The *Los Angeles Computer Society* Newsletter

Volume 27 Issue 9

SEPTEMBER 2010

User Friendly

apcug Member of The Association of Personal Computer User Groups

In This Issue

General Meeting

FREE is Good!

FREE is good! Judy Taylour from the Santa Clarita Valley Users Group has gathered a lot of information about free stuff on the Internet. Mostly software but Judy is the generous type and may have some other things to tell about.

Judy's emphasis will be on what free software is available for those of us using various versions of Windows.

We'll have some interesting door prizes too, so come along and see if you'll win something.

Come learn with us. Bring friends. FREE admission.

Tuesday September 14, 2010 7 PM
Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Avenue, Westchester

Note: An informal Computer Forum meets from 6 to 6:50 PM to answer individual questions. All are welcome.

More info at http://www.lacspc.org or Telephone: 310-398 0366.

After the meeting there's a "social" gathering at Dinah's Family Restaurant (Sepulveda at Centinela). All are welcome to join us.

AUGUST 2010 GENERAL MEETING REPORT

Gilbert Ialongo and **Charlie Semple**, LACS

Director Irv Hershman suggested that a Charlie Rose TV program about Ken Auletta's book: "Googled" would be a good topic for our meeting. This provided a "learning opportunity" for us.

The Firefox web browser was used to navigate to www.charlierose.com. The mouse cursor was hovered over the word "topics" at the top of the page and this produced a list with "technology" at the end. Clicking "technology" produced a screen with information about many Charlie Rose programs. One of these programs was a November 5, 2009 interview with Ken Auletta. Clicking on the link started "streaming" the video, which was projected on the large screen on the Hall stage via our projector, so it could be seen by the audience. The picture quality was about equal to playing a videotape and the sound channel was good.

We wanted to learn about "capturing" the program to record on a DVD or CD. Gilbert Ialongo came to the rescue and walked us through the process.

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(August 2010 General Meeting Report)

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Downloading the program was quite straightforward; one way to capture and store the streaming video requires a free Firefox add-on called DownloadHelper. This add-on detects the availability of video content available through a web page by displaying a rotating icon in the navigation tool bar of Firefox. When you click on that icon the list of available media content is displayed. If you click on the desired content it will be downloaded and saved as a file on the hard disk. The Charlie Rose download is in flash format. To make it "playable" it requires the use of a "codec", many of which are available FREE. Gilbert suggested VLC player, a free Media Player from videolan.org, and it worked very well. Gilbert had already recorded the program on a CD and brought it to the meeting. When we played a short excerpt from the CD, it looked a little better than the "streaming" video we watched earlier. The sound quality was considerably better.

We learned quite a bit from this meeting but realized that there's more to learn. There are many sources of video and TV programs available on the Internet and knowing how to deal with this material can be educational, informative and entertaining.

Who will become our coordinator to help us learn more? ♥

WELCOME ALL

Gene Jacobs, LACS
Database Manager

New (1)
Heidi Feingersh

Renew (13)
Roger Clough
Edie Ditmars
* Steve Halpern
Russell Ham
*** Dick Harmetz
Harold Igdaloff
Curly Jackson
* Jules Moster
Michael Price
Madeline Rungaitis
* Robert Sandell
Sei Shohara
Yasuko Shohara

*Contributor
***Benefactor

CASH FLOW

Charlotte Semple
LACS Treasurer

For The Month Of August '10

Current Liquid Assets	
Fidelity Money Market	
Cash Reserve Accnt.	$9,735.66
Bank Of America	
Checking Accnt.	4,206.89
Total Liquid Assets	**$13,942.55**
Gross Receipts	
Dues	632.00
Total Gross Receipts	**$632.00**
Expenditures	
Westchester UMC	
Facility Rental	$60.00
Creative Technology	
August User Friendly	232.50
Membership	
Publicity & Recruiting	29.10
Total Expenditures	**$321.60**
Net Surplus	**$310.40**

ELECTIONS

Lee Freehling
Chair,
LACS Nominations Committee

When Charlie called and asked me to serve as chair of the nominating committee my first reaction was - why me? My second thought was - why not me? LACS has come to mean a great deal to me so what better way to demonstrate my appreciation than by working for the good of the cause. I would like to thank the committee members, Leah Clark, Gene Jacobs and Stephanie Nordlinger for their diligence, perseverance and good humor. They were a pleasure to work with.

Candidates for Officers of the Los Angeles Computer Society and three seats on the Board of Directors as proposed by the nominating committee are:
President - Charlie Semple
Vice-President - ?
Secretary - Leah Clark
Treasurer - Russell Ham
Director - Nancy Cattell
Director - Ray Crovella
Director - Jim McKnight

Do you see the question mark next to Vice-President? Is there no one in this organization willing and able to conduct a meeting in the absence of the President? That is the job description. Surely there is someone in our organization who is not afraid to stand in front of a bunch of senior citizens and bang a gavel. Come on folks. Nominations are open until the end of the September meeting. Who will have the courage to throw their hat into the ring?

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(Elections)
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President
Charlie Semple

LACS has become much stronger in recent years. I enjoy being your president and would be happy to continue. Participation by some of our members has increased nicely. There are opportunities for more members to participate. Our society is a volunteer organization and depends on all of you to do your part to maintain its strength and grow. There's a lot of satisfaction being part of a successful LACS.
How will you help us?
I hope you'll vote for me as your President for 2011.

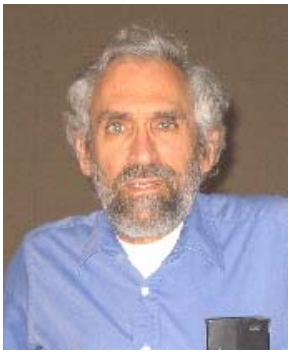
Secretary
Leah Clark

I have been a member of LACS for over 12 years. I started using computers with the Apple II about 25 years ago! Time does go fast when having fun! After graduating from UCLA I was a Medical Technologist at the UCLA Medical Center for 43 years before retiring.

In LACS I've been the Secretary for two terms. I'm the Welcome Chair, the Indexer for *User Friendly*, and a Quick Consultant for Genealogy. I volunteer at the Culver City Senior Center Computer Lab. I now attend the Digital Photo, the Software (or something), the Luncheon, and the Daytime SIGS. Other interests include needlework, gardening, genealogy, and RV traveling.

As a member and officer of LACS I'm constantly learning. I want to see LACS continue to be a viable organization serving the needs of the members and the community.

Treasurer
Russell Ham



I'm a renegade Mechanical Engineer from MIT who discovered, between sophomore and junior years, that digital computers were more than glorified accounting machines and never looked back. I spent essentially my entire working life with what is now called embedded hardware, firmware, and software.

I served for ten years as treasurer of the Los Angeles Branch of the Royal Scottish Country Dance Society, and am now on the board of directors of the United Scottish Societies and of the Kentwood Players at the Westchester Playhouse.

Director
Nancy Cattell

I have been a member of LACS for more than 8 years and for 6 years I have served as a Director. I have been a co-leader of the Digital Photography SIG for several years and have regularly attended the Hardware, Beginners/Internet/E-Mail and Software SIGs. My hobbies are: travel, photography and handicrafts. I hold B.S., M.A., M.Phil. and J.D. degrees. My professional experience includes 5 years of military service, 31 years of teaching and counseling at Santa Monica College where I have been a Trustee. I have been a practicing attorney for 33 years and developed paralegal programs at UCLA Extension.

