 OS. Many of the reasons for change are "under the hood", like improved security, and simpler networking. These may be hard to appreciate, because they are not on the surface and obvious; but they are definitely present and useful. Obviously, the thing that is most noticeable is the User Interface. But it is not just a new overall look, new wallpaper, and a different color for the Taskbar.

Speaking of the Taskbar, the Taskbar is one of the major User Interface components that has been improved. The new Taskbar takes on qualities of the "Quick Launch area" that was available in XP, but not really promoted. The Taskbar not only helps you launch your applications, but it lets you easily view all of the open applications and allows you to move between windows and applications effortlessly. In addition to showing the applications that you currently have open, the new Windows 7 Taskbar supports "pinned" shortcuts to your most commonly used applications (and even websites). Click a shortcut when the app is running, and it brings the most recently used window to the foreground. Click the same shortcut when the app is closed, and it will launch the app.

Another Windows 7 enhancement comes in the form of Jump Lists. Jump Lists put frequently used (recently opened) files in a convenient menu that is a simple click away from the icon on the Taskbar or on the Start Menu. Apps that support Jump Lists will display the list when you right click on the shortcut, or when you left-click and drag the mouse cursor up away from the Taskbar.

Windows Explorer has been enhanced in Windows 7. Anyone who has taken any of my classes knows, by now, that the Windows Explorer is the "keys to the kingdom". The improvements to Windows Explorer make the left-column of the Windows Explorer window the quickest way to navigate to any folder on your hard drive or network. "Libraries" is another new Explorer feature. Libraries are simply data repositories that can store content that is of a similar nature, but located in different places on the computer, across a network, or in the cloud. Libraries are handy for organizing and collecting files in one place because they appear to be, and can be used as, normal folders for most applications. Libraries become especially useful when you integrate them with your commonly used folders, network shares, and cloud services. For example, let's say that both you and your spouse are users on your computer and suppose your music is stored in your Music folder, and your spouse's music is stored in another Music folder. And further let's say that you have some music stored on a second networked computer. If you wanted to play all of your music you could point your music software to all of the folders (if that was al-

REASONS FOR MOVING UP TO WINDOWS 7

(Continued from page 4)

lowed), or you could create a Music Library that would contain the locations of all of your music folders and then point your software to the Music Library.

Another area of improvement is the use of Ribbons in the Windows 7 Accessory Applets. This may not seem like an improvement for those of you who preferred the traditional menus, but I think the more you use the Ribbons, the better you will like them; they do allow more information to be on the screen at one time without obscuring the work in progress.

Networking is another improved area. Windows 7 makes the home networking experience easier, faster and ultimately safer. Networking, in Windows 7, has been improved and made easier by the introduction of the "HomeGroup". The "WorkGroup" form of networking is still supported, but if all the computers in your network are using Windows 7 you can take advantage of the HomeGroup. A HomeGroup is easily set up by going to Control Panel - Networking and Sharing Center, and selecting "Choose homegroup and sharing options". Once you've created a HomeGroup, sharing files is as easy as right-clicking on a folder or file, clicking Share With, and selecting the options you want. When you want to share any of your files, or folders, or printers, on a network, you just Join the HomeGroup. Joining a HomeGroup is as easy as entering the HomeGroup password that you get from a computer that is already part of the HomeGroup that you wish to join. There are no permissions, or "network shares" to set up.

One surprise, when upgrading from XP or Vista to Windows 7, is that Microsoft has removed functionality from Windows. Windows Movie Maker, Windows Photo Gallery, and Windows Mail are no longer part of the initially installed OS. Instead, they are part of a separate, optional download called Windows Live Essentials.

Whether you're upgrading from XP or Vista, Windows 7 offers great improvements in usability and security. For anyone who regularly keeps many windows open at once time, the new Taskbar is worth the effort to upgrade alone. For XP users, the security improvements are equally worth the effort to upgrade. Windows 7 is the best version of Windows that has been released, and is a worthy successor. Whether you're an average or a power user, Windows 7 is well worth the expense and effort, either for an upgrade to your current machine or to have on your next new machine. Now what about Windows 8? Stay tuned.

ARE YOU READY FOR WINDOWS 8 ?

Are you ready for some Windows 8 on your desktop?
By Barney Babin, Cajun Clickers Computer Club (LA) member and instructor for XP, Vista Workshop and Windows 7
April 2012 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
www.clickers.org
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Now that Windows 8 Consumer Preview is a reality, you can download it and "play" with the latest and greatest from Microsoft. Just remember, this is a beta version; so everything that you see, or don't see, is subject to change when all of the customer feedback is analyzed by the Microsoft folks. Also, vendors have not developed many drivers for the beta version; so the goodies that you normally use, including printers, may be inoperable in one way or another.

With that said, you can still get a feel for what is coming – and it is definitely a change. If you are currently using a Smartphone, Tablet, or play games on Xbox, then you're going to feel much more comfortable with the (formerly named Metro) dashboard than someone who has never seen such a thing before. Basically, everything you associate with a computer is changing, including the Start Menu, how you shut down your computer, etc.

The following are my observations from downloading, installing, and using Windows 8 Consumer Preview since its release. It is by no means an in-depth look at all of the options. http://tinyurl.com/7rnql5l

(a shortcut to "Windows 8 Release Preview ISO images".

First, go to and download the Windows 8 Consumer Preview Setup which will verify that your computer and the associated programs on your computer are compatible with Windows 8.

