

November 2015

User Friendly



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NOVEMBER GENERAL MEETING

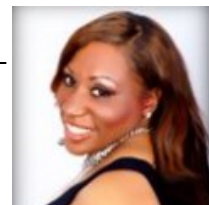
COMMON CORE STANDARDS

College and Career Readiness Through the Use of Technology

Are you curious about the upcoming, mandatory technological requirements for students? We will become familiar with the Common Core Standards for High School students. We will witness the heavy technological emphasis upon the curriculum, and will become aware of what it takes for students to be successful based on the new set of Common Core Standards.

Speaker: **Megan "25 Dreams" Faux**

Megan is an educator, author, songwriter and educational consultant. She is the founder and CEO of *25 Dreams Educational Media*, whose mission is to create events that inspire young minds to dream, to obtain and to sustain their dreams.



She's the creator of the *Multiply In Minutes with Multiplication Nation Program* for students struggling with multiplication, and is the author of *Red Flags Purple Ribbons*, an abuse prevention guide. She is a graduate of UC Berkeley.

Speaker: **Dr. Mary Frances Spruce**

Mary is an experienced, passionate educator who works with people to accomplish both educational and professional goals. She is an accomplished film executive with several years of experience in development and production. She earned her bachelor's degree from Howard University in Washington D.C. in Performing Arts, a master's degree from Howard in Communications, a masters from New York University in New York, NY in Film and Television, a master's degree in Education with a teaching credential from Argosy University, and a doctorate from Phillips Graduate Institute in Organizational Management and Consulting in Chatsworth, California.



Mary is currently a literacy instructional coach for secondary schools in the Inglewood Unified School District. She is developing an academy of performing arts for teens with a focus on teaching writing through film studies, film and television production and several arts related subjects.



Member of
An International
Association of Technology
& Computer User Groups

www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG
www.twitter.com/apcug
www.youtube.com/apcugvideos

Tuesday, November 10, 2015, 7 - 9 PM

**Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave.
Westchester, L.A. 90045**

An informal Computer Forum meets from 6:00 to 6:50 P.M. to answer individual questions. All are welcome.

After the meeting some members may meet at Dinah's Family Restaurant at Sepulveda and Centinela.

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

OCTOBER 13, 2015 GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor

LACS member, Kathy Jacobs gave an awesome presentation on **Social Media Trends**. She gave us much more information than I can record here, so listen to the audio at <http://www.lacspc.org/Podcasts/Social.mp3>, see her slides at <http://www.slideshare.net/callkathy/social-media-trends-2015-53936047>, contact her at [callkathy \(at\) vitaminch.com](mailto:callkathy@vitaminch.com).

Kathy has been on Social Media since 2000. It is a way to connect with people and to obtain information. The biggest trend in Social Media is MORE: more people and more information in more different ways. The idea behind social media is sharing, so others can see it, comment on it, and use it. Today, 75% of adults who are on the Internet use social media, through their computers, tablets, phones, TVs and watches. You can find most anything you are looking for on some social site. Facebook has 1.4 billion monthly active users worldwide; Twitter and Instagram each have 300 million.

Facebook data and applications only run in Facebook - no one else can easily get to that data without a hefty piece of programming to it out of its Application Program Interface (API). Twitter's API is easy to use. Snapchat started out to show a picture and to get rid of it in 24 hours. It is now much more. LinkedIn is for business profiles, what you have done, and resumé's. These, and other sites, have become "Unicorns", i.e. the once-in-a-million applications that, once you start using them, you cannot live without them.

Most social networks are free, but in exchange for joining them, you are giving them data, and you are seeing ads that people pay to place there. Most users are young people, but the largest growing population is women over age 50.

A few words about security: THERE IS NONE! If you are putting information on the web, don't post anything you wouldn't have told your grandmother or grandchildren. Some brands use Snapchat to sell information on a regular basis. When opening a new account you may sign in with your credentials from another

application to give them a way to know if you are real. Or, you may use a two factor authentication (2FA) with your phone. When you create an account, you give them a phone number, and they send you a text message with a code. If you can't get that code off your phone, they won't give you access to your account; they know your mail has been spoofed. (Go to <http://systemanswers.com/2015/10/15/you-need-a-strong-password-for-your-email-account/> to see an article by Bruce Jacobs, LACS, to learn more about 2FA.) To set up security preferences, go to the upper right hand corner to click on the lock icon.

Kathy told a personal story about getting information to family members and friends by using Facebook. People knew quickly when someone died, and they could be there emotionally and physically for them. Many could be at the funeral. In the old world, they wouldn't have found out until later. It would have been impossible to contact hundreds of people by e-mail or phone calls in such a short time span.

You won't forget anniversaries of weddings or other important events using "Timeline Memories" on Facebook. Go to <http://facebook.com/onthistday>.

You can get the application, Social Fixer, <http://socialfixer.com>, to help set up Facebook in ways to make it easier to use. This includes being able to put most recent news ahead of most popular posts.

When a person sends you a person to person message you can get it on Facebook on "Facebook Messenger" on your phone or in the Facebook message area if you are on the web. You can define who may send you a direct message.

A big negative: Anything on Facebook is guaranteed to move from one menu to another without notice.

BUT IT IS FB, SO... FEATURES CHANGE	
Good things	Not so good things
• See first	• Most recent vs most popular
• Timeline Memories	• Messages vs other messages
• Easier security access	• Everything still moves without notice
• Share options	• Ads....

(Continued on Page 4)

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENTS

HOLIDAY DINNER PARTY



The December 8 general meeting will be devoted to

**FOOD - FUN - GIFT
EXCHANGE - ENTERTAINMENT**



By **Leah Clark**, LACS and **Lee Freehling**, LACS

This year we are combining the holiday party and dinner, which were separate events in past years. Your family and friends are invited to join us. This will be a time to relax with friends, and to share favorite foods and stories. We'll celebrate the holidays and LACS.

The main course, drinks and paper goods will be provided by LACS. Participants will bring hors d'oeuvres, side dishes and desserts. We will have the use of the kitchen in Fellowship Hall for heating and refrigerating food as needed. But, there isn't a lot of space, so try to have food table-ready as much as possible. Please bring whatever serving utensils are needed.

If you would like to participate in the gift exchange game, please bring a wrapped present worth about \$15. No white elephants, please.

