

User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group

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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

DECEMBER 10, 2022 HOLIDAY PARTY

Time: 1:00 PM

Where: Fu's Palace

8751 W. Pico Blvd.

Los Angeles, 90035



Appetizers served at **1:10**, soup and salad at **1:30**, then main courses will be served on lazy Susans.

Cost: \$30.00 per person, including tax and tip.

Invite Family and Friends

Please be sure you have paid LACS and Mark Presky has the names of each person who is coming by **December 5**.

LACS accepts PayPal, Zelle, or checks.

See page 2 for payment options and how to use them.

For more information click on this URL:

https://www.lacspc.org/Various/Xmas_Party_2022.pdf

Menu

Appetizers:

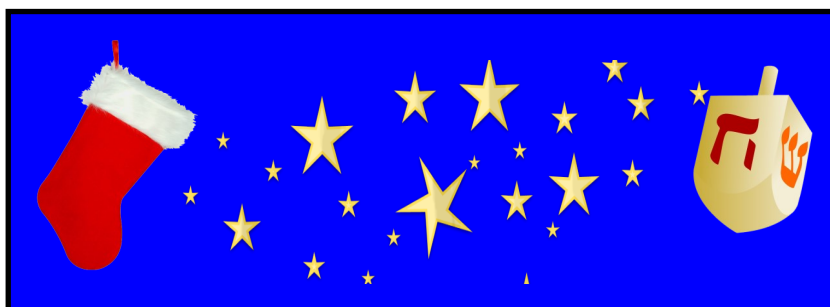
Vegetable Spring Roll, Pork Steamed Dumplings, Chinese Chicken Salad; without chicken for vegetarians

Soup: Wor Wonton

Main Courses:

Honey Walnut Shrimp, Broccoli Beef, Sauteed Garlic Chicken, Chicken and Vegetable Lo Mein (one of each), Buddha's Feast (mixed vegetables), Fried & Steamed Rice

Questions: Contact Mark Presky or Leah Clark.





FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR



OPTIONS FOR PAYING FOR THE HOLIDAY PARTY

Be sure Mark Presky has the names of each attendee by December 5.

★ To send money to LACS by PayPal

Go to this link:

www.paypal.com/paypalme/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. Enter the amount, **\$30.00 for each person**, and indicate it's for the Holiday Party. Click on **Send Payment Now**.

★ To send money to LACS through Zelle

1. Log into your bank with your username and password.
2. Select **Transfer Money**
3. Select **Send Money with Zelle**
4. Select **Add Recipients**. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**.
5. Indicate that the payment is **\$30.00 for each person** for the **Holiday Party**.
6. Select **Send by email**. Enter **lacomputersociety@gmail.com**
7. Click on **Save and Send**.

The wording on each bank site may be slightly different; the idea is the same.

For more information, see: <https://www.zellepay.com/how-it-works>

★ To send money to LACS by check

Make your check out to **Los Angeles Computer Society** for **\$30.00 for each person**. Put the attendees' names in the memo section.

Mail to **Mark Presky, 3560 Ashwood Ave. Los Angeles, 90066-1901**

Be sure to mail soon enough to arrive by **December 5**.

Happy Holidays

We wish for all LACS members and their families and friends to have peace, love and joy for the holidays and always.

We thank the members for their dedication to LACS.

We look forward to the Holiday Party Celebration having a good time



WELCOME TO ALL LACS NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members (0)

Renewals (6)

Shelby Croft

Stanley Johnson

Virginian Thomas

Joan Wilder



Robert Swarthe

Paula Van Berkomp*

*Contributor

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

November 15, 2022

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Topic: Fixing Printers and Other Devices

Speaker: Adi Hacker, *Computer Concepts*

Computer Concepts is authorized by Epson, Brother, Hewlett Packard, and several others. Adi does computer consulting focusing on printer service, and also virus repair and most anything computer-related.

He talked about internet security and how to avoid being hacked. Many use their names as part of their email addresses. Fraudulent companies look at email addresses, then bots can extract a name from an email. They send you an email addressed to your name that looks like it came from your bank. They can access your personal information or bank account if you click on a link in it. He discussed other scams to watch for. Beware!

You can have your credit card company notify you whenever there has been a charge on your account. Adi then talked about printers. He asks questions of customers so he can help them pick the right printer for their needs. The costs of the printers and the inks must be considered.

