

FOUNTAIN HILLS AUGUST MEETING 1 WEEK EARLIER  
CHECK OUR WEBSIR FOR DETAILS



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### Steering Committee:

Officers and Members who are present  
at the 6:00 P.M. West Side meeting.

# NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory  
for your PC!*

## MAIN MEETINGS JULY 2013

### West Side.....Tue, 16

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

### East Side.....Wed, 17

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

### Fountain Hills.....Thu, 18

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

#### Presentation this month:

Dr. Roger Angel, UA, ideas to cool our planet.  
Windows 8.1 Start button & more!  
Gene Barlow new Acronis specials  
Tragic fire in Arizona. Donate, Yarnell firefighters.  
Data Doctors has a new policy for recovery

For date and time changes, check our  
website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

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## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hello everyone,

This has been a sobering fire season in Arizona. Please Google 'Yarnell fire' for many links & donate to fallen firefighters' families, here's a link: <http://yarnellfallenfirefighters.com/>.

I have empathy. At scout camp, we cut small trees, marked by forestry pro's, to minimize fire danger. One fire came close to our camp. Very scary. Please help them anyway you can.

Big picture: we need solutions to regional & global warming, since Arizona has the highest heat stress in the US and fires are always a danger. More rainfall helps, but what is the solution? Come to the meeting and learn about Dr. Roger Angel, UA astronomer's ideas for cooling our planet.

Windows 8.1 has a Start button!! Well it's announced! Search - Google & Windows 8.1, or Kmando, or Leo Laporte, etc. - 2 examples: <http://tinyurl.com/q9cpxfp> or <http://tinyurl.com/be9z4ll>. We will cover Windows 8.1 in our meetings this month.

Gene Barlow is having some Acronis specials, please contact him for his newsletter to receive in your email. Use <http://www.ugr.com/>, <http://www.ugr.com/TrueImage.html>. At the meeting, I will explain what his newest specials are, including a future Acronis True Image for the soon to be released Windows 8.1 .

Gene: "Disk Imaging — Acronis True Image includes our patented disk imaging backup technology. You can copy your entire PC, including the operating system, applications, user settings, and all data. In the event of a system or disk crash, virus attack or other fatal failure you can restore your entire PC in minutes — no reinstallation is required!"

I've recovered drive failures, I can confirm Gene. Actually, it may take many hours, depending on how many gigabytes is on your C: drive to back up then restore to a new blank drive. At a minimum, do 3 recent hard drive backups on 3 different drives! If a drive fails, the other 2 drives are still viable backups. How much is your info - phone directories, email, pictures, documents, worth to you? Companies have gone out of business for lack

### FROM YOUR EDITOR

A perennial topic of conversational interest in America is the sad state of education. Any experienced educator has woeful stories about the poor performance of today's students compared with the pupils of the past. This is not a new discovery. Every President within memory has campaigned to be remembered as the "Education" President. A Department of Education was created over twenty years ago to slather federal funds in the unrealistic hope of improving the performance of students. The explosive growth of electronic technology has led to the widespread availability of online courses. But this created the pie-in-the-sky expectation that computer technology is the answer to all of the troubles with education.

In discussions at the individual level, whether opinions are written or oral, it seems that the depth of argument is almost always related to the number of students currently in the family of the writer or speaker. A current highly sensitive topic is the growth of charter schools. The immediate situation deals largely with the perceived degree of funding to these institutions. The deepest concern seems to be centered in a mistaken impression that funds will be shifted to charter schools to the detriment of "public" schools.

Little recognition is made of several salient facts, such as; public funding of schools is a Zero Sum game, i.e., there is never enough money to satisfy all demands, and all of the money that is available, is spent. In addition, administrative costs have increased more rapidly than inflation due to federal and state reporting requirements. The demise of the former Catholic Parochial schools system has been ignored. Enrollment has dropped 63 % (3.3 million students) since the peak years\*. This decline, of course, meant that alternate schools have had to be built or founded. Voila! Charter schools emerged.

However, the most important fact that is usually overlooked is the reality that all children are not alike. One technique does not fit all. There are students who will succeed no matter what methods are used. And there are others who will not. The differences in age, maturity, gender, motivation, parental interest, teaching techniques, teacher personality, and so on, will confound anyone who claims to have the perfect answer to educating any and all students.

\* National Center for Educational Statistics

Michael

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## MEETINGS

# CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

## GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday July 16, 2013
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 16)

- Wednesday July 17, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)

- Thursday July 18, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

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## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

of good backups. Data recovery can cost **thousands of dollars**. Drives are like tires, use them long enough and they will fail. **When will they fail** is the big question?

Data Doctors has done data recovery for many years. <http://www.datadoctors.com/> has a good line: "We'll Fix It or It's Free!\* We get your Slow, Crashing Computer Restored, Cleaned and Running

like New!" See <http://www.datadoctors.com/media/tips> for good topics too. Click to listen.