Your RSVP would be appreciated so we'll have an idea for how many tables to set up. Please tell us how many in your party and what you will bring to share? There will be sign-up sheets at the November general meeting and at the SIG meetings. You may contact Leah at leahjc@sbcglobal.net or Lee at leefreeh@aol.com to RSVP or to ask questions.

If a few good folks would come a little early to help set up tables, and if some would plan to stay a little late so we can leave the hall neat and clean, it would be most appreciated.

There will be more details in your e-mail and in the December *User Friendly*. ♦

2014 Holiday Party



SUGGESTION BOX

Heshmat Laaly made a cute suggestion box for the greeter table at the general meetings. Take a look at it and put in your ideas for a better LACS.



THE LATEST USER FRIENDLY ISSUES (Revised)

By **Karl Springer**, LACS Electronic Editor

So that only members have access to new issues of *User Friendly*, we have returned to our former practice of publishing the latest issue (PDF file, in color) in the Files area of the **LACSPC** Yahoo-hosted group. To access it:

1) Go to:

<https://groups.yahoo.com/neo/groups/lacspc/files/>

You will be asked to enter your Yahoo ID and password.

NOTE: Your Yahoo ID and your Yahoo hosted LACSPC account must be linked. If you don't have a Yahoo ID, or if you do, but it is not linked, at <http://www.lacspc.org/mail-list/#2> is how-to information.

2) On the screen that comes up, click on the *User Friendly* folder icon.

3) On the screen that comes up, click on the version with "Latest Issue" in its description.

When a new issue of *User Friendly* is available on the LACSPC Yahoo-hosted Group, a notice will be sent out.

Contact **mailguy (at) lacspc.org** if you have any questions or problems. ♦



2014 Holiday Dinner

(OCTOBER 13, GENERAL MEETING REPORT)

(Continued from page 2)

On **Twitter** you are limited to 140 text characters. Twitter Moments is a way of gathering up tweets from all kinds of people about a particular subject, and showing them on your Twitter profile. You can select news, sports, etc.

NEW TWITTER FEATURES

- Verified users increased
- Moments
- Better integration
- Better instant and looped video options than in past

Kathy talked about the image sharing media, Pinterest and Instagram. On **Pinterest**, each person has a number of boards, and each board has a number of pins - as many as you want. This can be compared to pinning notices on a bulletin board. Brands get charged for their boards. Pinterest can be used to pin text, graphics, or anything. Your pins are permanent until you take them down. There are about 1.7 million recipe pins. You can type in a main ingredient, and thousands of recipes will come up. Teachers can use Pinterest to share information with parents. The boards can be made private or public.

Most people use **Instagram** to share pictures from their phones. Take a picture and use Instagram to share it privately or publically. When on vacation one can load pictures daily so that everyone can see them in real time. Sharing is instant. The resolution for Instagram is what your phone takes. What comes down is dependent on peoples' data width. Usually the size is what fits on your screen X2. You can decide who sees your pictures. 70 million photos are posted daily on Instagram. Also, many filters are available for photo editing.

Kathy mentioned **Snapchat** and **MeerKat** for video and image sharing. Snapchat is in Santa Monica, and may offer tours if sent a snapchat. Meerkat may be the next Best Thing (NBT). There just wasn't time to cover all the possibilities in Social Media. ♦

DAYTIME SIG REPORT

By **Robert Mercer**, LACS and
Jim McKnight, LACS

The September meeting lacked the usual questions/answer session that gives our guru the chance to discuss and expand on the topics presented by visitors; the only people present were long-standing members! Hint: think, or write down your questions before the meeting. Encourage other members, your friends and visitors to come and do the same.

Jim likes **Thunderbird** as an e-mail program. It offers the choice of leaving e-mail on the server

(IMAP) or on your own computer (POP). And it has a calendar add-on that syncs to the Google GMAIL calendar. See Jim's website www.jimopi.net for detailed instructions on setting up Thunderbird.

See his website also for the use of **Sandboxie** with e-mail. If you download the entire e-mail – not just the subjects – and it contains some bit of malware, the problems will disappear in the 'sandbox.' Look at the very end of his article on Sandboxie, the last item under the heading of *Malware Topics*.

Jim runs **CCleaner** once a month, along with **CheckDisk** and the programs, **Malwarebytes Anti-Malware** and **SuperAntispyware**. These can take a while, so you may have to come back to the computer from time to time.

He repeated the virtues of **Ninite** at www.ninite.com as a convenient aid to installing and updating the current versions of many programs. See the July issue of *User Friendly*. (You do save at least some past issues, don't you?) (Editor's note: they are also on the LACS website at www.lacspc.org/category/user-friendly/.) Or use SEARCH MY SITE on Jim's website for many references.

But it does not include **Secunia**, which you must install separately. Secunia is similar to Ninite in that it shows which programs need to be updated – but does not do the update. One member present found it curious that it doesn't note its own version which may not be the latest!

Temp File Cleaner, unlike CCleaner, removes temporary files for all users, and thus is preferred. Always reboot when done, and

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DIGITAL PHOTO SIG REPORT

By **Elliot Silverstein**, LACS

At the September 24 meeting, Jerry Schneir gave us a bit more information about the free photo editing program **Picasa**, which he had demonstrated at our August meeting. He then discussed the Image editing program, **FastStone**, which is also free, although the publishers do suggest making a contribution if you download it.

Jerry stressed the unique features of Picasa, which includes a convenient way of downloading photos into your computer. Picasa also offers a system of organizing photos into albums so you can separate your pictures by subject matter, time, place or other criteria without actual separation of these pictures from the rest of the images stored in your computer. Each album exists only within Picasa. Another interesting capability of Picasa is an excellent facial recognition system that works even when the face occupies only a small portion of a photo. An additional unique feature of Picasa is a very good system for making and organizing collages, or groupings of photos within a single page, such as one might use in preparing a printed photo album.

He then proceeded to demonstrate many of the features that make FastStone a useful tool. First of all, he feels that FastStone is a bit simpler to use than Picasa, in that all its features are readily available as labeled icons at the edges or the screen, as well as in a menu at the top of the screen and other menus at the left side of the screen and shown by a right click on the image.

Also, the Exif information for each image is available at the right edge of the screen. And FastStone displays a full screen image during editing.