Some printer manufacturers don't sell parts for their printers when they are out of warranty, and sometimes they don't reimburse a service center when a printer is still under warranty. Then the repairer has to charge you. Epson, Brother, and Lexmark do reimburse for warranty service, and they sell parts when out of warranty.

Adi answered questions about cookies, ink cartridges running low, virus checkers, bank routing numbers, and printer and scanner drivers for Linux. He warned us to have only one antivirus running at the same time. Inks may be less expensive with higher-end printers.

Adi invited us to call him anytime if we have questions, and he gave us his phone number and email address. Thank you, Adi.

Topic: Touring the Web

Speaker: JB Burke,
Prescott Computer Society, AZ
APCUG Speakers Bureau

JB opened by taking us on a train trip through the town of Ygre in Norway. He showed a lot of videos and included links to them. Each day he saves things he finds on the internet. He shared many educational, interesting, humorous, and weird sites, cartoons, and videos with their links.

Some of the interesting sites, images, and videos JB found on the internet:

- Where to find, edit, and remove everything your browser knows about you. There may be more stuff stored than you are aware of. JB recommends never saving passwords in your browser. It's better to use a password manager. He showed how to find your data that's stored in Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, and Firefox.
- Gas Station Maps from the Early Days
- Stacks of code written by hand for NASA's Apollo program
- Elevate Bunk Bed Sofa Sleeper
- There are more public library branches in the U.S. than there are McDonalds.
- Broccoli is the only vegetable that is also a flower.
- Saltine crackers are worse for your teeth than sugar.
- It takes 3,000 cows to supply the NFL with enough leather for a year's supply of footballs.

- There are only 18 minutes of total action in a baseball game.
- Michael Phelps has won more gold medals than 66 countries.
- The world's highest-capacity micro SD card (1.5 TB) can store more than one million floppy disks.
- Slides about the history of education in the USA showing posters of weights and measures, counting and numbers, and the metric system.
- A slide warning about emails with grammar and spelling errors
- Sites on how long it takes to crack a password, how to make a password uncrackable for 27,000 years, the use of password managers, and a password strength checker
- Video of a 3-D shoe billboard in Tokyo
- A Craiyon AI image generator showing portraits of people who don't exist. They can be used to create stock photos or fake IDs. There are many fun AI drawing and music sites, and ways to turn text into images.
- Fly around a dentist office with a one-take FPV drone video.
- A paraglider captures stunning GoPro Footage of a historic village in the Swiss Alps with beautiful scenery.
- Early gliders
- How to casually migrate to a new Chromebook if the old one dies, because everything in a Chromebook is in the cloud.
- Some absolutely worthless websites that are interesting and fun. Then JB showed a long list of "worthless websites."

- How many humans have ever existed?
- A fascinating video depicting time from 4.50 billion years ago to the present. That really put things in perspective!
- Illustrations and videos of the solar system showing the relative size and position of the planets and the sun.
- A car's wheels can be thrown out of balance by a buildup of wheel ants.
- Articles about old car accessories and maintenance practices.
- Workers in very dangerous locations.

JB says it's not good to be too serious about a lot of things. Good advice!

We learned a lot and had much fun from these two presentations. Many thanks to Adi and JB.

After the presentations there was some discussion about spinning hard drives and SSD hard drives. A flash drive is an SSD.



JB Burke and Adi Hacker at Our Zoom Meeting



Clockwise from top left: Paula, Stephanie, Ray and Jim

WI-FI HOTSPOT AND USB TETHER

By John Krout

Presenter and Newsletter Contributor
Potomac Area Technology and Computer
Society , VA

www.patacs.org

If you use a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot to provide an internet connection to a single computer, the tether option may provide advantages.

Introduction

Many environments do not provide either reliable Wi-Fi or high-speed Wi-Fi. In those environments, some find that the only way to provide internet access for a computer is to enable a smartphone to provide a Wi-Fi hotspot.

From the viewpoint of the computer user, that hotspot is just like any Wi-Fi service. The hotspot shows up in the computer's list of available Wi-Fi services. Connection to the hotspot usually requires a password; you can find that password on the smartphone's screen.

Any Wi-Fi hotspot faces issues affecting its performance.

First, the Wi-Fi hotspot drains the smartphone battery at an increased rate, more rapidly than when the smartphone hotspot is disabled.

Second, the smartphone's Wi-Fi hotspot offers no competition for a Wi-Fi router. A router typically has two or more antennae and supplies much greater Wi-Fi signal power than a smartphone Wi-Fi hotspot.

