

User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group

IN THIS ISSUE

Zoom Meeting Instructions	
From Your President / Editor	2
General Meeting Report	3
Using Google Lens To Identify Items in a Photo	4
How Has AI Changed Your Life?	4
Word: How Many Spaces Between Sentences?	5
Windows Free Snip and Sketch Tool	7
LACS Notices	8
LACS Calendar	9
Members Helping Members	10
Officers, Directors & Leaders	11
My Experience With a Subscriber VPN, Part 2	12
Office Tips and Tricks	16
Interesting Internet Finds	17
Special Offers	18
Laughing Out Loud	18
Membership Information	19
Map and Directions	20



**LACS IS A MEMBER OF
APCUG**

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



An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

APRIL 14 GENERAL MEETING

TIME: 7:30 – 9 PM

This, and probably additional LACS meetings, will be held remotely to protect everyone from COVID-19. This system will be easy for you if you have a working computer and a good internet connection and follow the instructions.

See page 2 of this issue for instructions for joining the Zoom meeting. Please watch your email for updated information.

Topics: **Remote Meetings and How to Communicate and Purchase Goods and Services Via the Internet**

Speaker: **Christian Knudsen, Independent I.T. Consultant**



Learning how to use the internet in new ways is especially useful now since the COVID - 19 pandemic is forcing us to change our habits and avoid unnecessary personal contacts with other people. Many meetings or classes we attended are now held on line, using Zoom or other software. Technical support is often done online. These programs are safe and effective and often free or inexpensive. They are easy to attend – just follow the directions.

Meet Your Presenter

Christian Knudsen grew up in Pacific Palisades, CA. By his mid-teens, he got a job at a local computer educational center where taught other kids and adults basic computer skills. He also started doing “Personal IT” providing technical support and educational services in people’s homes. In his 20s, he used his computer skills working in motion graphics and video editing. In his 30s, he started his own company, DGT Creative, that specializes in IT, post production, social media management, marketing, and web development, all of which he continues to this day. Recently, Christian has been subcontracted to help out with another IT expert’s A-list celebrity clientele. He is now living, working, and creating art out of his home in Los Angeles, keeping busy helping his clients with their technological needs.

ZOOM MEETING INSTRUCTIONS

From Your President / Editor

With the kind help of Judy Taylour of APCUG, we are planning to conduct our April 14 general meeting by Zoom. It is very simple to join the meeting, and we will all be able to stay safely at home and attend the meetings remotely. This will be a new experience and a learning opportunity for many of us. If you can't drive at night, come to this meeting. We will keep you updated. If you have questions, ask Leah Clark and she will find the answers.

STEP 1:

When it is convenient, go to www.zoom.us/download and download the small app for the device you will be using. The first selection is for computers (Windows or Mac).

STEP 2:

Before the meeting, go to www.zoom.us/test and test our speakers and mic.

Click on Join

Join Meeting Test

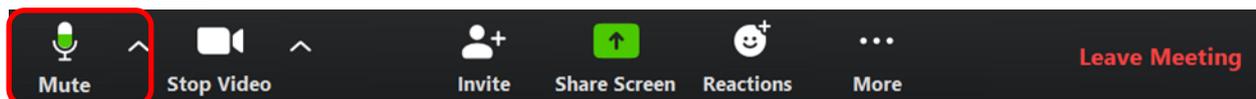
Test your internet connection by joining a test meeting.

Join

If you are unable to join the meeting, visit [Zoom Support Center](#) for useful information.

Click on Join with Video

Join with Video



Click on Mute and you will see a red diagonal line across your mic. No one can hear you, Click on it again, or press the spacebar and people will hear you talk. Click on the up arrow to troubleshoot your microphone and speaker. Click on Stop Video, there will be a red diagonal line across the camera and no one can see you, just your name.

Spring, Easter, and Passover

This year we must celebrate the season of New Life while having to keep socially distant. Little girls won't be able to go to church wearing pretty new Easter dresses, there will be no large groups hunting for Easter eggs, and people won't be able to gather for extended family Seder meals.

Some celebrations will be able to be held remotely, but that's not the same as personal contact. But we will come back stronger than ever.

Select a Microphone

- ✓ Microphone (Realtek High Definition Audio)
Same as System

Select a Speaker

- ✓ Speaker/Headphone (Realtek High Definition Audio)
Same as System

Test Speaker & Microphone...

Switch to Phone Audio...

Leave Computer Audio

Audio Settings...

If you are on our PC@LACS.groups.IO email list, before the meeting, you will receive an email invitation to join the meeting. If you don't receive the invitation by **April 9**, contact Leah at leahjc@sbcglobal.net. The invitation will have the meeting date and time, the Zoom URL and a meeting ID. Click on the *Join the Meeting* URL, which includes the meeting ID. Click on **Join a Meeting**. Fill in the required info, and you have joined the meeting.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

March 10, 2020

By Leah Clark, LACS Editor and President

Financial Software: TurboTax and Quicken

Speaker: **Stephanie Nordlinger**
LACS Vice President

Stephanie gave us an overview of what TurboTax and Quicken have to offer. She started with TurboTax because we're getting close to the April 15 tax deadline.