Director
Ray Crovella

Since I have been a member of the LACS for a number of years I feel privileged to volunteer my efforts to run as candidate for membership on the Board of Directors. I feel that I have

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(Elections)

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benefitted in a number of ways from membership and hope to return the favors in a small way for help from more knowledgeable members and the camaraderie of members.

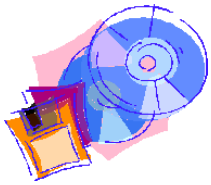
Although I have a Masters degree in engineering and am a retired structural engineer I am still on a steep learning curve with my computer and appreciate the help received from other members. I would hope that the board can be instrumental in helping to continue growth of LACS.

Director
Jim McKnight

I have been an active member of LACS since January 2006, a Director since January 2007, and a regular participant in almost all the Study Groups (SIGs) offered by LACS. I was born and raised in the L.A area. I began working with computers in 1966 with IBM Corporation, installing and repairing big mainframes & peripherals. I retired in 2003 after 37 years; 24 of them as a Hardware Support and Printer Specialist. I started using PC's in the early 90's, but only recently have taken a serious interest in PC diagnosis/repair as a hobby and educational endeavor, as well as providing some support services to LACS Members. I am also in the Culver City Senior Center volunteer Mentor group. With Karl Springer's help, I created a PC Self-help Support Website at www.jrmcknight.net for LACS members and the general (Techy) public. If re-elected as a Director, I would continue to help find ways for LACS members to be of service to the community, hopefully resulting in increased membership for LACS. ♥

BEGINNERS/INTERNET/ E-MAIL SIG REPORT

Ray Crovella, LACS



Karl Springer demonstrated use of "StripMail" (http://www.dsoft.com.tr/stripmail/), a Freeware utility that strips the characters "</>" and "|" from forwarded e-mails. Spaced text can also be cleaned up and arranged in neat paragraphs, making it easier to read using commands such as "doitall", "paragraph" and other options. Changes to the text's right margin can be made by indenting. Karl demonstrated other helpful choices, "create shortcut", "drag to new folder" and "copy to clipboard". This program can be used with any e-mail client.

Karl also showed that applications are not the only thing that can be launched from the Quick Launch Toolbar. Folders can too, such as My Documents

Kim Stocksdale showed procedures for certain interesting "computer tips". To scroll between pages in many programs, use spacebar to go down and shift-Spacebar to go up. To magnify & shrink text in many programs, use control/scroll wheel. To show desktop, type - Windows/D.

Charlie Semple demonstrated various cursors, methods for cleaning keyboard and a sound file that had a WAV extension. He showed a website, www.latimes.com, which lists all TV programs for 7 days. He showed how Windows Explorer and other files can be sorted: ascending and descending order, alphabetically, by date created, by date accessed, and by date modified. Charlie also demonstrated a program to lock icons called Iconoid, found at http://www.sillysot.com/. ♥

DIGITAL PHOTO SIG REPORT

Elliot Silverstein, LACS

Eighteen members attended the July 26, 2010 meeting of the Digital Photo SIG held at the SMC Bundy Campus.

Most of the meeting was devoted to the subject of creating a slide show from a series of still photos. This included adding a music track and voice commentary using a microphone.

Jack Koonan, the presenter, demonstrated various features of Windows Movie Maker, including determining the duration of each slide, the transition styles between slides, adding text or captions, and the timing of audio tracks.

Also, In response to an inquiry from one of our newer

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(Digital Photo SIG Report)

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members, there was a lively discussion of various methods of transferring photos from the camera to the computer.

These included use of Picasa, use of the copy/paste commands to copy photos from the camera card into the desired file folder, and use of the software usually included with the camera.

Jack sent an explanation of Video Terms to the LACS list which the Editor has included below:

Video

The term video ("video" meaning "I see", from the Latin verb "videre") commonly refers to several storage formats for moving pictures: digital video formats, including Blu-ray Disc, DVD, QuickTime, and MPEG-4; and analog videotapes, including VHS and Betamax. Video can be recorded and transmitted in various physical media: in magnetic tape when recorded as PAL or NTSC electric signals by video cameras, or in MPEG-4 or DV digital media when recorded by digital cameras.

Quality of video essentially depends on the capturing method and storage used. Digital television (DTV) is a relatively recent format with higher quality than earlier television formats and has become a standard for television video. (Look up a list of digital television deployments by country.)

3D-video, digital video in three dimensions, premiered at the end of 20th century. Six or eight cameras with realtime depth measurement are typically used to capture 3D-video streams. The format of 3D-video is fixed in MPEG-4 Part 16 Animation Framework eXtension (AFX).

In the United Kingdom, Estonia, Australia, Netherlands, Finland, Hungary and New Zealand, the term video is often used informally to refer to both Videocassette recorders and video cassettes; the meaning is normally clear from the context.

Frame Rate

Frame rate, the number of still pictures per unit of time of video, ranges from six or eight frames per second (frame/s) for old mechanical cameras to 120 or more frames per second for new professional cameras. PAL (Europe, Asia, Australia, etc.) and SECAM (France, Russia, parts of Africa etc.) standards specify 25 frame/s, while NTSC (USA, Canada, Japan, etc.) specifies 29.97 frame/s. Film is shot at the slower frame rate of 24photograms/s, which complicates slightly the process of transferring a cinematic motion picture to video. The minimum frame rate to achieve the illusion of a moving image is about fifteen frames per second.

Interlacing

Video can be interlaced or progressive. Interlacing was invented as a way to achieve good visual quality within the limitations of a narrow bandwidth. The horizontal scan lines of each interlaced frame are numbered consecutively and partitioned into two fields: the odd field (upper field) consisting of the odd-numbered lines and the even field (lower field) consisting of the even-numbered lines. NTSC, PAL and SECAM are interlaced formats. Abbreviated video resolution specifications often include an "i" to indicate interlacing. For example, PAL video format is often specified as 576i50, where 576 indicates the vertical line resolution, i indicates interlacing, and 50 indicates 50 fields (half-frames) per second.

In progressive scan systems, each refresh period updates all of the scan lines. The result is a higher spatial resolution and a lack of various artifacts that can make parts of a stationary picture appear to be moving or flashing.

Deinterlacing

A procedure known as deinterlacing can be used for converting an interlaced stream, such as analog, DVD, or satellite, to be processed by progressive scan devices, such as TFT TV-sets, projectors, and plasma panels. Deinterlacing cannot, however, produce a video quality that is equivalent to true progressive scan source material.

Scanlines

The size of a video image is measured in pixels for digital video, or horizontal scan lines and vertical lines of resolution for analog video. In the digital domain (e.g. DVD) standard-definition television (SDTV) is specified as 20/704/640×480i60 for NTSC and 768/720×576i50 for PAL or SECAM resolution. However in the analog domain, the number of visible scanlines remains constant (486 NTSC/576 PAL) while the horizontal measurement varies with the quality of the signal: approximately 320 pixels per scanline for VCR quality, 400 pixels for TV broadcasts, and 720 pixels for DVD sources. Aspect ratio is preserved because of non-square "pixels".

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New high-definition televisions (HDTV) are capable of resolutions up to 920×1080p60, i.e. 1920 pixels per scan line by 1080 scan lines, progressive, at 60 frames per second.