Consider using a solid state drive - SSD's are similar in most ways to magnetic hard drives. But price and performance are - more expensive per gigabyte and speed is greatly faster. For people who need high portability & reliability. They boot up extremely fast, go to sleep fast, and are not prone to mechanical stress like magnetic drives. **They have no moving parts**

David

## THE DEMISE OF THE DIGITAL CAMERA

### The Demise of the Digital Camera

By Jerry Schneir, Member, Los Angeles Computer Society, California  
[www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org)  
editor (at) lacspc.org

I probably should have used one more adjective in the title, "inexpensive", so that the title would have read "The Demise of the Inexpensive Digital Camera". You only have to look around you at any party or gathering and see that the majority of the picture taking is being done by the guests with "smart phones". Relatively few cameras appear at these gatherings, so you might ask why? What has happened? What is happening to fuel this dramatic change?

By some estimates, smart phones account for over 50% of the cell phones in use today, and those smart phones all have built-in cameras. And within the last couple of years, the cameras in those smart phones are getting much, much better. To prove my point you only have to look at two new products to be announced, one from Nikon and the other from Nokia, one a camera company, the other a phone company.

The Nikon S800c combines a camera with Wi-Fi capability, even internet browsing. It will not be long before a phone is added to that device. Nokia on the other hand created a phone, the 808c Nokia Pure-View Pro which combines a phone with new digital technology. It dispenses with the usual scaling/interpolation model of digital zoom used in virtually all smartphones, as well as optical zoom used in most digital cameras, to vary the magnification and field of view. This new technology which is already in use by Sony in some of their more advanced cameras (Sony NEX F3), allows zooming without any lens elements changing positions. And amazingly enough, the results are really fantastic.

More and more camera manufacturers are equipping their cameras with the ability to transfer images from the camera to a phone, iPad type device or a computer directly, no wiring required. As phone manufacturers start to incorporate this new technology into their phones, the need for people to have both a

smart phone AND a camera diminishes. Many manufacturers, aware of the missteps of Kodak in failing to recognize the change in technology (film to digital) and the eventual destruction of the company, are moving quickly to rearrange their product offerings.

What will be showing up in the marketplace are more mid to high-end cameras with fewer and fewer low-end cameras. The reasoning is pretty simple, the camera phones, as good as they are getting, are still a very long way from producing images as good as those from the mid to high-end range of cameras. If you take a close look at the camera offerings of today you may note the changes that are taking place right now.

Digital SLR cameras are moving in two price directions, up and down. Canon/Nikon/Pentax/Sony are locked in a battle in both the high-end professional/semi-professional/dedicated amateur lines at one end and the beginner/intermediary dSLR camera lines. However, this is an area that has fragmented greatly; new camera designs along with new technology are resulting in smaller and lighter cameras capable of producing results equal to that of their bigger cousins. I can hear the verbal challenges now to that statement, but I am noticing more and more pros/semi-pros using this newer technology and reaping the benefits of fewer backaches from the lighter, pounds lighter equipment. These stark changes were brought about by the "mirrorless interchangeable lens cameras. In some circles these are referred to as CSC (compact system cameras) or ILC (interchangeable lens cameras) or EVIL (electronic viewfinder interchangeable lens cameras). Cameras in this mirrorless grouping are the Fuji X-Pro 1, the Sony alpha and NEX family of cameras, the Nikon J1/V1 cameras, the just announced Canon EOS M cameras, the micro four-thirds (mFT) line of cameras such as the Olympus OM-D5 and Panasonic GX1, and of course the entirely different Ricoh line of interchangeable lens AND sensor cameras.

In addition to those camera groupings another new collection of cameras has appeared, the large sensor fixed lens cameras such as the Canon G1 X and the Sony RX 100 along with the Fujifilm X10 and X100. I

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## THE DEMISE OF THE DIGITAL CAMERA

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can see some questions arising about what constitutes a large sensor. To my way of thinking, sensors in the size range of 1/1.7 and larger meet that criterion, but just barely. But wait, the camera companies are also introducing more mid-to high-end point and shoot cameras such as the Panasonic FZ200, Pentax X5, Canon SD500, Nikon P7700, and Fuji SL300.

But if you look, you will see relatively little effort or money being spent on the inexpensive line of cameras, those retailing for \$200 or less. What you are seeing is product renaming with a change in camera color but very little in the way of any new features. What also appears to be happening here is that as the new models appear the older models are marked down substantially. As an example, Olympus Pen LP-2 was \$550 or more. It can now be had for about \$300 while the even older version, the LP1 is still around and going for a bit under \$300 and those are prices with the kit lens. The Fuji S4500 came out at about \$300, but today it can be bought for under \$200 and it came out in January of this year.

The economic downturn of the last few years certainly has played a part in the changing face of digital photography, making it less lucrative to introduce middling to low-cost cameras and to focus on the mid to upper range of cameras with special features, such as better video, longer zoom ranges, great low light and high ISO ability. You will also be seeing a move away from the traditional CCD sensor to the CMOS and BSI-CMOS type sensor since these are far better suited to video and low light photography.

One other very bad thing is happening and that is the increase in camera complexity. I hear it almost every week from my students, "I can't understand the manual (if there is even one included), there is no index or the index is vastly incomplete, the booklet uses abbreviations without ever defining them, they seem to assume I know something when I do not, they don't explain a feature or how to use that feature." I have long maintained that the instructions are written by people whose native language is NOT English and may not even be photographers.

This is a most interesting period in photography. Image quality and the ability to use high ISO settings or shoot in dim light has never been better. Cameras, at least the mid to high-price cameras, have more features and generally perform much better. The next five years will see very significant changes in the photographic landscape; stick around, you may even like what you see.