TurboTax

There are four versions of TurboTax: Basic,



Deluxe, Premier,

and Home and Business. TurboTax has frequent updates to keep up-to-date on the latest tax laws. It guides you step-by-step and double checks as you go. If you collect your data first, it will be much easier. All versions can import data from last year's TurboTax and other popular tax software brands. W-2s, 1099s, Social Security statements, investment and mortgage information, as well as data from Quicken and Quickbooks, can be imported or downloaded from the original companies. Check Quicken reports for errors or omissions, and clean up the data before using it for your tax returns. Have copies of the statements for each of your accounts, and any other emails, letters, or documents that may have pertinent data.

After starting TurboTax, answer it's questions. Mark items as "estimated" if you're not sure. The program includes federal form 4868 if you need to have an extension of time to file. There are lots of sources of HELP.

Finish the federal return, then do your state return. If you need to file Estimated Tax returns, prepare them. TurboTax includes electronic filing, but you may also mail your returns. Plan how you are going to pay your taxes.

Quicken

Quicken

Seventeen million people use Quicken, and it has been in use for over 30 years. Stephanie has used it since 1988. You can install it from a download or a CD. Allow it to update automatically.

Data cannot be transferred from Quicken to Quickbooks or vice versa. Choose the one you want by comparing them. The free Quicken mobile app is available for iPad or Android tablets. Stephanie does not recommend putting financial data on a cell phone.

There are four versions of Quicken.

- Starter – See all your accounts in one place, create a budget, manage your bills, manage your money across desktop, web, and mobile.
- Deluxe – Everything in Starter, create a customized budget, manage and track your debt, create savings goals.
- Premier – Everything in Deluxe, Free online payment, priority access to customer support, simplify taxes and investments.
- Home and Business – Everything in Premier, separate business and home expenses, email custom invoices with payment links, track business tax deductions and profit and loss.

Subscriptions are for one or more years, starting at any time. It's easy to add accounts and to enter data. Entries are made in a checkbook format. Quicken provides various categories, but you can easily add others. It can remind you when bills are due. You can manage your investments and get daily downloaded updates of the closing prices of your stocks and mutual funds. Quicken has some tax-planning features. Quicken can connect to your bank to download your monthly statements to reconcile

your accounts. You can generate reports of transactions, net worth, tax categories, etc. Reports can be downloaded to Excel, TurboTax, and other software.

You can search for specific transactions like when the roof was replaced or when a magazine subscription is due.

Stephanie offered this helpful hint. When you buy something, include the model or serial number, and any data that may be useful later.

Quicken provides a 30-day money-back guarantee. Data access is guaranteed even if you don't renew; you always have full access to your data. Quicken securely transmits your data with robust encryption. ❖

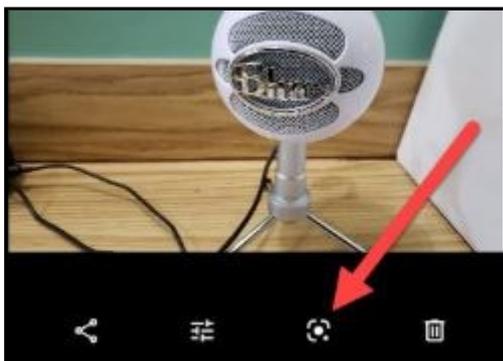
USING GOOGLE LENS TO IDENTIFY ITEMS IN A PHOTO

From Geeks on Tour

Saturday, February 8, 2020

www.geeksontour.com

When you open any photo in Google Photos, you will see a button at the bottom meant to look like a camera lens. That is **Google Lens** and it is amazing. Open any photo, using Google Photos, and tap that button - it will analyze the current photo and tell you all sorts of things! Identify flowers, birds, insects. Translate and copy text, scan QR codes, identify products, and give you links to buy them. And much more. ❖



HOW HAS AI CHANGED YOUR LIFE?

By **Stephen D. Ambrosini**, CLU, ChFC
20/20 Financial Advisers of Cardiff by the Sea
LLCsambrosini (at) 2020fa.com
From *Drive Light*, the Under the Computer Hood User Group newsletter

When I find myself at social events, I like to ask a question to start a conversation with those around me. The question is "Tell me how Artificial Intelligence (AI) has changed your life. What are your experiences.

Then I sit back and listen.

I started asking this question after attending a few seminars and reading books about the topic. Everyone has a story. Recently I asked my dental hygienist that question. She immediately became very tense and anxious. She denied it was affecting her at first, but after a few moments, she proceeded to tell me about a few new devices that will clean your teeth. They're available on Amazon, of course, and are Bluetooth compatible. You charge this dental retainer type device, and then you pop it in your mouth. Fifteen minutes later, your teeth are cleaned. That's one less dental visit.

This week I asked a journeyman electrician how his life is changing. His answer: Homes and offices being built today have less copper wire. It's not needed anymore since everything is wireless. They still have to run some copper to the lights, but nowhere else. That's a considerable saving in new home construction. Also, the power companies are putting in controls that let them dim our lights when needed. So instead of black- or brown-outs, the power company can dim our lights from their location to save power.

From the books and articles I've read, I came across the name, Jim Dator, an author and Professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. One of the Dator Laws is: "Any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous." Think about that for a moment.

Things that we mocked, saw on TV, and laughed at in movies are now modern-day. Star Trek communicators, Dick Tracy watches, “Back to the Future” hoverboards, “Beam me up, Scotty,” it’s here. They seemed ridiculous at the time, yet they are as real as the Apple Watch you’re wearing.

