

User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group

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APCUG EVENTS

Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other up-coming events.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

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



An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

DECEMBER 11 HOLIDAY LUNCH PARTY

Date: Saturday, December 11

Time: 1:00 PM

Cost: \$25.00 (including tax and tip)

Cash only—Please bring exact change

Where: Golden China Restaurant

9018 Venice Blvd. Culver City 90232

RSVP with the number in your party by **December 7** to Leah Clark or Annette Tossounian. Spouses and guests are welcome. Contact Annette or Leah with questions.

Everyone must have proof of COVID vaccination and a mask to enter.

We are anxious to celebrate the holidays with LACS members and their guests. Please watch your email for updates. There will be **no** general meeting in December.

Breaking News!
Santa has been studying his Nice and Naughty lists. He has found ALL LACS members on the Nice List.



Merry
Christmas



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR
HAPPY HOLIDAYS



Happy
Hanukkah

Holiday Lunch Party Saturday, December 11

We are looking forward to enjoying socializing and good food with LACS members and their guests at our Holiday Lunch Party. Please be sure everyone brings their **COVID vaccination card and a mask**. We celebrate all LACS member volunteers who have contributed their time and energy to making 2021 a good year for us. Thanks to all.

Gift Membership

Don't forget that a LACS member may give a gift membership to someone who has never been a member. It is only \$20.00 for one year. This may be a helpful idea for your holiday shopping.

Proofreader Needed

I could use another proofreader for *User Friendly*. It is too easy for me to miss typos, have something missing or misplaced, or some other error. This is usually done from the 23rd to the 26th of each month. If you want to give it a try, please email me. I thank you.

The APCUG Website <https://apcug2.org>

If you haven't looked at the APCUG website recently, you should give it a try. Get news about free up-coming video conferences, many tips for all computer and smartphone platforms, and find out what other groups are doing. See the winners of the Newsletter, Website and Photography contests.

Condolences

We offer our sincere sympathy to our member, Elliot Silverstein, at the passing of his wife, of nearly 65 years, Irma. She loved the outdoors and music, and she was active in the League of Women Voters. LACS members will remember her as a special person. Our prayers are with Elliot at this sad time that all his beautiful memories will sustain him.



Now is the Worst Time To Make Tech Purchases

A member recommended an article from the *ComputerWorld*, November 9 issue by Steven J. Vaughan-Nichols. Below is a link to it. Because of supply chain problems, getting new PCs, smartphones, routers, hubs, or any electronic device is harder and more expensive than ever. For now, stick with what you've got or consider used equipment.

<https://www.computerworld.com/article/3639830/thinking-of-upgrading-yourcompany-s-tech-gear-now-snot-the-time.html> or tinyurl.com/dm82v3sj

Order of LACS General Meeting

When members ask questions before the presentation, the speaker, who may be in a later time zone, is delayed. Every attendee should have time to ask questions. So this is a meeting schedule I want to try to follow.

6:30 - 7:00 — Q & A and socializing
7:00 - 7:15 — Introductions and LACS announcements

7:15 - 8:30 — Presentation and Q & A
8:30 - 9:00 (or when all are finished)
— Forum for questions and comments

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

November 9, 2021

By **Leah Clark**, LACS President and Editor

Topic: **Encryption**

Speaker: **Mark Schulman**

Central Florida Computer Society

Mark Schulman talked about three different ways to use encryption. Encryption is scrambling up data so other people cannot get at it. When a website starts with https, your data are encrypted from your browser via the servers to the recipients. Today, much of our data is on portable devices that may be lost or stolen. Encryption can help to keep them secure.

1. Single-File Encryption

If you have a single file that you want to keep secure or email to someone, you may want to encrypt it. There are several software programs that can encrypt a single file and apply a password to the file. Some single-file encryption options are Microsoft Office (built-in), 7-Zip (free software), and AESCrypt (free software). Mark demonstrated examples of these.

Open a **Microsoft Office** file, then go to the File menu > Info > Protect Document > Encrypt with Password. Pick a good, long password and save the document. Anyone needs to enter the password to open that document.

To encrypt a file that's not an MS Office document, Mark showed **AESCrypt**. After he installed it, he right-clicked on a .pdf file > AES Encrypt > Enter a Password. A new file is created with a .aes extension. The password will be needed to open it; the person receiving the file must also have the AES software.

7-Zip is often used to compress multiple files into a single encrypted file. Open 7-Zip > select and right-click on the files > Add to Archives >. A file called 2020 7Z is created; it can be renamed. You can then enter a password and click OK.

Mark warned us to be careful to select a file name that doesn't give too much information.

Be sure to give or send the password to recipients separately from the encrypted file.

2. Encrypted Containers

You can create a disc in which all the files in it, external drives, laptops, and PCs to store many encrypted files and to encrypt or decrypt them as needed automatically.

Mark uses **VeraCrypt**, which is free, open-source software. You create a VeraCrypt container; the contents are encrypted with a password, and it becomes a virtual hard drive on your system. Mark demonstrated creating a VeraCrypt container. As files are dragged into the container, they are encrypted and are decrypted when opened.

There are a few more cool VeraCrypt features. Put a container on a flash drive with the **Traveler Flash Drive**, and VeraCrypt also puts a copy of itself on the flash drive.

Key Files will open a VeraCrypt container without needing to remember a password. You put a file on a flash drive that will be like a key to open an encrypted file.

A **Hidden container** will hide the fact that there is any data there at all.

3. Whole-Drive Encryption

VeraCrypt can encrypt your entire hard drive. Mark uses this on his laptops in case they should become lost. A password will be needed to start up the computer. Use a good password, and this is uncrackable by any known technology. Don't lose the password — back up your laptop.