### HELP WANTED NEWSLETTER IN JEOPARDY

Unfortunately our Publisher has experienced acute problems with his vision which makes it impossible for him to continue publishing the newsletter. David and our newsletter staff will work on ways to convert our publication from Microsoft's Publisher to Word.

That done we need a replacement publisher. Members interested please contact David.

## BACK TO BASICS

### Back to Basics

Connecting Things to Your Computer – The USB Port

Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

December 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

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Printers, cameras, flash drives – is there any limit to what you can connect to your computer? Today we want to look at how to connect all those wonderful devices to your laptop or desktop. Almost all such connections (which are not wireless connections) are through a “USB” port cable. USB stands for Universal Service Bus and just like a city bus can carry all kinds of people a USB connection can connect almost anything. The purpose of this article is to provide you with the information you need to connect things using the USB connection port. All computers have at least two and maybe three or more USB ports. They are rectangular “holes” in your computer, approximately one-half inch wide by 3/16 inch thick. Any device you purchase which can connect to your computer will probably come with a connection cable with one end being a USB port connector. The other end of the cable will probably have a different shape which plugs into the device you are connecting (camera, printer, mouse, etc.). Here is how you connect something to your computer using this port:

1.. Using the connection cable, plug your device into your computer’s USB port. (The USB plug does have a “right side up,” so if it doesn’t fit one way, turn it over).

That’s it. There is no second step. Oh -- maybe you have to turn on the device you are connecting.

Yes, it’s simple, but I think it is helpful to know a little of what is going on and how to best use your USB ports on your computer. For example, did you know you can have as many USB ports as you need? If you have three USB ports and they all are used and you have a fourth device to connect, what do you do? You go to a store and buy a USB multiplier (or “splitter”) that connects to one USB port and provides four more ports! Believe it or not, you can

connect over 100 different devices through one USB port.

So what basically happens when you connect something to a USB port? Well, the computer, all on its own (please make sure the device you are connecting is turned on), identifies the device and establishes the communication code or language it must use to work with the device. If the computer does not have this code it its memory it will go to the internet and get it. So it is usually a good idea to be connected to the internet when plugging in something new to your computer. Pretty neat, huh?

If you are connecting some kind of memory device, such as an external disk drive or a flash drive, there will be an exchange of data to and from the device while you are using it. You can save files to the device and you can change or delete files already on the device. The only danger here is what if you disconnect the device (i.e. unplug it) while it was receiving information from the computer? The file could be incomplete – a file error. So, the idea is to make sure that the device is done transferring data before you disconnect it. Here’s how to safely disconnect a memory device:

In Windows, when you connect a memory device to your computer you will see a new icon in your SYSTRAY– those little icons by your clock on the right end of your taskbar.. The icon will look like a USB cable connector plug and a green circle with a white checkmark in it (in Windows 7). It will be tiny, so look closely. (If you don’t see it, click on the little arrow to the left of these icons to reveal the icons that didn’t fit into this area). Whenever you connect a new memory device to your computer Windows assigns it a drive letter. Most computers have the main “C” drive and a CD/DVD drive assigned the letter “D”. When you connect another memory device to your computer it would then be assigned the letter “E”. When you are ready to disconnect your device, click on this icon. You will then see a list of all the memory devices connected to your computer (most of the time it will be only one device). Click on the specific device on the list to tell the computer \\

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## HOLY COW! IS THIS A VIRUSM?

Holy cow! Is this a virus?

By Linda Gonse, Editor/Webmaster, Orange County PC Users' Group, CA  
March 2013 issue, nibbles & bits  
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I recently added a second external hard drive to my computer system. I use one for backups of InDesign files and the other one for Acronis True Image system backups.

As I browsed through the files I'd saved to the drives, I ran into something peculiar. Both drives had folders with names that were long strings of random letters. And each folder contained one file: mrtstub.exe at 89KB on the Iomega drive, and MPSigStub.exe at 227KB on the Seagate drive.

Fearing these might be malware or a virus, I quickly did a Google search. Interestingly, the search turned up conflicting opinions in different forums. Some people said it was a virus and highly dangerous, some said the folder and file(s) inside were benign, some said the files were leftover from when Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool (MRT) was run and had not been deleted automatically, and some said Windows created them.

Although I only found one file in the folders, other people have seen as many as four at one time: mrtstub.exe, mrt.exe.\_p, MRT.exe, and \$shtdwn\$.req.

I found a link to information about the Malicious Software Removal Tool at <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/890830#FAQ>. In particular, it gave instructions on how to remove the Malicious Software Removal Tool.

The Malicious Software Removal Tool does not use an installer. Typically, when you run the Malicious Software Removal Tool, it creates a randomly named temporary directory on the root drive of the computer. This directory contains several files, and it includes the Mrtstub.exe file. Most of the time, this folder is automatically deleted after the tool finishes running or after the next time that you start the computer. However, this folder may not always be automatically deleted. In these cases, you can manually delete this folder, and this has no adverse effect on the computer.

I also learned that MRT is not a substitute for a resident antivirus for various reasons: 1. MRT only removes malware AFTER infection, it doesn't BLOCK

malware like an antivirus does; 2. MRT is designed to target a small set of malware only, while an anti-virus takes care of most malware in the wild; and 3. MRT can only detect actively running malware — an antivirus can also detect dormant malware.