FastStone features easy editing for lightness, color, and levels. It also offers an editable Curves control along with the accompanying histogram. The Curves control allows one to adjust the lightness or darkness of any portion of the image, or of any color in the image, and it enables one to select and alter the lightness value corresponding to any part of a scene. FastStone also has a cloning tool with adjustable effective size and hardness (blending at the

edges), as well as the rather similar healing tool.

It also offers an effective e-mail tool, where one can select a standard or custom size for the images to be mailed. It also offers the capability to organize a slide show with selected images, and offers a number of options for display times, transition schemes, etc. Also available is a contact sheet builder that enables one to display and print a number of small images side by side on a single sheet. This can be useful for sending a friend a set of photos taken at a single time or place, so he can choose images he would like to receive in larger format.

To Summarize, FastStone and Picasa are both useful editing tools for occasions when one doesn't require the added features such as layers and stronger selection capabilities that can be found in programs such as Photoshop Elements or Paint Shop Pro.

Eleven people were present at the meeting. ♦

BASICS AND BEYOND SIG REPORT

By **Kim Stocksdale**, LACS

Topics discussed at the October 12, 2015 meeting included:

- Group e-mails using Gmail Address Book
- Body Browsing

GROUP E-MAILS USING GMAIL ADDRESS BOOK

Have you ever wanted to send an e-mail to multiple people on a regular basis, such as monthly, and did not want to keep entering all those people's e-mail address manually into the "To" field every month? Well you can do that with a group e-mail... you enter the recipients into a group, and then send the e-mail to that group name. Sounds easy enough at least. Using a Gmail address book, Paula Van Berk-om demonstrated how to:

- Create a new Contact group.
- Add / delete contacts to an existing Contact group.
- Edit the Contact group name or delete the Contact group.

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(BASIC & BEYOND SIG REPORT)

(Continued from page 5)

- Send e-mail using a contact group for the recipients

To Create a New Contact Group

1. Click Gmail at the top-left corner of your Gmail page, then choose Contacts.
2. Select contacts that you want to add to a group, click the Groups button in upper right, then New Group in drop down menu.
3. Enter the name of the group.
4. Click OK.

To Add /Delete Contacts to an Existing Contact Group

1. Select the contact(s) in the Contacts list.
2. Click the Groups button (on top right).
3. Select the group you'd like to add the contact(s) to.
4. A contact can be in more than one group.
5. Do the same to delete a contact and deselect the checkbox next to the group.

To Edit the Contact Group Name or Delete the Contact Group

1. Click Gmail at the top-left corner of your Gmail page, then choose Contacts.
2. Select the group you'd like to edit along the left side of the page.
3. Click on the pencil to Rename group or the trashcan to Delete the group.
4. Enter the new name and click OK.
5. This will delete the group but not the actual contacts themselves. Those will remain in your Contacts list.

Send E-mail Using a Contact Group for the Recipients

From the Compose Window:

1. Click Compose.
2. Leave the TO field blank. It will show up at the receiver's end as: "undisclosed recipients."
3. Click on BCC (or Ctrl/Shift/B): enter the first few letters of the name of the contact group to which you'd like to send the message.

4. All contacts will show up. Click on "x" to delete one contact if you do not wish it to receive the e-mail.
5. Compose your message.
6. When people are replying they will only reply to you. They do not see the other ones.

BODY BROWSING

We demonstrated an amazing interactive website that you can view incredible details about the human anatomy... Go to

www.healthline.com/human-body-maps for a website that is intuitively easy to navigate! In addition to peeling back layers of skin, muscles, and organs for 3-D viewing, the website allows you to focus in on 27 major components such as heart, knees, spine, etc. You have the option to choose the gender of the body you explore by clicking Female or Male. In addition to visual 3-D stimuli and image rotation, many links are provided to relevant articles and videos on nutrition and health related topics about those components.

There were 10 attendees at the October 12 Basics and Beyond SIG held at the Santa Monica College Bundy campus. ♦

(DAYTIME SIG REPORT)

(Continued from Page 4)

occasionally empty the Recycle Bin. Ccleaner runs all the time, but only for the current user.

The meeting concluded with suggestions about printing photos from e-mails. Too long for a detailed explanation, so (if you are interested) come to the next meeting!

Bring your friends (who don't have to be members), as well as interesting information, problems, and questions to the next Daytime SIG meeting at Felicia Mahood Senior Center for help from our guru and the education of the rest of us. It is usually on the fourth Tuesday of the month. Please check the User Friendly calendar and your e-mail ♦



PASSWORD GENERATION HINT

By **Jerry Goldstein**, Member,
The PC Users Group of Connecticut
The Program, August 2015
<http://www.tpcug-ct.org/>
Adrabinowitz (at) att.net

Thanks to the lack of safety concern of those holding our passwords, we are often notified of user information and password theft occurring by those we provide our information to. Banks, stores, and other major corporations announce data thefts and loss regularly. As a result we need to be constantly vigilant and update our passwords regularly.

Remembering passwords is difficult enough without having to change them at least twice a year. Password manager programs are great but even they can fail and then you can lose all your passwords.

A new password theme has been worked out that helps you to remember your ever changing password scheme. The method uses a consistent password coupled with the name of the site you want to open. Create a base password like: Qstn&16^, and combine it with the website you are visiting to create a unique password for that site. So if you go to the TPCUG Yahoo Forum site you would use, for example, Qstn&16^tpcg. This combines the usage of leaving out vowels in a word to more easily remember the password, while making the password harder to break, using numbers and characters, one capital letter, and using at least an eight-part letter/character basic password for better protection. You use the same basic Qstn&16^ with all your sites and just add in the website's name without vowels. You now have a single password to remember that can be used everywhere.

Since the likelihood of one of the sites where you use that password is going to be hacked this year, you want to take one extra step to avoid having to revise all your passwords every time a hack occurs. Value your sites according to Low, Medium, and High security needs. For low value sites, like the shoe store or grocery store you add LV to your password; that would be: Qstn&16^LV as your base password. For medium value sites add MV and for high value sites, like banks and credit cards, add HV.

For high value sites, it is recommended you also use secondary authentication, such as having to answer a question after your user name and password are approved. Remember not to use your correct information on your authentication answers. Your correct information is too easily available on the internet to use as an authentication. Dates of birth, schools you attended, and family and pet first and maiden names are readily found on many people's Facebook profiles and postings. Use something different that you can easily remember instead.