Since a smartphone's Wi-Fi signal is weaker than a router's signal, the distance between the smartphone hotspot and the computer is critical. Put the phone as close as possible to the computer. Move the smartphone a bit farther away, and the speed of the Wi-Fi connection available to the computer declines.

Third, due to the weak Wi-Fi signal from a smartphone, the Wi-Fi signal strength and,

therefore, the internet speeds may vary because of intermittent nearby interference beyond anyone's control.

In short, tether options overcome those three issues.

If your smartphone already enables you to create a Wi-Fi Hotspot, then your smartphone likely provides one or more options to use a tether.

Bluetooth Tether

Both recent iPhones and recent Android phones also include Bluetooth tethering capability. However, since Bluetooth involves no cable, the capability is better described as a Bluetooth hotspot.

Again, like Wi-Fi hotspots, your carrier contract may or may not allow your use of Bluetooth tethering. Also, like Wi-Fi hotspots, Bluetooth has disadvantages. For example, Bluetooth usage accelerates smartphone battery drainage. Also, Bluetooth range for useful internet data rates is quite limited and degrades over distance.

USB Tether Advantages

USB tether means that the smartphone provides internet service to the computer through a USB cable. The Windows 10 and 11 operating systems automatically recognize that the USB tether provides an internet connection.

The USB cable connection provides power from the computer to the smartphone, reducing battery drainage. In addition, USB cable communication requires less power than Wi-Fi or Bluetooth, reducing battery drainage.

How To Enable an Android Phone's USB Tether

First, attach the smartphone to a USB cable, then connect that USB cable to a USB-A socket on a computer. Most recent smartphones support USB3, so plug that cable into a USB3 socket on the computer.

After that, you use **Settings** on your smartphone to enable the USB Tethering behavior.

Here I will show you how to enable USB Tethering behavior on my Samsung Galaxy S10 smartphone running Android 12. The main Settings app screen, shown in **Illustration 1**, is the place to start. Then, on that screen, tap **Connections**, which is circled in the illustration.

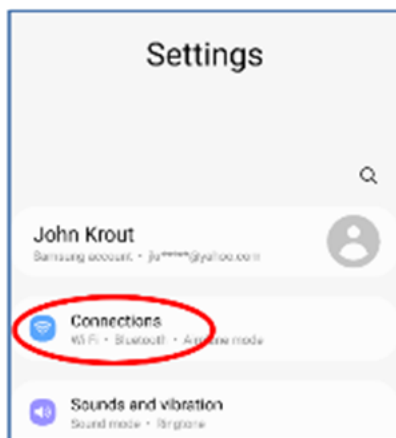


Illustration 1

In **Illustration 2**, you can see the Connections screen. On that screen, tap **Mobile Hotspot and Tethering**. It is circled in the illustration.

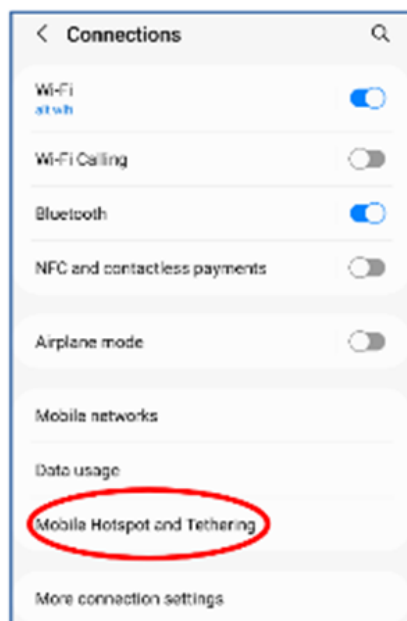


Illustration 2

In **Illustration 3**, you can see the Mobile Hotspot and Tethering screen. As shown, the USB Tethering switch is disabled. However, if a USB cable connects your smartphone and the computer, that USB Tethering switch will be enabled, like the Mobile Hotspot switch in the illustration.



Illustration 3

After connecting the USB cable to the smartphone and the computer, tap the enabled USB Tethering switch to turn it on.

When you do so, the computer should recognize the available internet connection via the connected USB cable within a few seconds.

How To Enable an iPhone's USB Tether

On my iPhone X, the equivalent Settings screen sequence to turn on a hotspot are **Settings→Cellular→Personal Hotspot**.