Voxels

Video resolution for 3D-video is measured in voxels (volume picture element, representing a value in three dimensional space). For example 512×512×512 voxels resolution, now used for simple 3D-video, can be displayed even on some PDAs.

Aspect Ratio

Aspect ratio describes the dimensions of video screens and video picture elements. All popular video formats are rectilinear, and so can be described by a ratio between width and height. The screen aspect ratio of a traditional television screen is 4:3, or about 1.33:1. High definition televisions use an aspect ratio of 16:9, or about 1.78:1. The aspect ratio of a full 35 mm film frame with soundtrack (also known as the Academy ratio) is 1.375:1.

Ratios where the height is taller than the width are uncommon in general everyday use, but do have application in computer systems where the screen may be better suited for a vertical layout. The most common tall aspect ratio of 3:4 is referred to as portrait mode and is created by physically rotating the display device 90 degrees from the normal position. Other tall aspect ratios such as 9:16 are technically possible but rarely used.

Pixels

Pixels on computer monitors are usually square, but pixels used in digital video often have non-square aspect ratios, such as those used in the PAL and NTSC variants of the CCIR 601 digital video standard, and the corresponding anamorphic widescreen formats. Therefore, an NTSC DV image, which is 720 pixels by 480 pixels ,is displayed with the aspect ratio of 4:3 (which is the traditional television standard). If the pixels are thin and displayed with the aspect ratio of 16:9 (which is the anamorphic widescreen format) the pixels are fat.

Color Model Name

Color model name describes the video color representation. YIQ was used in NTSC television. It corresponds closely to the YUV scheme used in NTSC and PAL television and the YDbDr scheme used by SECAM television.

The number of distinct colors that can be represented by a pixel depends on the number of bits per pixel (bpp). A common way to reduce the number of bits per pixel in digital video is by chroma subsampling (e.g. 4:4:4, 4:2:2, 4:2:0/4:1:1).

Video quality can be measured with formal metrics like PSNR or with subjective video quality using expert observation.

Subjective Video Quality

The subjective video quality of a video processing system may be evaluated as follows: Choose the video sequences (the SRC) to use for testing. Choose the settings of the system to evaluate (the HRC). Choose a test method for how to present video sequences to experts and to collect their ratings. Invite a sufficient number of experts, preferably not fewer than 15. Carry out testing. Calculate the average marks for each HRC based on the experts' ratings.

Many subjective video quality methods are described in the ITU-T recommendation BT.500. One of the standardized methods is the Double Stimulus Impairment Scale (DSIS). In DSIS, each expert views an unimpaired reference video followed by an impaired version of the same video. The expert then rates the impaired video using a scale ranging from, "impairments are imperceptible", to, "impairments are very annoying".

Video Streams

Many methods are used to compress video streams. Video data contains spatial and temporal redundancy, making uncompressed video streams extremely inefficient. Broadly speaking, spatial redundancy is reduced by registering differences between parts of a single frame; this task is known as intraframe compression and is closely related to image compression. Likewise, temporal redundancy can be reduced by registering differences between frames; this task is known as interframe compression, including motion compensation and other techniques. The most common modern standards are MPEG-2, used for DVD and satellite television, and MPEG-4, used for home video.

Bit Rate

Bit rate is a measure of the rate of information content in a video stream. It is quantified using the bit per second (bit/s or bps) unit or Megabits per second (Mbit/s). A higher bit rate allows better video quality.

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(Digital Photo SIG Report)

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For example VideoCD, with a bit rate of about 1 Mbit/s, is lower quality than DVD, with a bit rate of about 5 Mbit/s. HD (High Definition Digital Video and TV) has a still higher quality, with a bit rate of about 20 Mbit/s.

Variable bit rate (VBR) is a strategy to maximize the visual video quality and minimize the bit rate. On fast motion scenes, a variable bit rate uses more bits than it does on slow motion scenes of similar duration yet achieves a consistent visual quality. For real-time and non-buffered video streaming when the available bandwidth is fixed, e.g. in videoconferencing delivered on channels of fixed bandwidth, a constant bit rate (CBR) must be used.

Stereoscopic Video

Stereoscopic video can be created using several different methods: two channels have a right channel for the right eye and a left channel for the left eye. Both channels may be viewed simultaneously by using light-polarizing filters 90 degrees off-axis from each other on two video projectors. These separately polarized channels are viewed wearing eyeglasses with matching polarization filters; one channel with two overlayed color coded layers. This left and right layer technique is occasionally used for network broadcast, or recent "anaglyph" releases of 3D movies on DVD. Simple Red/Cyan plastic glasses provide the means to view the images discretely to form a stereoscopic view of the content; one channel with alternating left/right frames for each eye, using LCD shutter glasses which read the frame sync from the VGA Display Data Channel to alternately cover each eye, so the appropriate eye sees the correct frame. This method is most common in computer virtual reality applications such as in a Cave Automatic Virtual Environment, but reduces the effective video framerate to one-half of normal (for example, from 120Hz to 60Hz).

Blu-ray Discs greatly improve the sharpness and detail of the two-color 3D effect in color coded stereo programs.

There are different layers of video transmission and storage, each with its own set of formats to choose from. For transmission, there is a physical connector and signal protocol ("video connection standard" below). A given physical link can carry certain "display standards" which specify a particular refresh rate, display resolution, and color space. There are a number of analog and digital tape formats, though digital video files can also be stored on a computer file system, which have their own formats. In addition to the physical format used by the storage or transmission medium, the stream of ones and zeros that is sent must be in a particular digital video "encoding", of which a number are available.

Video Codec

A video codec is a device or software that enables video compression and/or decompression for digital video. The compression usually employs lossy data compression. Historically, video was stored as an analog signal on magnetic tape. Around the time when the compact disc entered the market as a digital-format replacement for analog audio, it became feasible to also begin storing and using video in digital form, and a variety of such technologies began to emerge.

Audio and video call for customized methods of compression. Engineers and Mathematicians have tried a number of solutions for tackling this problem.

There is a complex balance between the video quality, the quantity of the data needed to represent it (also known as the bit rate), the complexity of the encoding and decoding algorithms, robustness to data losses and errors, ease of editing, random access, the state of the art of compression algorithm design, end-to-end delay, and a number of other factors. ♥

DefCon 18:
Is Privacy Dead?

Doug Mechaber, LACS

DefCon, the largest and oldest hacking conference in the world, met recently in Las Vegas, amidst its normal controversies. DefCon is the less expensive stepchild of the more corporate "parent" set of classes and seminars, Blackhat. Some popular Blackhat seminars are repeated at DefCon.

Why don't more SoCal IT people attend DefCon? The price is reasonable, the hotel inexpensive, and some of the talks are brilliant. If DefCon is too crowded, some of the same people present at ToorCon, in San Diego, usually around August/ September. There used to be a

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(DefCon 18:)

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Con in Chicago; admission was reasonable, though the talks were fewer, all were excellent, and some food was included. All these Cons, and the right coast grand daddy, ShmooCon, typically are during a weekend, and typically include other activities besides just presentations.

At DefCon, myriad events occur simultaneously. Not only are there many contests, most drawing participants to that chosen contest exclusively, but also there are the Hardware Hacking and Lock Picking villages, and the presentations, usually five at any one time. At the Hardware Hacking and Lock Picking villages, you can identify yourself as a "noob," and more often than not someone will teach you how to solder micro components, add some JTAG pins, or show you how to pick a simple lock. Then they'll let you practice before challenging you with something more difficult.