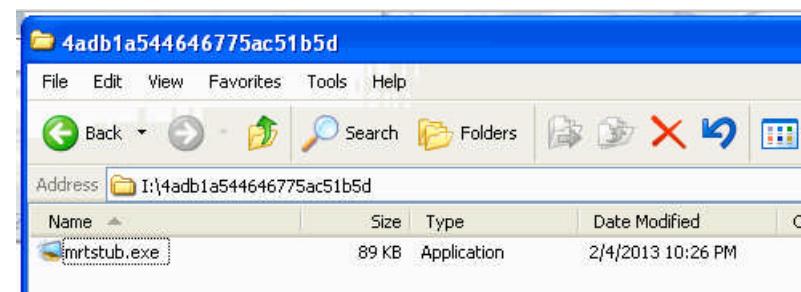
Microsoft's Knowledge Base (<http://support.microsoft.com/kb/890830>) also said a new version of the Microsoft Malicious Software Removal Tool is released every month. After you download the tool, the tool runs one time to check your computer for infection by specific prevalent malicious software (including Blaster, Sasser, and Mydoom) and helps remove any infection it finds.

This KB article contains information about how you can download and run the tool, and what happens when the tool finds malicious software on your computer.

Even though I did not intentionally download the Removal Tool or run it, I read that Windows Update may do that when it downloads automatic updates. Further, it uses the largest hard drive on the system to create the temp folders; and in my case, the external hard drives are the largest with each being 2TB.

The upshot of this was I checked each file's Properties and confirmed Microsoft had signed them. Then I deleted the folders and files manually and nothing bad happened. In the future, I'll disconnect the external drives before downloading or installing Windows Update.

4adb1a544646775ac51b5d	File Folder	2/13/2013 3:12 AM	
42d2f25a836739301afb69	File Folder	11/15/2012 3:07 AM	
400f8594bd90ae7748	File Folder	10/11/2012 2:05 AM	
ce2de5958a65c1d553dc15b052138	File Folder	10/2/2012 2:01 AM	
3fdcaa3608369462ba6fc4cb2500409a	File Folder	9/13/2012 2:03 AM	
d87320e64e98e3fa79	File Folder	8/15/2012 10:48 PM	
8ae149b3c64893979a59eb	File Folder	7/11/2012 2:05 AM	
61d09937c7438b2901d8	File Folder	6/14/2012 2:10 AM	
fc12df0ac3d13f6467fd9be822	File Folder	5/11/2012 2:10 AM	
4fd72056f35a0f2c4965bdee41980059	File Folder	3/22/2012 2:15 PM	
3e9ebfb04b9c0f008d169ebc425b421	File Folder	3/22/2012 2:14 PM	
fdfabf526927979eeb6939f5669aa	File Folder	8/9/2011 2:01 AM	



## IF YOU AGREE, CHECK THE SQUARE BOX

If you agree, check the square box!

By Ralph Smoyer, Vice President, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

February 2013 issue, The LVCG Journal

<http://sites.google.com/site/lvcgsite/>

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If you agree to the following list of items please place a check mark in the small square box.

How often have you seen this line before? Well I have seen this line many, many times before, and I have also personally entered that check-mark in that box at least one time too often.

You see I downloaded a MacAfee computer virus protection program via the Internet approximately three years ago and dutifully check-marked the square box. I thought the MacAfee program worked quite well! However, I have belonged to the Lehigh Valley Computer Group for many years and I often use a lot of the knowledge that I get at our meetings. Well about three years ago one of our instructors mentioned that Microsoft offers a free virus protection plan, and I jumped on it. Wow, I could save \$50.00+ bucks a year.

I chose to use my newly gained knowledge from the LVCG, and my present virus, malware and spyware protection is Microsoft Security Essentials (free from Microsoft) and yes I did check mark the square box to have it actuated. It works great.

The bottom line of this article is that sometime in mid-2012 I checked my monthly credit card statement a little more thoroughly than usual, and I found that the \$50.00 bucks that I thought I was saving a year was still being deducted from my credit card by MacAfee.

I then e-mailed, talked to them by phone, sent a letter, re-sent the letter via Certified mail! All to no avail.

My final realization was that I had to file a civil case with my local magistrate. I filed the paperwork, paid the court fees up front, and waited for my court date. On my court date the defendant, (MacAfee,

headquartered in California) did not show. The judgment was in my favor and I received the McAfee 2012 credit card cost of \$50.00 + bucks, and all of my court fees.

When talking by phone with a McAfee representative I mentioned that I didn't order their virus protection product this year and she replied, yes you did when you checked the square box. I then noted to her this could go on forever, and she agreed yes it could. I guess I now saved \$50.00 bucks a year, and possibly forever, even for my heirs.

## BACK TO BASICS

(Continued from page 6)

you are through using it. You should then see a message displayed that says it is safe to remove the device. It is just a little extra step to make sure you are not unplugging a device while it is in use. Another way is to simply turn off the device before you disconnect it.

There are other connection ports (i.e. "holes") in your computer where you can plug things in, like the ISDN connector, monitor, keyboard, mouse, and other cables. Make sure you are plugging your USB plug into a USB port – match the shape carefully! Remember, there IS a "right side up" on the plug too, so if it does not go in one way, turn it over and try again. Never force a plug into a port!