Protecting yourself is never going to be as easy as locking your doors and windows any more. Banks lose your data regularly as laptops filled with information are left behind by bank employees when they stop off for their morning coffee. Thousands of hackers work feverishly to break your passwords and steal your identity. The methods offered here are just methods to help you protect yourself. Doing due diligence in the battle against identity theft is an ever on-going battle. Stay alert and you may get lucky and not hacked, for a while. ♦

LIBREOFFICE PORTABLE

By **Bill Sheff**, Lehigh Valley Computer Group,
Pennsylvania, The LVCG Journal, April 2015
www.lvvg.org
nsheff (at) aol.com

Many of us have taken advantage of the free LibreOffice Suite. It is a suite that contains a word processor, spreadsheet, presentation tool, drawing package and database. Now you can get the LibreOffice Suite as a Portable program that will fit on a flash drive. It is packaged in PortableApps.com format so it can work with the PortableApps.com platform and its automatic updater and app store, which means it can work with other portable menus. But it can also work by itself from a USB, cloud or local drive. This is a full-featured portable version of LibreOffice which includes all the programs I mentioned above. This means you can put a thumb drive in your pocket and plug it into your tablet while traveling on a bus or plane. Like the big version this is also open source and completely free.

Find it and other information at
<http://libreofficeportable.org>. ♦

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gene Jacobs
Data Base Manager, LACS

New Members (2)

Shelby Croft
Beverly (Mary) Fedel

Renewals (14)

Newton Bernstein	Bob Mercer *
Felix Frolov	David Naistat
Vera Frolov	Michael Napoli
Bobbi Gold	Ronald Rose
Harold Igdaloff	Gloria Schack
Jim Louie	Julia Sumpton
Carmen Martinez	George Wolkon *

* Contributor



PODCASTS

To listen to the podcasts of our general meetings, go to <http://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/>. Click on the session you wish to hear.

LACS IS ON TWITTER AND FACEBOOK

On **Twitter**, follow us at:
https://twitter.com/LA_CompSoc

To see the LACS **Facebook** page, go to <https://www.facebook.com/Los-Angeles-Computer-Society-1646725522226616/> or log into your Facebook account. In the search box on top type in "Los Angeles Computer Society."

YOUTUBE SPACE L.A. HAPPY HOUR

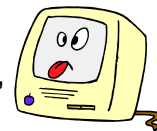
12422 W. BLUFF CREEK DR.

L.A., 90094, Near Centinela and Jefferson

Most months YouTube puts on a fabulous Happy Hour or other events with food, wine, and beer, entertainment and demonstrations. Everything is free, but you must register ahead at <https://www.youtube.com/yt/space/events-la.html>. It is usually in the third week of the month from 6:00 - 8:00 PM. After the first of the month check at the URL above for the exact date and event, and to register. Parking is validated. Their events are good for networking.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

Jim McKnight has an open offer to all LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or up-grade members' PC's for free.



There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

Non-members can wisely invest in a one- year LACS membership (\$40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too.

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

November 10: Common Core Standards

December 8: Holiday Party

January 12: Computer Technology for Understanding our Health

February 9: Population Growth and Climate Change

Note: This schedule is subject to change. Check your e-mail and U.F. for updates.

GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULE

By **Sylvia Q. Davis**

November 10: E through I

December 8: Holiday Potluck Party

January 12: J through N

If you are unable to come on your assigned date, please trade with someone.


Bring finger-food treats such as fresh fruit, veggies, nuts, cookies, brownies, cold drinks and the like. LACS provides hot drinks.

See your e-mail for more suggestions and updates.

Please pick up your remainders and serving pieces at the end of the meeting.



NOVEMBER 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Set Clocks Back	2 Board Meeting 7:00 PM	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Basics & Beyond SIG 7:00	10 General Meeting 7:00 PM	11  Veterans Day	12	13	14
15	16 Social Media SIG 7:00 PM	17	18	19	20	21
22	23 Digital Photo SIG 7:00 PM	24 Daytime SIG 1:00 PM	25	26 	27	28
29	30					

This Calendar may change.

Check your e-mail or with the SIG leader before attending a meeting.

The General Meeting is at Fellowship Hall.

The SIGs meet at the Santa Monica College Bundy Campus, room 415, unless otherwise noted.

The Board may meet at Maurice's home or at the college. The Board meeting has been changed to the first Monday. Members in good standing are welcome to attend.

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS (SIGs)

SIG meetings are lead by and for LACS members. Visitors are welcome to attend.

To inquire about a SIG, check your e-mail or call the contact person in advance.

Basics & Beyond SIG	Kim Stocksdales	310-720-0603	2nd Mon. 7 PM SMC, Bundy Campus
Daytime Sig	Jim McKnight	310-823-7829	4th Tues. 1 PM, Felicia Mahood Ctr.
Digital Photo SIG	Nancy Cattell	310-452-2130	
"	Elliot Silverstein	310-670-1544	4th Mon. 7 PM, SMC, Bundy Campus
Social Media SIG	Stanley Johnson	424-216-6984	3rd Mon. 7 PM, SMC, Bundy Campus

ADDRESSES

Dinah's Family Restaurant, 6521 Sepulveda Blvd., LA 90045 (on Sepulveda, just S. of Centinela)

Felicia Mahood Senior Center, 11338 Santa Monica Blvd., West LA 90025 (at Corinth)

Fellowship Hall, 8065 Emerson Ave., Westchester 90045

Santa Monica College Bundy Campus, 3171 S. Bundy Drive, LA 90066 (west on College Dr., one block South of Airport Avenue, 2 blocks North of Rose) Our room number may change each semester. Look for it on a sign opposite the elevator on the first floor. We have room **415** through December 28, 2015.

