

# User Friendly

LACS  
A Computer and  
Technology  
User Group

## IN THIS ISSUE

In Memoriam	2
From Your President / Editor	2
General Meeting Report	3
Selling on Line	4
The History of Caps Lock	5
Protect Your Computer Against Power Outages	6
What is Creative Commons	7
Genealogy Research Online	7
LACS Notices	8
LACS Calendar	9
Members Helping Members	10
Officers, Directors & Leaders	11
16 Ways To Repurpose Your Old Gadgets	12
Modern Television Technology	15
Your Next Printer	16
Special Offers	18
Laughing Out Loud	18
Membership Information	19
LACS on Zoom	20



### LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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An International  
Association of Technology  
and Computer User Groups

## NOVEMBER 10 GENERAL MEETING

**MEETING TIME: 7:30 – 9 PM – Via Zoom**

**6:30 to 7:30: Socializing and Questions & Answers**

Topic: **Saving Your Life With Wearable Technology, Part II**

Speaker: **Ron Brown, M.D**, APCUG Speakers Bureau  
Silvercom Computer and Technology Club, AZ



**R**on Brown spoke to us in July on Part I of this topic including smart watches and other devices that can get help quickly for a person who has a medical emergency and cannot reach a phone or other help. These devices can make records that will help a doctor diagnose and treat the patient. Some detect that your heart is beating too fast (A-Fib - atrial fibrillation) or too slow (you need a pacemaker). Even one EKG shows a lot about the history of the cardiovascular system.

This technology is constantly changing. What's new? How should you plan for a medical emergency? What hardware and software are important? How should you connect your devices? Use smart phones and computers? Fast and reliable internet connection? Stay connected to people?

Planning ahead to get and effectively use the right devices could save your life or that of a loved one.

### Meet Our Presenter

Ron Brown is a retired technologist. He graduated in Medicine at the University of Alberta in 1976 and then became a Flight Surgeon. In 1981, he left the military to start a Family Practice on Vancouver Island, British Columbia. PC's were just being produced and Microsoft Windows was going to integrate everything. He wanted an electronic office, so he 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, becoming an international company. He traveled across Canada and the U.S. giving papers at many conferences on patient management, lab integration, security, and data input.

**Tuesday, November 10, 7:30 - 9:00 PM**

This meeting will be conducted via Zoom

**6:30 - 7:30** Social Time and informal Q & A

More info: [www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org) or 310-398-0366

**IN MEMORIAM**

**Barbara Benjamin**  
1928-2020



By **David Benjamin**, Barbara's son  
Barbara Benjamin grew up in Wagga Wagga, a farming town south of Sydney, Australia and came to the United States when her husband, Cliff, became an engineer at Lockheed. As a devoted mom, she shuttled her children to junior lifeguard at Zuma beach, hosted Cub Scouts, and helped with Boy Scouts.

She earned a Bachelors in Business from CSU Northridge and enjoyed attending LACS. She liked assisting her elderly friends including driving them places when they could no longer drive themselves. Barbara was 92 and is fondly remembered by her sons Peter and David, daughter Jan, and granddaughter Stephanie.

By **Paula Van Berkom**, LACS Director

I met Barbara Benjamin more than ten years ago at the "Webspinners," a "high-tech" computer meeting that was presented by her son and a colleague. I have been friends with her ever since.

We used to have dinner at Denny's once a month together with Nancy Cattell before our LACS Tuesday general meeting. Barbara didn't mind making the whole long trip from the valley where she lived in Granada Hills. We always looked forward to our dinners and this catching-up time.

One time she had invited me to a yearly picnic of the Australian community. I enjoyed it, although I sometimes had a hard time understanding the "Down Under" accent!

I will miss her dearly.

My prayers and condolences to the family.

Rest in Peace, Barbara.

**FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR****End of Yahoo Groups**

Yahoo announced that they are shutting down the Yahoo Groups website on December 15, 2020. Members will no longer be able to send or receive emails from Yahoo Groups. (LACS had dropped Yahoo Groups and joined Groups IO in anticipation of this.)

**Yahoo Mail features will continue to function as expected**, and there will be no changes to your Yahoo Mail account, emails, photos, or other inbox content. There will also be no changes to other Yahoo properties or services. You can find more information about the Yahoo Groups shutdown and alternative service options on this [help page](#).

**HAPPY VETERANS DAY**

We thank all our  
LACS Veterans  
for their service.

May they know they are  
loved, appreciated and honored.

**HAPPY THANKSGIVING**

In spite of the  
difficulties of this  
year, we have  
many reasons to  
be thankful.

May blessings and  
joys be yours.

**Hyperlinks**

Note that underlined text (blue in the colored editions) in User Friendly usually indicates it's a hyperlink to a website.