**WE WANT TO INCREASE  
OUR MEMBERSHIP  
IF EACH MEMBER  
BROUGHT JUST ONE  
INTERESTED GUEST  
TO A MEETING  
WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL**

## TECHNOLOGY-TURNING US INTO COUCH POTATOES

Is Technology Turning Us into Couch Potatoes?  
Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS  
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Do you remember the days before remote control? For those of you who answered "no" to that question, let me tell you that there was a time when you actually had to get up and walk across the room to change the channel on the television. When remote controls were first introduced, there was great fear that we would all become "couch potatoes." In fact, the first television remote control that was produced by Zenith was called the "Lazy Bones." Now, more than fifty years later, we can truly assess whether this and other technological advances have made us lazy or have actually given us more reasons to get off the couch.

The television remote was just the first of many high-tech products that "did the work for us." We now have many more. Whole-house music players like Sonos save you footsteps by letting you control the music for every room in your house with your cell phone.

If it is cold outside, there is no need to run out and start the car, then run back in the house to wait while it warms up. Many new cars have auto-start. Just press a button on the key fob and you can start the car remotely. If you don't want to have to trek down the driveway for the newspaper, you can simply download the paper to your tablet or read it on the Internet. Oh, and you don't have to open the door to check the weather. You can see it on your portable device or on your thermostat. (My Internet-connected thermostat even gives me the weather predictions for the next several days.)

For many tasks, you no longer have to walk into the computer room, now you can use your smart phone or tablet to surf the Web, check your email, read a book, or play a game. And if you keep your cell phone in your pocket, you can make and receive calls without running through the house to grab the landline phone. I believe that these devices have collectively saved us trillions of footsteps.

Today, robotic helpers also take the sweat out of home chores. iRobot's Roomba, Scooba, Looj, and Verro will help you vacuum the floor, wash the floor, clean the gutters, and clean the pool.

And with the coming onslaught of Internet-connected appliances, you will work even less. Many

manufacturers have Internet-connected washers and dryers which you can control from your cell phone. They let you know when the clothes are dry and even let you give them a few more minutes of fluff time if you can't make it to the dryer to remove them as soon as they are done.

We've had timers on coffee pots for a long time, but the new Internet-connected coffee makers will coordinate with your alarm clock or cell phone to make the coffee at just the right moment, even if your schedule changes. Samsung has partnered with ADT to make a new home security system that shows up on your TV. So if you are watching TV at bedtime, you won't have to get up to check the door locks, turn off the lights, or close the blinds. You will be able to do it right from the TV.

Between 1950 and 2000 obesity rates in the United States have increased by 214 percent. Two out of every three people in the U.S. were obese or overweight in 2010. You don't even have to read the statistics. Just look around and you will see overweight people everywhere. Realistically, there are many reasons for this. We are consuming more calories, eating more junk food, and in general getting less exercise. It is also obvious, though, that our reliance on the technology that makes our lives easier is also to blame. Besides letting our devices do the work for us, we are also spending untold hours sitting in front of televisions and computers, and playing games with our fingers.

To be fair, technology is also presenting us with enticements to exercise and keep fit. Nike has pedometers that fit into their shoes and communicate with an iPod for later download to a computer. FitBit and others have wireless activity trackers, sleep trackers, smart scales, and mobile tools. In fact, there are hundreds of apps that will help you track your weight and motivate you to eat better. Take a look at the Apple App Store or the Android Play Store and you will see selections like Lose It!, Monitor Your Weight, iFitness, Get in Shape, and DailyBurn Tracker. There are also a wide variety of apps and devices like calorie counters, blood pressure monitors, and step trackers.

So I guess it comes down to whether more Americans will use technology to improve their health or to relax and let their high tech devices do their work for them. Although some people are choosing the healthier lifestyle, we know that most are not. In fact, it is estimated that if current trends continue in just a few years 75% of Americans will be overweight. I love technology, but I hate what it is doing to our waistlines.

## MISERY FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA

### Misery from Social Media

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA  
February 2013 issue, DriveLight  
[www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org)  
president (at) uchug.org

Does Facebook make you miserable? I know I get depressed when I think about all the time people waste on social media sites, spending hours looking at what other people are doing or raising imaginary crops on Farmville. I get perturbed when I read about those bird-brains that spend all their time tweeting their every action, and the twits that follow them. I'm not sure what is higher on the worthless scale in that case, being the tweet-er or the tweet-ee (at least the tweeter is writing something).

Now there may be proof that all this social media connectivity is bad for our mental health. A joint study conducted by two German universities indicates that use of social media sites like Facebook causes increased feelings of envy. Researchers reported

that one in three people felt worse and more dissatisfied with their lives after visiting these sites. "We were surprised by how many people have a negative experience from Facebook, with envy leaving them lonely, frustrated or angry", said researcher Hanna Krasnova from the Institute of Information Systems at Berlin's Humboldt University.