All IT people should attend at least one DefCon, just to learn what hackers can do, and the ease with which attacks may be mounted. It is a different way of thinking, one that would serve any IT engineer well.

Security at DefCon is handled by the "goons." These are usually large imposing gentlemen, set apart by the color and design of their shirts. Like the NYC Subway ad, they, unlike many attendees, actually smell – presentable. This year, red denoted hall monitors, and blue speaker/room monitors. Goons are privileged and obtain a special goon badge, and attendees have been known to ply goons with free shots. They have a thankless task, but overall manage to keep disruptions to a dull roar. This being DefCon, some denizens customize their "outfits" with whips, radios, Camelbaks, and other accoutrements.

Two new DefCon contests created news buzz and controversy, especially regarding privacy. Social Engineering, the term the security community uses for extracting information from unsuspecting employees, formed the basis for one new contest. This contest was organized by Offensive-Security, the firm that compiles BackTrack, a set of security tools.

The Tamper-Evident contest, conceived by BlackHat and DefCon founder Dark Tangent, consisted of multiple sets of tamper proof seals surrounding a box, then plastic bags and other containers located within a larger cardboard box, sealed with tamper evident tape.

Some businesses broadcast company-wide alerts once they realized they could be potential targets, to little avail. Contestants were given 20 days' notification for acquiring background information about their selected target. This was to be passive only, as no direct contact was permitted. During the actual contest, contestants were given 25 minutes to make as many calls as necessary to glean specific IT information (non-financial and non-personal) from a list. Only a few calls failed to gather any information. Every company (including BP, Apple, Google, Pepsi, Proctor & Gamble, Cisco, Ford, Wal-Mart) divulged at least some of the information requested; most divulged most of the information. One contestant was given extra points for having someone from BP visit the contest website!

For Tamper-Evident, the goal was to read the secret information contained in the last container, then reseal every seal such that there was no evidence that anything was disturbed. All locks and seals were successfully defeated. One seal, an expensive, $10 seal, was defeated with simple inexpensive magnets in under 5 seconds.

Two presentation topics were changed at the last minute. One was to be on a history of the Chinese Cyber Army's (Wang Jun) last ten years was *not* given because the two presenters, from Taiwan, had their families threatened. The reach of mainland China, even in the US, is appalling. The second was on high speed electronic fund transfers, and was pulled because of client concerns from the company that employed the speaker.

Chris Paget attempted to set the distance record for reading RFID tags and demonstrate that the technology is anything but secure. The new US Passport Card, used for travel in North America, works the same as Wal-Mart's RFIDs used for tracking merchandise, called EPC generation 2. Some states also use this technology in driving licenses. Chris made the point that it works similarly to radar, and can therefore be scaled by increasing input power and using a larger antenna. With modest input power and a mid-sized antenna, Chris read simultaneously, at least several hundred tags held aloft by the thousands of attendees at his talk.

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SEPTEMBER 2010 into OCTOBER 2010

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
		1 September	**2**	**3**
6  Labor Day Holiday	**7** Luncheon SIG Noon	**8**	**9**	**10**
13 Beginners/ Internet/E-Mail SIG 7 PM	**14 General Meeting 7 PM Forum - 6 PM**	**15**	**16**	**17**
20 Hardware SIG 7 PM	**21** Daytime SIG 1 PM	**22**	**23**	**24**
27 Digital Photo SIG 7 PM	**28**	**29**	**30**	**1 October**
4 Software SIG 7 PM	**5** Luncheon SIG Noon	**6**	**7**	**8**

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are run by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend up to six SIG meetings (three of the same SIG) before asked to join LACS. To inquire about a SIG, please call, or e-mail, the **contact** person in advance. SIG Coordinator: Charlie Semple, sig.coord (at) lacspc.org.

SIG	Contact	Telephone	When and Where
After General Meeting	All Welcome		Dinah's Family Restaurant
Beginners/Internet/E-Mail	Kim Stocksdale	310-358-7122	2nd Monday, 7 PM, SMC Bundy Campus
Computer Forum	Beginners Welcome		2nd Tuesday, 6 PM, before General Meeting
Luncheon	Richard Harmetz	310-277-5659	1st Tuesday, Noon, Fu's Palace
Daytime	Temporarily Leaderless		3rd Tuesday, 1 PM, Felicia Mahood Sr. Center
Digital Photo	Elliot Silverstein	310-670-1544	4th Monday, 7 PM, SMC Bundy Campus
	Nancy Cattell	310-452-2130	
Hardware	Charlie Semple	310-398-5052	3rd Monday, 7 PM, SMC Bundy Campus
Software	Temporarily Leaderless		1st Monday, 7 PM, SMC Bundy Campus

Addresses

Dinah's Family Restaurant, 6521 Sepulveda Blvd., LA (just south of Sepulveda and Centinela)
Felicia Mahood Senior Center, 11338 Santa Monica Blvd., WLA (at Corinth)
Fu's Palace, 8751 W Pico Blvd., LA (one block east of Robertson Blvd, NW corner, parking in back)
SMCBundy Campus, 3171 S Bundy Drive, LA (1/2 block south of Airport Avenue)

Members Helping Members

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then call a person whose number is listed next to it. We hope that you find this free service useful. ***If you are experienced in a particular program or topic, please volunteer to be a consultant.*** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please e-mail editor (at)lacspc.org or call Charlotte Semple at 310-398-5052. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You can always decline or postpone a call if it catches you at the wrong time. You perform a valuable service and often learn something unexpected!

America Online - 20
Anti Malware - 56
Digital Imaging, Editing - 50
Digital Photography - 58
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 9
e-Bay - 52
Genealogy - 20, 34
Graphics - 33
Hardware - 43, 55, 56
Internet - 43
LA FreeNet - 24
Lotus Wordpro, Approach - 56
Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird - 56
Mozilla SeaMonkey - 43
MS Excel - 1, 59
MS Office - 43
MS Publisher - 2, 52
MS Word - 9, 43, 53
MS Outlook, Outlook Express - 59
MS PowerPoint - 59
OnTime - 20
Printing - 43
QuickBooks - 52
Quicken - 20
Viruses - 46
Visual Basic - 57
Websites - 57
Windows XP/Vista/7 - 56
WordPerfect - 20, 33

No.	Name	Daytime Phone	Eves/Weekends	From		To
1	Effie Katz	310-403-2901	310-403-2901	9:30 AM	-	10 PM
2	Robert Mercer	310-837-5648	310-837-5648	9 AM	-	10 PM
9	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	310-397-9453	11 AM	-	11 PM
20	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	323-299-3244	9 AM	-	10 PM
24	Springer, Karl	310-645-3410	310-645-3410	10 AM	-	10 PM
33	Kierulff, Cap	310-472-9206	310-472-9206	9 AM	-	9 PM
34	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	310-677-2792	9 AM	-	5 PM
43	Semple, Charlie	310-398-5052	310-398-5052	9 AM	-	10 PM
46	Martin, Todd	818-766-1151	818-766-1151	10 AM	-	10 PM
50	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	310-670-1544	10 AM	-	10 PM
52	Semple, Charlotte	310-398-5052	310-398-5052	10 AM	-	6 PM
53	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	N. A.	10 AM	-	6 PM
55	Strate, Steve	310-450-7478	N. A.	9 AM	-	5 PM
56	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	310-823-7829	8 AM	-	7 PM
57	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	N. A.	9 AM	-	5 PM
58	Schneir, Jerry	310-451-4140	N. A.	9 AM	-	5 PM
59	Van Berkom, Paula	310-398-6734	N. A.	9 AM	-	5 PM

NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. LACS became a California non-profit corporation on July 17, 1991. ♥

The Editor of *User Friendly* will accept almost anything a member wishes to write, no matter how short or how long. Article should be sent to the Editor, editor (at) lacspc.org, as plain text in the body of an e-mail message, or as a Word document or as a PDF file. The deadline for submitting articles is the **20th of the month**. The Editor asks that an author **NOT FORMAT** any text. ♥

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(DefCon 18:)

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Though designed to be read from 30 feet, Chris read them from at least one hundred feet, in a room with lots of interference. The previous DefCon record was 69 feet; someone else claimed 213 feet. In a video, Chris demonstrated 217 feet. He calls it invasive technology, and suggested that he could remotely tell what color and style underwear you are wearing, if you didn't remove or inactivate the tag, never mind surreptitiously tracking individuals.