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

October 13, 2020

By **Leah Clark**, LACS Editor and President  
**Cybersecurity and Understanding Resilience**

Speaker: **Joseph Oregon**, Cybersecurity Advisor, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Agency (CISA)



The CISA works to defend against today's risks and threats that are digital, physical, man-made, and natural. They are now more complex and diverse than ever before. The CISA's vision is to secure and make resilient the American people's infrastructure. Its mission is to partner with industry and the government to understand and manage risk. This year's CISA's overall theme is **Do Your Part. #Be CyberSmart**, and its key message is **If You Connect It, Protect It**.

There are 4.8 billion internet users — 62% of the world's population. CISA builds a cybersecurity awareness culture to develop best practices and to implement them. October is National Cybersecurity Awareness Month (NCSAM). It aims to encourage all Americans to take practical steps to enable cybersecurity behavior. All connected devices are potentially vulnerable. Each week of October has a specific focus.

Working at home opens up more possibilities for exploitation and hacking of our businesses. A lot of healthcare providers are running outdated systems. The line of communication between your connected devices is susceptible to attack. Attacks are becoming more sophisticated, and the volume of attacks has increased significantly.

**Stop.Think.Connect (STC)** is a year-round awareness campaign to increase understanding of current threats and empower the public to take charge of their safety and security in order to meet best practices. A lot of our small businesses are not keeping up with recommended security precautions. Many aren't

using multi-factor authentication, and best practices are still not being implemented.

There has been an enormous increase in ransomware attacks recently. Businesses would be better protected if they had good backups. 84% of companies fear that they may have been attacked and don't know it. A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a means to encrypt communication. Joseph Oregon thinks people should use VPN, especially if banking from home or using public Wi-Fi connections.

It seems in every week there is a new data breach reported to CISA. Joseph Oregon mentioned some of the past massive data breaches affecting millions of users.

Advanced Persistent Threat (APT) is a term for state-sponsored groups: terrorists, criminal hackers, and state actors with lesser and greater capabilities. Today, China and Russia pose the greatest espionage and cyber-attack threats. Financial-motivated cybercriminals will likely expand their targets in the United States in the next few years to disrupt health care, financial, government, and emergency services. Terrorists can obtain and disclose information through cyber operations to enable physical attacks against their victims. Joseph Oregon discussed in detail APT programs involving Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea who impose significant threats.

When a lot of devices were created, security wasn't built-in. In 2020 software development does incorporate security best practices. Many Internet of Things (IoT) devices are trying to catch up; a significant amount still has the potential of being hacked. Computers are being hijacked to control computers operating in a robotic network. Malicious actors can use publicly available search engines to discover vulnerable devices directly to provide backdoor entrances to sensitive networks. Hacking can be a service sold on the dark web.

The most obvious consequences of a data breach are the loss of revenue and trust.

### To develop a culture of cybersecurity

- Use basic cybersecurity training.
- Identify available cybersecurity training resources.
- Stay current on cybersecurity events and incidents.
- Encourage employees to make good choices online.
- Learn about risks like phishing and business email compromise.

Consult [www.cisa.gov/cyber-essentials](http://www.cisa.gov/cyber-essentials) for details on the above items.

For more information: [www.cisa.gov](http://www.cisa.gov).

*Note: Joseph Oregon was not allowed to permit distribution of the recording of this presentation.*

## SELLING ONLINE, PART 3

By **Mark Presky**, LACS Director

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

OK, you've gotten your item cleaned up (and functioning if applicable), and you have nice photos that show off your sale item. But more about photos before we go on. I'm not trying to make this complicated for you, but I AM trying to help you acquire what I've often learned the hard way. For Craigslist and Nextdoor, and most sales platforms, you may want to use smaller file sized photos, say in the 100-400 kilobyte (kb) range. They'll upload into the listing/ad faster that way. For eBay, which we'll discuss more about down-the-line, you'll want much larger file sizes for your photos. And eBay is stricter about backgrounds.

Most digital cameras today take larger file sized photos, e.g., about 2-5 megabytes (MB), but there are several ways to reduce the file sizes of your photos to 100-400 kilo-

bytes (KB) each. 1000 kilobytes = 1 megabyte. Remember my last, July 2020, column on using Google? This might be a good time to try using Google.com. I'm able to send photos from my iPhone to my laptop computer, and when I do, the phone asks me for the photos file size I'd like to send. But there are MANY ways to adjust photo file sizes. If you cannot do this on your own or by using Google, you might try the [Picmonkey.com](http://Picmonkey.com) program (free) or just ask someone. Call customer service where you bought your smartphone or camera, or ask a family member or friend for help. (Tip: Slow your friend down and take notes, so that you'll have it to refer to for the next time you need to do this. Soon, you won't need the notes.) Once you learn this essentially simple procedure you'll be on your way, and will be able to teach it to another friend or neighbor, who will be impressed with your tech skills.

