User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group

APCUG EVENTS
Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other upcoming events.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG
www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG
www.twitter.com/apcug
www.youtube.com/apcugvideos

An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

MAY 10, 2022

Meeting Time: 7:00 - 9:00 PM — via Zoom
Socializing and Q & A: 6:30 - 7:00
Presentation: "Windows 10 Topics"
Speaker: Bill James
Computer Club of Oklahoma City VP of Operations, APCUG Board of Advisors Secretary, Region 8 Advisor, and APCUG Speakers Bureau Member

This is the first of two talks to LACS by Bill James on Windows 10 and Windows 11 (June 14). To use a computer well, you need to know how its operating system works. You need to make choices (e.g., about privacy and security issues). How do you get Win 10 free? Is it better than earlier versions of Windows? Subtopics might include File Explorer, Admin vs. Standard User accounts, Storage and the Free Up Space Tool, and How to Create a Restore Point. He can answer most Win 10 question in the Q&A.

Meet Our Presenter

In 1992 Bill joined the Oklahoma PC User's Group, now known as the Computer Club of Oklahoma City, to learn about the computer he purchased. A member of the club's Board of Directors since 1998, he was elected President in 2000 and served two terms. Bill is now VP of Operations and newsletter editor and often gives presentations on new software to his club.
Bill attended his first APCUG conference in 2003. Bill now is the APCUG Region 8 Advisor (AL, AR, KS, LA, MO, OK, TN, TX). and Secretary for the APCUG Board of Advisors. He retired from the Federal Aviation Administration as a Supply Systems Analyst at the FAA Logistics Center in Oklahoma City in 2007, where he worked for 38 years.

Tuesday, May 10, 7:00—9:00 PM Via Zoom
6:30—7:00 Socializing and informal Q&A
LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link on or about May 8. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net
before May 8.
More information about LACS is at www.lacspc.org.

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR

Happy Mother's Day

Happy Mother's Day wishes to all LACS mothers.

Volunteer Week

National Volunteer Week was in April, 2022. We thank all the wonderful LACS volunteers who keep this organization viable. We would never survive without them.

Volunteers don't get paid, not because they're worthless, but because they're priceless.

Sherry Anderson

Memorial Day

We thank the LACS veterans for all they have done for our country.

From LACS Treasurer

The Bank of America has requested that checks to LACS be made out to *Los Angeles Computer Society*, not just to LACS.

Don't forget that members may pay their dues via PayPal, avoiding sending checks through the mail. To pay your dues using PayPal, please go to this link:

www.paypal.compaypalme/00001024

and then click on **Send**. You'll be asked to log in to your PayPal account or sign up for a PayPal account so that PayPal will know where to get the money to send. Follow the prompts. Once you're done entering your dues amount, please click on **Add a note**. This is where you will give any updated information: physical address, email address, phone number. Please also add what type of dues you are paying: regular, electronic *User Friendly*, contributor, etc. Please note if you don't want your contact information published in the roster. If you have any questions or comments, the best way to reach Gavin Faught, LACS treasurer, is via email at

gmfaught@gmail.com .

Lunch Meeting

We are planning an in-person lunch meeting at a restaurant. This will be a time we can get together, enjoy good food, discuss computer and other technical issues, socialize, and have fun.

The tentative date will be Saturday, May 7. Please watch your email for the time and location. It will be nice to get together again and see our happy faces.

IN MEMORIAM

Carol Nord Johnson
December, 1938 to April, 2022

Gerd Carol Nord's parents immigrated from Norway and became naturalized citizens. Carol and her sisters grew up on a farm six miles north from Appam, North Dakota. Carol's elementary school years were spent at a nearby one-room country school.

At age 10, after her father's death, she moved with her mother and sisters to Williston, North Dakota. Carol continued her elementary and high school education in Williston. After finishing her freshman year at the University of North Dakota at Grand Forks, she took time off to travel with her family to Norway for four months. This was her first chance to meet her grandparents, aunts and uncles, and cousins.

After her Norway visit, Carol received her Bachelor of Science degree in mathematics at North Dakota State University in Fargo. She was hired by the Boeing Company in Seattle, Washington as a computer programmer. While in Seattle, she discovered Scandinavian folk dancing.

Carol moved to Southern California as a bride of James Johnson in 1969. They had no children and were divorced. Her move to California in 1969 led to her career at the Rand Corporation. Her favorite project at Rand lasted 13 years. The Dutch government contracted with Rand to develop a hydrodynamic model to be used in the Netherlands for decision-making in the prevention of flooding.

Carol continued Scandinavian dancing in Southern California and added English Country and Scottish dancing to her repertoire. After retirement, she became very involved in Omnilore. This nonprofit public benefit corporation serves active seniors in the South Bay who are interested in lifelong learning. She also was a volunteer librarian at the Norwegian Seaman's Church in San Pedro until she was no longer able.

Carol is preceded in death by a sister. She is survived by another sister, a niece, three nephews, two great-nephews, and many relatives in Norway and Sweden.