Once this process is accomplished, you are offered the option of downloading either the 3.8GB ISO file (will require much time for such a large download) that allows you to burn a DVD of the program, or you can download a file that runs from a bootable USB drive that has a minimum size of 4 GB, which will be optioned for boot during the process. This option allows folks without a DVD player to load the system from a bootable USB drive.

Once you do this, install the system – but not on your main system by updating to Windows 8! Remember, this is a prerelease and many things will change before the Windows 8 final edition is released. You can make a separate partition on your hard drive and install it there, or run it in a virtual machine on your existing operating system. If you choose the separate partition option, which was my choice, you will be dual booting to either the native system on your computer or to Windows 8, which gives you full processor and RAM capabilities in Windows 8 and, in my opinion, makes your testing phase more realistic. (Ed Walker, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, a shortcut to how to dual boot Win7 & Win8:)

http://goo.gl/UUFfg)

ARE YOU READY FOR WINDOWS 8 ?

The installation procedure gives you a choice of which system is declared default. If you change your mind later, you can easily change the default system by going to the start menu in Windows 7 and typing msconfig. This will bring up the msconfig window. Go to
the boot tab, highlight the operating system that you wish to be default and then click the "Set as Default" button. You will see the Default OS designation move to that operating system. If you look on the middle right of this tab you will see the default timeout delay time of 30 seconds, which you can change to a lower time if you desire. Close the window. The next time you restart your computer the default program will be highlighted and will activate after the timeout period, unless you press the Enter key to speed up the process.

The first and most startling thing you notice is the (formerly named Metro) UI, user interface, has the word Start at the top left corner, there is no taskbar with its normal start button on the left hand side, and no desktop or icons – just rectangles with Apps listed in them.

Since there is no start menu on the desktop, there must be no convenient way to search your computer, right?– but wait, there is an unbelievably cool way. In the Start or (formerly named Metro) location, without clicking anywhere with the mouse, just start typing what you would like to do or search on your keyboard; and Voilà, you are switched to the app window and the choices from your search are shown! But, there are also other ways to get there (and depressing the Windows logo key on the keyboard is no longer an option). You can depress the Windows Logo key+F and the Start sidebar on the right side of the screen appears. If you're a mouser, move your mouse cursor to the extreme bottom right side of the screen; and a similar looking sidebar, called the "Charm" will

appear with the search logo at the very top. The Charm area also has your system settings that allow you to tailor Windows 8 to your liking.

Notice on the start page that one of the apps listed is the Desktop, which looks almost like the classic Windows 7 desktop, but still has the start button missing because you are now in Windows 8 environment. All of your Windows 7 functions, keyboard shortcuts, etc., work just fine here and most of the keyboard shortcuts also work fine on the start page, or any other page in Windows 8. When you are at the desktop, just depress the Windows Logo key on the keyboard to toggle back to the Start page. You can also move your mouse cursor to the bottom left corner of the screen and a start screen
thumbnail will appear. Left click here and you will go back to the start page. You can also click the Start icon in the Charm area on the right.

If you right-click on an unused area of the start page, a bar at the bottom has an icon that allows you to view all of your installed items plus what you see on the start page. This is the best way to find items (Apps) in Windows 8 without using search.

So, how do you shut down Windows 8 since there is no start button to click? The easiest way is to depress CTRL-ALT-DEL, look on the bottom right for the power logo, right click and choose your option. You can also move the mouse to the right side of the screen, access the charm area, click settings, and the power icon will be in the area at the bottom. Click it, and you will be offered sleep, shutdown, or restart.

While this is by no means an in-depth article, you will now be able to navigate in Windows 8, install the programs you need, and shut down or restart the system to gracefully exit Windows 8.

Go forth and conquer!

DAD IS PROBABLY NOT A GEEK

Dad is probably not a Geek, but is most likely a Technophile!
By Lou Torraca, President, The TUG MOAA Computer User Group, Hawaii
www.the-tug.org
Af06hi (at) gmail.com

Father's Day is June 17, so you have some time left to pick a goodie for him, and don't forget granddad and even great-granddad [since I'm all 3 had to put in a plug {:-)] Here are a half dozen ideas for u 2 consider:

The Abyss LED Touchscreen Watch
Think Geek wrote the following about this watch, which I think is pretty nifty!

If you gaze for long into an abyss, the abyss gazes also into you. This watch is famous. Srsly, we wouldn't lie about something this important. Here's just a small snippet of the things it can do for you:

   Gives the ability to gaze into the abyss and come face to face with the true nature of your being

   Enables you to experience reality in four dimensions like a Tralfamadorian (no I don't have any idea what that is either, but I suspect is has to do with aliens!)

   Use your knowledge of blue oyster cult numerals to control the Eye of Sauron

   Flaunt your disregard for the Temporal Proliferation Treaty of 3012

   Suck the souls out of your enemies, leaving them empty shells of the losers they once were

   Experience the horror (the horror) of the heart of darkness or blue lights like Tron

   Be friended on Facebook by such famous wizards as Merlin, Gandalf, and Dumbledore (he's not dead!)

   Get you into top secret locations without top secret clearance

   Instantly assess whether someone believes in midichlorians

Seriously, you'd better get your hands on this watch before we get a Cease & Desist from the Federation. This kind of technology just shouldn't be on the open market for any chucklehead to order and use. But we trust you nerds. At least, we trust you won't use your newfound powers to hurt us.