This is not very surprising to me. The tendency of most people to post mostly positive information about themselves, their families and their activities, and leave off the unflattering bits tends to skew what is seen on these sites. I'm sure some use social media as the high tech way to brag. When faced with glowing reports of friend's lives and activities and beautiful photos of their latest adventures, a viewer's feelings of inadequacy seem a reasonable result of the social media experience. The study did report that vacation photos posted by others was the biggest cause of resentment. How surprising. Second was social interactions, where being able to compare against others the number of birthday greetings received or comments and "likes" on photos and posts produced envy.

The researchers noted that these feelings of envy prompted users to boast more about their own activities, which I would think would result in more angst overall for Facebook users, as everyone competes to report having the most impressive lives. It reminds me of the feelings I recall having when my wife and I would go out to tour model homes on the weekends, not to buy but to get decorating ideas for our own home. We would leave our house feeling reasonably satisfied with it, but interested in making it just a little better. We would return from touring these fabulously decorated and ridiculously neat model homes with the feeling that our house was a dump. It would have been better for our mental health and overall happiness if we had never gone looking. I wonder if we will someday find it is the same with social media?

### A Hard Drive In Your Pocket

Ignore those that say you can't take it with you - now you can. When you need to carry around a lot of data, Kingston is there for you. They announced the 1 TB version of the DataTraveler HyperX Predator 3.0 flash drive at CES, which is expected to be available in the first quarter of this year. It will allow you to carry a hard drive's worth of data with you and access it at USB 3 speeds. You will have room in your pocket for it, however, as the price will empty your pockets, wallet and more. "Greg's Rule of Flash Drive Pricing" says not to pay more than \$0.50 per GB for flash drive storage, and you can do that for drives up to 32 GB. Unfortunately, the 512 GB version of this drive is priced at \$1300 (\$2.50 per GB), and the 1 TB version is expected to fetch over \$2500, about what you would pay for 35 1 TB 3.5" hard drives.

### The Extermination of the Mouse

Those of us that were at the January general meeting at the Microsoft Store in the Fashion Valley Mall saw a demonstration of Windows 8 on a large display screen connected to a touch screen computer. The touch screen is one way to get rid of the mouse in our computing lives. Another way is coming from a company called Leap Motion (<http://www.leapmotion.com/>). They are producing a product that will allow you to interact with your computer

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## MISERY FROM THE SOCIAL MEDIA

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without a mouse, using hand gestures similar to those controlling the computers shown in the movie Minority Report. Think of it as a Microsoft Kinect interface for your hands only. You can interact with your computer through hand waves, pinches and other gestures more intuitive than a mouse can allow. You can pre-order their 3D hand gesture control capability for \$69.99. The small hardware motion controller, the size of a pack of gum, plugs into a USB port and sits in front of your monitor. With the Leap Motion software, they claim it can track individual finger movements to 1/100th of a millimeter. If this becomes real like Kinect, it could make the mouse obsolete.

### What's Going into the Gadget Graveyard by the End of 2013?

My column last month contained my predictions for the next year. One of them was that desktop and laptop computers would continue to hold their own against the onslaught of tablets and smart phones. I'm happy to report that my prediction is in line with the 2013 Gadget Graveyard predictions made by IEEE, the world's largest technical professional organization. Their survey of IEEE members, engineers, engineering students and CES attendees predicts that desktop computers should live on for at least another year.

Smart phones also will not yet force cameras, car keys or GPS systems into the gadget graveyard. What are most likely to head for extinction are entertainment devices like CDs, radios, MP3 players, DVDs and cable boxes, as streaming services for audio and video continue to gain in popularity. The consensus was that paper-based items, including printers and paper money, would be around a while longer.

I think I will hang onto my DVDs and MP3 players, as they may provide the only entertainment I will get this year. The problem with Internet streaming services is bandwidth, and in just one month I've found mine to be more limited than I thought. I've got cable Internet at home that typically shows a 12 Mbps or greater download speed (often approaching 20 Mbps), but recently I was confronted with web pages that would not load on my computer. Something was bogging down my Internet access. I went downstairs to find my wife watching an episode of Downton Ab-

bey on her Kindle Fire HD tablet, while my son was downloading something on his Google Nexus tablet. It is kind of like the water we San Diegans get from the Colorado River.

At the state line it is an impressive flow, but if enough users turn on the tap at the same time, all I'm likely to get is a trickle. All these new tablets are thirsty for bandwidth, so I may need to wait until everyone has gone to bed before I can pay the bills online. Meanwhile, as they are screaming for more bandwidth, I can watch my DVDs on my laptop in peace (as long as I have on my noise canceling headphones, that is).

### A Warning from the Cable Company

As if limited bandwidth isn't bad enough, I recently received a warning from Road Runner / Time Warner that I had an infected computer. When I tried to access the Internet through a browser, a web page popped up that appeared to be from Time Warner. It appeared in the same manner that an initial web page would on a hotel Internet connection, requiring a log in or acceptance of terms before proceeding to the Internet. This page warned me that they had "received a report of suspected virus activity from a machine connected to the cable modem" on my Internet connection. The page provided links to Microsoft's free Malicious Software Removal Tool, as well as McAfee anti-virus software that I could download for free as a subscriber. It also warned me that I could be in violation of their Acceptable Use Policy and could have my access suspended. To proceed to the Internet, I had to click on a button that indicated I was aware of this issue and would clean and secure my computers.