Submitted by Frances (Sparky) Sotcher

Carol joined LACS in 2008. In December, 2020, she gave a very informative presentation on *Holiday Traditions Made in Norway* for the virtual holiday party on Zoom. She told us about Norwegian traditions and legendary characters. Then she showed many family heirlooms including art, crafts, and needlework items.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT
April 12, 2022

By **Leah Clark,** LACS President/Editor
Topic: **Trouble Shooting Your Computer**
Speaker: **Judy Taylour**
APCUG Speaker and Consultant
Santa Clarita Valley
Computer Club

 We all will need to troubleshoot our computers some-time. Often it seems that gremlins reside in them! Because Judy gave us so much information, and we will need to have it available when needed, I'm not going to try to include all the detailed instructions here. This report includes a list of the topics she covered. LACS members and guests received the recording of the meeting and Judy sent a copy of her presentation including slides that were hidden in her presentation. Use them for future reference to access the instructions for each topic listed below.

There are a lot of problems that make it seem that your data or documents are lost, but they are usually there somewhere. A lot can be fixed, sometimes in a short time. When you start troubleshooting, be sure to remember what you have done; write everything down. Restart or reboot; some-times, that's all it takes. Note what you did before the prob-lem. Create a restore point before you start troubleshooting — just in case. Uninstall stuff you no longer use.

Judy gave a lot of detailed instructions for how to handle the following situations:

- **Make sure there really is a problem.**
    Check cables, surge protector
- **You have no internet access.**
    Check router, ISP

- **You have no sound.**
    Check speakers, speaker icon, settings
- **Your printer doesn't work.**
    Check connections, error messages, update software and firmware
- **You have unresponsive programs.**
    Check task manager, reboot, etc.
- **You get error messages.**
- **Hard drive makes grinding noises.**
    Drive may be failing, backup data!
- **SSD drives fail.**
- **Your system is overheating.**
- **Your computer is running slowly.**
    A lot of information and possible causes here.

Judy gave much more information on Windows 10 troubleshooting and maintenance, and on ways to get help:

- **Learn to use the Windows 10 Fix-It tool.** Here's a long list of things that can be fixed.
- **Clean your browsers.** It's important to check your settings to see what's running automatically and to customize your computer to the way you want it to work.
- **Clean your hard drive.** Disc Cleanup **DO NOT** defrag your SSD drive.
- **Use QuickAssist, TeamViewer, or AnyDesk for remote access to your computer.**
- **Search Google for answers to your problem.**
- **Go to** www.gethuman.com **to talk to a real person for help.**

This presentation was followed by a lively Q & A and discussion session. Those who attended learned a lot and had fun. ❖

HOW TO SEARCH THE DEEP (AND DARK) WEB

by **Bob Rankin** at AskBobRankin.com

You may have heard that the "Dark Web" is a place where criminals, terrorists, and hackers conspire to victimize unwitting Internet users. The reality is a bit more nuanced and not so scary. There is a **Deep Web** that you can't access with ordinary search engines and a **Dark Web** where people lurk anonymously for both good and evil purposes. What is really out there?

It's Cold and Lonely in The Deep Dark Web

And unfortunately, there is no dashboard light to guide the way. So, what's hiding in the deep and dark webs? Technically defined, the "Deep Web" is simply that vast portion of the Web that search engines don't (or can't) index. While Google, Bing, and other search engines can provide billions more Web pages than you can live to view, that still leaves over 90% of Internet destinations unsearchable.

One source I found estimated that over 130 TRILLION individual Web pages exist. If you don't know the URL (web page address), you can't just "google" it. You must find the "secret" URL some other way. However, most of the Deep Web is unindexed simply because it's uninteresting. Most of the Internet of Things fits into this category. Who really wants to google a light bulb, doorbell, or toaster?

There are also password-protected sites accessible only to those with memberships or subscriptions to the content stored there. If there's a lock on the door, search engines can't get into index the pages held stored at that location. That would apply to Facebook, Twitter, and other social media accounts with billions of pages of user-created content. Many online newspapers, professional journals, and research databases behind "paywalls" also fall into this category.

Many local government websites offer access to public records, such as real estate and legal filings. You can access them, often without a password, but these databases will not be indexed. That's because the search engine "spider" doesn't know what to do when it sees the search input box.

And then, some websites perform dynamic, real-time queries for things like travel. You can go to Expedia and find out how much it will cost for a ticket from NYC to Miami on July 23rd, but search engines won't index the results because they can change from one minute to the next.

Some websites have no inbound links (links from pages on other sites), so search engines will never find them. And, of course, there are legions of websites that just have no useful content. They may be spammy, scammy, rip-offs, or duplicates that will never appear in search results because search engines have gotten wise to many of the tricks that black-hats use to "game" the search results. Back in the mid-1990s, I can recall experimenting with search engine rankings in real-time. You could multiply your desired keywords on a page, submit it to the search engine, and see it rise in the search results. It's for the best that tricks like that no longer work.