Using only $1500. In parts and equipment, Paget, in another talk, demonstrated interception of GSM cell phone traffic (AT&T and T-mobile) in a very large room. To his credit, Chris posted numerous warning signs alerting attendees to turn their phones off. Though the FCC expressed concerns, The EFF – Electronic Frontier Foundation – DefCon's charity of choice – allayed those concerns sufficiently so that Paget's talk proceeded. DefCon also raised over $30,000. for the EFF through parties, games, and contests. Both of Chris's presentations are covered here: http://bit.ly/9c6Lfk .

For the last few years, DefCon registrants have received electronic badges that have alternate functions. One year, the badge also functioned as a "TV-B-Gone"; last year the badge was sound reactive, displaying varying LED patterns. This year was no exception: the badge sported a low power LCD matrix, and a laser etched design. The DC18 badge is now selling on eBay for close to the DefCon admission price: $100 versus $140 admission.

Another contest is the badge hacking contest, which consists of modifying the badge to do something different, or adding the badge as a controller to other electronics. The winner this year modified the badge software to produce bar codes on demand. It was successfully used on a bar code scanner at Target, substituting a user input code for the package code. The winner of this contest receives a coveted "black" badge, which grants said possessor free admission in subsequent years. Second place winner was an analysis of virus propagation and social networking and also used a badge from last year. Third place winner was an alcohol breathalyzer. YouTube videos have most of the entrants and descriptions.

http://bit.ly/aOiIal ♥

CHANGING FACE OF DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Updated

Jerry Schneir, LACS

Back in November of 2009 I wrote about how digital photography was changing, changing for the better by introducing smaller lighter cameras with most of the features of digital single lens reflex (dSLR) cameras. Today I have to say not all those changes are for the best, a few are downright awful.

In order to better explain what is happening I need to again introduce a couple of concepts. SLR cameras, be they digital or film, contain a mirror box. Mirror boxes contain mirrors and prisms that divert the path of light coming from the lens to the film or sensor. The light is sent up to the optical viewfinder until the moment the picture is taken at which time the mirror swings out of the way, the shutter opens and closes, and the sensor or film captures the image. Immediately after this exposure the mirror swings back into position and the light is once more diverted up into the optical viewfinder. It is this box that gives dSLR cameras their unique profile.

By removing the mirror box the camera manufacturers could make smaller and lighter cameras. A few manufacturers, primarily Olympus and Panasonic jumped into this new design and brought forth a number of cameras based upon the four-thirds sensor. Most of these cameras were well received even though they had some shortcomings, some of which may be considered severe by some users. The short comings most noted were the slowness of the autofocus, lack of a built-in flash, lack of a built-in viewfinder, and a compromised video mode. Following the earlier models some of these shortcomings were fully addressed or the problems mitigated so that the cameras were as capable as any of the beginners dSLR or, in some cases, as some of the more advanced dSLR cameras.

The future looked good, very inviting but then along came Ricoh, Sony, and to a lesser extent, Sigma and their concepts of a mirrorless interchangeable lens camera (MIL). As an aside, all you have to look at is the acronyms for this series of cameras if you really want to know how confused the topic of these newer style cameras has become. Digital Photography

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magazine refers to this series of cameras as EVF which I think means Electronic View Finder since they didn't explain the abbreviation. Popular Photography calls them ILC which I again presume to mean Interchangeable Lens Cameras. In other articles, cameras that combine HD video and high quality photography are referred to as "hybrid" cameras regardless of how the cameras are designed.

The Ricoh GXR series of cameras, which I think must have been promoted by a design team of air-headed relatives of the owner of Ricoh. The Ricoh GXR cameras use interchangeable body parts which include both a lens and a sensor as a complex unit. Each lens has its own dedicated sensor. I can't see how any 3rd party company would want to design a competing unit. Thus I would anticipate high prices, limited lens selection, and probably a short life. The July 2010 issue of Popular Photography (pg 79) has an article on this camera concept which you may want to read.

Sigma decided to implement the mirrorless design but with a fixed lens. I suspect that Sigma will eventually introduce an interchangeable model. Both Sigma and Sony use the larger APS-C sensor which should have higher ISO capability and thus very desirable.

Sony's version of the MIL camera concept, the NEX3 or NEX5 are, in my humble opinion, an affront to the very group of photographers that would most appreciate the many fine features these two cameras have. These cameras should appeal to the interested or devoted photographer who shoots lots of pictures. This group of photographers may use the auto setting on the camera a great deal but still like to be able to tweak the camera settings a bit in order to obtain that great shot. In all fairness to Sony, I have not had the chance to even handle these cameras. They are not due for release until July/August of 2010. However, the reviews that are starting to appear by people who have had the opportunity to handle these cameras have raised some questions. You can read the full Digital Photography review at http://www.dpreview.com/reviews/SonyNex5Nex3/

Sony's implementation of MIL style cameras seems to be aimed at a person who would never change a camera setting. Quoting from DPReview, "Sony has made clear that it is aiming for compact camera users who wish to upgrade (a market it estimates at around 10 million potential buyers), rather than trying to offer a second camera for existing DSLR users. And the NEX models have more in common with compact cameras than DSLRs - including very few buttons and a resolutely unconventional interface."

Quoting a bit more from DPReview may further illuminate my reasons for unhappiness with Sony's approach to the family of MIL cameras. "The problems in the manual and semi-manual control modes come when you want to change anything other than the basic exposure settings - there aren't enough buttons to give direct access and there's no function menu to allow you to change them as you shoot."

DPReview also comments about the lack of some type of function menu to make changing common settings easier. "The NEX has no such option - changing the ISO, metering mode, AF area selection method or type of file being shot (which has implications for which features can be used), requires leaving the shooting mode and delving into the menu." In other words, you are handicapped whenever you want to try to apply your own knowledge to a shooting situation. DPReview continues "These settings are then scattered across three sub-categories (Camera, Image Size and Brightness/Color), which you have to scroll through each time, since the menu always resets to the top item on the list. So, assuming you last used the Brightness/Color menu, it still takes a minimum of 6 button presses to change the ISO setting, 8 to change metering mode and between 10 and 20 to configure and engage the HDR mode (the higher numbers coming if you were previously shooting RAW files)."

In a New York Times article (May 19, 2010) David Pogue wrote, "The NEX-5 would be an easy recommendation, especially as your first interchangeable-lens camera — but there's one huge caveat: Few buttons means a lot of trips into the menu system. Now, Sony has completely redesigned the menus, and cleverly, too; the camera uses "soft keys," like on a cellphone — two buttons beside the screen whose functions change along with the on-screen labels. But this is the iPhone school of menu design: easy to learn, inefficient to navigate.