Last, on the subject of photos, for now, take or cull the number of images down to 3-12. The number of photos each platform (e.g., Craigslist.com, Nextdoor.com) allows is different. Craigslist allows up to 24 photos. You DO want to show lots of detail and to include several item angles, including perhaps the bottom with the model number. Pick the best photos that show off your item but still disclose the defects (e.g., scratches). You don't want the potential buyer to drive all the way over to your place or to where you're meeting them, only to have them disappointed in the condition of the item and to walk away.

OK, enough about photos for now. On to stuff to watch out for, such as fraud, and to discourteous potential buyers in my next *Selling Online* column. (Don't get impatient; we're getting there.) ❖

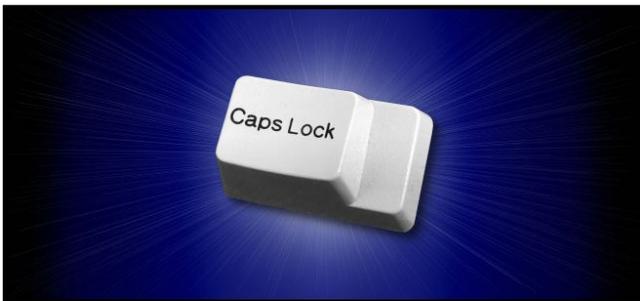


## THE HISTORY OF CAPS LOCK: WHY DOES THE CAPS LOCK KEY EXIST?

By **Benj Edwards**

@benjedwards

from *How To Geek*, August 2020.



Benj Edwards

**C**aps Lock: the key that **MAKES YOU SHOUT ACCIDENTALLY** when you press it. Do we really need it in this day and age? Why is it even there, anyway? Let's find out.

### It All Began in the Typewriter Era

Way back in the olden days, most typewriters only produced capital letters. In the 1870s, typewriter manufacturer Remington figured out an economical way to type both upper- and lowercase letters. It did so by placing two symbols or letters (such as upper and lower case) on each typebar—the piece of metal that struck the letters onto the paper.

To switch between the two symbols, you used a Shift key, which physically moved the entire type bar apparatus. This enabled a different portion of the typebar to strike the ribbon and produce a different letter.

Because the Shift key required a relatively large amount of mechanical force to use, it could be fatiguing to hold it down to type continuously in all caps. To fix this, Shift Lock was invented. This was basically a latching key that held the shifting mechanism in place. It was often just labeled "Lock."

### Shift Lock Becomes Caps Lock

On typewriters, the Shift Lock modified every key's function, including letters (from lower- to uppercase) and other characters, as well, such as numbers and symbols.

In the computer era, though, keyboards no longer physically moved type bars, so keyboard locks were free to diversify. Some terminal and computer keyboards retained the Shift Lock key, while others included a new key called "Caps Lock." This key only changed lowercase letters to uppercase and didn't affect any other keys.



The LA36 DECWriter II keyboard. DEC

According to [this anti-Caps Lock article](#) by Daniel Colin James, the original invention of Caps Lock seems to be linked to [this 1968 Patent](#), which applies to an electronic terminal keyboard invented by Douglas A. Kerr of Bell Labs.

James interviewed Kerr, who said he invented the "Caps" key because his boss's secretary was frustrated by typing strings of characters like "@#\$%" instead of numbers when Shift Lock was enabled.

But patents don't always translate into real products. The earliest record we could find of an actual Caps Lock key on a commercial product was the keyboard built into the LA36 DECwriter II terminal/teletype. Announced in 1974, it was a teletype and computer printer rolled into one.

The LA36 DECwriter II's [service manual](#) describes Caps Lock (on page 1-1) as a way to reduce the 96 upper- and lowercase character set into a set of 64 uppercase

characters. Originally, you were only able to set this internally via a switch on a circuit board. This suggests that permanent capital-letter production was a desirable feature at the time. This might have been because people were accustomed to the all-caps style of many earlier teletypes.

There might be an earlier example of Caps Lock yet to be rediscovered, however. It's unclear to what extent DEC was influenced by Kerr's patent (if it was at all). It's possible the DEC's Caps Lock just originated as a compatibility feature to imitate the all-caps behavior of older teletypes.

### Caps Lock in the PC Era

Several early home computers in the 1970s, such as the Apple II and the TRS-80 Model 1, didn't support lowercase letters, so there was no need for a Caps Lock. However, IBM terminals, which borrowed heavily from the [IBM Selectric typewriter](#) layout, often included a Shift Lock, and later, a Caps Lock key.

When IBM created its [Personal Computer](#) in 1981, it included a Caps Lock key, but IBM positioned it just to the right of the space bar—relatively out of the way. To the left of the A key, you'd find the Control key instead. This placement had been common on the all-caps terminal and teletype keyboards.



Benj Edwards

In 1984, when IBM converted its keyboard layout to the [101-key Extended Keyboard](#) (aka the Model M), it placed the Caps Lock key to the left of A, and some people still angrily complain about it to this day.