The Library of Congress Online Catalog is an excellent example of a Deep Web resource. It's a database containing millions of records of books, periodicals, audio recordings, photographs, and more. None of its records can be retrieved directly through Google. You need to visit the LOC's Online Catalog page and enter search terms in the appropriate boxes.

Web archives such as The Wayback Machine store copies of Web sites that have been modified or deleted. Search engines do not index such archived pages, which strive to index the current version. I've often

found the Wayback Machine handy when I want to see what a website looked like in the past. (Want to see what Yahoo.com looked like in October of 1996? It's in there.)

To find Deep Web material via Google et al., try adding the term "database" to your search query. "Plane crash database," "drug interaction database," "government grants database," and so on, will often lead to the home page of a database where you can enter search terms specific to that resource.

There are also paid tools such as LexisNexis and Factiva, which professional researchers use to find information about legal and business topics. Genealogy researchers can find a wealth of free information online, but often the best sources require payment. Ancestry.com is one such example. It's also becoming more common for online newspapers and magazines to limit free content and erect paywalls that require a subscription to view more than current headlines.

So, the Deep Web isn't scary -- it's just a part of the Internet that can't be (or hasn't been) indexed by search engines or pages that require human interaction to continue the desired content or search query.

The Dark Side of the Internet

But what's out there in the dark parts of the Web? Yes, there are bad places, people, and activities. They're part of what's called the **Dark Web** or The **Darknet** for dramatic effect. These places typically require prior authorization and special software instead of, or in addition to, your standard Web browser to access. (See discussion of "Tor" below.)

"The Silk Road" was one infamous criminal site where drugs, weapons, data, hacking services, and all manner of illicit things were traded until the FBI arrested its owner back in October 2013. Some referred to Silk Road as the Amazon.com of the underworld because it made shopping for illegal goods so

easy. Ross William Ulbricht, known by his hacker handle, "Dread Pirate Roberts," was nailed on charges of narcotics trafficking conspiracy, computer hacking conspiracy, and money laundering conspiracy. Court documents allege that over $1.7 million in illegal money changed hands each month on The Silk Road. Other black market websites exist, but the Silk Road is the best known.

Private forums exist where cyber-criminals offer services such as hacking, denial of service attacks, ransomware, and phishing scams. There are images on dark web pages that you would wish to forget after seeing them. And indeed, terrorists use encrypted messaging channels on the internet to communicate and collaborate.

Sometimes You Need to Hide

But there are also oases of light in the Dark Web that can't be called dark by any means. They're where the struggle for freedom rages. Dissidents, journalists, peace activists, and other good guys often need to hide their activities from oppressive governments and other institutions. Many citizens of totalitarian nations cannot freely access uncensored news or trade opinions and facts about politics or corruption. Some of these people turn to the Dark Web, to hidden forums, sites, and servers of information that protect their secrets and identities.

One of the most popular privacy tools is called **Tor**. Tor is, essentially, a network of Web proxy servers and browser software designed for them. Your identity and location are obscured when using the Tor browser, and your connection to the Tor network is encrypted. Even your ISP doesn't know where you're going because they can't read the data stream that passes between you and the Tor proxy server. All anyone knows is that you accessed a Tor server.

Your requests for Web content go to a Tor server, which then reaches out to grab the

requested content and relay it back to you over that encrypted connection. The destination site sees the Tor server's location and ID but never yours. Theoretically, there is no way to tell what you accessed via a Tor server.

Some users employ a VPN (Virtual Private Network) to protect their privacy and to hide their online activities. A VPN is a private network set up on the public internet. It uses encryption to ensure that no uninvited parties are able to eavesdrop on information that flows over the network.

To summarize, the **Deep Web** is just that portion of the internet that can't be reached directly by search engines. The **Dark Web** is actually a mixture of light and dark, good and evil, benefit and harm. Its symbol might well be the Yin Yang which illustrates how opposite forces can be interconnected and intermingled. ❖

KEEPING RECORDS HELPS ORGANIZE COMPUTER MAINTENANCE

By **Gabe Goldberg**
APCUG Advisor, Region 2
PATACS and Washington Apple Pi Director,
Gabe (at) gabegold.com

My background is enterprise computing, having worked in a high-tech company's data center and for a vendor selling software to organizations large, medium, and small. So it's second nature to me – developed over my career – to keep records of changes I make to computer hardware and software, even when it's my PC.

The change log is useful for many reasons, for knowing:

- What hardware and software is installed (important for debugging, upgrading, and replacing the PC)

- When I changed something (important for tracking the origin of odd behavior)

- How to replicate desired settings in a new computer (to avoid struggling to remember everything I've done to tailor/customize software)

- What I've done from my infinite to-do list (to avoid worrying about what I might have forgotten)

- What's left on the list (this is a separate section of the log)

- What I've spent on the computer

- How other devices are maintained and configured (such as a separate section for router settings and firmware updates information)

It's easiest and best to start such a log when a new PC is bought or built, but it's worth creating one by catching up as much as possible on what's been done and maintaining it going forward. Making this a habit means it's simple and quick creating entries, and the log will be a helpful reference.

