User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG
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An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

JULY 14 GENERAL MEETING Via Zoom
MEETING TIME: 7:30 – 9 PM
7:00 to 7:30: Socializing and Questions

Topic: **Saving Your Life with Wearable Technology**
Speaker: **Ron Brown, M.D.**
Silvercom Computer & Technology Club, Mesa, AZ

In this presentation, Ron wears both his Doctor and Technology hats. We start with a fictitious patient who lives alone in an RV Resort in Mesa and develops some medical issues that nearly cause a death. We look at common medical problems in the elderly that can be helped by wearable devices. The Internet of Things (IoT) can also play a big role in helping seniors with isolation and communication.

Meet Our Presenter

Ron Brown would like to be known as a retired technologist. After he graduated in Medicine at the University of Alberta in 1976, he became a Flight Surgeon. In 1981, he left the military to start a Family Practice in the Comox Valley on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. PC's were just being produced and Microsoft Windows was going to integrate everything. He wanted an electronic office and bought an interest in a start-up software company in Calgary, Alberta that made an Electronic Patient Record. As his Family Practice grew, so did his software company. Over the next 20 years it became an international company. He traveled across Canada and the U.S. giving papers at many conferences. The topics included patient management, lab integration, security, and data input.

Tuesday, July 14, 7:30 - 9:00 PM
This meeting will be conducted via Zoom
7:00 - 7:30 Social Time and informal Q & A
More info: www.lacspc.org or 310-398-0366

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR

LACS Zoom Meetings

Can you believe we have already held three Zoom meetings? 😃👍

For our July meeting, Ron Brown, our presenter, will use his own Zoom account, and I will be a co-host. We will be able to enter the meeting at **7:00** for socializing and questions. Jim McKnight will be available to help as he had done at the forums at live meetings.

Please be thinking about what you will like the future of LACS to be. Some members want to continue having Zoom meetings; others want only live meetings. I've been thinking of a combination of the two. Please share your ideas and suggestions.

Please let me know if you haven't received my email, or you can't find the link for joining a meeting by the morning of the meeting day. And, if possible, please try to enter the general meeting before 7:30. This will prevent interruptions after the meeting begins and will be appreciated. It would also give you time to test your set-up before the meeting time.

Special Board Meeting

The LACS board held a special meeting to vote on whether or not to keep up our room rental at the Westchester United Methodist Church since we're not holding live meetings at this time. One concern, besides the money, was how to handle the equipment stored in their closet. We were able to reach a compromise to pay less each month for the next six months to ensure the room and to keep the closet. After that time, we can decide what we'll do. We are thankful to the administration of the church for their cooperation.

Happy 4th of July

I wish all LACS members, their families and friends a Happy Fourth. It won't be the same this year as in the past, with Bar-B-Ques, block parties, and local parades.

But, we will remember the principles our country was founded on, and we won't let all the current distractions take that away from us. We will remain strong, and as Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "We shall overcome."

I was very happy to have articles written by our very own members, Allan Greenberg and Mark Presky, for this issue. See pages 4 and 5. Many thanks to both.

A Screen Shot from the June LACS General Meeting

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
June 9, 2020

By **Leah Clark**, LACS Editor and President
The Cloud Is Here — Don't Get Left Behind
Speaker: **Judy Taylour**
Santa Clarita Valley Computer Club

The cloud has been with us for many years. We first got connected to the internet in about 1970. Then

Judy Presenting on Zoom

came the web, and then the cloud. Google has 5.5 billion searches per day; Facebook, 10 billion; Twitter, 500 million tweets per day; Amazon, 4000 items sold per minute; Netflix, 167 million subscribers; YouTube, 500 billion videos watched per day; and Zoom, 300 million users each day.

Back in the day when programs came in boxes we installed them on our hard drives. We created documents, edited photos, and used the web to search and to send emails. All were on our hard drives. We then became mobile, saving to external storage devices that we could take anywhere. Web-based apps are available over the internet, not on our hard drives. We are now all in the cloud. "Cloud" is used to represent sources outside of your hardware. The term "cloud computing" has been around since 1977. When you do anything, on any operating system, you are in the cloud. We can access our data from any device, as long as we have an internet connection and any necessary app.

In the cloud, everything lives in a network of servers; we need WiFi to access it. A server provides data to other devices over the internet. Server farms provide massive storage and processing power.

To access the cloud, we need an internet connection, an account, a username and password or passphrase, and we need to agree to terms. We can use office suites, social networking, email, Evernote, Chat, Zoom, backups, etc. in the cloud. Everyone should have a redundant backup in the cloud.