Phones

Modern phones have whole-phone encryption built in. **ColorNote**, is a note-taking app that can encrypt any note. **Microsoft OneNote** includes encryption.

During Q & A, Mark discussed **LastPass** for managing your passwords.

LACS members have a link to the recording of this meeting for more information from this excellent presentation. ❖

SELLING ONLINE, PART 6

By **Mark Presky**, LACS Director

This column will cover a few miscellaneous items not discussed in my previous discussions of online selling.

NEVER DELIVER! Someone may be waiting in a dark stairwell or behind a wall to rob you or worse. In addition, once you have taken the trouble to deliver the item, they will always take advantage of your now being in their territory and showing that you are anxious to sell the item or negotiate a lower price. Legitimate buyers will find a way to meet with you at your place, the corner of your street, a shopping center, or better, a police station to complete the sale. If concerned about meeting with a stranger, ask a friend or neighbor to be with you when the buyer arrives. During our Covid-19 crisis, buyers were willing to stand on the sidewalk in front of my house to examine items and pay me over the fence. (I then took the cash inside and disinfected it with 10% bleach.)

Buyer discourtesy: People often don't show up after making an appointment with you. Provide a meeting address or place only when they are ready to pick up the item. And don't wait around much past the meeting time if you have an errand to run – meet when it is convenient for you. Let them know that you won't wait long. If living in an apartment, meet in the building lobby or in front of the building. Have them call or text you when they arrive. Don't hand them the item while they sit in their car. And if the item is an electrical appliance, is there a safe, convenient place to plug it in to demonstrate that it's functioning if they desire to see it working?

I am not a lawyer, and I offer no legal advice. Still, I have been told that unless one provides a verbal or written warranty, sales of used items are usually understood to be sold "as is" – with an exception for eBay. With eBay, if I believe there is a chance that a

buyer may not be happy with a sales item once seen, I list it for "local pickup only." Then they can handle the item before closing the sale (and leave positive feedback, which confirms delivery BEFORE taking the item). On eBay, occasionally, people have been known to damage an item, claim that it was damaged upon receipt, and then force the seller to pay for return shipping and a refund.

Good luck! I hope that I've covered the basics and that you feel more confident with trying your hand at online selling. As you've read, it may take some time and effort, but it can definitely be fun.

Go to <https://www.lacspc.org/category/uf-index/> to access the User Friendly indexes to find parts 1-5 of this series. ❖

HOW TO SAFELY CLEAN YOUR TV OR MONITOR

By **Tim Brookes**

How-To Geek.com



Yeti studio/Shutterstock.com

There's definitely a *wrong* way to clean your TV or monitor screen. Mess it up, and you'll be looking at scratches, smears, or worse for a long time. Get it right, and your display will gleam like the day you bought it.

Before you reach for a duster or cleaning solution, make sure you read this.

Consult The Manufacturer's Instructions

Your TV or monitor manufacturer likely has its own set of cleaning instructions for your specific display type. This goes for LG

OLEDs, Samsung QLEDs, and Dell touchscreen monitors.

While these manufacturer guides often err on the side of caution and recommend very little in the way of cleaning products, you may also find some specific advice to your particular display and the types of coatings used on it.

Some manufacturers, like Dell, recommend 70 -90% isopropyl alcohol on some products. Others like LG never recommend even moistening the display. If your display is still under warranty, you might want to carefully follow these instructions to avoid any problems if you have to make a claim later on.

Avoid Harsh Cleaning Chemicals

The most important thing to remember is to avoid any harsh cleaning chemicals including glass cleaners like Windex, polishes, and even isopropyl alcohol, unless you have specific clearance from the manufacturer that this will not damage the screen.



Mihael Lenard/Shutterstock.com

Such cleaning products are usually made with ammonia, alcohol, and they contain other products and fragrances that could damage the display. These screens often have protective coatings on them to combat glare and reflections or oleophobic coatings to repel fingerprint oil in the case of touchscreens.

If you've already used something like this with no ill-effect, consider yourself lucky and avoid using it again in the future. Many displays will be utterly ruined by applying these household cleaners, leaving streaks and clouding that

could render the display worthless.

Air and Microfiber Cloths Are Your Friends

Canned air is an excellent way of removing dust from a display surface without causing any damage. Dust particles, though small, may scratch sensitive surfaces when pressure is applied. By not touching the display, you're minimizing your risk of scratching the delicate surface. This is especially true of glass TV and monitors, like those that use OLED technology.



Falcon Dust-Off

Compressed Gas, 3.5 oz

This can of compressed air is perfect for safely cleaning your electronics, and the can is compact enough to fit in your computer desk.

Second to canned air is a high-quality microfiber cloth, ideally with deep grooves to catch all the dust without moving it over the screen. Use the lightest of touches when cleaning to avoid undue pressure on the display. You may need to turn to a microfibre cloth when canned air doesn't cut it.

Avoid paper-based cleaning products like tissues or kitchen towels since they contain many small fibers that can scratch the display. This is good advice in general when cleaning anything reflective, whether it's a shiny plastic gadget or a pair of reading glasses.

You should take care when cleaning the microfiber cloths too. Avoid putting them in the wash with any fabric softeners or in the dryer with a dryer sheet since these products contain oils and waxes that may transfer to any surfaces you wish to clean. This will leave unwanted streaks on your display.

Lastly, if your microfiber cloth has a tag, then be aware that the tag probably isn't

made of the same microfiber material and may cause damage to your display. For peace of mind, snip off any tags with a pair of scissors before using the cloth.