Here are sample entries for my Windows 10 system:

05/26/20 Install Firefox 76.0.1
05/26/20 Install Office 2019
05/26/20 Install Kedit 1.6.1
05/26/20 Install Belarc 9.5
05/26/20 Install Sysinternals Process Explorer 16.32
05/26/20 Install Thunderbird 68.8.1
05/26/20 Install Malwarebytes 4.1.0

08/16/20 Install CutePDF 4
08/16/20 Install Audacity 2.4.2
08/16/20 Install iCloud 13.3.59.0
09/06/20 Define local HPLJ printer

01/19/22 Install Firefox add-ins IFormEnter +, NoScript, Print Preview
01/19/22 Disable NoScript -- broke too many websites
01/20/22 Set Taskbar option to NOT show desktop when the cursor moves to lower right corner ❖
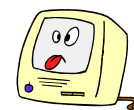
LACS NOTICES

WELCOME ALL

Gavin Faught,
LACS Treasurer
New Members (0)

Renewals (4)

Melvin Gaines   Irv Hershman

Roger Garland   Anne Uski

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.

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.

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the colored editions) in User Friendly usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Copy and paste to the address bar, or click on the link on the online version to see the reference.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

LACS member and presenter, **Jim McKnight**, has an open offer to LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade members' PC's for free. There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

Non-members can wisely invest in a one-year new regular LACS membership ($40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too. Contact Jim for specific considerations.

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 snail-mail it to

The Los Angeles Computer Society
11664 National Blvd. #343
Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802.

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members on the LAPC PC mail list will receive a link, meeting ID, Passcode, and instructions 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.
7. Click **Finish**.

LACS CALENDAR

LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, May 2, 2022 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

LACS GENERAL MEETING

Date: Tuesday, May 10, 2022 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

May 2: LACS Board Meeting

May 8: Mother's Day

May 10: LACS General Meeting

May 30: Memorial Day

VISIT OTHER COMPUTER USER GROUPS

Check out the URL below for information for visiting other user groups' Zoom and hybrid meetings, a list of groups open to other groups, and for tips and ideas for using and joining Zoom meetings.

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

GENERAL MEETING PRESENTATIONS VIA ZOOM

May 10: Windows 10 Topics, Bill James
June 14: A Guide To Windows 11
Bill James
July 12: Social Media for Seniors
Judy Taylour

Check your email and *User Friendly* for updates to this schedule.

ZOOM MEETINGS

To join any 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 many 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? It won't take a lot of time, and 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 - 11
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3
Genealogy - 8
Groups.IO - 8
Hardware - 7

Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7
Mozilla Firefox - 7
MS Excel - 8, 11, 12
MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12
MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10
MS PowerPoint - 8, 11
MS Publisher - 2
 Open Office - 6

Photoshop - 10
Quicken - 8, 12
Thunderbird - 7
Utilities - 7, 8
Visual Basic - 5
Websites - 5
Windows - 6, 7, 8
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 Berkom, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
12	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

TITLE	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2022
Past President	Stanley Johnson	2022
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2022
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2022
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2022
Director	Sylvia Davis	2022
Director	Howard Krivoy	2022
Director	Mark Presky	2022
Director	Irv Hershman	2023
Director	Fred Kong	2023
Director	Annette Tossounian	2023
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2023
APCUG Rep.	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
CCSC Computer Lab	Loling Beckman	
Database Manager	Sylvia Davis	
Groups.IO Email Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger	
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.

USB EXPLAINED

All the Different Types and What They're Used for

By **Suzanne Humphries**
@yeah_books, *Review Geek*

USB, short for Universal Serial Bus, is a common type of computer port that makes it easy to charge a device or transfer data between two devices. Since it was first developed in the 1990s, USB has continued to evolve alongside technology, progressively becoming smaller, faster, and more powerful. With so many devices that use USB, it's easy to get confused by the different connectors. But fear not—we're going to demystify all of that today.

When it comes to USB, there are really only four things that matter: form factor, transfer speeds, power delivery, and video delivery. So, let's dig in.

1. Form Factor

- USB-A
- USB-B
- Micro-USB
- Mini-USB
- USB-C
- Lightning
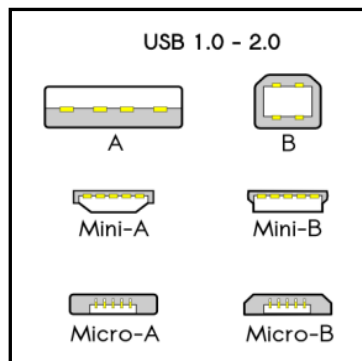
2. Data Transfer Speed

3. Power Delivery

4. Video Delivery

Multiple types of USB that have popped up over the years, each with a unique design and use case. The most common types are USB-A, Micro-USB, and USB-C, but we'll briefly discuss all of them.