Now that we know about Kerr's patent and the DECWriter II, we can see that IBM actually just restored Caps Lock to its original position. Unfortunately, that position is a prominent one, so people often accidentally press Caps Lock and type SHOUTY WORDS. It also disrupts the typing of case-sensitive passwords.

As we'll see, though, there are actually some good reasons why the Caps Lock key is still around.

### People Still Use Caps Lock

While many people complain about Caps Lock, others still use it in business to save time and effort. Some of the most common uses include:

**[Report headers](#):** This is a throwback to the typewriter era when different fonts were unavailable.

**[Serial or VIN numbers](#):** Many of these contain only capital letters.

**[Legal agreements](#):** Lawyers have used all-caps in legal documents since the typewriter era to make important terms more conspicuous.

**[To label elements in architectural plans](#):** Architects have done this since the days of handwritten letters. Today, they still use handwriting-like architectural fonts in CAD programs.

Beyond these more high-profile uses, there's also the issue of backward compatibility. For example, a feature that was present on [IBM's 1981 5150 PC](#) is likely still around in case a legacy application still uses it.

### How to Type in All Caps Without Using Caps Lock

If you do frequently type in all caps, but you dislike using Caps Lock (or the key is missing), you're in luck. Most word processing programs allow you to type text normally, then to select it, and apply an all-caps style.

Here's how to do that in a few common applications:

**Microsoft Word:** Select the text you want in all-caps, and then press Control+Shift+A on Windows, or Command+Shift+A on Mac.

**Google Docs:** Highlight the text you want to change, and then select Format > Text > Capitalization > UPPERCASE in the menu bar.

**Pages:** Highlight the text you want to change, and then select Format > Font > Capitalization > All Caps in the menu bar.

You can also [reassign the Caps Lock key](#) to perform another function (such as Control), use it as a [modifier key](#) in Windows 10, or [disable it completely](#).

While a lot of folks might never need it, Caps Lock isn't useless. As we noted above, many people still use it at work, so it'll likely be with us for decades to come.

[Benj Edwards](#) is a Staff Writer for *How-To Geek*. For over 14 years, he has written about technology and tech history for sites such as The Atlantic, Fast Company, PCMag, PCWorld, Macworld, Ars Technica, and Wired. In 2005, he created Vintage Computing and Gaming, a blog devoted to tech history. He also created The Culture of Tech podcast, and he regularly contributes to the Retronauts retrogaming podcast. ❖

### WHAT IS CREATIVE COMMONS & EXPLANATION OF EACH LICENSE

By **Steve Costello**, [scostello \(at\) sefcug.co](mailto:scostello@sefcug.co)  
<https://www.online-tech-tips.com/computer-tips/what-is-creative-commons-explanation-of-each-license/>

I remind anyone who blogs, edits a newsletter, or wants to use information or photos, that there is a legal way to do so. There is much good information and images available for use under Creative Commons licensing. Check out the above link to learn more. ❖

## GENEALOGY RESEARCH ONLINE

By **Frank Fota**, Secretary & APCUG Rep, Fredericksburg PCUG, MD  
 FPCUG Notes for April 2020  
[www.fpcug.org](http://www.fpcug.org)  
 fotafm (at) gmail.com

Well, the Coronavirus has us isolated at home instead of at work. So I've heard that some people are tackling tasks they've deferred for the proverbial "rainy day." I've often told myself that I would scan that box of photos I rescued from my departed uncle's home before its contents were sold at an estate sale. I intend to distribute the images to my relatives. The issue is identifying the people in the photos. Genealogical research can be a tedious task, just such a task for a time like this. If you are interested in creating a family tree or simply learning more about your ancestors, there are many websites where you can conduct genealogical research. Some of these websites are interactive and allow you to share photos and communicate with distant relatives. Bob Rankin at [AskBobRankin.com](http://AskBobRankin.com) provides a list of useful sites for Genealogical research:

1. **Ancestry.com** – perhaps the best known website for genealogical research. It is a subscription-based service that costs \$199/year or \$99 for six months. A 14-day trial will allow you to evaluate the service. For an additional fee, the "World Explorer" package adds the ability to search internationally.



2. **Cyndi's List** – is a free, "...categorized & cross-referenced index to genealogical resources on the internet. Over 335,000 genealogical sites are linked from this website.

*Cyndi's List*

(Continued on Page 17)

## LACS NOTICES

### WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

**New Members (0)**

**Renewals (3)**

Newton Bernstein

Bobbi Gold

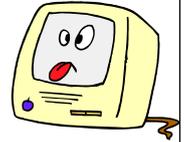
Betty Weatherspoon



### 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](http://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

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. It's recommended to join both lists.

- **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.

### 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.

### HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to [www.lacspc.org](http://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, email your changes to **membership (at) lacspc.org**, or mail it to LACS, 11664 National Blvd. #343, Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802.