Unfortunately, my iPhone is not currently on a carrier contract. Therefore, Cellular is ghosted (disabled) in Settings, so I cannot enable and test an iPhone personal hotspot.

The iPhone user's manual ebook on my iPhone does not document a USB tether capability. However, USB tether documentation on this iPhone support web page seems to indicate that a USB tether connecting an iPhone running iOS 15 to a computer can be accomplished without turning on any Settings switch: support.apple.com/en-us/HT204023



Ethernet Tether

You might think that your smartphone cannot connect to an Ethernet cable! On the contrary, perhaps it can, but you must spend some money to make it happen.

As you can see in **Illustration 3**, my Samsung Galaxy S10 phone supports an Ethernet tether. To use that Ethernet tether, a smartphone must support On-The-Go (OTG) capability.

The existence of that **Settings Ethernet Tether** switch may indicate that OTG is, in fact, supported. I know by testing my S10 phone that the phone does support OTG. To use OTG with Ethernet, you must obtain a 3-way OTG adapter and a USB-to-Ethernet adapter. With the OTG connected to the phone to power, the USB side of the USB to Ethernet adapter, and an Ethernet cable connected to the Ethernet adapter and to a computer, the Ethernet Tether switch will be enabled.

Most of us already have the USB cable for a USB tether, so the USB Tether method is essentially more straightforward and cost-free than Ethernet Tether. Therefore, I suspect that the USB Tether method will be preferable for all readers of this article.

Final Notes

A smartphone hotspot or tether will **never be any faster than the available speed provided by the nearest cell tower**. The very nature of cell towers means that factors beyond the control of any one person will cause the download and upload speed to vary. I have measured the 4G download speed from the cell tower about two blocks away from my suburban home a few times. The speed has been as high as 12 megabits per second and as low as 1.8 megabits per second.

Carrier companies claim that 5G will improve the speeds, but there are still caveats: 5G runs at a rate greater than 4G only if you are close to a 5G-compatible cell tower. Also, for maximum speed, the cell tower must not be overloaded. Unfortunately, that condition is

beyond the control of anyone other than the carrier company. Nevertheless, carrier companies are marketing 5G hotspots to businesses to use as an alternative to wired Internet connections. If that marketing succeeds, 5G-compatible cell tower overloading may become the new 5G normal in cell towers serving residential and commercial customers.

John Krout has been writing about the creative uses of personal computers since the early 1980s and now writes about the creative uses of smartphones, tablets, and digital cameras. He is a retired software engineer who spent his career collecting requirements, developing designs, coding in C and C++, and writing documentation for systems large and small used by Federal government agencies. He lives in Arlington, VA, and is a member of the APCUG Speaker's Bureau. ❖

LOS ANGELES IS THE FIRST MAJOR CITY TO SYNCHRONIZE TRAFFIC LIGHTS

You know that feeling you get when it seems like you're catching every red light in town? Thanks to traffic light synchronization, people in major cities worldwide are experiencing it a lot less these days.

It all started in Los Angeles, California, in early 2013 when the city became the first metropolis in the world to synchronize all its traffic lights in an attempt to manage sprawling gridlock better. The system uses a vast network of magnetic sensors embedded in streets and highways, with hundreds of traffic cameras, to analyze traffic flow.

This information is fed into a centralized computing array that constantly crunches the numbers and adjusts the city's nearly 4,700 traffic lights. Although only recently implemented, the city had been planning the upgrade for ages. It was proposed back in the 1980s as part of a plan to prepare the city's traffic grid for the 1984 Olympics.

Since the implementation of the city-wide system, commuting times have decreased. ❖

LACS NOTICES SEE PAGE 2 ABOUT THE HOLIDAY PARTY**PAY DUES BY PAYPAL OR ZELLE**

To pay by PayPal, go to this link:

www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024

and then click on **Send**. You'll be asked to log in to your PayPal account or sign up for an account so that PayPal will know where to get the money to send. Follow the prompts. Once you have entered your dues amount, click on **Add a note**. Tell us of any updated information: physical address, email address, phone number, and what type of dues you are paying: regular, electronic *User Friendly*, etc. or if you don't want your contact information published in the roster.

To pay by Zelle, log into your bank with your username and password.

Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is:

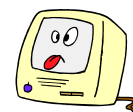
lacompetersociety@gmail.com. The wording may be a little different on your bank's site. Email questions to Gavin at gmfaught@gmail.com.

HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS now has **one** active general list: PC@LACS.Groups.IO. Use this email address to ask questions, to offer any comments or suggestions, and to conduct official LACS business.

New LACS members should receive an invitation to join our list with two weeks to accept. LACS members who want to join the list should send an email to

LACS+subscribe@Groups.IO from the email address they want to use with their name and phone number. Stephanie, our Groups.IO Coordinator, will check your membership and add you to the PC list. You can contact her at nordlacs@AOL.com

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

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

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members who are on our PC email 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 or have any problem.**

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.

LACS CALENDAR



LACS Board Meeting

Date: Monday, December 5, 2022 via Zoom

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

Please log in early so we can start on time.

No General Meeting in December

LACS HOLIDAY PARTY

Date: Saturday, December 10, 2022

Time: 1:00 PM

Place: See page 1

December 5: LACS Board Meeting

December 7: Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day

December 10: LACS Holiday Party

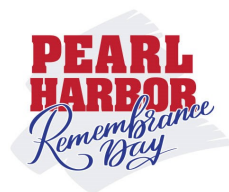
December 18: Hanukkah

December 21: First Day of Winter

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 and hybrid meetings. See 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/>

UPCOMING EVENTS

No general meeting in December

December 10: LACS Holiday Party

RSVP by December 5

See page 1

January 10: Security Tips and Q & A.

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

ZOOM MEETINGS

Members on our PC email list will receive, via email, an invitation to join LACS Zoom general meetings. Click on the URL in the invitation 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.

ZOOM RECORDINGS

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

HYPERLINKS

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

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 or 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 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.

| | | |
|--|------------------------------|------------------|
| Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, Photoshop, etc. - 10 | Hardware - 7 | Photoshop - 10 |
| Android Smartphones - 8 | Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7 | Quicken - 8, 12 |
| Apple devices - 11 | Mozilla Firefox - 7 | Thunderbird - 7 |
| Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8 | MS Excel - 8, 11, 12 | Utilities - 7, 8 |
| Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3 | MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12 | Visual Basic - 5 |
| Genealogy - 8 | MS Outlook - 8, 1, 10 | Websites - 5 |
| Groups.IO - 8 | MS PowerPoint - 8, 11 | Windows - 7, 8 |
| | MS Publisher - 2 | WordPerfect - 8 |
| | PDF 24 - 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 |
| 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 |

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

| TITLE | NAME | TERM |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------|
| President | Leah Clark | 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 | Emil Rozek | 2023 |
| Director | Annette Tossounian | 2023 |
| Director | Paula Van Berkom | 2023 |
| Immediate Past President | Stanley Johnson | |
| APCUG Representative | 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.

POWER BASICS

By **Dick Maybach**

Brookdale Computer User Group, NJ

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

Electrical power is remarkably reliable, especially considering that much of the system is exposed to the elements and sometimes wildlife. On the rare occasions when it does fail, it will be helpful if you know a bit about it. Troubleshooting by candlelight is seldom quick, and ignorance won't make it faster.

You may have noticed that electric power enters your home on three wires. Two of these, which we'll call "Phase 1" and "Phase 2," carry 110-V AC, and the third is neutral.

Figure 1 shows the waveforms on the "hot" wires, the voltage on the neutral wire is always close to zero.

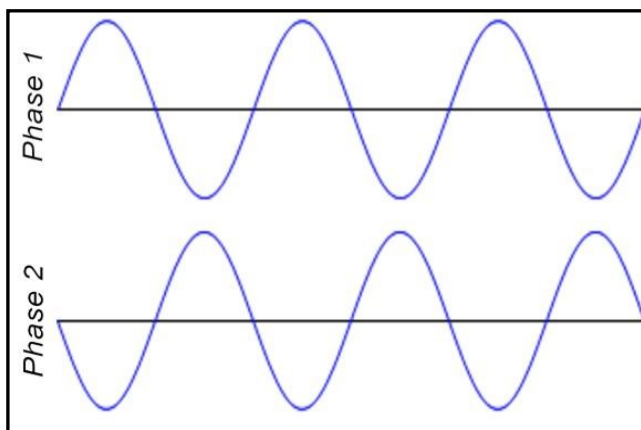


Figure 1. A-C Power Waveforms

A 110-volt outlet connects to either phase 1 and neutral or phase 2 and neutral. For example, an appliance needing 220 volts connects to both phase 1 and phase 2. Since phase 2 is the negative of phase 1, such a connection applies twice the voltage to the appliance as that between one of the phases and neutral.