Use Distilled Water Where Necessary

When air and dry microfiber cloth don't cut it, you may need to turn to distilled water instead. While tap water often contains particles and minerals that may scratch your screen, distilled or "pure" water does not.

Use a pump spray bottle to mist a microfiber cloth until *just* damp, then spot-fix any stubborn grime that has adhered itself to your screen. This will likely only work for dry matter. Oil and other streaky marks will probably need a different approach.

Be aware that some manufacturers will never recommend using any moisture near your display. LG is one such display manufacturer that dissuades customers from doing so. However, the company does not acknowledge that a dry microfiber cloth is often insufficient to remove stubborn dirt.

You'll have to use your intuition at this point. We've used distilled water and a microfiber cloth to remove dried-on grime from a glass-panel LG OLED with no ill effect since the alternative was a distractingly dirty screen.

Screen Cleaning Products Exist if You Need Them

Some experts recommend using a small amount of dishwashing liquid dissolved into distilled water to remove oily stains with a microfiber cloth. Once you've attacked the effective area, a clean microfiber cloth that's been moistened with distilled water should remove any remaining residue.



AudioQuest CleanScreen Kit with Cleaning Fluid, Microfiber Cloth, and Retractable Brush - A purpose-built cleaning solution for screens of all types

If you're not comfortable doing this, purpose-built cleaning solutions exist like AudioQuest CleanScreen that promise to safely clean display surfaces without damaging them. Of course, there's always a risk of damage when using any product, though purpose-made solutions are a lot safer than household cleaners and tap water.

Don't Forget About the Back Too

LCD screens use LED backlights which can kick out a fair bit of heat, while OLED displays also generate heat as a byproduct of the chemical reaction that lights up individual pixels. Plasmas and CRTs were also notorious for heat production, so cleaning the back of a display is equally as important as cleaning the front.

Make sure you take the time to blow out any dust from vents using canned air or use a microfiber cloth to remove any material that may hinder cooling. Take care not to use a vacuum or similar since static electricity can build up and cause damage to internal components.

Clean Sparingly for Best Results

While you should take care to make sure dust buildup at the back of the unit is kept to a minimum, you're better off cleaning the front of the display as sparingly as possible to avoid scratching glass or wearing down panel coatings.

Tim Brookes is a technology writer with more than a decade of experience. He's invested in the Apple ecosystem, with experience covering Macs, iPhones, and iPads for publications like Zapier and MakeUseOf. ❖



WINDOWS FREE PAINT APP

An Overview

By **Jim Cerny**

Forums Coordinator and Instructor
Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL

www.thestug.org

vp1 (at) thestug.org

The PAINT app or program comes free with all editions of Windows. It comes with many options for you to create your drawings or images and to modify others. I would encourage you to explore Paint and put it on your desktop. You will find it very useful if you take the time to try it! Here is a quick overview of what Paint can do.

If you do not have an icon on your Windows desktop for Paint, you can open the app anytime by clicking on the “Windows” icon on the bottom-left on your screen. This will bring up an alphabetical list of all your apps in the left column. Scroll down. The scrollbar for this list may be challenging to see or find – it is very narrow at the top of the list, on the right edge of the list (not the window, just the list column.) If your mouse finds it, it should widen to a standard scrollbar width that you can see and use. Scroll down until you see “Windows Accessories” and click on the down arrowhead just to the right to open the contents of this folder. Next, you should see “Paint” and click on it to open it. (Note this is NOT “Paint 3D”.)

You can find out everything about Paint by asking Google and viewing some good videos about using it. But here is a quick picture of its features.

You can open almost any image (photo, drawing, clipart, etc.) in Paint by using the “File” tab/menu. The file types that Paint can work with are BMP, JPEG, GIF, PNG, and single-page

TIFF formats. Now you are free to play with that image any way you want. You can draw on it, add text or shapes, crop the image, and much more. You can also SAVE the image using the “Save as” option, and you can save your image as a different file type.

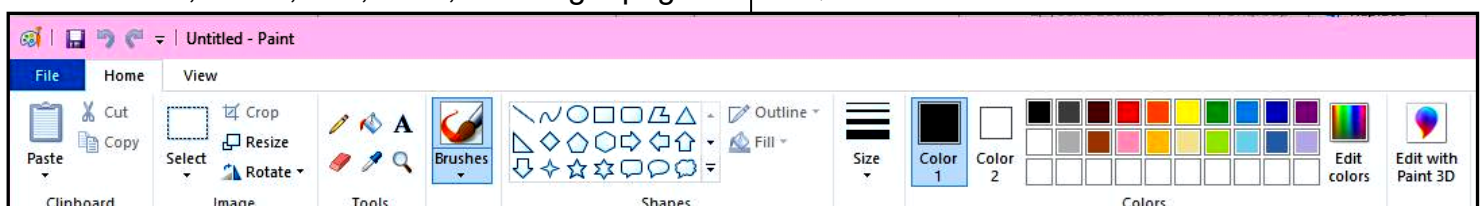
Have you a desire to be an artist? On the “Home” tab/menu, you can use Paint to draw and create your images. Select your color or pick your color from a palette, pick a drawing tool (pen, brush, marker, etc.), the size or width of your line, and draw away. There are many useful shapes as well, such as ovals, boxes, arrows, and more. You can even zoom in as close as you wish to see and work with each tiny pixel if you want. That is about as detailed as you can get. Remember, zooming in or out on an image does not change the image size; it just lets you view the image closer or farther away. If you make a mistake, the “undo” arrow at the top will erase the last thing you did.

You can “Resize” an image to save memory size, rotate the image, erase things in the image, or select some part of the image for some action, such as copy or delete. Yes, you can add text in a “box” or right on the image.