54% of Americans say they never use the cloud, BUT 95% of this group actually does use the cloud. If you share photos, play online games, listen to music, you use the cloud. All of your devices can link together via the cloud.

Use storage in the cloud for redundant backups in case a hard drive should fail. iCloud is built into every iOS and Mac, and Google Drive is built into every Android device. Data should be stored in multiple locations. Data stored in the cloud is protected by encrypted passwords, and it can be accessed anytime and anywhere. There are sources for free unlimited storage and for free limited storage with a paid version for more.

You need an excellent antivirus program, a firewall, a router, and a strong password or passphrase. Malwarebytes works with your security program, and Judy recommends it.

We should have a password manager program that stores your login information, logs you in automatically, and has an encrypted password database. You will need to remember only one master password, and it can generate random passwords. You can use two password managers to be safe in case one goes down, or you forget your master password.

Judy suggested using Two-Factor Authentication (2FA). In addition to your password or passphrase, you may have a PIN, can use your fingerprint, facial recognition, a text message, or a phone call.

You can organize your life in the cloud with a program called **Toodledo**, an online to-do list and task manager. Judy also mentioned Google Calendar and Evernote.

We all communicate via the cloud with email, Skype, Zoom, Vonage, Ooma, Google

Voice, Magic Jack, Facetime for Mac, etc. Use Google in the Cloud so others can have access to shared documents in case we are no longer here. Anything on paper can be scanned in and stored in Google Docs. The Internet of Things is all about the cloud. Each IoT device needs its own password.

After the presentation, Judy led a "Members Helping Members" session. Several members discussed their favorite programs and apps, and the meeting was open for Q & A. Members may give short presentations on their

A Screen Shot from the LACS June Board Meeting

SELLING ON LINE, PART 2

By **Mark Presky**, LACS Board Member

As printed in the *Santa Monica Star*

This article is a continuation of my Selling Online discussion in the February 2020 issue.

Preparing your sale item: first, make sure your sale item is clean — make it attractive to your potential buyer. Get rid of that dirt and grime. And if your item performs a mechanical or electrical function, such as a clock or an appliance, make sure it works well. It is essential to be the kind of salesperson that YOU would want to buy from.

No one wants trouble from buyers, nor from the sales platform regulators of eBay, Craigslist, Nextdoor, or other sites on which you're selling. And your reputation will spread, good or bad. On eBay and Amazon, past feedback from buyers is all-important, and it will determine your future success. If you receive numerous complaints, eBay will terminate your privileges and force you to refund payments. Craigslist, Nextdoor.com, and some other selling platforms are less strictly regulated, but you still want to acquire a good reputation and have and provide good

experiences for others.

You will need photos of your sale items. A fancy expensive camera is NOT necessary. But taking the time and effort to obtain good quality photos with your cell phone will pay off. Don't use blurred, dark photos, or those with cut off portions of your item. Take pictures showing all sides of your item, and close-ups of item parts that show the condition and perhaps the model number. Don't include photos that show yourself or parts of yourself. It should only take a minute to figure out how to use your cell phone flash. If necessary, ask a friend to help you with this. We all know people who are ahead of us on the cell phone use curve. Perhaps you can take photos outside to obtain better lighting. White backgrounds are often recommended – a white sheet or a white tabletop will suffice. When you become more sophisticated with online sales, you may find yourself buying a roll of photography background paper. But that is absolutely unnecessary to succeed at online selling.

Remember, you are not the only one out there selling an old lamp. But you want to be the only one, or one of few, selling the right, attractive, working lamp that someone else is looking for. And the better condition your item appears to be in, the more attention it will receive, and the higher price it will likely fetch.

Learn more about online sales in Part 3 in a later issue.❖

EMAIL ETIQUETTE

By **Mark Presky**, LACS Board Member

Subject Lines: People often reply, over and over, to a previous message, rather than starting a new message with a new subject line. This can be frustrating for the recipient (and perhaps the sender) who may wish to later refer to or find a specific message among many that have the same subject line. It takes little effort to start a new subject line. If the recipient's address isn't in the sender's

Contact file, it is generally easy to add it to your "Contacts" file for future use. Unfortunately, each email client (e.g., Gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo, etc.) is different, so one may have to search for the correct method to import a new address from an existing email message, or look it up via Google.com. Once learned, write the method down for importing addresses for future reference, unless one has a good memory. A great idea might be to create a new document to include methods for doing computer-related tasks like this.

While we're on the subject of subject lines, here's another suggestion. The recipient who probably receives "mountains" of email messages each day, including a lot of spam, may miss seeing your message. To increase the chances that your message will be read, include your name and/or organization in the subject line.