Now for the serious stuff-

Product Specifications:
   Japanese-inspired blue LED touchscreen digital watch
   Gently touch the screen to display the time
   Touch and hold to enter time setting mode
   Blue & white LEDs encircle the mouth of the Abyss
   Black, snakeskin-textured leather band with buckle clasp
   Powered by 2 - CR2016 batteries (included)
   Longer-than-average battery life since the time only displays when you tap the watch!
   ThinkGeek is not responsible if the watch drives you crazy…Me either {:-)

Lighted hands - the next step in human evolution

DAD IS PROBABLY NOT A GEEK

If you're trying to do difficult work in the dark (assuming you are) you need a pair of these LED Work Gloves. They allow you to focus beams of light on your work while keeping both hands free to do said work. Whether you're putting together computers, fixing the innards of your vehicle, or building a robot companion, a little extra light goes a long way.

One LED light with four attachment points on each glove (two lights per pair)
 Ergo-flex designed palm pattern
 Reinforced foam padded palm
 Neoprene cuff with pull tab closure
 Air flow panels in fourchettes
 Micro-textured grip enhancing polymer material
  gives you a firm grip on items, life
 Micro-terrycloth perspiration pad
 Double layered synthetic thumb
 Star stretch fabric so the gloves fit nice and snug
 Sizes S-XL

The Hydrokinetic Adjustable Wrench adjusts to the job
Doctor Who has his sonic screwdriver - a small tool that can adjust to any situation. It uses advancements in technology to provide an infinitely adaptable tool. While the Hydrokinetic Adjustable Wrench won't let you start up your TARDIS (that would be the time machine) it will let you fiddle with twenty three different sizes of bolts and nuts. And the secret resides in wrench's liquid core. Take a look at the little computer graphic cut-away, and you'll know what we mean.

To adjust the Hydrokinetic Adjustable Wrench, just open the valve, fit around the nut or bolt of your choice, and push the gripper on the opposite end. It will compress the liquid which will, in turn, push the gripper on the end you want. Once it is snug against the nut, close the valve and your Hydrokinetic Adjustable Wrench is locked into position. It's that easy! The slim heads of the wrench will let you sneak it into tight spaces, and the design of the grip will help you turn even damaged nuts and bolts. Once you get your Hydrokinetic Adjustable Wrench in your hands, you will instantly know its power - which it looks like something from Doctor Who or Star Trek doesn't hurt either!

Features:
 Patented, liquid-core technology allows this
  wrench to adjust to fit almost any nut or bolt.
 Easily adjusts to 23 different sizes (metric and
  standard): 7mm - 19mm and 1/4" - 3/4".
 Slim, ergonomic design allows the wrench to fit
  into hard to reach areas.
 Great for removing even damaged nuts and
  bolts.
 Made of nickel plated, cold forged steel.
 Dimensions: 7.5" long

DAD IS PROBABLY NOT A GEEK

Custom Tie
Yes, the good old standby for gifts when u don't know what to give the Dad who has it all!

What's a tailored suit without a custom tie! Create one-of-a-kind ties for yourself or your loved ones. Upload your own images and patterns, or browse thousands of stylish designs to wear in the office or on the town.
> 55" long, 4" wide (at widest point).
> Unlimited colors.
> Made of silky 100% polyester fabric.

The ICON Link Flashlight
A flashlight is just one of those things that's just good to have around. Whether it's being prepared for a potential weather-related emergency or just having a good light source available in person or in your car, you just never know when you'll need a flashlight. The Link by ICON is a great option for just such circumstances.

The Link is 4 inches long and has a carabineer clip, so the flashlight is easily stashable in the glove compartment or clipped to be within arm's reach. The Link's high strength aluminum body (3.1 oz) feels substantial yet not weighty in hand and is rugged (and waterproof) enough to take whatever you can dish out. But the selling point for any flashlight is the light And with both powerful 50 lumen and a useful 6 lumen outputs, the Link can shed the right amount of light under any condition with merely one AA battery.

A Great Gift For: Emergency preparedness, campers and of course, Father's Day.

Baseball Prospectus 2012
And finally, all Dads are baseball fans...or at least wannabe fans, right? Here is the perfect gift for either.

Now in its seventeenth edition, the Baseball Prospectus annual shows once again how it became the industry leader: The 2012 edition includes key stat categories, more controversial player predictions, and the kind of wise, witty baseball commentary that

makes this phone-book-thick tome worth reading cover to cover.

Baseball Prospectus 2012 provides fantasy players and insiders alike. Baseball Prospectus 2012 brings together an elite group of analysts to provide the definitive look at the upcoming season in critical essays and commentary on the 30 teams, their managers, and more than 60 players and prospects from each team.

Have fun and remember to be careful out there on the www.

Aloha, Lou

Read all of Lou's columns at Oceanic Time Warner Cable's Community Website
http://www.aroundhawaii.com/technology_in_plain_english.html
http://bit.ly/f3TQ5t

WE WANT TO INCREASE

OUR MEMBERSHIP

IF EACH MEMBER

BROUGHT JUST ONE

INTERESTED GUEST

TO A MEETING

WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL

SPAM AND SPYWARE

Spam and Spyware
It Takes Two: Senders and Receivers
By John Roy, President, The PC Users Group of CT
May 2012 issue, The Program
www.tpcug-ct.org
johnroy1 (at) comcast.net

As a recipient, everyone must be cautious before opening any email including those from family or friends. Fortunately, most ISPs do a fairly good job of stripping out obvious spam/malware email so it never reaches your inbox. You may even have a second filter to further reduce what arrives in your real mailbox but it is impossible to eliminate all spam/malware. Therefore, the final filter is a manual decision by you not to open a potential Spam/malware email.