Has Paint now sparked some interest? Please use Google to ask about how to use



Paint and explore its many options. It is a very fun tool, easy to use, and will boost your creativity too! No actual paint, no canvas, and no mess! ❖



LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members (0)

Renewals (4)

Guy Clark

Clara Harris

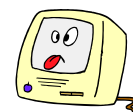
Helena Karagozian

Hedy Zhang



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



jim@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.

HOW TO 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 highly 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.

Email computer or technology-related questions or comments to all members on the LACSLIST to [lacslist \(at\) lacs.groups.io](mailto:lacslist(at)lacs.groups.io).

New members will receive one invitation to join each list; they must respond promptly or follow the above instructions.

If you have any problems or questions about joining the lists, please contact Stephanie Nordlinger: [nordlacs\(at\)aol.com](mailto:nordlacs(at)aol.com).

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 email it with your changes to membership@lacspc.org or mail it to

LACS, 11664 National Blvd. #343,
Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802.

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members should receive, via email, a link, Meeting ID, and Passcode to attend the LACS general meetings a couple of days before the meeting. **Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it.**

You can put an icon to the link on your desktop so it's handy at meeting time.

1. Right-click a blank spot on your desktop.
2. Select **New** from the drop-down menu.
3. Select **Shortcut**.
4. Type or copy and paste the link in the box that says "Type the location of the item."
5. Click **Next**.
6. Type a name for the shortcut.

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the colored editions) in User Friendly usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Click on the link to see the reference.

LACS CALENDAR



LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, December 6, 2021 via Zoom

Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

Please arrive early so we can start on time.

Where: At your home or wherever you are

Holiday Lunch Party

Date: Saturday, December 11, 2021

Time: 1:00 P.M.

Where: Golden China Restaurant
9018 Venice Blvd, Culver City 90232

No General meeting in December

December 6: Last day of Hanukkah

December 21: Winter begins

December 25: Christmas

December 26: Kwanzaa

December 31: New Year's Eve



VISIT OTHER COMPUTER USER GROUPS

Check out the URL below for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom meetings and for many 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

December 11, Saturday, 1:00 PM:

Holiday Lunch Party

There will be no general meeting on December 14.

January 11: Tips for Using YouTube

This schedule is subject to Change.

Check your email and *User Friendly* for updates.

ZOOM MEETINGS

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

Contact Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net if you have any questions or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day.

Please enter before our meeting starting time in case problems need to be solved and to ask questions. We want our meetings to start on time.

ZOOM RECORDINGS & PODCASTS

LACS members will receive links to the recordings of Zoom meetings via email.

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.

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 top right.

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 contact a person whose number is listed next to it. **Find a helper's email address and phone number on your roster.** If you don't have your roster, call 424-261-6251. Only members in good standing may receive a roster. We hope that you find this LACS free service useful.

If you are experienced using a particular program or hardware, 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@sbcglobal.net or call her at 424-261-6251.

More Quick Consultants, and more categories are always needed. Do we have anyone who can help with Google apps? You may decline or postpone a call if it comes at an inconvenient time.

Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, PhotoShop, etc. - 10	Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7	Photoshop - 10
Android Smartphones - 8	Mozilla Firefox - 7	Quicken - 8, 12
Apple devices - 11	MS Excel - 8, 11, 12	Thunderbird - 7
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8	MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12	Utilities - 7, 8
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3	MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10	Visual Basic - 5
Genealogy - 8	MS PowerPoint - 8, 11	Websites - 5
Groups.IO - 8	MS Publisher - 2	Windows - 6, 7, 8
Hardware - 7	Open Office - 6	WordPerfect - 8
		Zoom - 2, 9

Preferred Time for Phone Calls			
Number	Name	From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
5	Ialongo, Gilbert	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Johnson, Carol	10:00 AM	9:00 PM
7	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
8	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
9	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
10	Rozek, E. J.	Noon	8:00 PM
11	Van Berkorn, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
12	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

Title	Name	Term
President	Leah Clark	2021
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2021
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2021
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2021
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2021
Director	Newton Bernstein	2021
Director	Irv Hershman	2021
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2021
Director	Sylvia Davis	2022
Director	Fred Kong	2022
Director	Howard Krivoy	2022
Director	Mark Presky	2022
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman	
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis	
Groups.IO Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Hospitality Chair	Sylvia Davis	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity – Press	Mark Presky	
Publicity – Online Media	Open	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkom	

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

Website: www.lacspc.org

Contact the President/Editor at 424-261-6251. Follow the prompts. This is a Google Voice number.

Please use your roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member or other member, or you may leave a message at the above number. If you don't have your roster, please contact Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net and she will email you a copy. Only LACS members may receive a roster.

COMPLETE ROBOCALL DETERRENCE, PART 1 OF 3

A two-step approach:

Prevent the ring and convince the robocaller that your line is disconnected

By John Krout

Presenter & Newsletter Contributor

Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

<https://www.patacs.org>

jkroun.apcug.presenter (at) gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

Robocalls are a pervasive problem. The Washington Post reported in April 2019 that the estimated U.S. volume of robocalls in March 2019 was 5.2 billion. That's a billion with a B. Divide 5.2 billion by 31 days, then 24 hours, and then 3,600 seconds. So, the number of robocalls **per second** was about 2,000.

Refusing to answer your smartphone is not enough. Robocaller systems are smarter than that; the systems won't stop calling. And the robocalls often jam your voicemail inbox.

The best deterrence is based on a **thorough understanding of what automated robocall systems do**. Then, we can use robocall system behaviors against the robocaller systems.