Other good email practices: Your writing sends an impression of you. Sloppy writing creates a poor impression. You are not there when the message is read to dress well, to put on makeup, to smile, to shake hands, or to otherwise neutralize a poor impression that your writing might create. RE-READ your message before hitting the 'Send' button. Did you forget to include something you wanted to say? Were you verbose – can your message be said more efficiently? Did you use 'Spell Check'? Every email client has it. Most of the time, a misspelled word or an incorrect punctuation mark is noted by a squiggly blue line below a possible word or phrase error. All one has to do is to right-click on it with the cursor using the mouse key on the right side of the mouse. If you are using a laptop with a built-in mouse pad, there will be a key or button for one to do this. A pop-up window with options for potential correction, or no correction, will be provided.

I hope that this helps your email messages create better impressions. ❖

COMMENTS ON ZOOM, VPN, BACKUPS, IPOD'S AND MORE

By **Allan Greenberg**
LACS Member, Past LACS President and Retired Computer Consultant

Allan on Zoom

ZOOM

Thanks to Zoom, I have been able to "attend" or to use the verbalized word, Zoom, into the last three LACS meetings. I live in Northern California, and I have not physically attended a meeting in probably decades, but I still am a member. Zoom definitely has its place, and we are now using it more than we would imagine since COVID-19 and social and physical distancing are the way of life for the foreseeable future. It is easier to zoom in than to have to fight LA traffic and all the while enjoying a glass of wine or whatever while relaxing in a comfortable chair. I have to admit when the topic turned to something I was less interested in, I processed some of my emails on another screen (my systems have two screens).

But Zoom is not the inevitable destroyer of F2F (Face to Face) as one might think. Zoom is what I would call a one-to-many communication; it is one person at a time talking to many others. F2F is more of a many-to-many communication. There are casual conversations between people or groups of people before and post-meeting. Some comments might be made to your nearest neighbor during the meeting, and then there are the group reactions, which may be laughter, moaning, applause, or any other group communications. While Zoom and F2F both have their places, I don't foresee one replacing the other except for the current constraints of the coronavirus.

VIRTUAL PRIVATE NETWORK (VPN)

In recent LACS *User Friendly* issues, there have been discussions on VPN's. I would like to point out that the Opera browser automatically uses a VPN connection from your site to their servers. Thus, for example, your local internet provider and any sneaky neighbors can not intercept and listen-in on your web activities. You don't get to choose which VPN server and where, that is which countries, the servers are located. With a VPN service, there are more choices, but usually, there is a fee for the service.

The Opera browser is free. While I don't notice any special speed or download or upload connection problems, there is no doubt some loss as the information has to be put in a VPN envelope and also go through the Opera servers. This would be similar with a VPN service. I have occasionally had some compatibility problems with web sites. For example, I was trying to update a beneficiary document on a financial website, but the information would not update. I thought it was the site's problems, and after any number of tries, I gave up and went back the next day, hoping the site corrected the problem. However, the next day and the day after, the problem persisted. I finally tried another browser; in this case, Mozilla, and the update went through easily. I think this is practical advice for any browser; if there is a problem at a site, try another browser. I like Opera, Mozilla, Chrome, and Edge in that order and, of course, Safari for Apple products.

BACKUP AND RESTORE

I used to advise that backups are not important. It is *restores* that are important. Many times people would use a backup program and think that now they were protected against loss. However, when they actually tried to retrieve a file or restore a system, either they found out they didn't know how to do a restore, or the backup was incomplete or corrupt, or some other difficulty. So if you practice a restore, it assumes, of course, a backup exists, and there is a test of the validity of the backup.

For the last few years, I have abandoned my advice. I own a good backup program, Acronis, but I have not used it recently. (I also am not too happy that Acronis wants to sell me an update every year.) Admittedly it is partly laziness, but I also feel I have most of my important files redundantly available. I use the Windows 10 *File History* that makes periodic copies of directories of my choosing to a 2TB USB drive that is always connected. I have 2 of my laptops configured in this way. Then I used the cloud to store many of my files. I use Google Drive with the optional additional capacity for which I pay a modest yearly cost. I use the Microsoft OneDrive, but I have not yet expanded the free capacity. I have a Dropbox account, but I rarely use it, and I also have an iCloud Drive for info and photos from my Apple devices.

Of course, if something serious should happen like my hard drive dies or a worst-case scenario, a ransomware virus encrypts my entire system and even extends out to the cloud drives I am in real trouble. However, I have four laptops, which I rotate in their use. If any one of these laptops should die, I could easily just move over to another one. The critical files are duplicated on at least two of the laptops regularly. And then there are the removable USB thumb drives that I use for the very critical files like tax files. While I don't recommend this style necessarily for other people, it has been working for me, and I guess I'll continue until it doesn't.