USB-A

USB-A, or USB Type A, is the original flat and rectangular connector that no one could ever figure out how to plug in correctly the first time. These cables always have USB-A on one end with a different port type on the other, and can be used for device charging and data transfer. USB-A is still widely used and can be found on devices including computers, gaming consoles, TVs, and all kinds of peripherals.

USB-B

USB-B is pretty much only used on large devices, like scanners or printers. Visually, this connector looks almost square. Most of these are USB-B to USB-A cables, but some newer devices have moved on from USB-B to smaller options, like Micro-USB or Mini-USB.

Micro-USB

Micro-USB was the standard a while back for certain portable devices, like Android tablets and smartphones, because it can transfer data and provide charge. It comes in both Type-A- Micro and Type-B Micro flavors, and is smaller than USB-A. Some manufacturers still opt for using Micro-USB parts for their devices, as they're less costly than those for USB-C.

Mini-USB

As its name suggests, Mini-USB is a smaller version of USB-B. It was the standard for charging or transferring data from devices like tablets before Micro-USB was. There are also Type-A and Type-B versions of this connector. It's uncommon to see many products using Mini-USB today, though you can still find them on older electronics like MP3 players or the PlayStation 3 controller.

USB-C

This is the current standard, and it marries power and data delivery with display connectivity. USB-C is what you'll see on most new devices like smartphones, game controllers, earbud cases, microphones, and laptops. Its form factor is small, oblong, and reversible, so it can be plugged in either way (take that, USB-A). The port's 100-watt connection
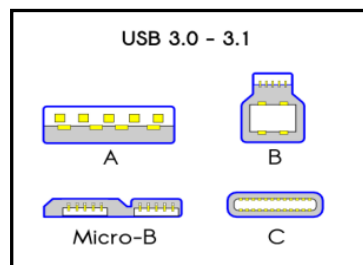
makes it perfectly suited for fast charging and data transfers, even with larger devices.

USB-C can do more than other USB types can, and get it done faster. USB-C has the potential to replace all other cables, thanks to its diverse multi-tasking abilities. It has the ability to power even the most power-hungry devices, like laptops and TVs. It can also transfer 40 gigabits of data per second (Gbps), and it can be used to deliver 4K video to external monitors.

While manufacturers continue to release new products with ports other than USB-C (looking at you, Apple), we aren't yet able to live in a single-cable society, but we're getting there, and we may eventually be freed from the burden of lugging around multiple cords.

Lightning

Technically, lightning is not USB, but rather Apple's proprietary connector type that works similarly to USB. You'll see it on Apple's devices, like the iPad and iPhone. It's similar to USB-C in that it is reversible. It supports speeds similar to USB 3.0

Data Transfer Speed

In addition to coming in a variety of shapes and sizes, USB types also have multiple speed standards. Keep in mind that some USB cables are data transfer only, and others are power delivery only, but also that there are options that can handle both tasks. Be sure to verify a cable's abilities before purchasing it.

The first, USB 1.x, is old and incredibly slow, and can only move 1.5 Mbps. Your odds of finding a device in the wild still on 1.0 are slim

to none. The slightly less old (and comfortably slow) USB 2.0, however, is still relatively common, though you'll really only find it on older electronics. 2.0 has a full-speed option that can handle 12 Mbps, and a high-speed version that can handle 480 Mbps. Super-Speed USB 3.x can transfer data between 5-20 Gbps.

The latest entries, USB 4.0, Thunderbolt 3, and Thunderbolt 4, are where you'll find the highest data transfer speeds: a maximum capable throughput of 40 Gbps. Thunderbolt is another transfer speed standard used in some USB-C cables—all Thunderbolt 3 and 4 cables are USB-C, but not all USB-C cables are Thunderbolt. So if Thunderbolt is what you're after, you'll need to make sure that's part of the cable you're buying.

These super-high transfer rates are impressive, but they don't matter much if you aren't regularly transferring hundreds of GB of data or doing something wild like editing video on an external hard drive. If you are, however, you'll want at least Thunderbolt 3.

Power Delivery

As we mentioned above, some USB cables are only capable of delivering power or transferring data, though most can do both. Power delivery (PD) standards fall into one of three main categories: power only, slow charge, and fast charge.

USB 2.0 supports 2.5W charging and USB 3.0 supports 4.5W charging. To put things in perspective, 10W is enough power to slow charge your phone, and 18W is enough to fast charge your smartphone or power a Netbook or similar bare-bones laptops.

In contrast, USB PD can handle up to 100W, which is powerful enough to power things like a MacBook Pro, monitors, docking stations, and most TVs. It can also fast-charge smaller compatible devices like your phone or Nintendo Switch. PD also only provides the necessary charge to your device but

won't overcharge it. Newer battery banks are starting to support USB PD, which are more capable of keeping your power-hungry devices powered and fully charged.