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Most painfully, there's no physical mode dial. To switch from Auto mode to a scene mode (like Panorama or Macro), you call up an on-screen dial — that's up to six button presses. Adjust the light sensitivity? Six presses plus a dial turn. Switch to manual focus? Eleven presses. It gets old fast. Similarly, in playback mode, you can't view photos and videos together. Switching takes six button presses. Also, Sony is inventing a whole new camera/lens format here — and Sony doesn't have a great track record with new formats. Remember Betamax? Memory Stick? Atrac? (Me neither.)

But yet, the NEX 5 and NEX 3 do perform well; do very well in low light. This may be an ideal camera for someone who almost always uses the auto mode and appreciates exceptional pictures. And besides, the NEX 3 and NEX 5 do have some fantastic and very interesting features, things such as a sweep panorama and an articulating LCD (only on the NEX 5). There are also some rumors about Sony incorporating 3D into the camera by manipulating their sweep panorama mode".

It is unfortunate that Sony decided to design this camera for the Point and Shoot crowd and not for the people who could appreciate the fantastic capability that it could have brought to the more serious photographer. I can only hope that Sony will rethink this camera offering and bring forth a revised MIL camera designed for the serious amateur. In the meantime I will continue to drool over Panasonics G2 or GF-1 and wonder when (not if) I will take the plunge. Canon, Nikon, are you listening? What are you waiting for? I am ready to go swimming in the MIL pool NOW. And of course, as soon as I can I will try out this camera and perhaps eat my words and disregard my worries. ♥

NETWORKING FOR DUMMIES

Part 2 of 2

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In part 1, I reviewed the history of my first network installation about 7 years ago, and the difficulties I encountered. Part 2 will cover all the work I did to essentially replace the old network, since the main wireless router had failed. For all practical purposes, the work involved now would have been the same as if this were a new network installation, starting from scratch.

The Purpose of a Home Network

The main purpose of most home networks is to share an internet connection among several computers. Using a wireless router typically provides 4 plug in ports for hard wired cable connections, and a receiver/transmitter which broadcasts the connection wirelessly, with a typical range of up to 300 feet, depending upon the router, the surroundings, walls, etc.. You can of course share files, printers, et al, should you wish to do so, but configuring this is done after the initial setup.

You Will Need The Following:

First, a wireless router.

The two current main varieties of routers are the "G" and "N" series. The "G" series wireless capability can handle up to 54 Mbps (megabits per second), and the "N" series is roughly twice as fast. But for home use, the "G" series hardware is more than fast enough for any high speed cable modem connection. And the "G" series runs at 2.4 Ghz, as opposed to a much higher frequency for the "N" series. Considering all the spec variables between "G" and "N", I would recommend the "G" series, since it is also more readily compatible with earlier hardware types, especially "B". I used a Linksys WRT54GL for this new install. The price range for this is in the $70 region, depending upon your choice of vendors.

This router comes with an installation CD. Just run the CD, and follow the instructions which are plainly and clearly presented. In the areas of security, I would accept the suggestions made along the way. You will have to establish some passwords et al, and connect things up as directed. From what I've seen, most routers today come with a good install CD. Before you buy your router, check to make sure that is the case for the unit you choose.

There may be one window which comes up along the way, where there are fields to be filled in re IP addresses, gateways, etc.. But the one key item to be selected is the choice of static or dynamic IP addresses. In most instances, such as Comcast, dynamic IP addresses are

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used, and when that choice is made in the window, all the other fields disappear, making life that much easier. Locate the router as high up as possible.

Second, a computer cable modem.

But if you already have an Internet service provider, you already have the necessary modem in place and working. For a number of years, I rented the cable modem, for $5 per month on my Comcast cable bill. You are allowed to purchase your own modem, which I did, and save the monthly charge. A suitable Motorola cable modem will cost in the $40-$55 region, and will quickly pay for itself. Of course, if you own it, you are responsible for it. Cable modems seem to have very long life however.

Third, several lengths of Ethernet Cat-5 cable with RJ-45 connectors

You will need one length to connect the cable modem to the wireless router, and then another length to connect the router to your computer. You can of course have all your computers run via a wireless adapter. But it is usually better to have your "main" computer hard wired to the router. However, if your cable modem is in a location which is not convenient for this, all computers can run in the wireless mode. Most routers come with one length of cable. If you need more, there are many stores where you can find them. Even Office Depot may carry the needed cables.

Wireless USB Adapters as Needed

For any computer that does not already have a wireless capability, you will have to buy a wireless adapter(s). These are small units ranging from the size of a flash drive to a few inches square, with a USB connector on them. Some have a captive short USB cable already built in. They should be mounted in a "free space area" preferably on the wall, and above the desktop to obtain the best reception, and connected to a USB port on the computer involved. Again, these days, most adapters come with an installation CD, which is usually run first -then follow the instructions as they appear.

Once you get the wireless computer running on the network, check the signal strength. There should be a small icon in the right taskbar area indicating you are connected online. Double clicking it will bring up a window, and there should be a display there with a series of green bars (hopefully). This shows wireless signal strength. One bar is marginal, but usable. Three bars is very good, and four or five bars is excellent. If your signal strength is low, try moving/repositioning the adapter, or router, if possible.

If All is Not Working, When All is Done - Now What?

After I connected everything, and followed all the steps I outlined, my main computer (hard wired) was connected very solidly to the Internet. I had also taken my old wireless signal booster, and added it into the new system, on top of the new router, as it was fully compatible.

I went to my number 2 computer, which already had a wireless adapter installed in it via a PCI card. It had good received signal strength, but no Internet connection. So I started browsing around in the various XP network connection windows. I saw some strange numbers in some of windows, and they were absolutely wrong. I questioned how I had ever gotten it onto the Internet in the past, but I usually did, although with occasional glitches. But try as I might, I could not get things working there. So I decided to download the 7 day trial version of Network Magic. Go to this site and read all about Network Magic: http://www.purenetworks.com/product/pro.php

I installed Network Magic on my main machine, which was working nicely on the Internet, and on my number 2 machine. On my number 2 machine, I then clicked on a choice in Network Magic which said "connect to the Internet". I clicked, and in about 2 seconds, a confirmation window came up saying all was OK. And indeed it was - I didn't have to do anything. Three cheers for Network Magic.

Then I went to my #3 desktop machine where I had been using BOINGO - the free software program that Linksys had referred me to 7 years ago. I uninstalled that software, and also removed the old Linksys USB wireless adapter that had given me 1 bar of signal strength over the years. I installed a new wireless

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adapter which the salesman had suggested I use. It was a refurbished NetGear unit, about the size of a flash drive, and it sold for $15, instead of the typical $40-50 for a new adapter. It came with a note telling me where to go online at the NetGear site to download the install file for this adapter. I did so, and installed the software, then connected the unit as directed. Immediately I was on line, and I had 4 bars of signal strength. I never had such a strong signal before, and with no real work on my part.

Lastly, I powered up my Acer laptop with its built in wireless capability, and as usual, I didn't have to do anything here - it immediately was on, with a very strong signal strength.