### LACS IS ON TWITTER

On **Twitter**, follow us at:

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

### 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



### LACS Board Meeting

**Date:** Monday, November 2, 2020 via Zoom

**Time:** 7:00 P.M.

**Where:** At your home via Zoom

### General Meeting

**Date:** Tuesday, November 10, 2020 via Zoom

**Time:** 7:30 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

**Where:** At your home via Zoom

November 2: **LACS Board Meeting**

November 3: Election Day

November 10: **LACS General Meeting**

November 11: Veterans Day

November 26: Thanksgiving



### VISIT OTHER USER GROUPS

Check out this URL for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom meetings, and for a lot more ideas for using Zoom and managing dealing with the stay-at-home restrictions.

<https://apcug2.org/tech-things-to-learn-while-sheltering-in-place/>

## GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS VIA ZOOM

**November 10:** Saving Your Life with Wearable Technology, Part 2

**December 8:** Virtual Holiday Celebration  
Due to the pandemic, our future presentations may be uncertain. Check email and *User Friendly* for updates.

### 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, leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net, if you have any questions, or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day. Try to enter at least five to ten minutes before the meeting's start time to avoid interrupting the meeting.

### PODCASTS & ZOOM RECORDINGS

To listen to the podcasts of most of our past in-person general meetings, go to <https://www.lacspc.org/category/audio-files/>.

Click on the session you want to hear. **LACS members 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/>

To find a specific article or topic, use the search box on the right below the picture.

## 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. - 10  
Android Smartphones - 8  
Apple devices - 12  
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8  
Digital Imaging, Editing - 11  
Digital Photography - 11  
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3  
Genealogy - 8  
Groups.IO - 8

Hardware - 7  
Linux - 4  
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7  
Mozilla Firefox - 7  
MS Excel - 8, 12, 13  
MS Word - 1, 3, 13  
MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10  
MS PowerPoint - 12  
MS Publisher - 2

Open Office - 6  
Photoshop - 10  
Quicken - 8, 13  
Thunderbird - 7  
Utilities - 7, 8  
Visual Basic - 5  
Websites - 5  
Windows - 6, 7, 8  
WordPerfect - 8  
Zoom - 2, 9

Number	Name	Preferred		
		Phone for Calls	From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	310-471-7893	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	310-677-2792	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	310-397-9453	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
4	Hughes, Bill	424-259-1818	Any	Any
5	Ialongo, Gilbert	310-641-7906	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Johnson, Carol	310-372-8535	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
7	McKnight, Jim	310-823-7829	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
8	Nordlinger, Stephanie	323-299-3244	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
9	Presky, Mark	310-780-3302	Any	Any
10	Rozek, E. J.	310-823-3811	Noon	8:00 PM
11	Silverstein, Elliot	310-670-1544	10:00 AM	10:00 PM
12	Van Berkomp, Paula	310-398-6734	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
13	Wilder, Joan	310-472-8445	9:00 AM	9:00 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 Berkomp	2021	310-398-6734
Director	Howard Krivoy	2020	310-717-7465
Director	Mark Presky	2020	310-780-3302
Director	E. J. Rozek	2020	310-823-3811
Director	<b>Open</b>	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
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 Berkomp		310-398-6734

**Mailing Address** 11664 National Blvd., #343, Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802

**Website** [www.lacspc.org](http://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.

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## 16 WAYS TO REPURPOSE YOUR OLD GADGETS

By **Eric Schoon** @ericpschoon

Review Geek, September 17, 2020

Eric Schoon is a writer for *Review Geek* and has spent most of his life thinking about and analyzing products of all shapes and sizes. From the latest games to the hottest smartphones, he enjoys finding the most significant strengths and weaknesses of everything he gets his hands on and then passing that information on to you.



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Tech is constantly outdated, and because of that, you might have a small gadget graveyard building up in your house somewhere. But you spent a decent amount of money on all that stuff, so it shouldn't go to waste! So before you get rid of it, let's go over some cool things you can do with those dated pieces of tech.

*Note: When applicable, tutorials or instructions for various projects will be available through links on the bullet-points.*

### Computers

Whether it's an old Windows desktop or an out-of-date MacBook, you might have a computer or two collecting dust in your closet. And while dated specs may make them difficult to use nowadays, there are still a few ways you can use them.