Thus, although some devices may need 220 volts, the maximum voltage in your house is 110. By the way, if you measure the voltage, you will find it's about 125. When electric power was first developed, it was 110 volts, but

that label is no longer accurate.

Figure 2 shows a portion of a home breaker box, which is the interface between your outlets and devices and the power company. At the top is the master breaker through which all the individual circuits connect. Turn this off to remove all the power in your house.

Below are the breakers for the individual circuits. If your home is new, there is probably a sheet on the breaker box cover that lists what each breaker controls. In older houses, this sheet is often out-of-date or even missing. Note that the two top individual breakers are actually two individual ones; these are for 220-volt service. As you go from top to bottom, alternate breakers connect to phase 1 and phase 2. Thus, as breakers are added, the loads on phase 1 and phase 2 remain approximately equal, and adjacent breakers can control 220-volt circuits

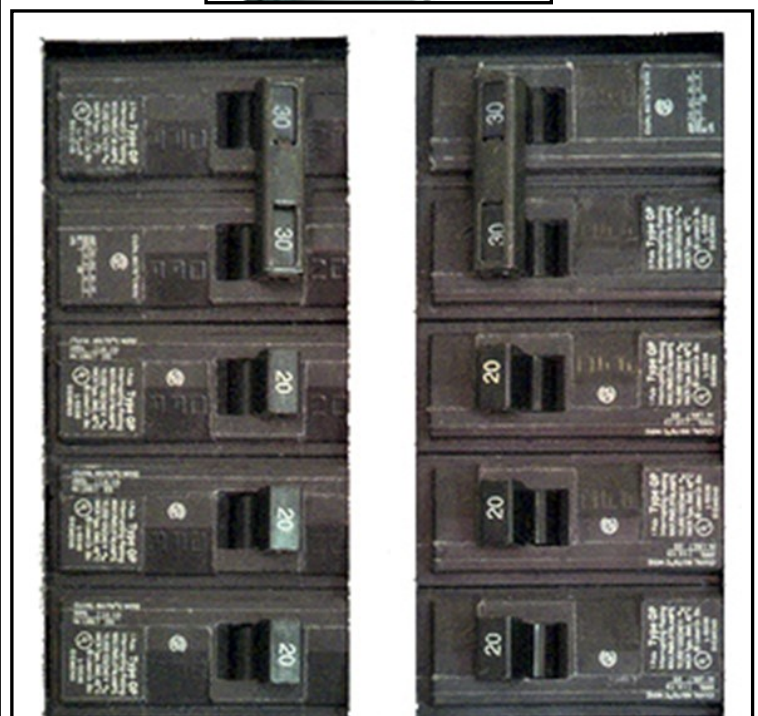


Figure 2. Residential Breaker Box

There are two types of 110-volt outlets in the U.S., as shown in Figure 3, but the two-wire one is usually found only in older houses.

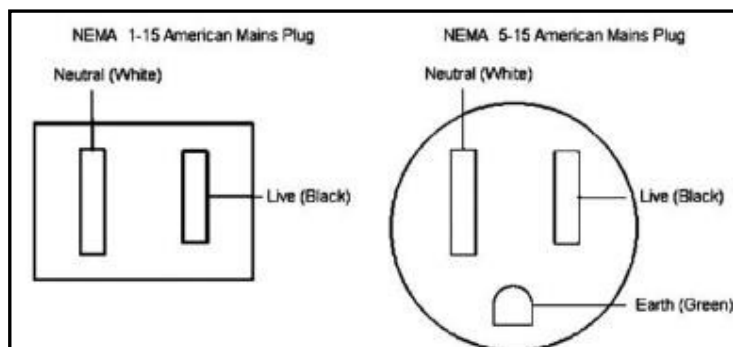


Figure 3. U.S. 110-volt Power Outlets

The live slot connects to either phase 1 or phase 2 of the incoming power, and neutral connects to neutral. Ground does not connect to the power company but to a good earth ground in your home, typically the incoming water pipe.

You need an adapter between a 3-wire plug and a 2-wire outlet. If you use one, be sure to connect its ground wire to the screw that secures the outlet cover plate. If you have any doubts about your wiring, testers such as the one in Figure 4, are inexpensive insurance.



Figure 4. AC Outlet Tester

As you can see from its label, the indicator lamp's pattern shows the outlet's state. It's also helpful during the first step of PC troubleshooting, ensuring it has electrical power.