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. Or you may use a Helper's e-mail address, found in your LACS Roster. 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 Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net or call Leah Clark at 310-677-2792. More Quick Consultants are always needed. You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at an

Adobe Creative Suite: PDF,
InDesign, PhotoShop, etc. - 17
America Online - 5
Android Smartphones - 5
Apple Devices - 15
Anti Malware - 12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8, 14
Digital Photography - 8, 14
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4
Genealogy - 5, 7
Hardware - 12

iPhone, iPad, iPod - 15
Linux - 11
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12
Mozilla Firefox, Thunderbird - 12
MS Excel - 3, 15
MS Word - 3, 4, 10
MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17
MS Outlook Express - 15
MS PowerPoint - 15
MS Publisher - 2, 7, 9
Open Office - 16

Picasa - 14
Quicken - 3, 5, 9
QuickBooks - 9
Thunderbird - 12
Visual Basic - 13
Websites - 13
Win XP-Vista - 12, 16
Windows 7 - 5, 12
WordPerfect - 5
Yahoo - 9

No.	Name	Preferred Phone	From	To
2	Mercer, Bob	310-837-5648	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
3	Wilder, Joan	310-472-8445	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
4	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	5:00 PM	10:00 PM
6	Springer, Karl	424-646-3410	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
7	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Silverstein, Elliott	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
9	Kamerman, Cora	424-442-9592	Noon	8:00 PM
10	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
11	Hughes, Bill	424-259-1818	Any	Any
12	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
13	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
14	Schneir, Jerry	310-451-4140	9:00 AM	10:00 PM
15	Van Berkomp, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
16	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
17	Rozek, E. J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM

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e-mail	Contact Us (at) lacspc.org	Change of Address	changes (at) lacspc.org

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If the message is for another board member, they will forward it to the correct person.

To contact other officers, directors, leaders or members directly, members may use our roster for phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

WINDOWS 8.1 CORNER

By **Rosita Herrick**, Yahoo Forum Moderator,
Sarasota Technology User Group, FL

<http://thestug.org>

Rosita (at) thestug.org

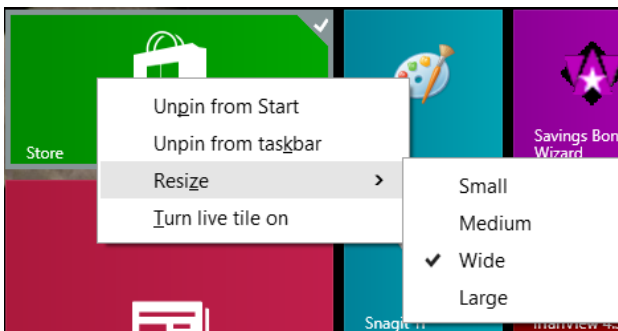
Since this October it will be 3 years since Windows 8 was made available to the public, I thought I would repeat some of the basics.

THE START SCREEN

The screen display of colorful squares that are called tiles, is fully customizable.

Tiles can be moved around and organized to fit the user's working habits. Just click (or touch if you have a touch screen) a tile and drag it to a new location.

Tiles come in 4 sizes and can be resized by right clicking on the tile. The strip below will pop up at the bottom of the screen:



As you can see above, in addition to resizing, a tile can be pinned or unpinned from Start, pinned or unpinned to the task bar or the live tile option can be turned on or off.

This change was implemented with the Windows 8.1 update.

Live tiles are tiles that, if you are connected to the Internet, will display current data like the Weather, sports, news, etc. Those apps come distributed with your Windows 8.1 Software.

Additional Apps can be installed from the Microsoft Store. You need a Microsoft ID to download from the store.

THE DESKTOP

The Desktop tile is your Windows 7 code except for the old Start button that gave you access to the various options. Instead, the Windows 8 icon, if clicked on, will get you back to the Start Screen. The File Explorer and Internet Explorer Icons are still on the task bar. Programs that are installed the traditional way can

still be pinned to the task bar, or an icon can be created on the Desktop to link to the program.

There are free downloadable modifications that can restore the old Start Button. One that I find quite nice is the Classic Shell that can be downloaded from: <http://classicshell.net/>.

To customize the Desktop right click on any empty place.

FILE EXPLORER

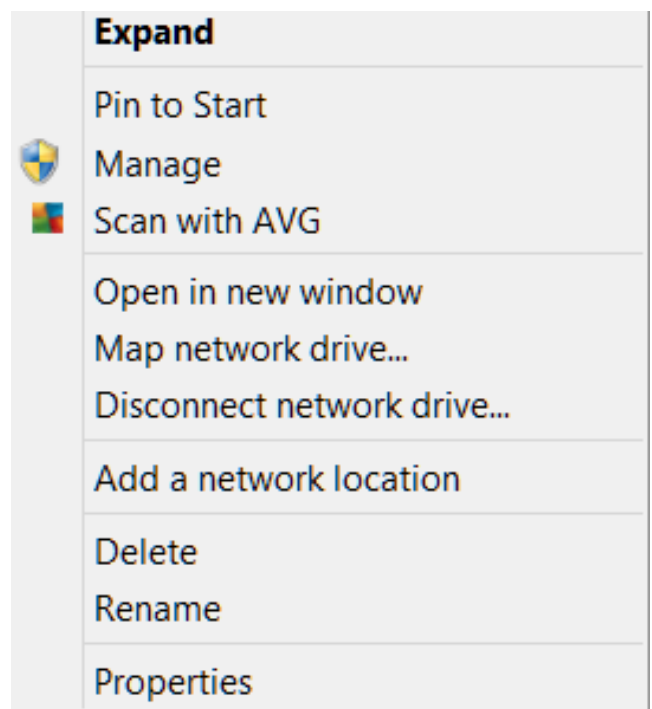


The File Explorer maps the contents on your hard drive. Clicking on it will display your folders, your hard drive(s), CD, etc. (See the screen shot on the top of the next page)

Clicking on any of the listed items will display further details about content.

In addition, a right click on any item will display more information about that specific item.