- **Turn it into a Chromebook:**  
There is a way to squeeze some life and performance out of your old laptop or desktop before it finally dies out: Install ChromiumOS on it. ChromiumOS is the open-source version of Google's Chrome OS, and it's a less intensive operating system than something like Windows. While Chromium OS can't do everything more complicated operating systems can, it's a more than an acceptable replacement for most people.
- **A Laptop as a Secondary Monitor:** If you've got a Windows PC and a Windows laptop, you can wirelessly connect them so that the laptop can serve as a monitor to the PC. Having two monitors is always nice, and this is a simple way to add on to your current setup without dropping more money on a new monitor. Be aware this is a wireless connection, so there can be some delay.
- **Turn it into a Plex Machine:**  
Plex is a great service for watching your digital copies of movies and shows anywhere. The thing is, you need a central server for your library to live on. Fortunately, the software for creating such a server is available for Mac and Windows. The process of turning your old computer into a Plex server is relatively simple.
- **Turn a Broken Screen Laptop into a Desktop:**  
A laptop with a broken screen can feel useless. However, there's a simple way you can get more use out of it—just use it as a desktop. Buy an external monitor (or salvage an old one), and you're good to go. You might need to purchase a [USB hub with an HDMI port](#) for this to work.
- **Your Old Case is a Useful Box:**  
Your dusty old PC may barely boot nowadays, but if you tear out all of the internal hardware, then the actual case can be

surprisingly useful. Most PC cases are just big boxes, and there's a lot you can do with an empty box from a [geeky mailbox](#) to a [unique shelving unit](#).

## Phones



*pkproject/Shutterstock.com*

While an old phone is the opposite of fun to use (especially on the Android side of things), there are some things you can do with their cameras—even if the cameras aren't good.

- **Use it as a Dashcam:**  
A dashcam is invaluable for drivers to have installed, but the price barrier and setup process can make it a difficult sell. But with a [simple phone dock](#) and a [car charger](#), you can easily turn your old phone into a functional dashcam. Just be prepared to delete the video files off your phone regularly to free up space.
- **Use it as a Webcam:**  
Webcams are a rare commodity nowadays, but it's pretty simple to turn your phone into a wireless webcam. The app Epocam is great for this, and it is available on both [Android](#) and [iOS](#). You'll probably also want a [tripod for your phone](#) for a simpler setup.

## Tablets

Your old tablet may take a long time to boot up, but that doesn't matter as much if it's only serving one purpose.



*Devenorr/Shutterstock.com*

- **Dedicated Weather Station ([Android/iOS](#)):**  
While a tablet may slow down over the years, you don't exactly need a lot of power to check the weather. You can set your tablet up with a kickstand and a charger, and keep your weather app of choice open at all times. With the added benefit of virtual assistants, this is a great way to keep up with the weather.
- **Dedicated Calendar ([Android/iOS](#)) and [To-Do](#) Station:**  
Forget wall calendars and notebooks. You can easily turn your tablet into a dedicated scheduling / productivity station similar to the weather station. Just install your calendar and to-do apps of choice, and set up your tablet with a kickstand and charger.
- **[Recipe Machine](#):**  
Here's another simple option, but keeping a tablet in the kitchen just for recipes is really useful. It's also nice to have something more disposable to take this place than the phone or tablet you use every day.
- **SmartHome Hub ([Android/iOS](#)):**  
If you're heavily invested in the world of smart homes you're going to need a place to manage all of your smart devices. And old tablets are great for this as devices like the Amazon Echo and

Google Home have companion apps for tablets. Apple also fully supports the iPad to act as a Home Hub.

## Consoles



[emodpk/Shutterstock.com](#)

While game consoles may appear as restricted pieces of tech at first glance, there are some bonus ways to use them nowadays besides playing their respective libraries of games.

- **Homebrewing:**  
This refers to flashing ROMs of various games digitally to a console's memory. The process is wildly different for every console, and as such, the difficulty level is also varied. The Wii (and by extension, Wii U) is one the [simplest consoles to Homebrew](#), so if you've got one of those lying around, start there. Besides that, your mileage will vary, depending on the systems you have available to you — research will be critical here.
- **Use it as a Media Center:**  
Your old Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3 may be more useful than you think. Both of these systems can read DVDs (the PS3 can even read Blu-Rays), but they also have access to apps like Netflix ([Xbox 360/PS3](#)) and Hulu ([Xbox 360/PS3](#)). The online stores for both of these are still up, so it's as simple as downloading the app and signing in. Despite their age, these systems are still fully viable media centers today.

## Miscellaneous



### Panasonic

Here are the projects that don't fit into any of the categories above. That doesn't mean you should discount them though; they're still pretty cool.

- **[Cameras as Webcams:](#)**  
Many digital cameras can serve as webcams with a simple cord, but the process can be more complicated for high-end DSLR cameras. Fortunately, [Sony](#), [Panasonic](#), and [Canon](#) have all released software that makes it relatively simple to set up your fancy camera as a high-end webcam.
- **[Add Bluetooth to Your iPod Dock:](#)**  
Did you buy a dock for your old iPod so that you could listen to tunes loud and clear? Chances are, it's not getting much use nowadays, but it can still prove useful. Through [an adapter from ZIOCOM](#), you can add Bluetooth functionality to your old iPod dock and use it the same way you would use any standard Bluetooth speaker.
- **[Turn an Old Monitor into a Smart Mirror:](#)**  
Why limit your mirror only to show yourself when you look at it? With a smart mirror, you could see the time, weather, and news all while getting ready for work. This is a DIY project you'll have to spend some time on, and depending on how

fancy you get with the frame, it can be quite expensive, but the results will be well worth it.