Common sense about opening any questionable email has been published numerous times and need not be repeated here. Those of you that heed this generic advice will minimize your chances of becoming infected. The people that can't resist knowing what lies behind the questionable email will continually be infected. The bottom line is if it doesn't look right delete it. If you really think your friend sent something important, just respond requesting a follow up without opening the pending email.

Are you or your email address being flagged as the sender of this spam/malware? If you are being accused of sending spam/malware one or more of these things have happened.

> Your computer is infected and is sending this email without your knowledge.
> A friend of yours with your email address has a compromised computer that is sending the spam/malware using your email address.
> One or more of your email address passwords has been cracked and consequently compromised by a criminal.

Of course there could also be random spoofing of common email addresses. Some other clues that you may notice is getting replies or bounce messages to email you never sent.

So what can be done? When I receive a potential email threat from someone I know I first disable any active hyperlink and respond to the sender letting them know that spam/malware is being received from their email address. I recommend the person take preventative action by first running several malware tools such as Malwarebytes on their personal computer.

They can also change their ISP password in case that has been compromised. If the spam/malware source is someone else's computer or just random spoofing there really isn't much more that can be done but hope it eventually stops.

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This month the list covers
"Movie Maker", "Windows 8",
"Office versions 2007 – 13",
"Tiny URLs" and
Current PC News.

TO CLOUD OR NOT TO CLOUD

To 'Cloud' or Not To "Cloud,"
That Is the Question
Submitted by Joan Frerichs, CIACUG Board Member
www.ciacug.org
ciacug@ciacug.org

I'd heard of saving computer files to the "cloud," but I really didn't know very much about it until our April CIACUG meeting when David Williams provided members with a great deal of helpful information about how it works.

If you have never had your computer "crash," be destroyed in a fire or flood, be struck by lightning, or stolen, you have been exceptionally fortunate, or, perhaps, you haven't been computing very long. After spending many painstaking hours of inputting data, contact lists, medical histories, financial information, etc. on our first computer, we experienced a crash that lost all of that data forever. Many times you toss or shred the paper trail thinking your information is safe forever. How naive can one be? It can be an "oops moment," or it can be devastating. We had to consider ours an "oh phoo moment" and move on with life and start over, and that is disconcerting, to say the least. If you have business information and customer lists on your computer, it can put you out of business temporarily, at the very least.

If you've been backing up your files to an external hard drive, what if that is destroyed in a fire? If you've been religiously backing up your data to disc

times two, putting one in the fire safe (not very safe) and taking one to an off-site location, that gets time-consuming and cumbersome. The easy solution….back it up to the "cloud."

If you are a non-business user, there are several cloud servers that give you a certain amount of free storage, and it was pointed out that it is a good plan to review the sites to see what they have to offer and then choose a couple that you feel fit your needs and you are comfortable with probably being around for the long-term. There have been servers that have "disappeared" in the past without ample warning for users to recall their data. Thus, it's a good plan to save the same data on more than one cloud server. If you are a business user or require more space than the free allotment, there will be a charge. With some servers you can increase your allotment by "recommending" their service to others, and if they should decide to sign on with that service, you may then be allowed additional storage space.

The next step is to set up your accounts, organize your files, save your files to the clouds and then synchronize your pc, your laptop, your iPad, etc. so that any changes you make to any of your saved files will automatically be updated on all your devices. That's a time-saving plus. Also, you are able to access those files in the cloud from any web-based hardware that has access to the internet. You can also share data files, photos, etc. with friends and family. Be sure to remember, or write down, your user names and passwords.

DRIVING YOUR COMPUTER

DRIVING YOUR   COMPUTER

Diane Fahlbusch,

editor(at)iconpcug.org

ICON PC User Group, NY

 www.iconpcug.org

We all know that one of the most   essential components of our   computer is the storage drive. It's is the home of your operating   system, firmware, applications   and those precious files   you have collected over time.   Faster processors, more RAM …   are useless if there is nothing to   pass through them. We now   have tremendous options available   to us: larger capacity,   faster RPMs, newer materials,   faster connections, external   drives and thumb/flash drives.   The more you know about them,   the better you will be able to   decide what is right for you.

 Floppy Drives   Yes they still do exist! But they   have almost waved themselves   goodbye. In their day they were   great, and became smaller. But   as the capability of computers   increased and technology advanced,   they just did not have   the capacity, were too bulky   and very fragile little things.   But, they are still designated as   the A drive, and the standard   "Save" icon.

Zip Drives and Jazz Drives   Yes, they still do exist! These   were inherently floppy drives   on steroids to meet larger capacity   demands, as well as being   able to function faster. But   these are also stored to a magnetic   film, which will erode over   time, and are subject to semisevere   conditions. So if you still   have anything you want from   these, it is recommended that   you transfer your data to a   newer format. **CD**

Rom Drives   These sounded the beginning of   the end for floppy drives and   their kin, as well as cassette   tapes and vinyl records. Writable   CDs are very inexpensive   now, and consist of various layers.   The top layer is actually a   protective coating which is why   scratches to this layer may be   able to be repaired with Skip   Disc, or something similar. The   data is stored on a different   layer. There are plenty of these   drives still around, and it's not a   bad idea to slap one into your   tower unit if you

have room.   This way you can burn out the   CD only drive and save the:

CD/DVD Drive   This is the dual drive that is now   standard on any computer, and   very similar in physical design   to CDs. If you need to replace   one, watch for read and write   speeds, which are far faster than   the ones just 5-7 years ago, as   well as any firmware updates   you might need for faster write   speeds to work. Do not forget to   watch the read/write speeds of   the discs you buy, as well as   whether your drive can burn +R   DVDs. Also watch for the "new"   thing from just a few years ago,   dual layer.   But of course the latest is:

Blue Ray Drive   An essential for REALLY large   capacity discs or to watch blueray   discs with high definition   graphics. Of course, if your   monitor is not high definition or   your computer's video card   does not know what to do with   HD files, you may just want to   wait on this one. It's still very   pricey – even the stand-alone   units to connect to your HD TV.