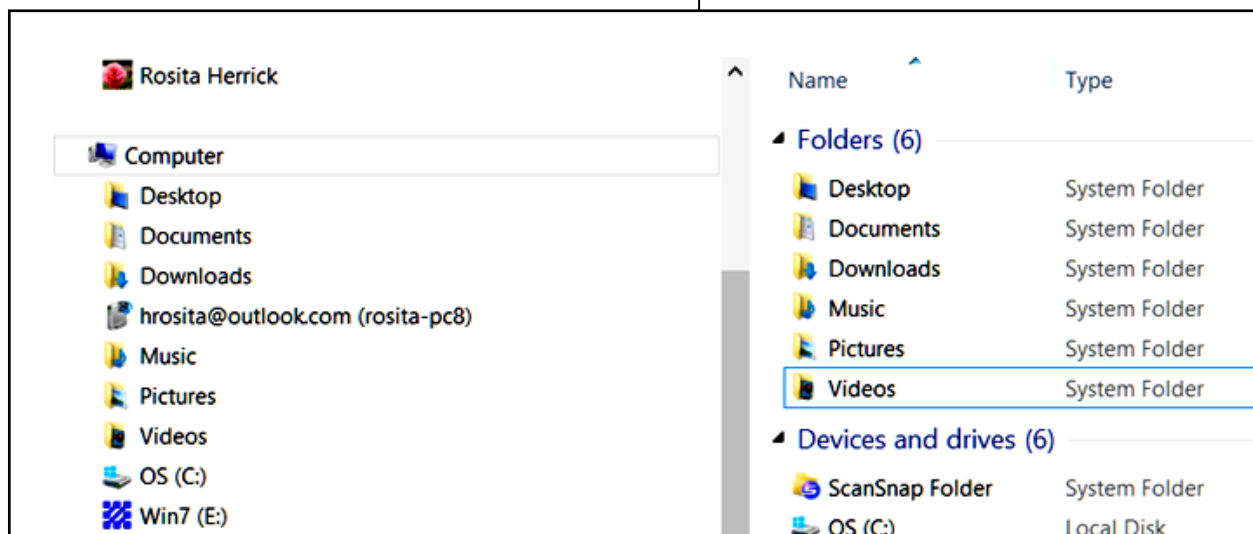
For example, right clicking on **Computer** will show the window below.



I hope this article will help you navigate around Windows 8.1 easier.

(Continued on Page 13)

(Windows 8.1 Corner)
(Continued from page 12)

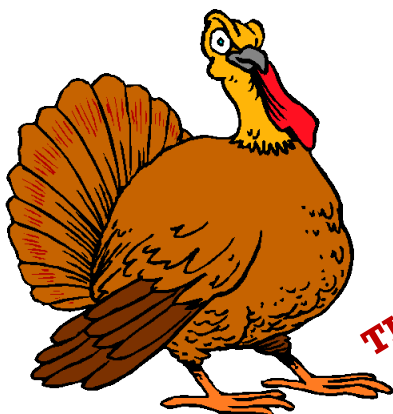


To take advantage of the available keyboard shortcuts, I am listing the ones that I use most.

This keyboard key next to the left Ctrl key is called the Windows Key.



- Win + C Displays the Charms on the right side of the screen
- Win + D Displays the Desktop
- Win + X Displays a comprehensive list of links to windows options
- Win + S Displays the Search box
- Win + E Opens Windows Explorer
- Win + W Opens the Settings search bar. ♦



**HAPPY
THANKSGIVING**

NEW "PROJECT FI" WIRELESS PHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE FROM GOOGLE

By **Ira Wilsker**

Golden Triangle PC Club

www.gtppc.org

iwilsker(at)sbcglobal.net

One of the annoyances of modern telecommunications technology is its penchant for having inadequate coverage or dead spots in areas other than the major metropolitan areas. When traveling with family and friends, who in aggregate, have smart phones and other devices from T-Mobile, AT&T, Verizon, and Sprint, the one constancy is that we all do not have the same level and degree of broadband wireless coverage at any given time. For example, on a recent trip through the Piney Woods to a final destination in northern Louisiana, we had two of the above carriers represented in the car. While both services each had some data connectivity during most of the trip, at different locations only one or the other had data connectivity, with several areas of dead spots for both.

The data connection results from the Louisiana trip somewhat matched the varying degree of connectivity we had with multiple carriers on an earlier trip through central and southern Mississippi by way of southern Louisiana. It has become obvious to us that there are

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(NEW "PROJECT FI" WIRELESS PHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE FROM GOOGLE)

(Continued from page 13)

distinct qualitative gaps and coverage dead spots in each of the individual carriers' coverage, often in contradiction to those carriers online coverage maps.

Google, well known as an innovative technology organization, is now making available in much of the country a "new" wireless phone service that may potentially reduce the number of dead spots and weak signal strength areas. Google's new "Project Fi", originally announced earlier this year, is now starting to offer more

"invitations" to sign up for its service which currently combines the 4G LTE networks of T-Mobile and Sprint, along with over a million high quality Wi-Fi hotspots, thus greatly improving cellular coverage, as the combination of coverage from multiple carriers is synergistic. The Google Project Fi system automatically and seamlessly connects to, and switches between, whatever mode of connection and carrier provides the strongest and fastest connection at that instant. If a participating 4G LTE network is unavailable at any particular location, Project Fi will then automatically attempt to seamlessly connect the user to the next fastest available network which may provide service at 3G or 2G speeds. According to Google, "Through new technology developed with our partners, Project Fi puts you on the best available network between Wi-Fi and two 4G LTE networks. This means you get access to more cell towers and 4G LTE in more places."

Project Fi connected smart devices can also place and receive calls and text messages, as well as access data, when connected to any of the more than one million participating Wi-Fi hotspots. Google has identified over a million Wi-Fi hotspots that it has determined to be fast and reliable, with Project Fi connected phones utilizing these hotspots whenever possible in order to minimize any wireless data charges, as there is no charge for data or other usage when connected to Wi-Fi. The integrated communications hardware built into Project Fi compatible phones and smart devices will



seamlessly "hand off" calls and data connections between cellular providers and Wi-Fi hotspots, depending on location, speed, and signal strength. In order to properly secure the Wi-Fi connection when utilized, Project Fi and its compatible hardware devices automatically encrypt all of the user's data while on a hotspot, thus creating a secure connection generally safe from eavesdroppers and hackers. This Wi-Fi connection is especially secure, because in the words of Google, "When Project Fi automatically connects you to an open Wi-Fi network, we help protect your data by sending it through a secure connection, known as a Virtual Private Network (VPN). This secure connection protects your data from being looked at by other users on the open Wi-Fi network."

For those who may own multiple compatible devices (a selling point not lost on Google), any device that supports the Google Hangouts app can also be used to send and receive calls, text messages, and video text messages over the Project Fi connected device. Currently, most Android devices (tablets and smart phones), iPhones, iPads, iPod Touch, Mac powered computers, Windows computers, and Chromebooks can utilize their own native versions of the Google Hangouts app to access the system. Users of the Gmail e-mail service can also send and receive texts from a widget in Gmail when using a computer. Project Fi will automatically synch the appropriate message content between all connected devices. All domestic texts and calls placed from any connected device through Project Fi are free, but there may be a nominal charge for international calls and texts.