Video Delivery

Being able to transfer data *and* power a device is already impressive. But you can also choose to use USB-C to connect to monitors in place of a bulky HDMI or VGA cable. USB-C also has support for 4K video delivery to a screen. Thunderbolt 4 cables can handle displaying 4K content on two monitors at a time, or 8K on a single monitor. Again, this isn't going to be the use case for most people, but as 4K and 8K video becomes more commonplace, you'll eventually need a cable that can keep up.

How to Know if You're Using a Safe USB Cable

The rule of thumb is that you should always use the cable that came with your device and that you should buy any replacements from the manufacturer as well. That cable is specifically engineered to be used with your phone, tablet, or computer.

If you want to purchase one from a third party, be sure to stick with trusted established brands like Anker, Aukey, or Belkin, or look to see if a different brand lists the cable's USB certification. Otherwise, you could end up with an inferior cable that lacks official USB-IF certification and could potentially damage your device.❖

INTERESTING INTERNET FINDS

By **Steve Costello,** November 2021

scostello (@)sefcug.com

Disable Smart Compose Feature In Gmail

https://techviral.net/disable-smart-compose-gmail/

I keep the Smart Compose feature turned off; I distrust the AI figuring out what I want to say. If you have not turned this feature off in your Gmail, I suggest you do it now.

TALK, TEXTS, DATA – HOW MUCH, AND FOR HOW MUCH?

By **Phil Sorrentino**, Newsletter Contributor
Sarasota Technology Users Group
www.thestug.org
philsorr (at) yahoo.com

As you probably know by now, along with a smartphone comes a phone plan. This plan defines how you will be charged by your Wireless provider for using your phone. Some of the more popular Wireless providers are AT&T, Verizon, and T-Mobile because those three companies own the three major wireless networks in this country. In addition to those three, there are resellers like Consumer Cellular, Mint Mobile, Ting, and Boost Mobile. A reseller is an organization that sells wireless services under its own name but uses the networks of other service providers. For example, Ting uses T-Mobile.

If you have a "completely unlimited" plan, that is, no limits on the number of talk minutes, texts, and especially data, the rest of this article is just academic because you pay one price no matter how or how much you use your phone. But, if you don't have a completely unlimited plan, this may be interesting. Many plans that sound like completely unlimited plans are unlimited talk and text with typically a very large data allotment, but not complete data. A completely unlimited plan for a single phone may be around $70/month, but less if you have multiple lines. For example, I have seen an unlimited plan advertised as $37.50/month each for two lines; that's $75/month for two unlimited lines.)

Talk time is the number of minutes you can use your phone for voice cellular phone calls. This would be the time you spend on your phone talking to people who are using smartphones, flip phones, or even home phones. Phone calls are from phone to phone, so you need a phone number for the phone call recipient. Phone calls typically go via the cellular phone network (cell phone

towers) though you may be able to use wi-fi calling under certain conditions. Talk minutes are relatively inexpensive; they are almost free with most plans. If you want a plan with only talk minutes, they can currently be had for around $20/month with unlimited minutes or about $15/month with around 250 minutes. Talk used to be the whole reason for having and using a phone, but now there are many more uses for the smartphone.

Texts is the number of typically short typed-in messages that are sent immediately to the phone number you have chosen from your contact list. Texts (text messages) can only be sent from one phone to another, so you need a phone number to be the recipient of the text message. (Smartphone, Flip phone, but probably not a home phone number.)

Texts typically go via the cellular phone network (cell phone towers) but can go via wi-fi if you are in the vicinity of a wi-fi router. (Note: Data is used for attachments to texts.) Texts have become a fairly common way to keep in touch with people because of their instant messaging nature. A text is immediately sent to the recipient, giving him the message and the ability to answer immediately or at a future time.

Data is the amount of "data" that is transmitted over the cellular phone network (cell phone towers). Data allotments typically come in Gigabyte or half Gigabyte increments (some may even be in hundreds of Megabytes.) Data allotments may be on a per-line basis, or with some plans, the data can be shared among a group of phones in a so-called family plan.

When you are out and about, even traveling in your car, all the data transmitted to and from your phone is charged against your monthly data allotment. Fortunately, when you are not out and about and you are in the vicinity of a wi-fi router, the data that gets transmitted is not charged against your monthly data allotment. (You have already paid the Internet Ser-

vice Provider for the use of the wi-fi as part of your monthly internet bill.)