If it’s scary, and it is, it’s because change is hard. It’s rarely accepted or appreciated. We’re all stuck in our ways and want to leave it like that. However, we must accept the change because it’s happening whether we want it or not.

The banks didn’t ask us if we want to withdraw money from a machine and replace the friendly teller. They just did it, and we adjusted. As a result, many of us haven’t been inside a bank for years. This week I needed to refer a friend to a personal banker. I couldn’t; I don’t have one. Those days of walking in, saying hi, asking about the kids and work, are gone. AI has taken that away. And you know, that’s okay. We all have adjusted very well to that change. So, let’s not be afraid of these changes. Let’s instead open up our eyes to see what’s coming. How can we benefit from them? How will it improve my life?

Example: the BMW dealership contacted me recently because my car sent them a message informing them that an oil change is overdue. Now I’ll be bringing the car in for service. That’s a good thing; it’s extending the life of the vehicle. ❖



When I saw this first daffodil in my yard, I knew all will be well.

WORD: HOW MANY SPACES BETWEEN SENTENCES?

How to remove extra spaces in Word

By **Dorothy Fitch**, Editor
GVR Computer Club, AZ
Green Bytes, February 2020
www.ccgvaz.org
dmfitch (at) cox.net

Back in the day, the guideline was to type two spaces between sentences. That is no longer true.

I learned to type in 1987 on an IBM Selectric typewriter - a typewriter, not a computer. We had those, but they had big, *actually floppy* disks and honest to God, no one had any idea what to do with them. My semester of typing remains one of the most valuable classes I ever took in high school. I can still dazzle small children with my ability to make words appear on a screen by just hysterically wiggling my fingers on the keyboard.

But one rule from typing class has definitely expired, and if you’re over 40, no one may have given you the message. Here it is:

Unless you are typing on an actual typewriter, you no longer should put two spaces after a period. Or a question mark. Or an exclamation point. The rule applies to all end punctuation. Just one space. Really. Yes, *really*.

Here’s why: Back when we used typewriters, every character was given the exact same amount of space on the page. That meant the letter *i* was given the same amount of space as the letter *m*, even though it clearly didn’t need it. This is called **monospaced typesetting**, and it’s, well, spacey. We needed that extra space between sentences to make it easier to see the beginning of new sentences.

Word processors and computers and everything that is not a very old typewriter use mostly proportionally spaced fonts, which adjust spacing to the size of the letter.

That's why a proportional font can squeeze 12 letters into the same space where a monospace font can only fit nine:

If you do a little bit of research on this topic, you'll find plenty of articles practically begging you to stop using two spaces. *Slate's* Farhad Manjoo went so far as to say that it is totally, completely, utterly, and inarguably wrong.

But these articles are not reaching everyone. Probably because for many of us who learned to type before computers, it was hammered into our heads over and over and OVER again to use two spaces. We got our papers marked wrong if we didn't. It takes a long time to unlearn that. And until you unlearn it, you'll probably force this funky old rule on your own students. I know I did: I remember sitting in a computer lab in 1998, going through my students' papers, marking all the places where they needed to *add an extra space after the period*. It wasn't until 1999, when I got a copyediting job with the *New England Journal of Medicine* that I learned the "new" rule.

When you know better, you do better. It's time we all join the modern age and spend just a little less time leaning on the space bar.

Back in the days before computers, people were taught to type one space between words and two spaces between sentences. These days, you want just one space between sentences.

Why? Because the extra spaces after any punctuation that ends a sentence disrupt the balance of white space, say typographers, making the sentence harder to read. All the major style guides now prescribe one space between sentences.

The one exception is when you use a monospace font, such as Courier, which is used in this sentence. Then you are allowed (but not required) to use two spaces. This is often done in legal documents and pre-published manuscripts.

How to remove Extra Spaces in Microsoft® Word

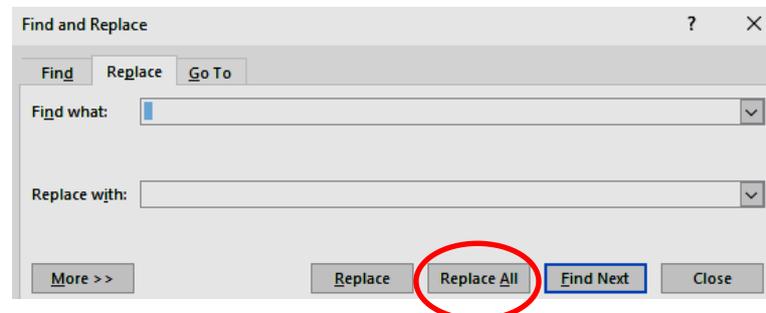
I do proofreading for several organizations, and when I receive an article in Word, the first thing I do is to remove the extra spaces. Sometimes there is more than one space between sentences, and the extra ones need to go away. Sometimes people use spaces instead of tabs to put text where they want it, so I remove those extra spaces and replace them with tabs.

To remove extra spaces, click Replace, at the upper right corner of the main Word screen (in the File tab). You can press Ctrl+H to get there as well. (Ctrl+F gets you the Find box.)



Type two spaces in the 'Find what:' box, and one space in the 'Replace with:' box.

Then click the 'Replace All' button. You may need to do this several times until it doesn't find any more occurrences of two spaces. Word will tell you each time how many replacements it made.



See page 16 for more Office tips by Dorothy Fitch.