Hard Disc Drives   The vast majority of storage   drives available are still the   good ole magnetic discs. The   original design of the rotating,   rigid platters storing data magnetically   by read/write heads   floating on a layer of pressurized   air is still the same as it was   from the 1960's, but the recording   density has increased   dramatically. The platters themselves   are not made of a magnetic   material. They are coated   with a thin layer of magnetized   material, which has changed   over the years. The platters are   held together on a spindle,   which requires very careful   placement to allow for just   enough air between each platter   as well as the read/write   heads.

Disc drives also contain two   electronic motors. One motor   spins the platters at a specified   RPM. The faster the RPM, the   faster the drive can access the   data - and the greater the heat   output. The platters do have a   special coating to resist thermal-   induced magnetic breakdown,   but it is still very important   to make sure that your cooling   fans are working properly,   and more important to check

DRIVING YOUR COMPUTER

or change your fans if you replace the factory installed drive with one with a faster RPM. The second is called an actuator motor to control the read/write heads. If they no longer line up correctly, they will not function properly. It is possible to reset the placement of the heads if they are no longer lining up properly – but not easy. Of course, if your drive has experienced a "Head Crash", where the misplaced head has actually scraped along the surface of the disc, those sections are destroyed forever.

Your data is stored in digital magnetic format on the platters on disc drives. Once a brand new hard disc drive has collected any information, it will never be the same as it was in its pristine state – just as a magnet will always have some residual iron filings no matter how hard you try to remove them. And of course another way to help prevent the loss of the data is for the correct magnetization to be stored with some room to spare. But that concept of "elbow room" shrinks as there is more data stored.

One way to think about this is by comparing the way some neighborhoods look today versus 25 years ago. (The Smithhaven Mall used to loom out of nothingness like Oz's Emerald City – now you can miss it because there are at least three other shopping centers/malls around it.) So if your data was originally being stored with plenty of space, you will wind up with fragmented files as that space shrinks. Defragmenting your hard disc drive is one of those easy maintenance things to do to speed up performance, because it moves related pieces of information near one another for faster access. However, you can rewrite to a hard disc drive as long as the device is working properly. Of course, there might be residual bits of magnetic charges left on that previously written space which might corrupt your file.

Hard disc drives seem sturdy because of their tough protective casings and hard materials, but they are not made to withstand sudden shock, such as being banged or dropped, especially when still spinning. Some notebook computers now come with an active hard drive protection that parks the disc heads if the unit is dropped. Hard disc drives are also sensitive to power surges (including static electricity), sudden loss of power, contamination within the enclosure, corrosion and exposure to excessive heat or magnetic fields.

Some recent studies seem to show that disc drives maintained at somewhat colder temperatures do NOT outlast those at somewhat warmer ones, as previously believed. All drives will experience normal "wear and tear". Interestingly, your disc drives are like your car – it's better for the engine if you take longer trips instead of the short hops, or leaving it idling. One way to reduce the life of your drive is by leaving the computer on, but in an idle state. It is better to shut the computer off when you are not using it. Of course, excessive rebooting will also shorten the life of your disc drives, as they have to spin up every time.

Solid State Drives The newest data storage drive is the solid state drive, which is radically different than its predecessor. These drives use microchips to store the data to free, programmable blocks and do NOT contain any moving parts. Because of this, they are quiet, physically smaller, use less power to operate, run cooler, can tolerate greater altitudes and temperature ranges, tolerate vibration, are not susceptible to magnetic fields, do NOT require defragmentingactually, defragmenting adds wear for no benefit) and are less susceptible to sudden shock. (But that does NOT mean that you should be playing handball with them!) Performance is most frequently tied to the type of memory used and the controller, an embedded processor that works as a bridge between the computer's electronics and its own, as well as a number of other factors. They will typically use either non-volatile (NAND flash) memory or volatile (DRAM) memory.

The NAND flash based memory, while being slower than its counterpart, has an advantage – it can retain information WITHOUT power. That is why your camera cards and thumb/flash drives do not need a separate power supply. This memory

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can be MLC (multi-level cell), or single- level cell, the latter of which is more reliable and faster, but more expensive. Also, the NAND flash memory cannot directly overwrite a file. It must first rewrite the information to free programmable blocks of space, THEN it overwrites the previous blocks. If data was encrypted with an encryption program NOT located on the drive itself, the original data, can only be safely "wiped" by using a special "secure erase" program on the drive.

Effectively, this means that your once secured information is unsecure, unencrypted and accessible. And these blocks do have a limit of 1,000,000 to 2,000,000 write cycles (1,000 to 10,000 per cell) for MLC, and up to 5,000,000 write cycles (100,000 per cell) for SLC. This is compensated for by "wear leveling" – writing to different sets of blocks each time and spreading the usage out evenly. (Think of it as a little league coach who always rotates all of the players in every game, but does a quick tidy-up at the end of the game.) This effectively means that you will eventually "use up" the memory. When that happens the drive just stops working. Granted, it may take many years, but it depends upon how much you create, or re-create.