Windows has all the necessary features to arrange for file and printer sharing. But, one has to know where to look for them, and how to set them up. And when sharing files, the protocols in XP are not as clean and simple as doing this via Network Magic. It took me about 10 seconds to designate one folder on my main machine as a shared folder, and it immediately was accessible by all my other machines. Sharing a printer was just as easy. Amazing what a fine piece of software can do with no bumps along the way.

Purchasing Network Magic
I was so impressed with Network Magic, and all the things it offered, that I immediately went online, and purchased the Pro version. Even though I had a Linksys router, and many of the trial software features would still remain working forever because of that, I wanted 4 computers to use the program, and I wanted file and possibly printer sharing. At $39, I consider the program worth every penny, especially when I saw what it did for me when I couldn't initially get my number 2 machine connected to the Internet. If I had Network Magic back 7 years ago, I would not have had to spend over a week working at getting my 2 machines functioning on the network. ♥

TIPS 'N TRICKS

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MS Excel
Defining Shortcut Keys for Symbols

When you need to insert a special symbol into a cell, the normal way to do it is by using the Insert Symbol dialog box. If you need to insert the same symbol quite often, you may want a way to assign the symbol to a shortcut key so you can insert it easier.

Some symbols have obvious shortcut keys, defined by the folks in Redmond. One of the lesser-known facts is that every symbol has a "shortcut" key, but using that shortcut may not seem that short. How does this work? By holding down the **ALT** key as you type the ASCII or ANSI code for the symbol.

For instance, let's say you want to enter the cents symbol. If you display the Insert Symbol dialog box and select the cents symbol, at the bottom right of the dialog box you can see the character code for the symbol (it is 00A2). This is a hexadecimal number; you need to convert it to regular decimal notation. You can do this by using the formula =HEX2DEC ("00A2"), which returns the value 162. If you remember this code, you can hold down the **ALT** key as you type the code, with a leading zero, on the numeric keypad.

This approach works great if you only need to input a few symbols on a regular basis; it doesn't take much work to remember those few codes you need. However, if you have a lot of symbols you need to work with, then remembering codes becomes more problematic.

You could develop your own printed "cheat sheet" for the symbols so that you can refer to it all the time, or you could rely on Excel's AutoCorrect feature to do the remembering for you. Follow these steps:

1. Use the Insert Symbol dialog box to insert the symbol into a cell.

2. Select the cell that contains the symbol.

3. Press **F2** to start editing the cell.

4. Select the symbol, and only the symbol.

5. Press **CTRL+C** to copy the symbol to the Clipboard.

6. Display the AutoCorrect tab of the AutoCorrect dialog box. In Excel 2010 display the File tab of the ribbon, click Options, click Proofing, and then click AutoCorrect Options. In Excel 2007 click the Office button, click Excel Options, click Proofing, and then click AutoCorrect Options. In older versions of

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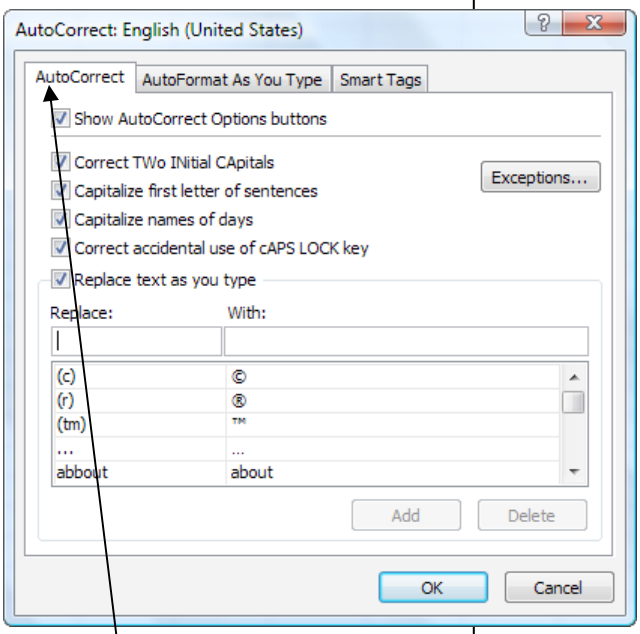
Excel choose AutoCorrect options from the Tools menu.



The AutoCorrect tab of the AutoCorrect dialog box.

7. In the Replace field, type a short mnemonic for the symbol. This should be a series of letters that are not a real word, such as *hrt*, which might be the mnemonic for a heart symbol.

8. In the With field press **CTRL+V** to paste the symbol from the Clipboard.

9. Make sure the Formatted Text radio button is selected.

10. Click OK.

Now you can just type the mnemonic when you want the symbol to appear. When you type the space bar after the mnemonic, AutoCorrect kicks in and replaces it with the symbol.

MS Word

Slowing Down Mouse Selection

Have you ever noticed that there are times that text scrolls way too fast on your screen when you are trying to select it using the mouse? There are many ways you can attempt to slow down the speed at which text scrolls when you are using the mouse to select text. Perhaps the easiest is to use the keyboard in conjunction with the mouse. You do this by clicking the insertion point at the position where you want the selection to start, and then hold down the **SHIFT** key while you click where you want the selection to end.

However, if you don't want to use the keyboard, and only rely on the mouse, your options are a bit more limited. Perhaps the best idea is to get a mouse that has a scrolling wheel between the two buttons. Using the wheel you can scroll through a document at the speed you want.

Those who have used Word for a while know that there are actually two mouse-scrolling speeds in Word. To use the slower speed when selecting text, move the mouse down to the horizontal scrollbar area. This scrolls downward at a relatively moderate speed. Moving the mouse below the horizontal scrollbar sends the scrolling into full-speed mode. The "moderate speed" zone for scrolling upward is the ruler bar. The actual differences between these scroll speeds depends on the speed of your computer and how many other tasks your system is running.

The final option to try is to slow down the mouse speed using Windows itself. Display the Control Panel, and then open the Mouse applet. (How you access both the Control Panel and the Mouse applet will vary, depending on your version of Windows.) Within the Mouse applet, make sure the Motion tab is displayed. You can adjust the Pointer Speed setting on this tab so it is more toward the Slow side. When you close the applet by clicking on OK, you should notice that your mouse speed is a bit more manageable. ♥

PRODUCT REVIEW: Charge Anywhere

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TCS eJournal

The last few years have produced a remarkable quantity of mobile devices: phones, MP3 players, cameras and so on. Each of these needs a power source. The internal battery can hold only so much charge and needs to be refreshed from time to time. A secondary industry has sprung up to meet this need for an external battery to charge the internal one.

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(Charge Anywhere)

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Of course, your device comes with a charging unit, requiring you to plug it into a wall socket. If you have more than one device (and who doesn't?), you would need to carry a charger for each. Here's where Charge Anywhere comes in very handy!

The Charge Anywhere unit is an external battery that can be used to recharge just about any device that has an internal battery. In fact, it can charge two at once!

The unit is slightly larger than a deck of cards, has a retractable wall plug on its back side and two USB sockets on its bottom. The front side has a button and two LED lights.

When you plug the unit into a wall socket, both of the lights come on. The red one indicates the internal battery is being charged. The blue light also comes on. When you want to charge a device, you connect it with the USB cable and press the front side button The blue light comes on to indicate your device is being charged

The unit comes with a cable with a USB plug on one end and a connector at the other. Various tips can be attached to this connector. You'll need the right tip for each device you want to charge. One free tip comes with your purchase of the Charge Anywhere.