WINDOWS FREE SNIP AND SKETCH TOOL

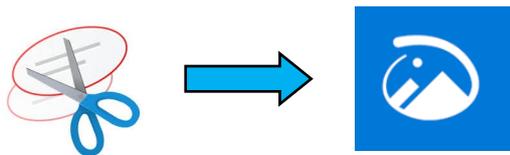
is new and replacing the old.

By **Jim Cerny**, Forums Coordinator
STUG Monitor, December 2019

www.thestug.org

jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

The new Windows **Snip and Sketch** tool was part of the Windows 10 October 2018 update. This tool is intended to REPLACE the old **Snipping Tool** of previous Windows editions. But they (Microsoft) did something to actually help us users this time – they kept the old tool! So you can play and learn the new Snip and Sketch and keep the old Snipping Tool too! Maybe they learned not to force users into using updated or changed apps right away – we need time to adjust and learn, right? Everything you could do in the old Snipping Tool you can do in Snip and Sketch, plus you get a few more tools and options. Thankfully these new additions are easy to see and use, and they can be ignored if you do not want to use them. Microsoft promises more options to come. Be sure to search Google for videos on how to use Windows Snip and Sketch! I am including here only the basic options.



Click on the Windows logo in the lower-left corner of your desktop, and you will find Snip and Sketch in the alphabetical list of apps that appear. It is not inside the Windows Accessories folder of apps (where the Snipping Tool remains). I recommend dragging this app to your desktop screen to always keep it handy. But you can also open it anytime by holding down the Windows key + Shift key + S on your keyboard. Upon opening the app, your whole screen goes gray, and you will see the small controls rectangle at the top. Here you

select HOW you want to choose what you want to snip or capture. From left to right, you can select a rectangular area, freeform selection, the entire window, or your full screen. If you select the rectangle, you drag your mouse on the screen to select whatever you want. As soon as you release your mouse – presto, your selected image has been captured and saved on the clipboard to do with whatever you want!

You can open a Word document, for example, place your cursor where you want, and “paste” your clip right in your document. Or you can open the Windows Paint app, and you can “paste” it there if you want to do more editing. At the same time that your snip is placed on the clipboard, you will also see a message stating that you can edit, draw, or markup your selection. Click to do that and Snip and Sketch opens in its own window with its own menu of options.

Various easy marking tools are available for you to play with and try. There are highlighters and markers, and clicking on the down arrows will open things like color choices, etc. Once you have “sketched” on your “snip,” you can save it as a .jpg, .png, or .gif file by clicking on the old floppy disk save icon and selecting the file type you want. The new Snip and Sketch is easy to use, and it is very helpful for saving and sketching on any image on your screen for any purpose. Why not give it a try? ❖



Happy Easter

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Sylvia Davis, LACS Database Manager

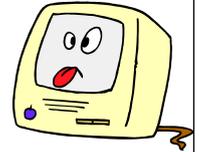
New Members (0)
Renewals (15)



Sylvia Davis	Michael Napoli
Ray Crovella	Stephanie Nordlinger
Kent Francisco	Emil Rozek
Allan Greenberg	Elliot Silverstein
Irv Hershman	James Somerville
Robert McDonald	Maurice Stephenson
Sheila Moncavage	Rich Waters
	Hedy Zhang

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

Jim McKnight has an open offer to LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade 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 new regular LACS membership (\$40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too. Contact Jim for specific considerations.

JOIN OUR MAIL LISTS

Members of LACS can join our lists by sending their names in the message body of an email from the address they want LACS to use for each of the lists they want to join.

PC@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io
and/or to
LACSLIST@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io

PC is for official LACS business.
Lacslist is for any other computer-related messages and questions.

RIDE SHARING

If you need a ride to a General Meeting, or if you are able to give a ride, please contact Freda Sanders at 323-230-3278.

HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Member Forms** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update**, select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out and bring it to a meeting, mail it, or email your changes to **membership (at) lacspc.org**.

LACS IS ON TWITTER

On **Twitter**, follow us at:

[https://twitter.com/](https://twitter.com)

[LA_CompSoc](https://twitter.com/LA_CompSoc) or click on this  icon to see what's there.

LACS WEBSITE

www.lacspc.org posts current and back copies of the color version of *User Friendly*, calendar information, and podcasts of most of the general meetings. There is also a bi-annual index to past issues on the website. Check the menu on the right side.

LACS HAS JOINED MEETUP

Our Meetup group is called:
"Los Angeles Computer Society and Technology Meetup."

Please join and **RSVP** for our general meetings - it's free. Go to <http://www.meetup.com/Los-Angeles-Computer-Society-and-Technology-Meetup/> or **click on this icon.**  Then click on **"Join Us."**

LACS CALENDAR



LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, April 6, 2020 via Zoom

Time: 7:00 P.M.

Where: At your home

General Meeting

Date: Tuesday, April 14, 2020 via Zoom

Time: 7:30 P.M.

Where: At your home

April 1: April Fools" Day

April 6: LACS Board Meeting

April 8: Passover

April 12: Easter

April 14: LACS General Meeting

April 22: Earth Day



GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS

April 14: Remote Meetings and How to Communicate and Purchase Goods and Services on the Internet

Note: Due to the Coronavirus crises, our future presentations may be uncertain.

Check email, *User Friendly*, and the LACS website for updates.

PODCASTS

Listen to the podcasts of most of our general meetings. Go to <https://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/>. Click on the session you want to hear.

USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES AND INDEXES

To see back issues of *User Friendly*, go to <http://www.lacspc.org/category/user-friendly/>.

For indexes to past issues go to <https://www.lacspc.org/category/uf-index/>

GENERAL MEETING SNACK SCHEDULE

By **Sylvia Q. Davis**, Hospitality Chair

April 14..... On your own

Watch for future announcements for when LACS will be able to meet physically again.



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 using a particular program or know a topic, please volunteer to be a consultant. You don't have to be an expert.** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please email Leah Clark at <Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net> or call her at 310-677-2792. More Quick Consultants, and more categories are always needed. You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at an inconvenient time.

Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, PhotoShop, etc. - 17	Hardware - 12	Photoshop - 17
Android Smartphones - 5	Linux - 11	Quicken - 3, 5
Apple devices - 15	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12	Thunderbird - 12
Anti Malware and Backup - 5,12	Mozilla Firefox - 12	Utilities - 5, 12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8	MS Excel - 3, 5, 15	Visual Basic - 13
Digital Photography - 8	MS Word - 3, 4, 10	Websites - 13
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4	MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17	Windows 5, 12, 16
Genealogy - 5	MS PowerPoint - 15	WordPerfect - 5
Groups.io - 5	MS Publisher - 7	Yahoo Groups - 5
	Open Office - 16	

No.	Name	Preferred Phone for Calls	From	To
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	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
7	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 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
15	Van Berkom, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
16	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
17	Rozeck, E. J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term	Telephone
President	Leah Clark	2020	310-677-2792
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2020	424-216-6984
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2020	323-299-3244
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2020	310-838-1409
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2020	310-346-2037
Director	Paula Van Berkomp	2021	310-398-6734
Director	Newton Bernstein	2021	310-945-9111
Director	Charlotte Semple	2021	310-398-5052
Director	Howard Krivoy	2020	310-717-7465
Director	Mark Presky	2020	310-398-0366
Director	E. J. Rozek	2020	310-823-3811
Director	Open	2020	
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Car Pool Coordinator	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Change of Address	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		310-471-7893
Greeter	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Assistant Greeter	Penny McKnight		310-823-7829
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Asst. Hospitality Chair	Open		
Membership Database	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
Assistant Program Chair	Open		
Publicity - Press	Mark Presky		310-780-3302
Publicity - Online Media	Stanley Johnson		424-216-6984
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkomp		310-398-6734

Website www.lacspc.org

Newsletter Editor editor (at) lacspc.org

Voice Mail 1-310-398-0366

Webmaster sitemaster (at) lacspc.org

E-mail ContactUs (at) lacspc.org

Change of Address membership (at) lacspc.org

The **ContactUs (at) lacspc.org** address goes to our president and vice president.

If the message is for another officer or 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.

MY EXPERIENCE WITH A SUBSCRIBER VPN

Advantages, costs, pitfalls, workarounds

Part 2 of a 2-part article series

Author: **John Krout**

Member, Potomac Area Technology and
Computer Society (PATACS)

www.patacs.org

jkrou75 (at) yahoo.com

In part 1, you learned about the need for VPNs and how a VPN secures your internet communications. Also, Part 1 identified several VPN services that are highly rated, including the one to which I subscribe, IPvanish.

This part explores some of the complications and workarounds that I have encountered.

REAL LIFE VPN IMPACT

As of late September 2019, I have a VPN installed on my laptop computer, two tablets, and my smartphone. As was the case at work, the VPN at home does not seem to impose any noticeable slowdown on those devices.

I use my second tablet primarily for its Roku app, which is a remote control for my Roku Premiere video streaming box. When I installed and used the IPvanish VPN app on that backup tablet, the Roku app was no longer able to communicate with the Roku box on my home network.

Why did that happen? The tablet could not search the LAN for the IP address of the Roku box. This may be because the tablet communications were encrypted, and our home LAN router was not. This led me to learn about another aspect of subscriber VPNs.

SPLIT TUNNELING

In operation, a VPN connection is sometimes referred to as a *tunnel*. That simply means the communication is hidden by encryption as if concealed inside a tunnel, and

it cannot be read or understood by a Man in the Middle.

Split tunneling is a feature of the IPvanish app for Android. Many other VPN services offer split tunneling in their apps.

The idea of split tunneling is that you can configure the VPN client app so that, for example, communications by a particular app on my tablet or phone should *not* be encrypted, not sent through the “tunnel” to the VPN server. Apps exempted in that way are *split* away from the encryption tunnel.

Split tunneling is configured on an app by app basis. Lucky me, the Android VPN app for iPvanish enables split tunneling, so I told the VPN app to exempt the Roku app. That way, I can use the app to control the Roku box even while the tablet is otherwise connected to the IPvanish VPN.

Later on, I set up split tunneling for the Roku app on my smartphone. At that moment, when I applied the config change to implement the split tunneling, my smartphone VPN app was already connected to the VPN. I learned that for the IPvanish VPN client, it is best to set up split tunneling while the VPN app is *not* yet connected to the VPN. I tried when the VPN client app is connected to the VPN; the VPN client app then told me it had to disconnect and reconnect the VPN in order to implement the config change for split tunneling.

I started thinking about other types of in-home communications on a home Local Area Network. The **Internet of Things (IoT)**, meaning lights and appliances connected to your router, is one example. For a control app to communicate with those devices from a phone or tablet running a VPN client app, the control app would have to be split tunneled.