The DRAM provides lightning fast data transfer, and does NOT have a limit to the number of times programmable blocks can be written to. It also requires an internal battery or capacitor or other power supply, and requires backup storage systems to ensure preserving data if power is lost. These are most frequently used as internal drives in netbooks and computers. Because nothing needs to spin during boot up or starting up applications, these drives respond rapidly. Their read times are far less than hard disc drives, again because there are no heads to search for the data. However, these drives do have certain drawbacks.

For starters, solid state drives with DRAM are far more expensive, but the price is coming down. Because of this, there really are not many large capacity solid state drives available. Be wary that there are some of these drives are using a combi-

nation of NAND and DRAM. Another consideration is the write speed. Less expensive models may not be providing much faster write performance than hard disc drives, but will be impacted significantly by the number of free programmable blocks. Solid state drives are really not the best choice for operating systems that continually rewrite to the drives while in use, such as Windows. While solid state drives CAN provide greater performance, be aware that you can only push the information through as fast as your connection can handle. Having a USB3 device will not increase the speed of data transfer if your computer's connection is USB1. Write performance is greatly reduced when using a SATA connection. Performance of DRAM drives will deteriorate in time when there are no free programmable blocks left. Also, as previously mentioned, DRAM requires constant power. So even though your computer is turned off, the DRAM drive still requires power.

Please always remember to make educated decisions about the products you select, and set realistic expectations on any hardware you use.

DAVID'S TAKE

Publisher's Note

Now that you have read the Sep issue I thought you might be interested that each issue of our Newsletter is checked by our President, David, for accuracy and also typos etc. Here is his critique of this issue.

Page 5
Reasons for moving up to Windows 7

A Jump List is a list of recent previously opened files.

Jump Lists can also be accessed by pinning the application (eg. Wordpad) to the Taskbar and right clicking that icon.

Page 12
Spam and Spyware

This article could have included hijacked computers, which can render the computer useless, only going to certain websites or taking over full control and leaving the user with an inoperable PC.

First shutdown your computer so that any malware residing in RAM is gone when powered off. Then boot up in SAFEMODE using F8 function key, choosing SAFEMODE with Networking so that you can use the Internet. Be aware this can take hours per scan.

There is no quick fix…**except** one - go to your current hard drive backup from Acronis (or similar utility) and restore it to a new hard drive, then transfer all non-backed up information from the infected drive via USB.

Also Google & use the following: ESET online scan, Bit Defender and similar ones. Next use these HitmanPro, Sophos Virus Removal Tool, tdsskiller.

Not all anti-malware software will remove all viruses, hijacked computers etc. In an extreme case, I had to rebuild Windows 7 on another clean new drive. Then we took the old drive, connected it to the new drive via a USB connector, transferred documents, photos, etc. and reloaded any other applications needed by the end user.

Then we created a new email account with a strong password and transferred all the contacts, folders and emails from the old email account. This took days. Perhaps using 'sandbox' software will avoid these problems. Yet to be tested.

Finally, send an email from your new account, tell recipients that your new email address is preferred. Possibly you may want to have any continuing email forwarded to the new account. Google 'email forwarding service' for more details.

Page 13
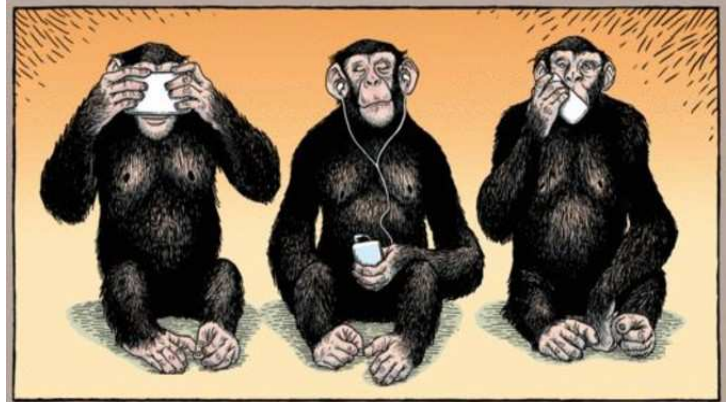**To 'Cloud' or Not To "Cloud,"**
That Is the Question

The 'Cloud' is basically a server on the Internet. Carbonite, Mozy and others offer 'automatic' backup of many files, such as My Documents, My Pictures, etc. Also Cox, Century Link and many Internet Service Providers offer online 'Cloud' storage. See reviews for more information via Google.

Thanks David

Short Circuits....zzzt!

See U. The 8-year-old twins love their iPad. They draw, play games and expand their vocabulary. Their family's teenagers also like the hand held computer tablets, too, but the clan's elders show no interest. The orangutans at Miami's Jungle Island apparently are just like people when it comes to technology. The park is one of several zoos experimenting with computers and apes, letting its six orangutans use a tablet to communicate and as part of a mental stimulus program. The software was originally designed for humans with autism and the screen displays pictures of various objects. A trainer then names one of the objects, and the ape presses the right button. *Associated Press* May. 9, 2012

No See U.   It's the latest prescription for extreme ultra-Orthodox Jewish men who shun contact with the opposite sex in Jerusalem: Glasses that blur their vision, so they don't have to see women they consider to be immodestly dressed. In an effort to maintain their strictly devout lifestyle, the ultra-Orthodox have separated the sexes on buses, sidewalks and other public spaces in their neighborhoods. Their interpretation of Jewish law forbids contact between men and women who are not married. Walls in their neighborhoods feature signs exhorting women to wear closed-necked, long-sleeved blouses and long skirts. The glasses are going for the "modest" price of $6. *Associated Press* Aug. 8, 2012