You can also use an inexpensive multi-meter to check the voltage at an outlet, but be careful when you insert the probes into the slot; touching 110 volts is always unpleasant and can be lethal. Non-contact testers avoid this hazard, but user reports indicate they aren't reliable.

If a circuit breaker trips repeatedly, either it's defective, or the circuit is drawing too much current. Never replace it with one with a higher rating, as the wires in your house are sized to carry currents only up to the breaker rating. In Figure 2, for example, the wires in the 30-ampere circuits are thicker than those in the 20-ampere ones. If you exceed these currents, the voltage at the outlet will drop, and the temperature of the wires in the walls will rise, perhaps enough to degrade the insulation or even to start a fire. **Therefore, any electrical work should be done only by a licensed electrician.**

In newer homes, some outlets are protected by a **Ground Fault Interrupter (GFI)**, most often in kitchens, bathrooms, and outside the house. Some, particularly those in kitchens and bathrooms, have a distinctive connector, Figure 5.



Figure 5. GFI Outlet

If a GFI detects any current flowing to ground, it trips the breaker. Note the two rectangular buttons in the center; "Test" checks the operation by tripping the breaker, and "Reset" restores power. Usually, each GFI outlet connects to

two or three others that don't have distinctive buttons but are also protected. It may be worthwhile to press each test button to see what other outlets are affected. Not all

GFI-protected circuits have distinctive outlets. **Figure 6** shows a portion of a residential breaker box.



Figure 6. Breaker Box Equipped with GFI Breakers

Note the green squares labeled "Test" on five of them. These are GFI breakers, but all their outlets are normal, with no test or reset buttons. This is probably because the outlets are near the floor and can be obscured by furniture, making them difficult to access.

It would be worthwhile to become familiar with your home electrical power system while it's working.

- Check which lights and outlets each breaker controls and update the sheet on the breaker box cover if needed.
- If you have an older home, use a tester like the one shown in **Figure 4** to be sure the outlets are wired correctly. Use the test button on your GFI outlets to find which are on each circuit.

- If you don't have GFI sockets, consider hiring a licensed electrical contractor to install them, at least in your bathrooms and kitchen.

The most frequent power problem is storm damage, usually repaired within a few hours. Gasoline-powered emergency generators are a common solution here but don't use them near your house because of the carbon monoxide they also generate. It's not uncommon for GFI breakers to trip, which is an excellent reason to become familiar with the circuits they control. I've had standard breakers fail, especially when they are old; in such cases, call an electrician. ❖

WINDOWS 11 ONEDRIVE AND A MICROSOFT ACCOUNT

An Offer You Can't Refuse?

By **David Kretchmar** Hardware Technician
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OneDrive is cloud storage that is built into



the Windows 11 operating system. Microsoft has integrated OneDrive more closely into Windows 11 than Windows 10, presumably to get more users onboard with what OneDrive offers. In this article, I'm not going to get into the "nuts and bolts" of the operation of OneDrive in Windows 11 but discuss some advantages of using OneDrive, and hopefully convince users who have not taken advantage of this feature to consider it.

What is OneDrive, and why do I need it?

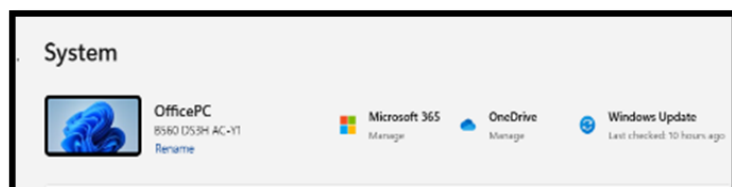
OneDrive is the Microsoft cloud service that allows you to access your files from any device connected to the internet. OneDrive enables you to store and protect your files, share them with others, and get to them from anywhere on any device. OneDrive can be used on many operating systems, including iOS or Android.

What's in It for Microsoft?

OneDrive and Microsoft Office 365 can provide Microsoft with “recurring” or “subscription” revenue, which is much more valuable than a one-time purchase of an operating system or a version of Microsoft Office. This explains why Microsoft appears eager to get users to have a Microsoft account as a first step toward using Microsoft subscription offerings.