LAN PRINTERS AND VPNs

There is one very widespread present-day LAN use that will require split tunneling: I have my printer connected to my home router

so that computers around the house can print. The initial issue I have is that the Windows VPN client application from IPvanish does *not* permit split tunneling as of September 2019. The IPvanish help desk says the company is working on adding that feature. So I have to wait for IPvanish to update their Windows VPN client app.

If you choose a different VPN service, and you have a printer connected to the LAN at home, make absolutely sure that their VPN client app for your personal computer supports split tunneling, whether it is a Windows box, a Mac box, a Linux box, or a ChromeOS box.

The second issue is that there is a *huge* number of personal computer applications that can print. Examples include all Microsoft Office applications, all LibreOffice applications, all web browsers, Adobe Acrobat Reader, Notepad, Wordpad, graphics image editors like Adobe Photoshop, general printing applications like PrintMaster (invitations, birthday cards, banners, et cetera), desktop publishing applications, and so forth. It is fairly difficult to identify valuable desktop applications that do *not* include the ability to print.

Because split tunneling is so useful, I am researching other subscriber VPN services and their VPN clients' abilities to support split tunneling. I will report on that in a later article.

DO NOT SPLIT TUNNEL THAT WEB BROWSER!

Now, of all the myriad of applications that can print, the one that is most often the target of snooping and, therefore, most in need of a VPN is a Web browser. Don't set the VPN app to split-tunnel that browser.

If you habitually print one or more web pages using your Web browser, there are a couple of ways to work around that problem while connected to a VPN.

The easy case is to connect the computer to the printer using a different method. Most, but not all, printers can be connected to computers by a USB cable.

The two following suggestions are provided in case you cannot do that.

For the special case of downloading and print-

ing PDF files, you can download each PDF using your Web browser. In the VPN client application, apply split-tunneling to **Adobe Acrobat Reader**, which is far less risky than applying it to your web browser. Then use Acrobat Reader to load and print the PDFs.

For the more general case, when you need to print Web pages, you can print each Web page through a PDF print driver such as Microsoft Print to PDF or PDFCreator or PDF995. Those drivers create a PDF file instead of sending output to a printer. Then you use the same technique: apply split-tunneling to Adobe Acrobat Reader, then use Acrobat Reader to load and print the PDFs to your LAN printer.

Sounds too complicated? But wait, all is not lost.

A MORE COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION

Some VPN services also allow you to install a VPN client on a *home router*. What are the advantages of that approach? First, the router connects all of your devices to the internet via a VPN server, so long as those devices are at home and connected to the home LAN, either by ethernet or by Wi-Fi. Second, the router VPN client will do the work of VPN client encryption and decryption for all of your devices.

Using this approach, your devices at home need not run a VPN client. Effectively, your device count at home, from the viewpoint of your VPN service, is **one**: the router itself, which handles all VPN encryption and decryption for all your devices. Therefore, the home router must contain a fast CPU and a good amount of RAM and will be expensive.

When all devices use a home router VPN client, your devices at home can communicate with a LAN printer.

When all devices use a home router VPN client, your devices at home can act as the remote control for a Roku box and run an app to control home lights and appliances.

I must say that the installation process for a VPN client on a router is complex and not for newbies. It often involves installing a third-party app called DD-WRT on the router

as a prerequisite. I watched a YouTube video of how to do the installation for the NordVPN router client, and the process looked daunting to me.

This strikes me as an opportunity for a **user group lab**: work on the installations together during a user group meeting. It would require you to bring your home router to the lab meeting.

Some VPN services even sell routers with the VPN client pre-installed. I think this is probably the best alternative for most folks who want to use a VPN client on a home router.

IPvanish publishes a list of router makes and models on which their router VPN client is known to be installable and is known to work. The list as of September 2019 includes high-end, expensive Linksys routers, Asus routers, and Netgear routers. I checked out the prices of those routers: the lowest I saw was about \$150. With the VPN client pre-installed, the cost would increase.

When you are away from your home router, yes, you will still run the VPN client on your phone, tablet, or computer. But typically, you won't bring your Roku box or printer or your lights and appliances along with you.

ARE THERE WEBSITES THAT ARE NOT ACCESSIBLE WHEN YOU USE A VPN?

At some point in 2019, I read an article published in a user group newsletter that briefly described VPNs. The author made a broad claim, without details, that VPNs *prevent the use of video streaming services and financial web sites*. The VPN service was not specified, the streaming service was not specified, the financial sites were not specified, and the browser and operating system used by the author were not specified. Perhaps the author was using a home router running a VPN client. Again, no details were provided. As I was wrapping up this article series, I went looking for that article. I could not find it.

That claim was *questionable*, in my opinion. The traveling public uses those sites on the Web all the time while on the go, even overseas. Netflix, in particular, encourages use by travelers.

More generally, subscriber VPN services address *how* users access the Web and do not act as content censors. Well, I admit VPNs of some corporations and government agencies block certain types of web content that they deem unrelated to work. And I suspect in some small countries the local banks lobby the government to prohibit access to foreign banks through the Web, a simple protectionism for the local banks.

But that is another big reason why VPNs exist: to enable connections to foreign web sites with powerful security so that government snooping does not know what you are accessing on the Web. The only IP addresses the snoops can see are those of your device and the VPN server.