I regularly scan my computers for viruses and malware, but occasionally have guests, like my son's girlfriend's laptop, connected to my network. I was also not sure how regularly my son maintains his PCs. I persuaded my son to install a free antivirus to take the place of his expired software, but he found no infections. I scanned my laptop and desktop, but found no problems there. When I scanned my wife's desktop, the antivirus did find something that was reported as part of a trojan, and eliminated it. I don't know if that was the "reported" problem, or how it was that a problem was detected by the cable

## TABLETS—A REVIEW WITH MUSINGS

Tablets—a review with random musings

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Those of you that know me understand I have fallen in love with tablets. They are sweet in my mind.

This doesn't mean that all tablets are created equal.

I thought it was time for some random musings on what I've found in the tablet markets.

My tablet journey has consisted of 16 tablets with something like 10 different models.

I've owned: Apple iPad 1, Apple iPad 2 (2 of these), Apple iPad 3, (all 9.7"), Samsung Galaxy Tablet 8.9 (4 different ones, all 8.9") a Sony S Tablet (9.7"), a Asus TF101 (10.1"), an Acer A500 (10.1"), a Toshiba AT305 (10.1"), a Acer W500 (10.1"), and a Google Nexus 7 (7").

I've also spent significant time with Lenovo's ThinkPad Tablet (10.1") .

Of the tablets I've experienced, four have run Apple iOS, 10 have run Android of various versions (2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.x, 4.1 and 4.2) and one runs Windows 7/8.

I currently have 4 tablets, two iPad's, the Nexus 7 and the Acer W500.

### Observations

My first suggestion is don't buy a cheap tablet. You'll be sorry. You'd be better to wait till you can afford the \$200 price of a Google Nexus 7 than spend \$100 on a low end tablet.

Why you ask? The low-end tablets are under powered and have very limited storage. And they typically use resistive touch screens. Without getting into the dynamics, resistive touch screens are not as sensitive or responsive as the capacitive touch screens used on higher end tablets.

With the Google Nexus 7 selling for \$200, buying something less expensive to save a few bucks will only bring on frustration.

That brings another observation. Buy a general purpose tablet, not a reader.

Amazon and Barnes and Noble both sell very good tablets in the Amazon Fire and Nook Tablet. However, all these are intended to lock you into their store. You buy your books and applications only from them. Unless you root the device. We'll talk about rooting a little later.

Given the Google Nexus 7 is available for 200 bucks, pass on the Amazon and Nooks and go for it as a fantastic general purpose tablet.

### Customizability

By this I mean your ability to change how the tablet looks and works. This should be more than just changing your wallpaper.

iOS limits the customizability to what Apple feels you should do. Change the wallpaper and organization of the applications is about all you can do. Even when jailbroken, you cannot perform a lot more extensibility on iOS.

Android allows a lot more customizability. You can change the wallpaper including live wallpapers that change while you view.

Android also allows you to change the default keyboard and other input methods and select alternate launchers. What's a launcher? Basically a launcher is the method you interface with the tablet. Think of this as the look and feel of the screens.

Overall, Android allows more extensibility than iOS.

### Applications

Applications written for tablets typically use higher resolutions.

Applications written for phones use lower resolutions.

I know duh! Right!

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## TABLETS—A REVIEW WITH MUSINGS

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### **Screen Size**

I like to hold the tablet in one hand in a vertical position and use my other hand to navigate on the tablet.

Given this, I find the traditional sized tablets of either 9.7" or 10.1" too big, bulky and heavy to hold comfortably in one hand for very long.

My favorite tablets are the smaller sized ones. 7" is a good size for personal viewing of videos. It can be a little too small when viewing web sites. The 8.9" form factor is about perfect in my opinion; videos are great and web sites show clarity.

### **Storage**

The presence or lack of expandable storage probably isn't too big a deal for me. Tablets typically come with some built-in memory ranging from 2 GB and up to 64gb or more.

The more storage, the more stuff you can store on the tablet. Another duh right?!

I don't use my tablet to listen to music from Waste of good hardware in my opinion. I carry either an iPod or Sansa device to listen to music. That's what they were made to do and they do it very well. Music typically takes lots of storage; removing it saves a lot of space on the tablet.

I find 16gb a decent amount of internal storage. That's enough to store 10 or so movies for viewing on long flights.

Books and applications typically don't take a lot of storage. 16gb is a decent amount. Sure, you'll not be much of a pack rat with 16gb.

Larger amounts of storage allow you to get sloppy.

Expandable storage can be used to back the device up which we all should do, right?

### **Device memory**

Here you have to watch. It's pretty easy to find the amount of storage. Much more difficult to find the amount of memory in the device. My experience is if

the device has 512kb or less, stay clear. It's going to run out of memory and slow down.

iPads and most higher end tablets have at least 768k memory. Some have 1 to 2 GB. The more memory, the more applications. On a duh role aren't I!

### **CPU**

Again, here you may have to search to find the specs on the tablet.

The best tablet experience also has fast multicore CPUs. Didn't know tablets come with multiple cores on their CPU's heh? Well it's true.

Quad core tablets are all the rage. The Nexus 7 uses a quad core CPU and it's fast and responsive.

Dual core tablets are normally responsive, but there may be times you experience a lag because either you don't have enough memory or enough CPU to do the task you're asking for.

My suggestion is get at least a dual core CPU running at least 1.0 GHz.