For those interested in signing up for service with Google's Project Fi, an invitation can be requested through the link on any of the Project Fi websites, or directly from <https://fi.google.com>. Prior to sending an invitation to the user, Project Fi checks for local availability at the user's zip code, and is currently sending out only a limited number of invitations as the network is being developed and expanded. I had actually applied for a Project Fi invitation about 6 weeks ago, and just received my invitation a few days ago.

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(NEW "PROJECT FI" WIRELESS PHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE FROM GOOGLE)*(Continued from Page 14)*

While I would really like to try the service, I do not (yet) have a compatible smart phone, as the only readily available primary devices are a few of the Nexus models, notably the recent models manufactured for Nexus by Motorola (some of the Nexus 5 and 6 models), and the newly released Nexus models manufactured by Huawei and LG. While most of the Nexus branded phones sold directly by Google are unlocked and will work on many of the major domestic and international carriers, only a few of the newer models will work on the Project Fi system. Specifically, Project Fi currently requires a Nexus 6, Nexus 6P, or a Nexus 5X, which are available directly from Google (store.google.com/category/phones) in the \$350 to \$650 range (no contract), but are also available from several online third party sellers at deeply discounted prices.

Personally, I am strongly considering purchasing one of the Project Fi compatible, Motorola manufactured Nexus 6 phones with 32 GB of internal memory for slightly less than \$300, or the similar model with 64 GB of internal memory for under \$350. While these phones are fully compatible with my current cellular provider by simply inserting my current SIM card into the phone, I would more likely use the new Nexus phone with the Project Fi provided SIM card which will allow access to what Google calls its "Network of Networks." At present, these are the only phones supported by Project Fi, while it is likely that others manufacturers will be offering Project Fi compatible phones in the future.

While all of the recent Nexus phones are running the latest version of Android, and are typically the first to receive any Android updates and upgrades, the radio hardware incorporated in these Project Fi phones is what makes them different than their competitors, regardless of operating system. These particular models of Nexus phones are unique in that they utilize a cellular radio that can contact the towers of several different carriers, utilizing several different cellular protocols; Google describes this in simple terms, " ... imagine if your car radio only supported AM or FM radio instead of both!"

Some of the early reviews of the Project Fi wireless service have claimed that it is generally among the lowest cost providers of unlimited text and talk phone service, with users only paying for the cellular high speed data that they actually use, recognizing that any data access over Wi-Fi networks is always free of charge. Google offers Project Fi with what it calls its "One Simple Plan" with no contract, which for \$20 per month (plus the inevitable taxes) includes, " ... unlimited domestic talk and text, unlimited international texts, Wi-Fi tethering to use your phone as a hotspot, and access cellular coverage in 120+ countries."

Cellular data carries an additional "budgeted" fee of \$10 per GB per month for data over a cellular network (Wi-Fi data is always free), but the user only pays for the cellular data actually used; any data overage collected in any month is automatically credited the next month. When opening a Project Fi account, the user sets a cellular data budget, which at \$10 per GB, is billed on a monthly basis. Any overage is promptly credited, as explained by Google, "If your data usage at the end of the month is less than your data budget, you'll get a credit for approximately one cent per MB. For example, if your data budget is 2GB and you use 1.265GB, you'll get a \$7.35 credit. ... if your data budget is 3GB and you use 2.2GB, you'll get \$8 (for 800MB of unused data) to use next month to lower your bill." In my opinion, this is a very fair system of determining cellular data charges, making it often more economical than the fees charged by other carriers, as many of their users end up paying for data that they never use; my current data plan with another major carrier includes 10GB of data which I pay for every month whether I use it all or not, but in reality I only use a tiny portion of that data most months. Project Fi could be a significant money saver for me.

At present, the \$20 per month no-contract, unlimited talk and text plan with the \$10 per GB cellular data charge is the only plan available; there is not yet a "family plan" available, although several published pundits have indicated that Google may be considering such a plan. Users who have an existing plan with another carrier can easily port (transfer) their

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(NEW "PROJECT FI" WIRELESS PHONE SERVICE AVAILABLE FROM GOOGLE)

(Continued from Page 15)

current phone number to a phone on Project Fi. Likewise, users who already have a Google Phone account (other than Project Fi) can have their Google Phone number work on their Project Fi phone. If a user has one of the Nexus branded Project Fi compatible phones, and desires to change to a different carrier, it may only be necessary to swap the Project Fi SIM card with a SIM card provided by the new carrier (some carriers do not use SIM cards). Since there is no contract with Project Fi, there are no termination or cancellation fees connected with the account.

My current cellular contract has expired, and I had purchased my current phone outright from a major online seller without any subsidy or contract, so I am free to change carriers if I wish. A new Nexus phone compatible with Project Fi, as well as the Project Fi service are available at very competitive, even potentially money saving, price points. The holidays are approaching. Maybe a new phone with Project Fi might mysteriously show up at my house. ♦

WHAT IS AN EXPLOIT KIT?

By **Dave Palmer**

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Bits of Blue, June 2015 www.tpcug.org
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You may have heard the term **exploit kit**. Maybe not. The term has become more prominent over the last decade as Internet crime has become more sophisticated. A few definitions will be helpful in explaining what an exploit kit is and how it's used.

A **vulnerability** is a weakness in a system that can be directly used by a hacker to gain access to a browser, a router, a system or a network. Vulnerabilities can result from mistakes in software, weak passwords or infected software. The vulnerabilities mentioned here are the software variety and require updates, patches, or fixes in order to prevent compromise by hackers or malware.

A **zero-day vulnerability** is a newly discovered vulnerability. It is completely unknown to

the security community. It has not been recognized, analyzed or patched. Signature-based anti-virus software will not recognize it and cannot defend against it.

To take advantage of a specific vulnerability, hackers create software, called an **exploit**, specifically designed to take advantage of it.

An **exploit kit** is a malicious software toolkit that automates the exploitation of browser and computer vulnerabilities for the purpose of spreading malware. I'm beginning to believe that 'toolkit' is too soft a term. 'Attack platform' is more accurate. The goal of an exploit kit is to automate the infection of computers or other systems.