So, as soon as I got my IPvanish account set up and I got the VPN client app installed on my laptop computer, I started testing access to financial web sites for the accounts I use, my stock brokerage, my credit card banks, and my checking account bank. I also tested watching a video on the Netflix web site.

Here's how I did that test.

First, I connected to an IPvanish VPN server in the Boston, Massachusetts, area. I accessed all those sites and kept track of what happened.

Second, I connected to an IPvanish VPN server in the London England area. Again, I accessed all those sites and kept track of what happened.

My tests used a Toshiba Satellite laptop running Windows 10, and the Firefox web browser.

The results appear in **Illustration 3** on page 15.

In short, I found that Netflix worked, my three credit card bank web sites worked, my stock brokerage web site worked, and my checking account bank web site worked. That was true even when accessing those through the London England VPN server.

I did also learn that Netflix and my stock brokerage site both require that I enable cookies. I did that. I also have my Firefox browser set so that, when I shut down Firefox, it deletes all cookies that were created by web sites during its current use.

Cookies are one way that snooping is implemented. But there are also good cookies.

Cookies are used to “remember” your login ID on various web sites such as email, Amazon.com, and geocaching.com so that you need not login again when you revisit the sites.

Cookies are also central to the way retail shopping and bank transactions are handled in your Web browser.

So the lesson is: set up your browser to allow sites to install cookies, so you can shop and use the bank and stock brokerage sites.

To avoid keeping bad cookies, I set the browsers to delete *all* cookies installed during the current Web browser use, when I shut down the browser after shopping or banking is done. That way, I throw out the bad cookies, but I am forced to discard the good cookies too.

Shut down your browser promptly. Don’t let it run for days at a time.

The regrettable side effect is that I must log into Yahoo! email, Verizon email, geocaching.com, and Amazon.com every time I use the browser to access those sites. I can even checkmark the web site login box saying remember me. The remembrance works until I shut down the web browser and the cookies get purged.

I am willing to live with that side effect.

Is my test comprehensive? No. I do not have an account for every bank and every stock brokerage in the US. Nor do I have an account with every VPN service. So a comprehensive test is just about impossible.

But I think my test results provide good news. Not every VPN service causes such problems. Not every browser causes such problems. Not every web site experiences such problems.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout is a former president of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC), one of two groups that merged to become the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS). He has been writing about personal computer uses since he joined WAC in the early 1980s. He is a frequent contributor to PATACS Posts, and occasionally provides presentations on tech issues at PATACS meetings. He lives in Arlington, VA and is a writer for the Thales Group, a major maker of automated fingerprint identification hardware, supporting the use of that hardware in the computer system of a major federal government agency. ❖

Service	Service type	Boston VPN server	London VPN server
Netflix	Video streaming	Success	Success
www.Citicards.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.Americanexpress.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.usaa.com	Credit card issuer	Success	Success
www.bankwithunited.com	Checking account bank	Success	Success
www.schwab.com	Stock brokerage	Success	Success

Illustration 3

OFFICE TIPS AND TRICKS

By **Dorothy Fitch**, Editor
GVR Computer Club, AZ
Green Bytes, February 2020
www.ccgvas.org
dmfitch (at) cox.net

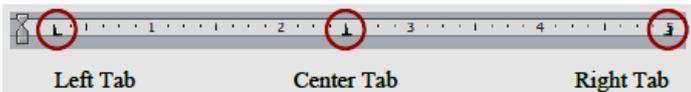
I use Microsoft Word and Excel a lot and want to share some tips.

Word: Exploring Tabs

You can press the Tab key to move text 1/2 inch to the right, or you can use the ruler to place tabs exactly where you want them. Did you know there are five different types of tabs? Left Tab, Center Tab, Right Tab, Decimal Tab, and Bar Tab. How and when do you use these different tabs? I put together a primer on tabs.

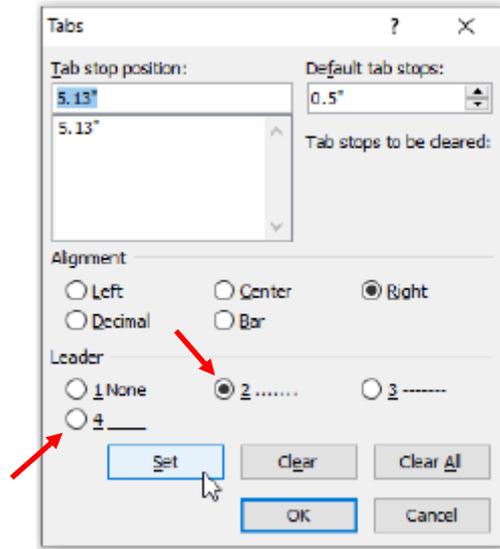


To add a tab to the current line in your document, click the icon at the upper left of the screen in Word. Each time you click the icon, you will see another type of tab. Hover over the icon with your mouse to see the name of the tab. After selecting the tab you want, click in the ruler at the top of the document, and it will be placed there. You can drag it back and forth to put it where you want it or drag it out of the ruler to remove it.



Right Tab with dotted leader.....2 below
Right Tab with underline leader_____4 below

This is a handy tab to use when creating forms for people to fill out on paper. To get to the Tabs dialog box below, double-click a tab. Click the Tab stop position you want to modify and then click the Lead in the screen shot below. You can also add tabs here. Note that each line of your document can have a different set of tabs.



Decimal Tab: \$39.99
\$1,023.99

The Decimal Tab aligns numbers with decimal points.