The weakness is that if I have a hard drive failure, I will not be able to restore the OS and applications. However, to have confidence in the restore, I either have to test it with the current working drive with risks to it or put in a new drive. While putting a new drive in a desktop is not that hard, it can be

painful in a laptop. So basically, my collection of laptops is my full backups. The laptop hard drive is actually configured into four partitions, of which two of them are dedicated to Recovery. And while I own legitimate copies of Windows 10 Pro, Microsoft does not provide any of the media, like a CD or DVD to use to reinstall. The copy of Windows is buried in the Recovery partition. This becomes a Catch 22 in the case of a hard drive failure, so an image backup of a hard drive does make sense.

I would suggest that any really critical files, like a will, tax and financial documents, important contracts, and so on, be burnt to either a CD or a DVD and make sure to close the disc after the files are put on the media. In this way, they are immune to any virus or ransomware. It probably makes sense to make duplicates and give copies to trusted people.

My intent in describing my current ways of dealing with possible information loss is not to abandon the usual backup/restore paradigm but to consider the risks versus the efforts and the possible alternative to achieve your level of comfort.

iPOD'S

When podcasts became popular, it was quite nice to be able to listen to a chosen topic, especially when traveling in a car or airplane. I purchased a Zune that was manufactured by Microsoft to compete with the Apple iPod. The Zune was the size of today's larger cell phone and more than twice as thick. What I liked about the Zune was the software application. It was seamless when it came to updating the podcasts and loading other media. When Microsoft decided it could no longer compete with Apple's iPod, it discontinued the Zune. It portends a much larger and more important battle Microsoft lost to Apple: The iPhone versus the Windows phone. Microsoft should have taken that earlier lesson to heart.

In order to continue with podcasts, I purchased an Apple iPod Nano 6. It was much smaller than the Zune at about the size of a large postage stamp and slightly thicker. The iPod itself was just great to use, but the problem was the software application was iTunes for Windows. I found it to be one of the worst software applications in recent times. After many years and many updates and iterations of iTunes I still find it a lousy piece of software.

I had to move to an iPod Nano 7 when the iPod 6 failed, but it didn't help working or struggling with iTunes. One good feature of iTunes is when I changed to the new iPod, it updated the latest hardware with the previous configuration. I believe that Apple announced that it was to discontinue iTunes, but I have not seen any change, and I don't know what they will replace it with.

In fact, I went through about three iPod 7's in the first year or so. I used the iPod during exercising, and it had a Walk or Run feature which would either keep track of your steps (Walk mode) or give 5 minute time markers in the Run mode while playing either the FM radio or previously recorded music. It took me a while to realize that because I would usually hold it in my hand while walking or running, the sweat would end up ruinous to the iPod. Why a device that was made to use while exercising did not have more robust protection from moisture is a shortcoming of the design. My solution was simply to put the iPod in a plastic sandwich bag.

Still, the iPod would eventually give out. I now consider the iPod a constant companion, and as soon as it failed, I repeated what I had done several times before. I went to Target to buy another. The salesperson told me that the iPod Nano 7 was no longer available, and there was a new model called the iPod Touch. It cost more and was quite a bit larger and thicker, but it was still manageable for holding in my hand while I walked or ran.

LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught, Treasurer

New Members (0)
Renewals (5)

Barbara   Benjamin

Gavin   Faught
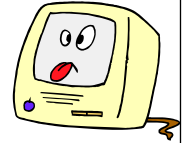
Roger   Garland

Mark   Presky

Ronald   Wisansky*

* Contributor

JOIN OUR MAIL LISTS

LACS members can join one, or both, of the lists shown by putting just their name in the message body of an e-mail to each of the lists they wish to join from the e-mail address they wish LACS to use.

PC@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io

LACSLIST@LACS+subscribe (at) groups.io

PC is for official LACS business only. **Lacslist** is for any other computer or technology – related messages and questions.

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/LA_CompSoc or click on this icon to see what's there.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

LACS Member and presenter,

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.

YOUR FRIEND IN THE FIELD

Friend of LACS and presenter, **Christian Knudsen,** is available for hire, and he will be giving LACS members a 15% discount through the end of 2020.

Christian specializes in educating people of all skill levels in computers (both Mac & PC), smartphones, tablets, all things internet related, office and productivity apps, web development, home entertainment equipment and media production.

Please call for a free consultation (310) 571-8755. Or visit https://dgtcreative.com/pp/ for more information.