Connection to the Internet
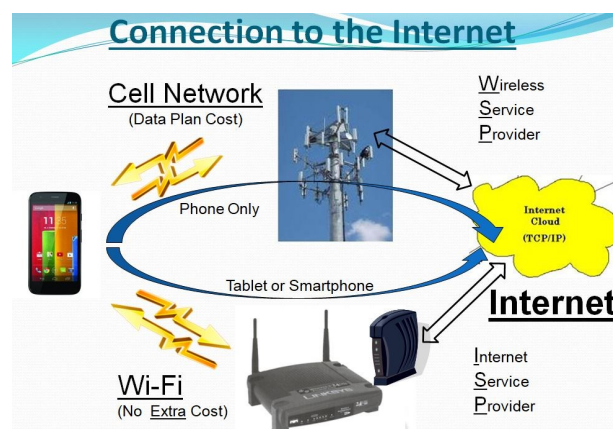
Data may be transmitted from your phone by any widget or open App. Keep in mind that widgets are open as long as your phone is not powered off. Fortunately, most widgets use very little data. Many Apps need a constant flow of data to keep their information current. Maps and Waze are two apps that come to mind. All of the Apps on your phone are designed to be the Client in the Client-Server computing model. These Apps can only do their job when connected to their server. The internet provides the connection via cell phone towers or wi-fi.

Client-Internet-Server
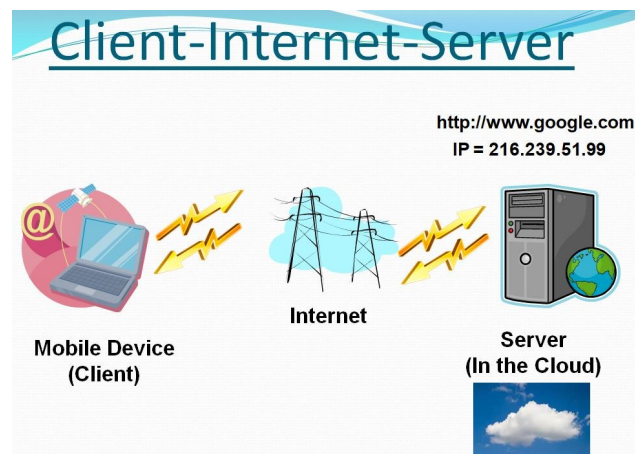
If an App is not closed after it is used, it may still be transmitting data to, and receiving data from its server, even if you are not looking at one of its screens. So, if you don't have an unlimited plan, make sure you close any app you will not use. If you don't want to

use any data at a given time, most phones can turn off the Data, typically in "Settings". Make sure you leave yourself a reminder to turn Data back on afterward. With the Data turned off, you will still be able to make and receive voice calls and probably texts, though you will probably not be able to receive attachments, like pictures, or texts.

Data is really what makes the smartphone so useful and versatile. Data makes the smartphone a personal digital assistant with endless uses, gives you access to enormous databases, and provides answers almost instantaneously.

As you can see from the amount of information describing talk, texts, and data, the emphasis is on data. The cost of most plans is directly correlated to the amount of data; it almost seems that talk and texts are just thrown in at no extra charge.

It is the fact that your smartphone can interact with a much more capable server at the other end of the internet that gives your smartphone all of its various amazing capabilities. It is data that lets us check our email, consult our calendar, find the nearest Japanese restaurant, keep in touch with people, and research and purchase items on Amazon or many other retailers on the internet, all without us moving from the comfort of our homes, offices, or automobiles. ❖

Interesting Internet Finds

Continued from page 14

Is Charging Your Phone Overnight A Bad Idea?

https://www.online-tech-tips.com/smartphones/is-charging-your-phone-overnight-a-bad-idea/

This question pops up from time to time. The people at Online Tech Tips answer this and some other questions regarding battery charging.

SOME USEFUL TECHNOLOGY

by **Jeff Wilkinson**, President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
https://www.scscc.club
president.scscc (at) gmail.com

I recently decided to put music on our patio for an upcoming party. While we have an intercom station on the patio, the sound was not acceptable for music. So, I decided to upgrade. I investigated various methods, from wired extension speakers for my existing stereo, multiple Amazon Echo's, and a few other complex or pricey solutions. Since I had recently "ripped" a whole series of my favorite music CDs and loaded them on a Plex server, along with several downloaded music selections, I wanted access to that growing music collection. In addition, I had compiled multiple playlists for use in different situations, parties, easy listening, smooth jazz, 60's music, etc.

A sale on the Echo Smart Speaker, 4th generation, prompted my purchase of two, intending to use the multi-room music feature to sync them together. In addition, I could locate them on the patio since I had conveniently placed available electrical outlets. The Echo Smart Speakers sounded good and were perfectly acceptable for a party with multiple conversations and ambient noise. I put the Echo Smart Speakers on the patio, and they worked fairly well, although there appeared to be some syncing problems.

About that time, I came across a BOGO (Buy One Get One) offer for Santana Samba 20-watt wireless speakers and thought I would give them a try. I was amazed at their performance. The sound was excellent. The pairing via Bluetooth to a single Echo Smart Speaker was easy, and I could pair the two speakers together for excellent sound, given their small size. With my new configuration, I played music from my Plex server with a simple com-

mand to Alexa: "Ask Plex to play … " virtually any song title, artist, or playlist in my growing collection. I can also access Sirius radio and Amazon music, offering me a wide choice of streaming music.