Bar Tab: Use this tab to add a vertical bar. Compare with the Vertical Bar key (shift + \).

Excel: Create a Series of Numbers or Dates

Have you ever wanted a column of numbers from 1 to 100 in a spreadsheet, or some other range? Do you want to know how to easily create a series of dates in order?

You don't have to type in all the numbers or dates yourself. You can do it automatically.

A. To create a number series, start by typing a 1 and a 2 in the top two cells in the first column. Drag your mouse to highlight the two cells. Move your mouse to the lower right corner of the cell with the 2 in it until you see a small crosshair (different from the white "plus sign" cursor).

JERE'S TECH TIPS

For many helpful tips and tricks for all aspects of computing, see *Jere's Tech Tips* at <https://apcug2.org/jerestips/>.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

teaches how to use various websites and internet-based applications.

- <https://TechBoomers.com>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2-bwYIYu1I>

SPECIAL OFFERS

Go to the APCUG website <https://apcug2.org/discounts-special-offers-for-user-groups/> for discounts and special offers for Members of User Groups. Avast Anti-virus and Acronis True Image, and several book, media and training sites offer discounts including the two mentioned below.

- Members can save at the **Pearson Technology** websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.
Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx
Code for print books: **ITCOMMUNITY**
Code for eBooks:
DIGITALCOMMUNITY
- See the latest books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre from [Routledge | Focal Press](#) today! They offer discounts to User Groups members.



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. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD



"My computer kept crashing, so I smashed it. I'll have to finish my anger management website when I get a new computer."

If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It

Technology Jokes

Submitted by *Bumpa Hennigar*

Most people will say, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

An engineer will say, "If it ain't broke, it doesn't have enough features yet."

FINANCIAL REPORT

A LACS member who wishes to see or has questions about our financial reports may contact our treasurer.

COPYRIGHT © 2020

by the Los Angeles Computer Society, an all-volunteer, tax-exempt [IRC Section 501(c)(3)] non-profit California corporation. All rights reserved. *User Friendly* is published monthly. Subscriptions are included in membership dues. Reproduction of any material here by any means is expressly prohibited without written permission, except that other non-profit User Groups may reprint LACS articles in substantially unaltered form if credit is given to the author and this publication and an e-mail is sent to <editor (at) lacspc.org> reporting the reprint information (user group and the name and date of the publication). Product and company names are the trademarks of their respective owners.

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual membership Dues:

Regular New and Renewal,	
Printed Newsletter	\$ 40
Electronic Newsletter	30
Family-Associate	12
Students	18
Contributor	50
Supporter	75
Benefactor	100

A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.

Associate members are those who live in the same household or work at the same address as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*, but may read it on the LACS website. **Students** must prove full-time status.

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

- **Monthly Newsletter** *User Friendly*. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- **Get FREE help** by phone from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly*.
- **Get help by email** by using our LACSLIST Group Mail List. Send your questions by e-mail to lacslist (at) lacs.groups.io
- **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's Group e-mail lists.
- Occasional product **discounts**, special offers, etc.

- **Virtual Technology Conferences** and free quarterly webinars.
- **Information** on training, swap meets and trade shows.
- Occasional **free software and computer books**, if you review them for *User Friendly*.
- **Rewards** for recruiting; LACS will extend your membership for three months for each new regular member you recruit.
- **Annual Holiday Party**
- **Field trips**
- **Social Interacting** with others who have like interests in computers and technology.
- **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created to help you to learn.

Date: _____ **LACS** New or Renewal Membership Application

Check # _____

Please bring your dues and this form to a meeting or mail them to:

Los Angeles Computer Society, 11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802

Please PRINT Clearly New Renewal

New / Renewal with printed newsletter - \$40.00 Associate - \$12.00 Student - \$18.00

New / Renewal with electronic, no paper, newsletter - \$30.00

Contributor - \$50.00 Supporter- \$75.00 Benefactor - \$100.00 Other

Name: First _____ Last _____

Name of Associate: First _____ Last _____
(Same address as primary member)

Address: _____

City, State, Zip + 4 _____

E-mail Address: _____ E-mail of Associate _____

Preferred Phone: _____ Publish Contact Info in Roster Yes No

Did a member of LACS invite you to join? If so, who? If not, how did you hear about LACS? _____



First Class Mail

Editor..... Leah Clark
 IndexerLeah Clark
 Podcast TranscriberIrv Hershman
 Photographer..... Vacant
 ProofreadersLance Hegamin,
 Jim McKnight, Stephanie Nordlinger,
 and Charlotte Semple

FREE!

Earn 3 months of free membership for every new regular member you bring in.

User Friendly is published by the Los Angeles Computer Society.
 11664 NATIONAL BLVD, #343 LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802
 Voice-mail: 310- 398-0366. Web site: <http://www.lacspc.org>

DIRECTIONS TO GENERAL MEETING

Westchester United Methodist Church Fellowship Hall
 8065 Emerson Ave.
 Los Angeles CA 90045

From the North:

Take Sepulveda Blvd. SOUTH to W. 80th St. Turn WEST/right. Go about one mile to Emerson Ave. Turn SOUTH/left. Go one long block to W. 80th Place. It 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. Go about eight blocks to W. 80th Place. Fellowship Hall is on the Northwest corner of Emerson and W. 80th Place. There is street parking and a small parking lot West of the church.