MEETUP

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

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

LACS CALENDAR

July ☆☆☆

LACS Board Meeting
Date: Monday, July 6, 2020 via Zoom
Time: 7:00 P.M.
Where: At your home

General Meeting
Date: Tuesday, July 14, 2020 via Zoom
Time: 7:30 P.M.
Where: At your home

July 4: Independence Day
July 6: LACS Board Meeting, via Zoom
July 14: LACS General Meeting, Zoom

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS VIA ZOOM

July 14: Saving Your Life with Wearable Technology
August 11: Smartphone Apps
September 8: The Internet and Real Estate

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our future presentations may be uncertain. Please

ZOOM MEETINGS

To join an Zoom meeting, click on the URL on the invitation you will receive via email before the meeting and follow the prompts.

Contact Leah Clark if you have any questions, or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day.

PODCASTS & ZOOM RECORDINGS

To listen to the podcasts of most of our past live general meetings, go to https://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/. Click on the session you want to hear. **You will receive links to the recordings of Zoom meetings via email.**

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/

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
Android Smartphones - 5
Apple devices - 15
Anti Malware and Backup - 5,12
Digital Imaging, Editing - 8
Digital Photography - 8
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 4
Genealogy - 5
Groups.IO - 5

Hardware - 12
Linux - 11
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 12
Mozilla Firefox - 12
MS Excel - 3, 5, 15
MS Word - 3, 4, 10
MS Outlook - 5, 15, 17
MS PowerPoint - 15
MS Publisher - 7
Open Office - 16

Photoshop - 17
Quicken - 3, 5
Thunderbird - 12
Utilities - 5, 12
Visual Basic - 13
Websites - 13
Windows 5, 12, 16
WordPerfect - 5
Yahoo Groups - 5

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	Rozek, 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	310-346-2637
Director	Newton Bernstein	2021	310-945-9111
Director	Charlotte Semple	2021	310-398-5052
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2021	310-398-6734
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
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman		310-471-7893
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Greeter	Freda Sanders		323-230-3278
Assistant Greeter	Penny McKnight		310-823-7829
Groups.IO Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis		323-293-5004
Asst. Hospitality Chair	**Open**		
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark		310-677-2792
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger		323-299-3244
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 Berkom		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.

Comments on Zoom, VPN, Backups, iPod's and More
Continued from page 7

When I started it up, it wanted to connect to my iPad to verify my Apple account, and from there, I thought I was up and running.

There were a few other steps, but I must say Apple makes these steps very easy. The first look showed many icons on the different screens. There are over 40 native app icons on the iPod Touch, not including the ones I purchased from the iStore, and this compares to only eight on the iPod Nano. The iPod Touch looked and even felt very much like an iPhone but without the cell phone part. My guess is it even uses the same OS as the iPhone. Then I looked for the FM radio icon and the activity monitors. They were not there! Then I tried to connect it to iTunes to download my podcasts and music that is stored in the iCloud. It would not work. I connected to an Apple Genius, but he could not figure it out.

I could see that this iPod Touch was not going to do what I had very much wanted and had become used to with the previous models. I wonder if Steve Jobs would have let this happen. Everything useful on the iPod Touch depends on it being connected to WiFi. There is an Apple FM application that I pay $7.99 a year, but it uses the internet radio. If I go out of range as one would when exercising, it is, of course, useless to me. The intriguing part of the FM app — the possibility to listen to FM stations anywhere as long as they put themselves on the internet — as opposed to a true FM receiver that will just have local stations available.

The iPod Touch sits in a drawer along with the Zune. I was able to find sellers on the internet that were offering iPod Nano 7's. The first one I purchased was refurbished from Newegg and guaranteed to be as new, and the price was the same as the new ones I had previously purchased. It did not work at all. I was able to return it except for some shipping charges. A further search on the internet and I was able to find sales of bona fide new models, except the packaging would be different because it was officially discontinued. Also, the available color was always grey because, I assume, it was not a popular color, and there is a stockpile out there. I have purchased three of them with the hope that Apple will come to its senses, and the next iPod will put back in the features it took out.

WINDOWS 10 DESKTOP

A feature in Windows 10 that I believe is rarely used is that there can be multiple Desktops. If there are multiple users of the same computer, each user can have their own Desktop. Separate Desktops can also be achieved with different logins, but there may be a reason, for example, applications, directories, to have distinct Desktops under the same login.