Hopefully, one of these suggestions will save your old tech from being dumped just yet. While old tech may not be as useful as the brand-new devices, it's always nice to save some money by repurposing something. ❖

## MODERN TELEVISION TECHNOLOGY

By **Jeff Wilkinson**, President  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV  
Gigabyte Gazette, February 2020  
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After a recent class on "Getting the Most From Your Roku," and preparing for a March General Meeting update on "Cutting the Cord," I reflected on how different television viewing is today. Growing up in San Francisco, my family had just a few choices for television viewing, all over the air, and received with an antenna either mounted on the roof or rabbit ears that sat on top of the massive console. I'm sure we all remember the gyrations we went through when using rabbit ears in an attempt to receive stable snow and ghost-free pictures! And, of course, the drudgery of walking over to the TV to manually change the channel. How times have changed! Now we change channels and volume from our favorite viewing spot and control source, and even record our favorite shows!

Today, we watch TV on smartphones, tablets, computers, and television sets in various resolutions. We stream to TVs using different devices like Roku, Fire TV Stick, and Android boxes, and we do it in a multitude of formats. Many years and millions of dollars have been spent to build a streaming infrastructure capable of on-demand and live streaming to a

myriad of different devices and configurations. According to streaming media consultant and expert [Dan Rayburn](#), the internet wasn't set up to do this top quality video on such a large scale. Streaming isn't a static medium like TV, and our on-demand consumption pattern requires video to travel through lots of steps as it's formatted for the final destination device.

If you look at some of the parts of the required process of streaming a live event, it is a complicated and involved process. First, you must capture the event, then convert the file format, add a content protection scheme, add insertion for on-demand revenue models, and, finally, formatting for delivery through the internet to many devices.

According to Mr. Rayburn, it's a lot more complicated. There's no standard for encoding, so video files need to be "wrapped" differently for every platform they're delivered to. Files are wrapped differently for [Roku](#) than they are for a desktop browser, a smart TV, or an Android or iOS device. A single video file could be wrapped 20 times or more depending on the devices to which it's being delivered. Enjoying video on a powerful computational device such as an Xbox or PlayStation is different than streaming to a device with less memory and computational power such as a Fire Stick. The size of the video file segments must be adjusted as well as the metadata payload. And we have begun to take for granted that the video we desire will be available in 720, 1080p, or even 4K quickly and reliably when and where we want it.

Video streaming is a whole new frontier to be developed. As the deployment of streaming options continually expands, so must the technology and computing power needed to deliver it reliably.

This is a little background about what is involved in streaming content as we all anxiously look for ways to improve our television viewing experience. ❖

## YOUR NEXT PRINTER INKJET, LASER, OR ALL-IN-ONE?

By **Bob Rankin**

<https://askbobrankin.com/>



When shopping for a new printer, should you look for an inkjet or a laser? How about a plain old printer versus an all-in-one (AIO) printer, scanner, copier, and fax? The inkjet vs. laser choice depends on what you print and how often you print it. Here's a look at the tradeoffs, and factors to consider when buying a printer.

### Which Printer is Best For You?

So you're in the market for a new printer. Here are some tips to help you decide. An all-in-one printer seems to be the de facto standard for all but the tightest budgets these days. But it's not the right choice for every one.

Laser technology is ideal for black text or graphics. It uses heat to fuse tiny dots of black toner to paper, creating a crisp and fade-resistant image of an all-black document or greyscale picture. There's no "bleeding" as there can be with ink. High-volume print jobs are handled better by laser printers. Laser technology is inherently faster than inkjet, and a laser toner cartridge prints ten times more pages than an inkjet cartridge.



If you print a lot, if speed is important to you, and you don't need color capability, a monochrome laser printer may be your best choice. Color lasers are an option, but tend to be rather pricey. (More on cost considerations later.)

On the other hand, some bleeding is desirable when printing high-quality color images, like family photos. In nature, liquids blend together to form new colors; they do not just trick the eye by juxtapositioning dots of primary colors, as color laser printers do. Inkjet printers also lay down primary colors only, but they bleed and blend just enough to produce more natural-looking colors. Glossy photo paper is designed for ink; color laser prints don't look as good as inkjet even on the expensive, glossy paper.

That brings us to cost, both upfront and over the printer's entire lifecycle. A low-end inkjet printer may cost under \$30; an entry-level monochrome laser printer costs \$50. Consumer-grade color laser printers run between \$150 and \$300; the fastest inkjet printers are in the \$100 to \$250 range. As you can see, the difference in upfront cost is not that great, but it's easily made up in the long-term costs of supplies and maintenance.