Hear U. A West Coast restaurant is offering a deal to customers who agree to not to talk with their fellow diners. Eva Restaurant is giving a 5 percent discount to customers who will leave their cellphones with staff when they are seated. The owner told the local radio station that the policy isn't entirely about other diners who might be annoyed by cellphone chatter or the glow of smartphone screens, but it is rather an attempt to create an environment where diners connect to each other instead of to technology. Servers make the offer to diners when they greet them, and the innkeeper says that nearly half of his customers take advantage of the discount, and many express gratitude at the opportunity to let go of the devices for a while. *Associated Press* Aug. 15, 2012
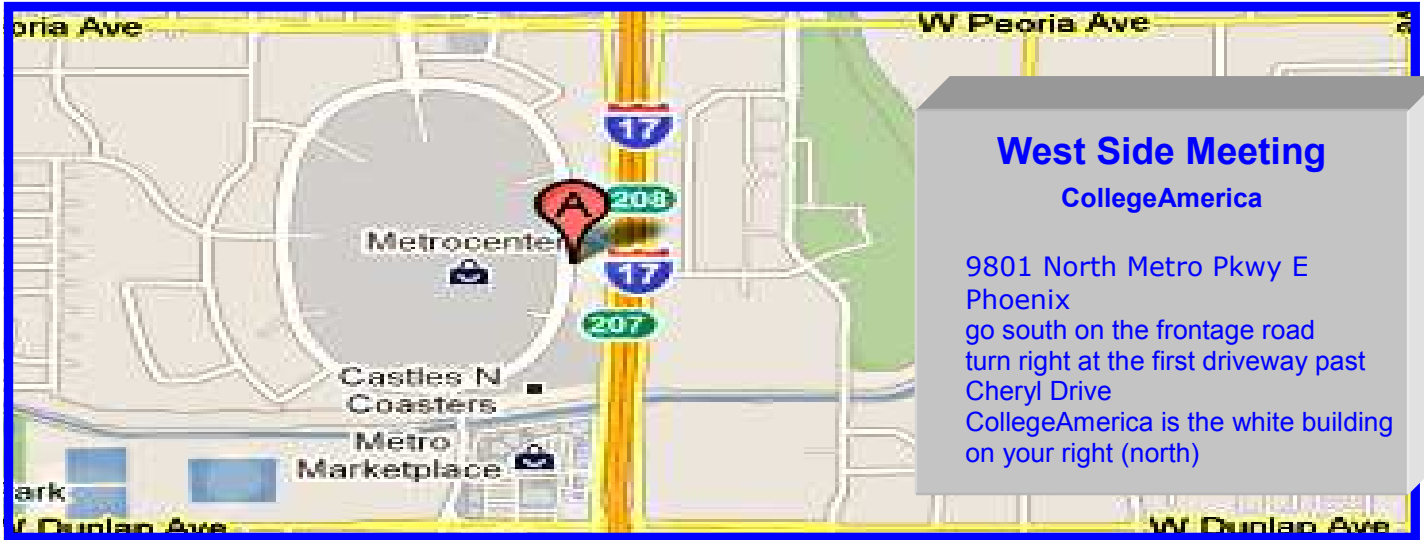
No Hear U. A busy stretch of Yonkers Avenue in this New York City suburb has become a Bermuda Triangle for parked cars. For at least six months now, business owners here say a mysterious force has been locking people with keyless remotes out of their vehicles or preventing them from starting their engines near Yonkers and Page avenues. But the cars revive after they are pushed or towed away. When the problem first arose, employees of a nearby hardware store said that some of their customers assumed that the batteries on their keyless remotes had died while they were in the store and bought new batteries on the spot. When that did not do the trick, the store employees began to push stalled vehicles down the street apparently out of range of the interference—which did the trick. A local expert hired to investigate the problem said that a localized radio signal is to blame for disrupting the signals from keyless remotes. Equipped with a high-tech spectrum analyzer, he scanned the area for an "offending signal". But he is still trying to find the exact source. He declined to identify a specific property as the location of the interference, but he is confident that it will be found on the even-numbered side of the street. *Westchester Journal News* Jul. 24, 2012

"They've gone wireless."