If a single user has work or personal distinctions, there can be Desktops configured for each separate use. The icon to create a new Desktop is usually on the Taskbar to the immediate right of the search window. Right-click on it for the option to create a new Desktop. If there are multiple Desktops already, then this is the way to choose among the Desktops. This feature is available in Windows 10 Pro, and I am not sure if it is available in the Home edition. ❖

WHY IS MY COMPUTER SO SLOW?
By **David Kretchmar**, Computer Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
Gigabyte Gazette, November 2019
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There are plenty of computers being used that are performing much more slowly than they should. One of the quickest ways to turn a fast, new computer into a slow system

THE 5 BEST VIDEO DOORBELLS TO KEEP AN EYE ON THE OUTSIDE WHILE YOU'RE INSIDE

By Josh Hendrickson

joshhendrickson@canterrain
Review Geek, November 2019

Video Doorbells are among the best smart home devices you can own. And these days, there are more choices than ever, each with different benefits and shortcomings. Whether it's a locally-recording doorbell or one that can identify grandma, there's a video doorbell for you.

What to Look for in a Video Doorbell

It seems like every company in the smart home game has a video doorbell for your consideration. But video doorbells call for more than slapping a camera and a button together and calling it a day. You'll want to make sure the doorbell is compatible with your home and works well for your particular needs.

Power Source: There are two ways to power a video doorbell: your home's existing doorbell wiring or battery power. Battery-powered video doorbells are easier to install, but require charging. Some (but not all) doorbells that run off existing wiring can make use of your home's chime. If your wiring doesn't work, then you'll either want to choose a battery-powered doorbell or run a plug-in transformer from inside your home.

Resolution: Like any other camera, resolution matters. Most video bells offer 720p, 1080p, or 2K resolutions when recording video. While the higher resolution does provide better quality, it also requires more bandwidth and storage space. It's best to aim for at least 1080p for a good quality video.

Chime Options: Most (but not all) wired doorbells can ring your home's chime. But if it can't (or you chose a battery-powered doorbell), you'll need an external plug-in chime.

Some doorbells include them, but for others, it's an extra cost to factor in.

Cloud Subscriptions: Nearly every doorbell offers a cloud subscription. For many, like Ring and Nest, it's a requirement for advanced features like facial recognition and motion zones. You may also need a cloud subscription to review past videos—and the more history you want, the more it will cost. If you don't want to pay monthly fees, look for a local capture doorbell.

The Best Overall Doorbell: Eufy Video Doorbell

Eufy Security Wireless Video Door bell (Battery-Powered) with 2K HD, No Monthly Fee, On-Device AI for Human Detection, 2-Way Audio, Simple Self-installation

You might be surprised to see a doorbell other than Nest Hello listed here, but Eufy earns the top spot with a few smart choices. First, unlike Nest Hello or Ring, you don't need a cloud subscription.

The Eufy doorbell records videos locally and provides advanced features like motion zones and facial recognition without cloud processing. The doorbell records 2K video (like the Nest Hello), and while it can't ring your home's chime, it comes with a Home Base that acts as a Chime. That Home Base also stores your videos on a 16GB hard drive using AES-256 data encryption.

You can either wire it up or run it off batteries. All-in-all it provides 90% of Nest Hello's features for about 65% of the cost, and that's before cloud subscriptions.

The Eufy Battery-Powered doorbell doesn't require subscriptions for its more important features. Video is recorded locally, it accomplishes person detection on device, and everything is encrypted. And you can either wire it up or power it with batteries.

The Premium Pick: Nest H

Josh Hendrickson

If you don't mind cloud subscriptions, Nest Hello is the absolute best video doorbell you can buy. Thanks to cloud processing, it does a better job of correctly identifying human movement (as opposed to a cat or sunlight) than the Eufy doorbell does.

It also records continuously, works with your home's existing chime, and remembers who people are so it can identify them by name. Because Google makes it, Nest Hello has better integration with Google Home than any other doorbell. If you have a Nest Hub or Nest Hub Max, the video will appear nearly instantly on those devices when someone rings the doorbell.

Just keep in mind that Google locked Nest Hello's best features behind the Nest Aware subscription. You can only get facial recognition, video history, and motion zones when you subscribe. If you don't, it's the equivalent of a digital peephole — only useful when you're looking at it.

Best Battery Powered Doorbell: Ring Video Doorbell

If your home's doorbell wiring doesn't work or you don't want to mess with electricity, then a battery-powered option might be the way to go.

Like the Eufy battery-powered doorbell, the Ring 3 can use your home's wiring, or you can skip that and use the included battery pack instead. You'll just need to recharge it once in a while.

The Ring 3 records 1080p video, and much like the Nest, it requires a subscription to view previous footage. If you don't wire the doorbell into your home, you'll need to buy a separate chime to hear when someone rings the doorbell. The latest model includes improved zone detection and 5 GHz Wi-Fi support. Ring does have Alexa integration, which includes doorbell announcements, which could negate the need for a separate chime purchase.