### **Battery Life**

iPads have better battery life. Before you get ready to argue with me, this is my column with my observations so I can write what I feel. So there!

However, this is backed up by a number of independent studies.

Why you ask? iOS is a single tasking operating system. The application that runs is in the "foreground". Other applications simply pause. This saves battery life.

Android allows applications to run in the "background". You may find the features performed by the background applications useful, but they do affect your battery life.

### **Screen Resolution**

The more expensive tablets come with better screens. Currently iPad 3/4 and the Nexus 10 have the highest pixel count screen.

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## TABLETS—A REVIEW WITH MUSINGS

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Can you see the difference? Absolutely. This truly is a time where more is better!

What price do you pay for the increased screen resolution? You will pay a price in battery life as the more pixels to be changed, the more power it takes.

You may not see much difference when watching movies, although you can see the difference on the iPad 1 and iPad 2 with their lower resolution screens pretty easily.

Select a tablet that has at least 800x600 resolution. If you can afford it, go for 1280x800 (720p) resolution.

### Cameras

Tablets have built in cameras, sometimes multiple ones, front and back.

They can be useful if you're Skypeing with someone. You will probably not use the cameras for much, although the higher resolution ones (5 mpixels and up) take great pictures.

An Android tablet running Ice Cream Sandwich (Android 4.0) typically has a panoramic view allowing you to have a scene that pans a wider area, much like a wide angle lens. It's a unique feature that you might find useful. There are multiple applications available to edit the photos on the tablet.

### Application Stores

Applications written for tablets typically take advantage of a tablet's higher resolution screen.

The Apple Store has more applications than Google Play and more that take advantage of a tablet's higher resolution screen.

Having said this, you will find both stores have selections in almost whatever type application you desire. Lots of games, utilities, weather updates, etc.

Without jailbreaking, iOS applications can only be downloaded from the Apple Store.

Android tablets can download from the Google Play store, the Amazon store and other locations. You don't need to root the device to enable installation from other than the Google Play store however.

### Rooting/Jailbreaking

Both refer to the same thing, but on different platforms. You root an android tablet and jailbreak an iPad.

So what is rooting/jailbreaking? Basically it's removing the limitations the hardware vendor placed on you.

Jailbreaking an iPad means you can install applications from places other than the Apple Store.

Once jailbroke, an iPad can install applications from non-Apple Store locations. Additionally you can customize the iPad interface somewhat. Not as much as Android allows, but you can add things like a mouse driver.

Rooting an Android device allows more control over the hardware. Typical things you can do include over or under clocking the CPU (running the CPU faster or slower than rated). Note: you don't really need to under clock as the Android OS does a pretty good job of slowing the CPU down when it's not required. Another thing rooting does is allow for total backups. I know, you mean you cannot backup everything about an Android tablet without rooting? Sad but true. While email accounts typically are synced with your Gmail account, application settings are not.

Do you need to jailbreak or root the tablet to enjoy it? Absolutely NOT! I used to jailbreak/root a device soon after acquiring it. Now I'm not finding the need to jailbreak/root it. Just enjoy the tablet is my current view.

### Expandability

By this I mean accessories, cases, hardware add-ons, etc.

iOS takes the cake here hands down. There are simply more add-ons available that use the Apple Dock connector. Radios, speakers, video games, even piano keyboards.

## Short Circuits....zzzt!

A Pennsylvania woman allegedly changed her children's grades after logging into a school computer system using passwords obtained when she worked for the district. Investigators say the suspect used the superintendent's password to change the grades. She was arraigned on a half-dozen felony counts. Officials say she changed a failing grade to a medical exception for her daughter, when the woman was still a district secretary. She is also accused of bumping one of her son's grades from 98 to 99. State police say she admitted changing the grades, saying she thought her actions were unethical but not illegal.

*Associated Press*

A Michigan university has determined that about 7,700 students got email notices kicking them out of school for bad grades -- a message intended for only 100 students. Eastern Michigan said that the incorrect emails were sent by a third-party provider. The school president apologized for the email, calling it an "inexcusable mistake." The email starts by telling the [students](#) that as a result of their "academic performance," they've been "dismissed from Eastern Michigan University." It also mentions a way for students to appeal.

*Associated Press*



"Yelling at the screen won't help.  
Try yelling at the keyboard."



A Central Texas man told police that his wife stabbed him in the hand after reading his Facebook page. The 33 year-old woman was taken to the County jail and was charged with aggravated assault. Police records show the husband told officers he was trying to sleep when his wife got upset reading his Facebook account in the living room. When he checked on her, she chased him with a knife and stabbed him. The wife said her husband was high on drugs and they were arguing over his drug use when she struck his hand with her keys. However,

[Facebook](#) has changed your email address. At least that's how many felt after a quiet but vast change in the way the company displays users' contact information. In yet another change to its [website](#) that irked users, Facebook replaced the email address you picked to display on your profile page when you signed up for the online social network and changed it to an (at)facebook.com address. Previously, users may have had a [yahoo.com](#) or [gmail.com](#) address displayed, so that if other users wanted to contact them outside of Facebook, they could. Sending an email to a [Facebook.com](#) address will land the email in the messages section of your Facebook profile. It means keeping Facebook's already-captive audience even more captive.

*Associated Press*

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

# HOW TO GET THERE