### Don't Forget To Factor in Supply Costs

An HP-branded black inkjet cartridge for an OfficeJet Pro 8610 costs \$40 and yields about 2300 printed pages (about 1.7 cents/page). The color cartridges cost \$30 each and yield 1500 pages (2 cents/page). But this \$25 laser cartridge for the Canon MF236n laser prints 2,400 typical pages (less than 1 cent/page). So over time, your cost for inkjet printing will be about twice as much as laser.

The price gap between toner and ink narrows when you look at remanufactured cartridges, which can cost 25% to 70% less than OEM cartridges. It's hard to compare cost-per-page in the remanufactured market because prices vary a lot from one recycler to another,

and so does the amount of ink or toner supplied. See my article [The Truth About Discount Ink Cartridges](#) for my recommendations on suppliers for discount ink cartridges.

Whether you go with laser or inkjet, look for high capacity cartridges available because that will drive cost per page even lower.

Some printer vendors unfairly try to prevent you from buying third-party or refilled inkjet cartridges. In my article [HP Playing Dirty Tricks?](#) I tell the story of my HP printer suddenly telling me that all of my inkjet cartridges appeared to be "damaged," and how I found a solution.

#### To summarize the laser vs. inkjet decision:

- Fast printing of black text and greyscale images: go monochrome laser
- Lots of black and occasional, mid-quality color: go color laser
- Low volume printing, upfront cost a major factor: go inkjet
- Printing color documents or high-quality photos: go inkjet

A few caveats, though... If you live in a very dry area, or if you print only on rare occasions, an inkjet may not be a good choice. Ink can dry up in dry, hot climates, and print heads may clog if the printer is not used on a regular basis. Laser toner is powder, so it fares well in a dry place. But in high humidity, pages printed on a laser can stick together. If you manage temperature and humidity in your home or office, these problems will not be an issue.

So what about a single-function printer version an all-in-one? As I said, the decision to buy an all-in-one version of a given printer model is really a no-brainer. Who wants to run to the office store to scan a document, make a few photocopies or send a fax? The price difference is minor, and the joy of digitizing all your paper clutter is immense. You'll save money by not buying filing cabinets, folders, labels, and hours of time as well. ❖



## Genealogy Research Online

*Continued from Page 7*

3. **Family Search** – is run by the LDS Church. It provides access to over a billion records worldwide at no cost. The LDS Church also offers personal assistance and access to some of the paid sites via local family history centers. A local family history center is located at 10741 Santa Monica Blvd, Los Angeles, 90025, 310-474-9990.



4. **Roots Web** – is the oldest and perhaps the largest genealogy site on the internet. The Roots Web site has genealogy search engines and message boards where you can obtain help from budding, but more experienced genealogists.



5. **USGenWeb** – provides lists of genealogy resources by state and county.



6. **WorldGenWeb** – is similar to USGenWeb. Bob Rankin says, "WorldGenWeb is a nonprofit volunteer organization dedicated to the free use and access of public domain genealogical information."



Mr. Rankin notes several other websites and resources that are provided in the article linked above (i.e., at [AskBobRankin.com](#)). He provides links to genealogy software. ❖

### 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>

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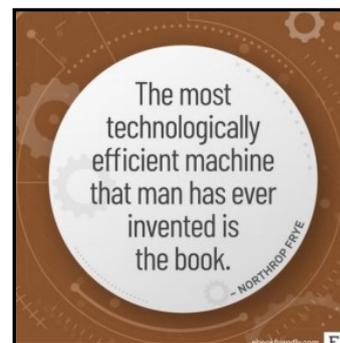
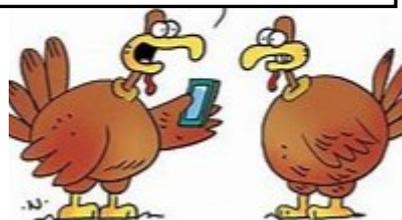
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### LAUGHING OUT LOUD

"Hey officer, how did the hackers escape?"

"No idea, they just ransomware!"

Dude, I have a ton of online followers and they all want me over for dinner!



From the *News Journal* of the Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts, IL.

### 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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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.

**Monthly general meetings will be via Zoom during the pandemic stay-at-home orders. Members also enjoy these special benefits:**

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- **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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- **Virtual Technology Conferences (VTCs)** and free quarterly webinars.
- **Information** on training and technical education.
- 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.
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Before each meeting, members and invited guests will receive an email with the URL link to the meeting. If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know. When you click on the link, you will enter a waiting room. Then the host or a co-host will admit you to the meeting.

Please try to arrive at least a few minutes before the meeting start-time so you don't interrupt the meeting and any problems can be solved. If you need to take a break during a meeting, do not click on Leave or End. If you do, the meeting will be interrupted for someone to re-admit you from the waiting room. You may turn off your video when you are gone.