Once the unit is charged, you can take it with you wherever you travel. It can be used in other countries, as well, without a voltage converter, a handy travel benefit.

If you are charging two devices at once, the power available from Charge Anywhere is divided. In some instances, this may not be enough to charge a device. Either turn it off when charging or charge one at a time. Charging power is 5 watts with a capacity of 1080 milliamps per hour. This is a handy item for travelers and others that use several devices and need to be able to charge them when away from a power source.

About: Charge Anywhere
Vendor: iGo
www igo com
Price: Approximately $70

PRODUCT REVIEW
Power Smart Wall
Reviewed by
George Harding
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Tucson CS
Tucson AZ
June 2010 Issue,
TCS eJournal
www.aztcs.org

This device is a combination surge suppressor and wall outlet, but there's so much more!

The physical object is approximately 5" X 3" X 2", and weighs maybe a pound or so. The back side has prongs to ft a standard wall socket. Both the left and right side have two sockets for three-prong power plugs.

Here's where the difference begins, though. The plugs on the left side are the usual type and are always "on", but the ones on the right side are very special. They are "green." They provide power while the plugged-in unit (laptop charger, monitor, printer and so on) needs power.

When the unit is off or in standby, the outlet shuts down. Why does this make a difference? Just about everything that is plugged in sucks power, even when turned off. The "green" outlets eliminate this power drain when power isn't needed. The surge protection feature is rated at 1080 joules, a good level of protection, according to Underwriters Laboratory.

That's not the end, though. There is an indicator on the top of the front side. This can be pressed to restore power immediately to the "green" outlets, if they are off. The button can also be used to cause the device to recognize the power needs of the devices plugged in to it. The unit comes with a warranty for damage to devices plugged in to it.

It is good for repair or replacement of damaged equipment up to $25,000. This is a handy unit, easy to use and which provides valuable protection.

About: Power Smart Wall
Vendor: iGo
www.igo.com
Price: Approximately $30

Membership Information

Annual membership Dues:

Regular	$ 40
Family/Associate	12
Students	18
Contributing	50
Supporter	75
Benefactor	100

Subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.

Associate members are people who live in the same household or work for the same company as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*.

Students must prove full-time status.

In addition to LACS monthly general meetings, members enjoy these special benefits:

- ◊ Monthly printed Newsletter *User Friendly*. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- ◊ Get Help via phone from Members and Quick Consultants listed in User Friendly.
- ◊ Get Help via e-mail by using our LACSLIST Yahoo Group Mail List. Simply address your e-mail questions to lacslist (at) yahoogroups.com
- ◊ Receive important news and announcements via LACS's "Yahoo Group" e-mail lists.
- ◊ Special Interest Groups (SIGs) to help solve your problems regarding selected topics.
- ◊ Eligibility to win door prizes in the General Meeting's "Lucky Draw".
- ◊ Occasional swap meets and information on trade shows.
- ◊ Periodic product discounts, special offers and group purchases.
- ◊ Free software and computer books (if you review them for User Friendly).
- ◊ Rewards for Recruiting Members,: LACS will give you a three month's extension of your membership for each new Regular member you recruit.

Change of Address

Send E--mail address changes to changes (at) lacspc.org

For more information:
Telephone (310) 289-7177

LACS Membership Application

May 27, 2010

Please return this form with applicable fees to:

Los Angeles Computer Society, 12228 Venice Blvd., #504, LOS ANGELES CA 90066-3814

Please PRINT CLEARLY

[ ] Renew [ ] Regular - $40.00 [ ] Associate - $12.00 [ ] Student (Full Time Only) - $18.00

[ ] New [ ] Contributor - $50.00 [ ] Supporter - $75.00 [ ] Benefactor - $100.00 [ ] Other

Name: First Last Name of Associate: First Last

Company: Your Title/Occupation [ ] Retired?

Address (Home):

City, State, Zip + 4

Phone: (Home): (Business)

[ ] (Do not Publish Phone No. in Roster)

e-mail address: Who Invited You To Join LACS?

USER FRIENDLY

FIRST CLASS MAIL

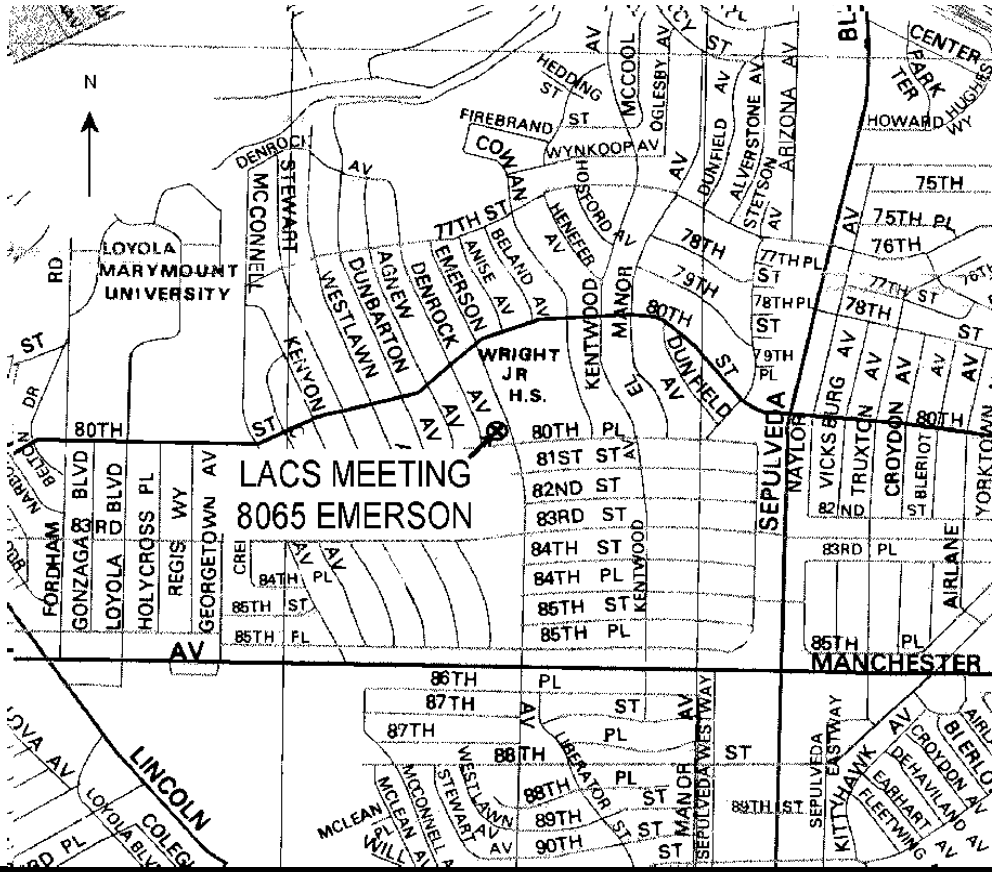
Los Angeles Computer Society
12228 Venice Blvd., #504
Los Angeles CA 90066-3814

Voicemail: 310– 398-0366
Web site:
http:// www.lacspc.org

Directions to General Meeting

***From the North*:**
Take Sepulveda Blvd. SOUTH to W. 80th St. Turn WEST/right and go about one mile to Emerson Ave. Turn SOUTH/left and go one long block to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place.

From the South, East or West:
Take Manchester Ave. to Emerson Ave. Turn North and go about eight blocks to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place. There is plenty of street parking and a small parking lot West of the church.



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