- First, robocaller systems change their Caller IDs constantly. Often, when placing 1,000 calls, a robocaller system can use as many as 1,000 different Caller IDs. Since most robocall deterrence apps and systems maintain a database of robocall Caller IDs, called a **Blacklist**, such databases always fall behind the robocaller Caller IDs.
- Second, robocaller systems often are based overseas, making it impossible for the .U.S. government to establish criminal jurisdiction.
- Third, robocaller systems keep a list of phone numbers known to have answered

their robocalls in the past, even calls "answered" by a voicemail greeting. The robocall systems continue to call those phone numbers ad nauseum.

SPOOFING

Robocall systems use a phone network behavior called **spoofing** to hide their real Caller IDs. That phone network behavior introduced many decades ago had, and it still has, a valuable purpose for large phone sub-systems such as companies, hospitals, and the like.

Spoofing allows a caller to change the Caller ID shown to you when the customer calls you. The idea was to show the organization's main number, often the receptionist, even if the call was placed from technical support or Accounts Payable. This is appropriate for a large organization calling you back so that you can see a consistent and familiar Caller ID rather than one of the dozens or hundreds of phone lines used by the organization. That Caller ID replacement is done inside the phone network, based on commands sent by the caller system.

The bad news is that the **phone network never imposed any security or restraints on Caller ID replacement**.

The key thing to know is that automated robocaller systems often use spoofing to change their Caller IDs and with impunity. Often robocall systems use a spoofed Caller ID, including your area code and even your exchange (the three digits after the area code), to appear to be a call originating locally. The systems might even show a caller ID for a live local phone number. The systems seldom use the same ten-digit number twice to dodge Blacklist enforcement.

WHITELIST: AN ALTERNATIVE TO BLACKLIST

In the area of robocall deterrence based on Caller ID, the most powerful strategy for you is **Whitelist**, meaning configuring your

phone to accept incoming calls only from the numbers in your phone's Contacts.

I have used that method on my phone since roughly September 2019. **Paul Brandus, a Marketwatch.com columnist**, had asked his readers to send in their own personal fixes for robocalls. Brandus published the most interesting reader responses in September 2019.

Brandus did not publish details of Whitelist configuration but did provide enough info for me to figure out the details on my own.

WHITELIST BEHAVIOR OUTLINE

The Settings feature you need to find in any iPhone or Android phone is called **Do not disturb**. The Settings app may allow you to type in a search term to find the place in the Settings app where you can access the feature. Use Settings search to find *Do not disturb*.

The basic purpose of Do not disturb is, "**Don't ring the phone.**" It is not the same as Airplane mode, which disconnects your phone from the cell tower network. When Do not disturb is on, the phone stays connected to the cell tower network. You can place calls and read and write emails and text messages while using Do not disturb with Whitelist configuration.

And, very importantly, you can configure an **exception to Do not disturb**. The exception I have chosen are calls from my Contacts list. That turns this configuration into a Whitelist behavior. Calls from my Contacts will ring my phone. Other calls will not.

Once in a while, I have to turn off Do not disturb, for instance, if I expect a call from my state's COVID vaccine management office. Of course, I don't have any idea what that number might be.

So, yet another feature of Do not disturb becomes very valuable. It is possible to configure the phone to **resume Do not disturb on a schedule automatically**. For example, I have my phone set to continue Do not disturb at 10 PM local time. That way, **I do not have to remember to re-enable Do not disturb** after the

expected call comes in. Unfortunately, the scheduling system requires you to specify a time range when Do not disturb will be in effect.

The complete Android Whitelist configuration steps are captured from my Samsung Galaxy S10 running Android 11 OS. Before Android 11 was available, I was able to do the same setup using Android 10, but the step details differed in some minor ways.

STEP 1. Open the Settings app. **Illustration 1** shows the **main screen** of the Settings app. Tap the **Notifications** choice, which is circled in Illustration 1.

STEP2. The **Notifications screen** opens, as shown in **Illustration 2**. In that screen, find the **Do not disturb** choice, which is circled in Illustration 2.

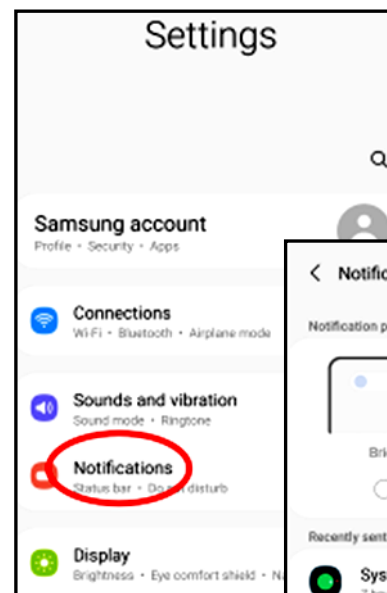


Illustration 1

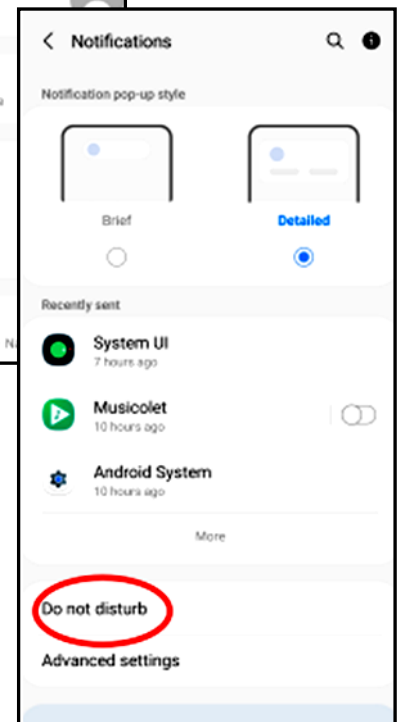


Illustration 2

STEP 3. The **Do not disturb** screen opens, as shown in **Illustration 3**. On that screen, tap the phrase **Add Schedule**, which is circled in the illustration.