If you prefer to keep your videos locally stored, the Eufy battery-powered doorbell is another great option.

All-new Ring Video Doorbell 3 – 1080p HD video, improved motion detection, easy installation

Ring 3 is the best option if your door bell wiring doesn't work (or doesn't exist). You'll get close Alexa integration, 1080p video, and the ability to view previous video recordings with a subscription.

The Best Budget Doorbell: Eufy Video Doorbell

Josh Hendrickson

The Eufy Battery-Powered Video Doorbell is excellent, but what if you want to save a little money? If you don't mind giving up some storage space and you have the option to wire your video doorbell, you can save.

The original Eufy Video Doorbell was our former Best Overall pick, and for good reasons. You still have local storage, no subscriptions feeds, and on-device person detection. It doesn't use a Home Base, and it can't be battery-powered. But it does come with a Chime.

Watch for sales and coupons, which can often bring down the price more than $50 off the newer battery-powered Eufy Doorbell.

> **Eufy Security, Wi-Fi Video Doorbell, 2K Resolution, No Monthly Fees, Secure Local Storage, Human Detection, 2-way audio, Free Wireless Chime, Requires Existing Doorbell Wires**

Don't want the cloud? The Eufy video doorbell doesn't require it. It still gives you 2K

video, motion zones, and basic facial recognition for less than the cost of a Nest Hello.

Best for Renters: Ring Peephole Camera

Amazon

If you're not allowed to make changes to your doorbell or other hardware, the Ring Peephole Camera is your best pick. Instead of replacing your existing doorbell, the Ring Peephole goes on your door. As the name suggests, it replaces the door's peephole.

You can still use your peephole as you usually would, but it also doubles as a camera that can notify you of visitors. As a bonus, if someone knocks on the door, the camera will detect that and notify you.

Like the Ring 2, the Peephole camera records in 1080p resolution, uses a rechargeable battery, and features close integration with Alexa. Best of all, it comes with the necessary tools to install it. Since it doesn't have a wiring option, you'll have to buy a plug-in chime if you don't want to rely on Alexa or phone notifications.

> **Ring Peephole Camera - Smart video doorbell, HD video, 2-way talk, easy installation**

If you live in an apartment or rent your home, you may not be allowed to change the doorbell hardware. If so, the Ring Peephole is

perfect, as it replaces your existing peephole. You get 1080p video and a rechargeable battery.

Josh Hendrickson has worked in IT for nearly a decade, including four years spent repairing and servicing computers for Microsoft. He's also a smart home enthusiast who built his own smart mirror with just a frame, some electronics, a Raspberry Pi, and open-source code. Read Full Bio » ❖

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Why Is My Computer So Slow?
(Continued from page 12)

crippled by malware is to download what you think is good software from the wrong sites, or to download the wrong software from what appears to be the right site.

Newer computers being slowed by unwanted programs is a bother, but the damage done by PUPs (Potentially Unwanted Programs) can be much more serious. PUPs can be responsible for programs that lock up your system and make it impossible to access any of your files, or otherwise ruin your system.

Every time you download anything from the Internet you first issue permissions that enable the opening of a conduit between the Internet and your computer. The series of complex events is mostly invisible to you, except for your clicking on that virtual button that starts the whole process.

Bing and Google searches often can take you where you don't want to go. When searching for popular software, sponsored search results (which result in unwanted programs) often appear at the top of the search results page, along with links from the actual software source sites. Often those ad links try to install software on your computer that you do not want. It could be anything; it could be a fake driver update program or a scam system cleaning program. Note that my Bing search for VLC media player first showed four sites NOT associated with VLC – places that have

a high potential for providing bad software.

Testing Misleading Advertisement links
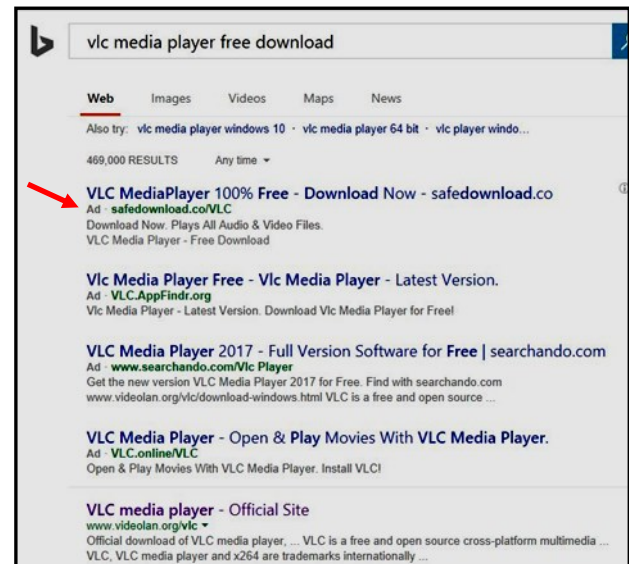
How bad is it? To find out, I installed a fresh Windows 10, plus all Windows updates, on a freshly formatted hard drive. I downloaded and installed the free version of Avast! Antivirus software that brought a hitchhiker of its own — Google Chrome. OK, I wanted Chrome, but not every user would, so I considered this an invasive act by a program I downloaded for protection.