Exploit Kit Basics

The earliest exploit kit was developed in Russia and was first seen in mid-2006. It was called WebAttacker, and it sold for \$20 US and included tech support. Researchers and security analysts are currently tracking over 70 exploit kits around the world. Together they take advantage of more than 100 different vulnerabilities. While they can, and sometimes do, take advantage of zero-day vulnerabilities, the vast majority of the time they attack vulnerabilities that have already been patched. Those computer users who are slow to patch their systems are therefore at highest risk.

Advantages of Exploit Kits

- Easy to use - Exploit kits are designed from the beginning to be easy to use. Their target market includes criminals with only low-level tech skills. They also provide a console or dashboard to help attackers track the performance of the infection campaign and provide information about the victims system. Did I mention tech support is included?
- Flexible - Most exploit kits probe for multiple vulnerabilities. Their initial payload can include multiple exploits, or they may download exploits to match the victim's vulnerabilities. Customers can often customize specific features to fit their business model such as ransomware, bank heists, botnet building, etc.
- Evasive - Some exploit kits can probe for anti-virus programs and virtual machines. If found, these exploit kits may stop them-

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(What is an Exploit Kit?)

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selves from running to avoid being found and analyzed. Some exploit kits don't write their payload to disk but run directly in the memory instead to prevent detection by anti-virus programs. They are called "fileless infections." Exploit kits also use a number of other evasive techniques.

- Continuously updated – Subscribers are continuously updated with the latest exploits against such software as Java, Adobe Flash Player, Adobe Reader, Microsoft Data Access Components (MDAC), and other programs and browser plug-ins.
- Good Communications – Once an exploit kit is discovered and analyzed, authorities and security firms can usually block communication URLs (web addresses) within 24-48 hours. To counter this, authors of some exploit kits provide fresh communication URLs every hour plus an automated process to update the URL to stay one step ahead.

How an Exploit Attack Works

The hacker builds one or more websites that contain a **landing page** and adds an exploit kit. To drive traffic to the exploit kit, the hacker has many options:

- E-mail spam - Spam campaigns using content such as warnings from the IRS, banks, and even police seem to work well. Fake alerts from legitimate companies that contain poisoned links are also popular. Unlike traditional phishing spam, the victim of these spam campaigns isn't taken to a look-alike site and asked for credentials. Instead they are directed towards a landing page that hosts an exploit kit.
- Purchased traffic – Underground markets have **traffic providers** where traffic can be bought and sold.
- Compromised websites – When hackers compromise a website it's trivial to add a redirect. To slow down security analysts and authorities hackers typically add multiple redirects that change frequently.
- Malvertising – Malicious advertising is a

relatively new and rapidly growing tool hackers have added to their arsenal. Hackers create fake companies and legitimate looking ads on existing online advertising systems to redirect victims toward exploit kits.

- Just prior to connecting to the exploit kit, potential victims are screened by automated traffic direction systems (TDS). Hackers can filter out unwanted IP addresses (like security companies) or target specific countries or companies.

Once a potential victim encounters the poisoned landing page, the kit quickly (in fractions of a second) analyzes the browser and its components to see what's out of date. If there is a usable vulnerability, the correct exploit is loaded and executed. The hacker is then notified which exploit was used as well as the victim's country, operating system, browser and which piece of software on the victim's computer was exploited.

As a result, and without your knowledge, the hacker now owns your computer. Additional malware will be added to prepare it to become a vehicle for further crime. Just as smart street criminals don't use their own vehicles for street crimes, cybercriminals don't use their own computers for Internet crime. They will either use it to commit crimes or rent it out to other criminals as part of a botnet.

Exploit kits facilitate the addition of most other types of malware such as backdoors, droppers, banking Trojans, spyware, ransomware, botnet malware, scareware, keyloggers, rootkits, viruses, worms, adware, remote access tools, and ad fraud malware.

Earlier I mentioned that exploit kits could and probably should be considered attack platforms. A comparison could be made between exploit kits and unmanned military drones. Both carry sensors. Both carry weapons. Both can be programmed to operate with little or no human oversight. Both can be assigned a variety of missions.

Exploit kits are commercial products developed by teams of specialists. A recent example is the **Blackhole** exploit kit developed by Dmitry Fedotov (aka Paunch) and his team.

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(What is an Exploit Kit?)

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Blackhole was one of the most notorious exploit kits of the last decade. Popular and quite profitable, it was first offered in 2010 and lasted through the arrest of the Paunch and 12 others in late 2013.

The Blackhole product itself and the service and management of the business was quite sophisticated and business-savvy. The scripts that made the software work were protected by a commercial coder to prevent other criminals from lifting & reusing the code. Blackhole was reported to have had thousands of customers and making \$50,000 a month. Paunch was the first to use a 'rental' business model for exploit kits. Other licensing agreements were also available, all of which included tech support.

How to Protect Yourself

The standard excellent advice you've heard dozens of times before still applies. Run in Standard User Mode, NOT Administrative Mode. Stay patched & updated. Don't click on links in e-mail. And I'll add one item not typically mentioned: Configure your browser(s) to deny redirects without permission.

More Information

<http://krebsonsecurity.com/2013/12/who-is-paunch/>

<http://trendmicro.com/cloud-content/us/pdfs/security-intelligence/white-papers/wp-evolution-of-exploit-kits.pdf>

<https://blog.malwarebytes.org/intelligence/2013/02/>

<http://www.securityweek.com/black-hole-exploit-business-savvy-cyber-gang-driving-massive-blue-fraud> ♦

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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. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

The Editor of *User Friendly* will accept contributions of any suitable length from members.

Articles should be sent to

Leahjc (at)sbcglobal.net as plain text in an e-mail message or as a Word document. The deadline for submitting articles is the **20th of the month.**

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

- Technology is dominated by those who manage what they do not understand.
- Hardware, *n.*: The parts of a computer system that can be kicked.
- PICNIC - Problem In Chair, Not In Computer (AKA: There's a screw loose somewhere between the computer and the chair)
- Any technology distinguishable from magic is insufficiently advanced.
- Machines don't save you from *doing* more labor, they just save your employers from *paying* for more labor.
- A computer lets you make more mistakes faster than any other invention, with the possible exceptions of handguns and Tequila. -- Mitch Ratcliffe
- At the source of every error which is blamed on the computer you will find at least two human errors, including the error of blaming it on the computer.

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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.