STEP 4. The **Schedule** screen opens, as shown in **Illustration 4**. In that screen, make sure all seven days of the week are selected.

STEP 5. Then tap the **End Time**, which opens a **time adjustment window**, shown in **Illustration 5**. Change that to 9:59 PM the next day. Each of the three parts (hour, minute, and AM/PM) can be adjusted by swiping up and down.

At the lower right corner of the window, tap the **Done** button. The window closes.

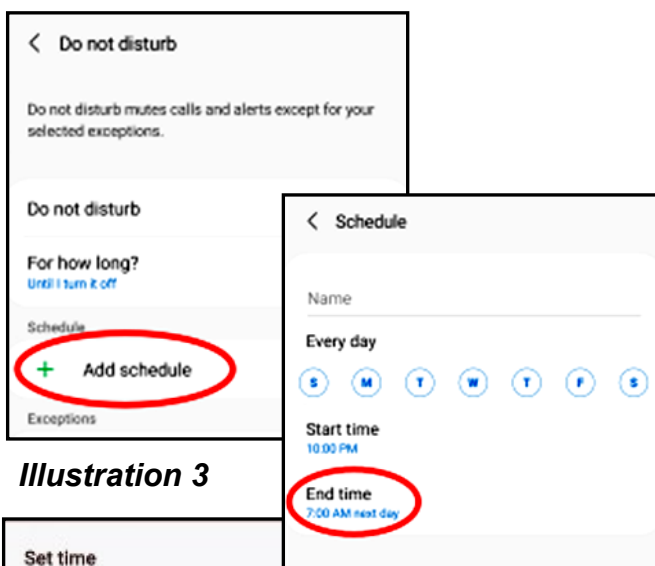


Illustration 3

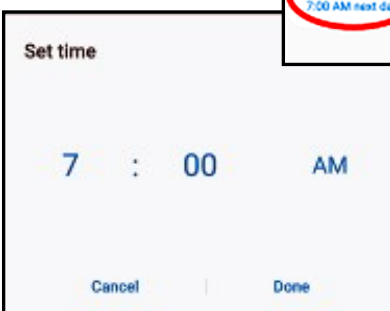


Illustration 5

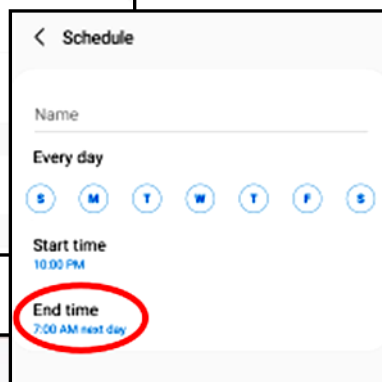


Illustration 4

The Schedule screen closes, and the Do not disturb screen reappears. The schedule name and hours now appear under the Schedule heading on the screen.

STEP 8. In the Do not disturb screen, tap Calls, Messages, and Conversations under the Exceptions heading, which is circled in **Illustration 6**. That tap opens the **Calls, messages, and conversations** screen, as shown in **Illustration 7**.

STEP 9. In the **Calls, messages, and conversations** screen, tap the word **Calls**, which is circled in **Illustration 7**. A menu appears, as shown in **Illustration 8**.

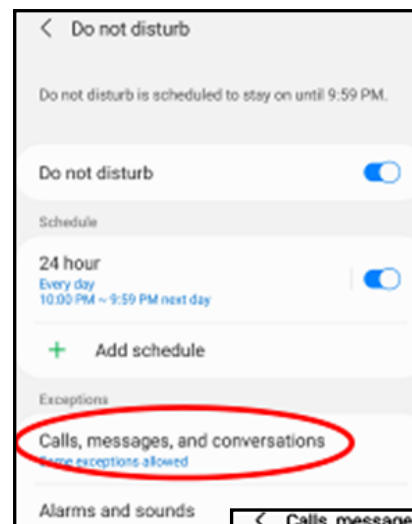


Illustration 6

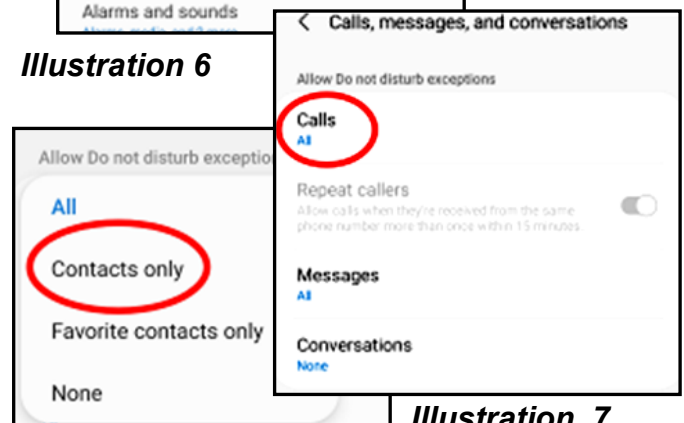


Illustration 7

Illustration 8

STEP 6. In the Schedule screen, in the Name field above the weekday list, type a name such as 24 hours.

STEP 7. At the bottom of the Schedule screen, tap the **Save** button (not shown).