I used Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome, and I started using Google and Bing search engines to start searching for free programs. The programs I sought are often the first programs that get installed on a PC —

Firefox, Google Chrome, OpenOffice, iTunes, Adobe Flash, Java, Adobe Acrobat, VLC, and WinZip. I carelessly clicked on ad results, which appeared above or on the same first page as "real" search results. These paid ads were identified by notes and highlighted in a very pale color to differentiate them (slightly) from the actual search links that appeared nearby. The ads didn't appear after every search and the ones that appeared varied among searches and were different for different browsers.

Sometimes, the first paid ad link actually took me to the software's true source site, i.e. searching for Google offered www.google.com first). Often Avast would block a download it recognized as harmful, but Avast did not catch many problems.

For all of the searched for programs, I was able to bring up more questionable sponsored search results within seconds of repeated searching. Misleading results showed up in all search engines and I could not determine that any browser offered better or worse protection than others.

For each ad link, I clicked through and installed the respective programs via the link or button provided. Instead of delivering just the application I was looking for, all of the paid links attempted to tack on unwanted programs. In some cases, if I was careful to read all of the fine print and uncheck boxes, I could get the files I was looking for without a bunch of extra "added value" software, but it was very difficult.

For the purposes of this article, I acted as an inexperienced user (or an experienced user who's not paying attention) and clicked my way through ads and dialogue boxes that looked like the End User License Agreement (EULA) we're used to seeing when installing software.

And …They Got Me!

After installing just a few programs this way, I started accumulating browser toolbars (Bing, Yahoo, and Google) and noticed my search engine and home page had been hijacked to something unwanted. As I continued the process, Windows started slowing down to a crawl.

After installing all of the programs on my list, I opened Windows 10's Programs and Features and each browser's extensions and add-ons and counted 39 items that had been installed in addition to the programs I intended to get.

On rebooting, three new programs launched popup windows at startup, including two that started running virus/registry scans as soon as

they launched, and a couple that flashed warning windows and offered fixes if I registered or upgraded to the full paid version.

Remember, this was originally a clean install of Windows 10 that needed nothing. Within a few minutes, my computer became noticeably slower, plagued by numerous popups, and was becoming essentially unusable.

A Malwarebytes scan disclosed 1572 unwanted programs were present on my system. I'm sure not all of these were nasty, but if even a small fraction of them were, I would be in real trouble.
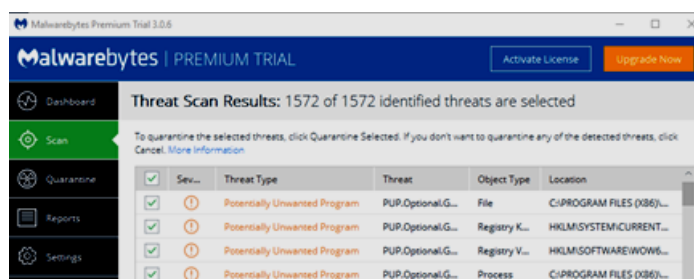
Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of us will occasionally have reason to download and install some third-party (non-Microsoft) software from the internet. This does not have to be dangerous if you pay attention that the software is being offered from the true home site of that product. NEVER download software from any sponsored link unless the desired software creator is the sponsor.

Do not depend on your anti-malware program to protect you. It will catch some issues, but not all. ❖

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.
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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Most Common Lies Ever Told
"I didn't do it."
"I'm fine."
"I have read and agreed to the Terms and Conditions."

A mother asked her son, "What do IDK, ILY and TTYL mean?"

He answered, "I don't know. I love you. Talk to you later."

She replied, "That's OK, I'll ask your sister."

Our computers went down at work today, so we had to do everything manually.
It took me twenty minutes to shuffle the cards for Solitaire.

FINANCIAL REPORT

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

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Annual Membership Dues:

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  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

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— 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.

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Revised Jan. 2020, ljc

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