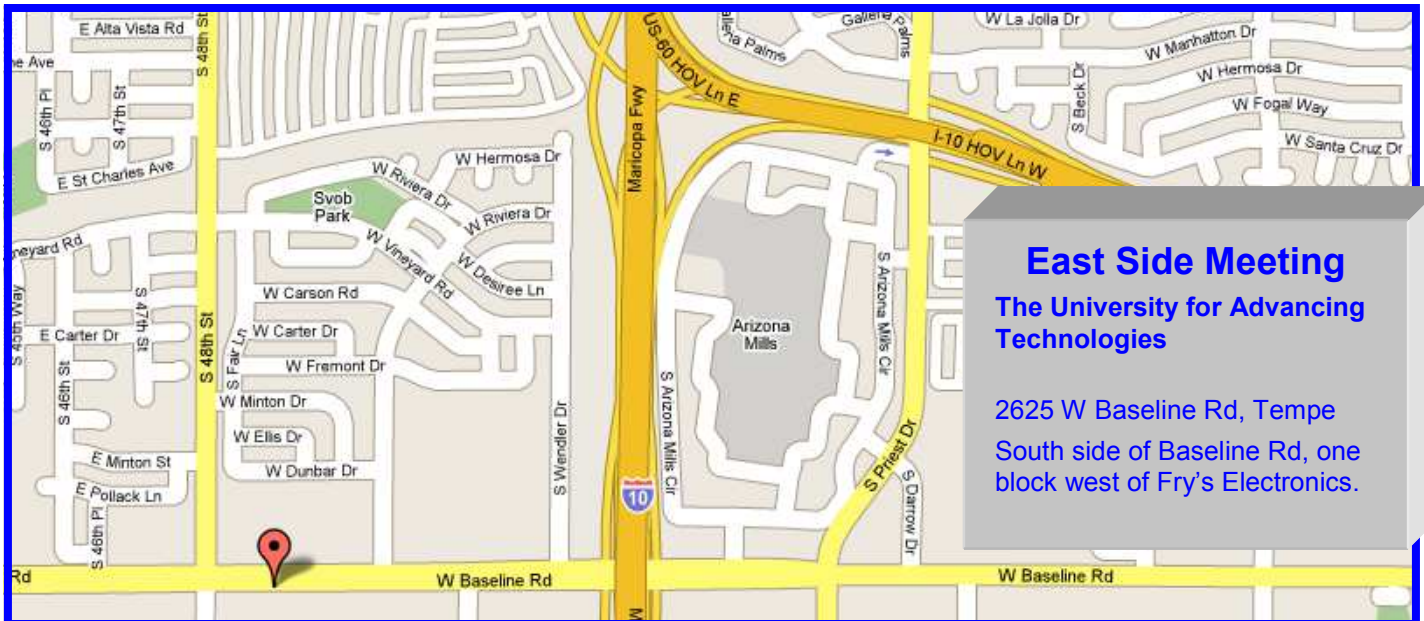*These Items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.*

HOW TO GET THERE
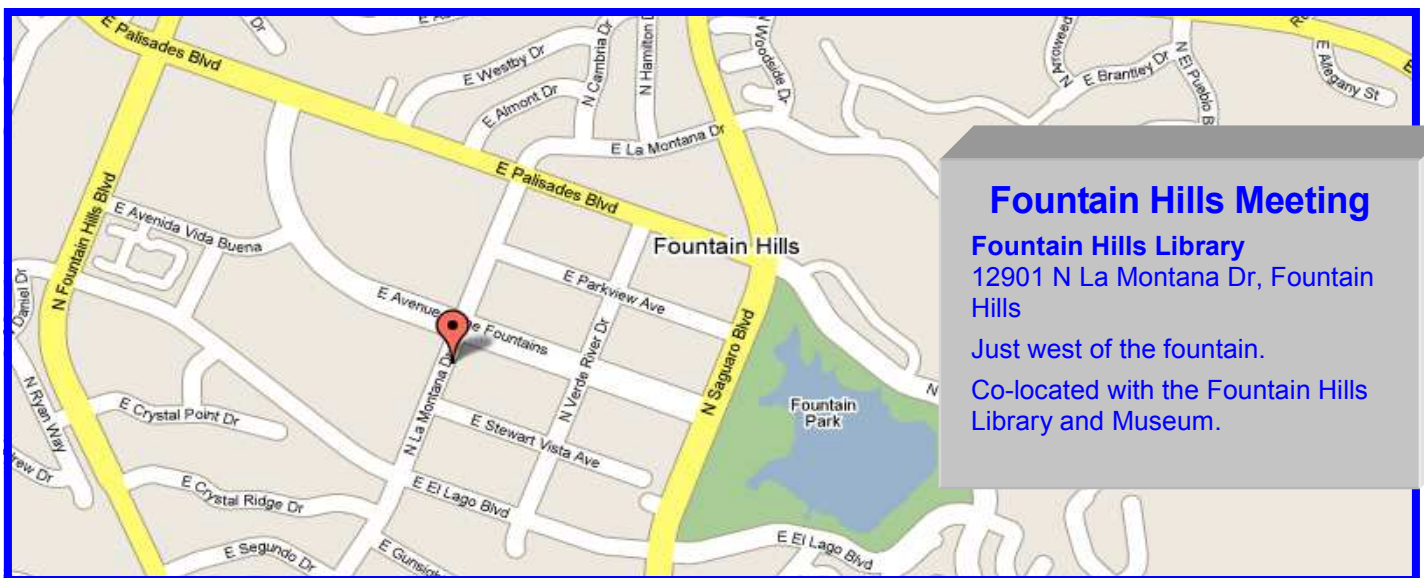
West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

9801 North Metro Pkwy E
Phoenix
go south on the frontage road
turn right at the first driveway past
Cheryl Drive
CollegeAmerica is the white building
on your right (north)

East Side Meeting

The University for Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe

South side of Baseline Rd, one
block west of Fry's Electronics.

Fountain Hills Meeting

Fountain Hills Library
12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain
Hills

Just west of the fountain.

Co-located with the Fountain Hills
Library and Museum.

MEMBERSHIP DUES

The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Users Group is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.

DUES $36
THROUGH
DEC 31, 2012

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Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code:_____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Ext: _____
Please note: We DO-NOT share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one: ☐ Yes   ☐ No

E-mail address: _____(Print Legibly)

Signature _____Date___/___/___

Release my address to vendors ?   ☐ Yes ☐ No Note: Phone numbers **will not** be listed.

May the club share your e-mail address
with other members only?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
With club approved vendors?   ☐ Yes   ☐ No
Please do not share my e-mail address   ☐

Mail this completed form with payment to:

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