STEP 10. In the menu, tap the **Contacts Only** choice. The menu closes, and the phrase **Contacts only** appears below the word **Calls**. At the top of the screen, tap the left arrow to return to the Do not disturb screen.

STEP 11. In the **Do not disturb** screen, tap the **Hide Notifications** heading. The Hide notifications screen appears. Turn off all of the switches on that screen. At the top of the screen, tap the left arrow to return to the Do not disturb screen.

STEP 12. In the Do not disturb screen, turn on the **Do not disturb** switch. You can see that switch in **Illustration 3**.

Note: that same Do not disturb switch can be used to disable Do not disturb when you expect a legitimate incoming call from someone outside of your Contacts list. Due to the automatic schedule, you won't have to turn on Do not disturb manually; the phone will do it for you.

That's it. Your Android phone is configured for Whitelist behavior. Exit the Settings app.

IPHONE DO NOT DISTURB

I identified similar Whitelist settings on my corporate iPhone 6s. Due to corporate policy issues, I was unable to apply and test the iPhone Whitelist settings. The basics are very similar to Android: in Settings, find Do not disturb. Set a schedule, set an exception for Contacts, and turn off Hide Notifications.

NEXT UP

In part 2 of this article series, you will learn how to convince robocaller systems that your phone number is not in service so they won't call you again, and how to assemble a combination of your voice and other sounds in a voicemail greeting for that purpose.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: **John Krout** has been writing about creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s, and more recently, about creative uses of smartphones. He finished a long career as a software engineer with 14 years as a technical writer for a federal contractor. He lives in Arlington, Virginia, with his son, many computers and cameras, and too many cats. ♦

CREATING AND USING MACROS IN MS WORD 365

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This month we'll take a look at macros, a little-used but powerful feature of all the MS Office programs. A macro is a piece of program code that can be executed whenever you want to operate on a section of a document to perform a defined sequence of changes such as formatting or editing. For example, macros can help insert letterheads, generate pre-formatted tables, applying fonts, highlighting, or styles. In addition, macros make it easy to carry out everyday repetitive actions as easily as clicking a single button. For this article, we'll focus on Word macros.

Creating and Saving Macros using the Macro Recorder

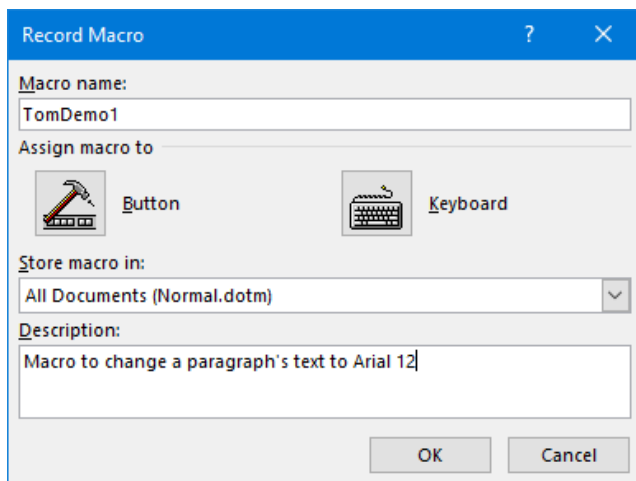
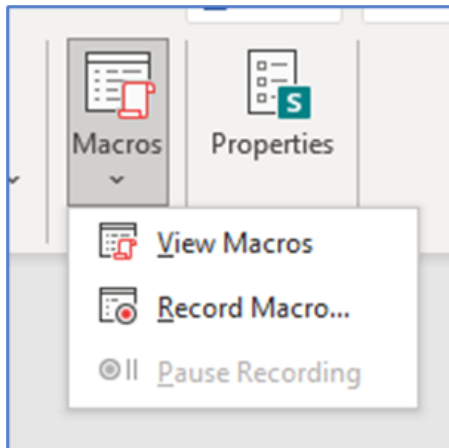
The easiest way to create a macro in Word is to turn on macro recording, perform a sequence of formatting and editing steps and then stop recording. The recorded macro can be given a name and have an optional hot-key sequence or a "Quick Access" button assigned to it.

Here are the essential steps:

On the View tab of the Word ribbon, go to Macros and click the down (v) widget to open a menu; choose "Record Macro." That will open a small Record Macro dialog. Give the macro a name and optionally fill in the description. You can also click to assign a "Quick Access" button or a hot-key sequence to your macro. Finally, click OK and begin the sequence of steps to be recorded.

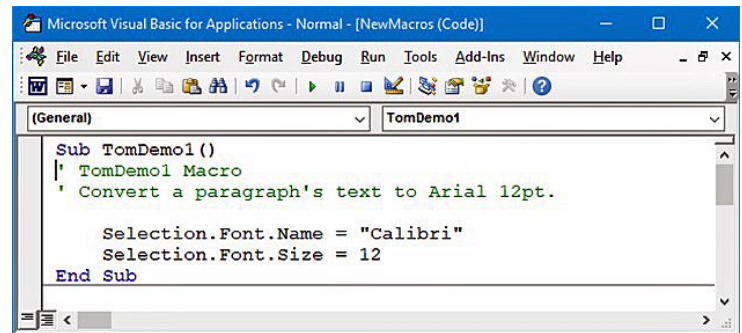
When you are finished, go back to View > Macros, click the down (v) widget, and choose Stop Recording. Your newly recorded macro's name will now appear in the list

of macros. You can go to this list, select your macro and then click the Run button to run it. More conveniently, if you assign the macro to a Quick Access button, click the button to run the associated macro.