Paired for Stereo connected to Echo with Bluetooth
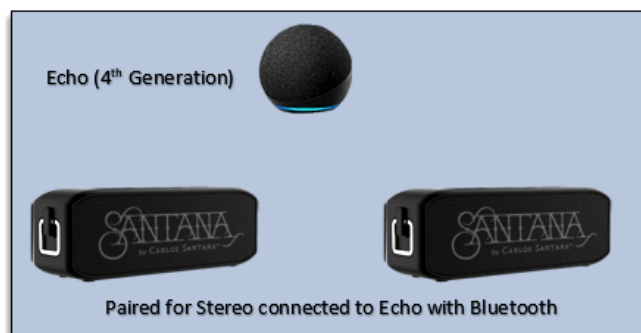
The example above shows a practical use of some fantastic technology that is available to us today.

Here's Another Useful Technology

I recently started using a Windows 10 feature, **Your Phone**. With a little setup and configuration, you can mirror your Android or iOS smartphone to your PC screen. With this app installed on your phone, you can manipulate your phone via your PC keyboard, open and run phone apps, view your picture gallery, and do virtually anything you can do on the phone! I find it easier to type and send a text message from the PC keyboard!
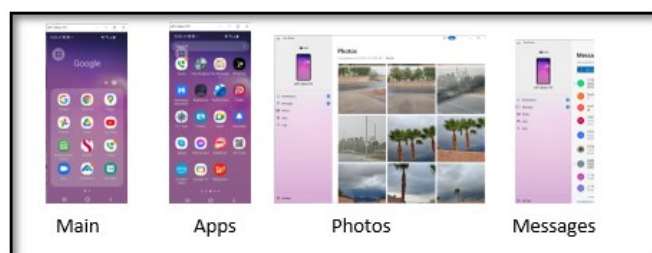

Windows 10 monitor view of **Your Phone** app

While many of us didn't grow up immersed in technology, much of it is very useful and can add a new dimension to everyday tasks. Your computer club strives to help users explore existing features and introduce new technology to our members. ❖

BA BA DUM

By **Cyn Mackley,** Cyn's Tech Tips
https://www.facebook.com/cynstechtips

Ba Ba Dum is a language game that lets you practice your vocabulary in one of 21 different languages.
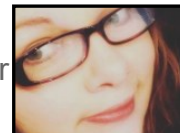
When you arrive at the site you'll click **Play to begin**. Then, you'll select that language you want to practice. To do so you'll need to click on the country's flag in the bottom right corner of the language you selected.

After selecting the language you want to practice, you're ready to play. Doing so is easy! First, choose a game. You'll find the game options in the top left corner.

You can pick from matching the word to an image, matching an image to the right word, matching the spoken word to the right image, filling in the blanks, or a mixture of them. There's also a character game where you match the spoken word to the correct character.

In the top right corner you'll see your score. There are two numbers: your cumulative score and the score for the language you are currently playing.

If you'd like to save your progress, you'll need an account. Mouse over the gear in the bottom left corner and choose Sign In, and then Create Account in the sign in bubble that appears center screen. Fill out the form with your e-mail address, a nickname, and then create a password and press the Create Account button, you'll be whisked right back to your game so you can pick up where you left off.

This is a fun way to practice vocabulary for different languages, so check it out today!

https://babadum.com/ ❖

FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

for all aspects of computing and operating systems go to
HTTPS://WWW.APCUG2.ORG.

TECHBOOMERS.COM

For learning how to use various websites and internet-based websites and internet-based applications for free.

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

SPECIAL OFFERS

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

- Members can save at the
  Pearson Technology websites:
  InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.
  Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx
  Code for print books: **ITCOMMUNITY**
  Code for eBooks:
  DIGITALCOMMUNITY

- See the latest books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre from Routledge | Focal Press today! They offer discounts to User Group members.

NOTICE

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. LACS became a California non-profit corporation on July 17, 1991. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Annual Membership Dues:

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

   — **Monthly Newsletter** *User Friendly*. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.

   — **Get FREE help** by phone from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly.*

   — **Get help by email** by using our LACSLIST Group eMail List. Send your questions to lacslist (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, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information.** Go to https://www.lacspc.org to see what's offered, and when.

   — 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.

- - - - - - - - - ✄ - ✄ - ✄ - - - - - - - -

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

Check # _____

Please mail your dues and this form to:
Los Angeles Computer Society, **11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802**

Please PRINT Clearly   [ ] New   [ ] Renewal

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

[   ] New / Renewal with electronic, no paper, newsletter - $30.00   [   ] Gift Membership - $20.00

[   ] Contributor - $50.00   [   ] Supporter- $75.00   [   ] Benefactor - $100.00   [   ] Other

Name: First   Last

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

Address:

City, State, Zip + 4

E-mail Address: E-mail of Associate

Preferred Phone: Publish Contact Info in Roster [   ] Yes   [   ] No

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

Los Angeles Computer Society

GENERAL MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM.

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 technical 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.