Editing Macros Using the Macro Editor

Word generates a series of program statements in the Visual Basic for Applications (VBA) language when recording a macro. A Word document is organized into a hierarchical set of collections such as sections, paragraphs, sentences, words. These elements can be accessed using VBA statements, and their various properties can be changed. You can see the generated VBA code by going to View > Macros > View Macros, selecting your macro, and clicking the Edit button. This will open the VBA macro editor with your macro displayed.



Word Macro (Visual Basic) Editor

Let's look at my very simple macro's recorded VBA statements. The green lines (They will appear bolded in a black and white copy.) preceded by apostrophes are code comments.

```
Sub TomDemo1()  
' TomDemo1 Macro  
' Convert a paragraph's text to Arial 12pt.  
    Selection.Font.Name = "Calibri"  
    Selection.Font.Size = 12  
End Sub
```

Once a paragraph or sentence has been selected, clicking the Quick Access button to run the macro changes the selection's font name to Calibri and font size to 12 points.

Let's make this macro do a bit more work by also setting the line spacing to 1.5 lines and the text alignment to Justified. The macro would then look like this:

```
Sub TomDemo1()  
' TomDemo1 Macro  
' Convert a paragraph's text to Arial 12pt,  
' line spacing 1.5,  
' alignment justified.  
  
    With Selection  
        .Font.Name = "Calibri"  
        .Font.Size = 12  
        .ParagraphFormat.LineSpacingRule =  
            wdLineSpace1pt5  
        .ParagraphFormat.Alignment = wdAlignPar-  
            agraphJustify  
    End With  
End Sub
```


Note that I've also modified the macro to use a VBA "With" clause to eliminate the need to explicitly specify "Selection." for each property reference. This makes the macro code easier to read and run faster, and it also simplifies making changes. The "wd" symbols to the right of the = signs are Word internal symbolic constants.

The macro editor is helpful by automatically offering a menu of "Intellisense" choices. Thus, you don't have to remember or learn every possible property of every object or collection.

Example Macro – Formatting an Article for the Gigabyte Gazette

Now let's look at a more real-world situation. Every month, when I edit the Computer Club's Gigabyte Gazette newsletter, I need to integrate articles and other content from various sources and give them a standard format. One way I simplify this is by using predefined Word styles. I have five: Heading 1, Heading 2, Heading 3, Heading 4, and GGBody.

Here's the VBA code of a macro named GGFormat that applies the GGBody style to each paragraph in a selected area of a document, except those that already have a "Heading x" style.

```
Sub GGFormat()  
' GGFormat Macro - Convert all non-Heading  
paragraph Styles to "GGBody"  
Dim pg As Word.Paragraph  
  
With Selection  
  
' Iterate the document's collection of Para-  
graph objects  
For Each pg In Paragraphs  
    ' Only change non-Heading paragraphs  
    If Left(pg.Style, 7) <> "Heading" Then  
        pg.Style = "GGBody"  
    End If  
Next  
  
End With  
End Sub
```

The "For Each" statement loops through the Selection's collection of paragraph objects, successively referencing each via the pg variable. Each paragraph's Style property is checked to see if it begins with "Heading." If not, the paragraph's Style property is changed to "GGBody."

Now I can open one of my submitter's documents and copy its contents to the desired place in my working copy of this month's Gigabyte Gazette newsletter. Then I select all the body text of the copied article, go to View > Macros > View Macros, and run my GGFormat macro. This formats all the body text to have Style = GGBody but leaves the rest of the document alone.

A Caution

Macros are very powerful and can sometimes affect places in your document that you did not intend. For example, I had a test document open while experimenting, but I also had this document (the May Gigabyte Gazette) open. My GGFormat macro above initially operated on the entire active document rather than the current selection. I expected it just to format my test document, but it formatted both documents – NOT what I wanted when I ran it. So, I modified the GGFormat macro to only operate on the current Selection.

Learn More

We've barely broken the surface of what can be done with macros in MS Word. Here are some hyperlinks to more in-depth information on Word macros:

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/office/create-or-run-a-macro-c6b99036-905c-49a6-818a-dfb98b7c3c9c>

<https://www.pcworld.com/article/2952126/word-macros-three-examples-to-automate-your-documents.html>

<https://www.ionos.com/digitalguide/online-marketing/online-sales/creating-macros-in-word/>

https://word.tips.net/C0012_VBA_Examples.html ❖

JERE'S TECH TIPS

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

TECHBOOMERS.COM

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

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

SPECIAL OFFERS

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

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



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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

A New GPS

The other day I bought a new GPS for old angry people...
It tells other people where to go!



"I forgot to program my smartwatch to remind me to stop running. I'm about 1,200 miles away."

From *How-To Geek*

Dear Santa, I'm asking for a **Big Fat Bank Account** and a **Slim Body**. Please do not mix these up like you did last year.

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Printed Newsletter	\$ 40
Electronic Newsletter	30
Family-Associate	12
Students	18
Contributor	50
Supporter	75
Benefactor	100
Gift Membership	20

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

Associate members 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. A member may give a 1-year, 1-time **gift** to a non-member.

Monthly general meetings are via Zoom. In-person or hybrid meetings may take place in the future.

Members also enjoy these special benefits:

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— **Get help by email** by using our LACSLIST Group eMail List. Send your questions to lacslis (at) lacs.groups.io

— **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's Group e-mail lists.

— **Free APCUG** (International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups) **Webinars**.

— **Free quarterly Virtual Technology Conference (VTCs)**

— **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.

— **Annual Holiday Party**

— **Social Interacting** with others who have like interests in computers and technology.

— **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created by members.

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Name: First

Last

Name of Associate: First

Last

(Same address as primary member)

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E-mail of Associate

Preferred Phone:

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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.