OneDrive Promoted to the System Folder

OneDrive now has a prominent place in the **System folder** in Windows 11:



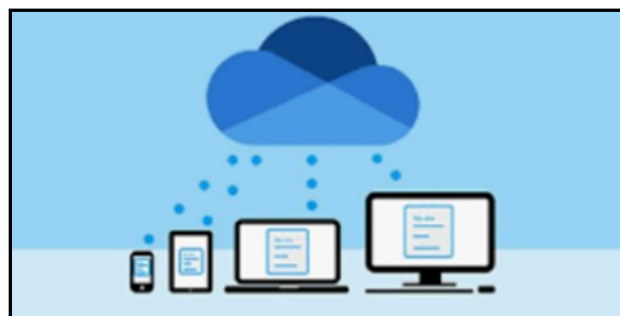
Click on the OneDrive icon shown at the top of the system folder, and you will see the folders on your system are backed up (synced) on OneDrive.

Microsoft Account

OneDrive requires a Microsoft Account. You already have a Microsoft account if you use other Microsoft features, such as Skype or the Microsoft Store. Microsoft strongly encourages Windows users to create a Microsoft account if they don't already have one, starting when a Windows 11 system is first configured. If a user does not have a Microsoft account, one can be created anytime at the Microsoft website.

Levels of OneDrive storage

Different storage levels and other features are available for a Microsoft account.



The basic free program provides a minimum of 5GB OneDrive storage. Individuals qualify for additional free storage based on the length of time they have had a Microsoft account or on the length of time they have used a Microsoft email address (Outlook, Hotmail, or Live.com). For example, I have had a Hotmail account for many years and get 15 GB of free OneDrive storage due to “loyalty bonuses.”

For \$1.99 per month, you can get 100GB of storage. Microsoft 365 Personal subscriptions (\$6.99/month, \$69.99 a year) provide a massive 1TB (1024 GB) of OneDrive online storage. Microsoft 365 Family subscriptions are \$99.99 per year and \$9.99 per month. They provide 1TB of OneDrive space for up to six users.

Do I really need a Microsoft account?

A Microsoft account is required to install and activate Office versions 2013 or later and Microsoft 365 for home use. You might already have a Microsoft account if you use a service like Outlook.com, OneDrive, Xbox Live, or Skype; or if you purchased Office from the online Microsoft Store. If you have no interest in OneDrive, Skype, Microsoft mail, or any of the many applications available from the Microsoft Store, you don't *need* a Microsoft account.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Microsoft has evolved OneDrive into a reliable and useful service that gives you a minimum of 5GB of cloud storage for free. Over time free OneDrive cloud will grow to 15GB. Users should strongly consider using at least the free storage furnished by Microsoft to back up vital documents and pictures or any files they might need to access from any device on any internet connection in the world. ❖

BLUETOOTH ADAPTERS – DO I NEED ONE?

By **Phil Sorrentino**, Secretary and APCUG Rep, Sun City Center Computer Club, FL
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The short answer is “no” if all your devices have Bluetooth incorporated in them, but yes, if you have a non-Bluetooth device that you would like to use with other Bluetooth devices. A Bluetooth adapter allows a non-Bluetooth device to work with a Bluetooth device. The adapter does this by providing Bluetooth electronics for the non-Bluetooth device.

Bluetooth is a wireless communications standard for interconnecting electronic devices. It allows devices to connect wirelessly over a range of about 100 ft. This wireless connection can be beneficial if devices are in separate rooms in a house. But that's the technical side of Bluetooth.

Most of us know Bluetooth as how our smartphones connect to the radio system in our cars to provide "hands-free" phone conversations. This is probably one of the most extensive uses of Bluetooth today, but there are other uses. Two other uses of Bluetooth that come to mind involve listening to music; wireless headphones or earbuds and wireless (Bluetooth) speakers.

As implied above, Bluetooth is included in Apple and Android smartphones. Bluetooth is a convenient way to connect a smartphone to a listening device like headphones or a speaker. (In fact, some smartphones like the Apple iPhone XS, the Google Pixel 3, and the Motorola Moto Z3 don't even have a 3.5 mm wired headphone jack, making Bluetooth the only way to connect these devices to headphones.)

Headphones are a convenient way to take advantage of a smartphone being used as a music player. Start the phone's music app, put on the headphones, and enjoy the music. Apple wireless headphones are very noticeable. Apple AirPods, as they are called, are typically white and look like someone cut the wires going to each individual headphone.

Besides Apple, many other wireless headphones are available from Sony, Bose, LG, Jaybird, Optoma, Beats, and others. Using Bluetooth headphones, you replace the wires needed with standard headphones with the wireless Bluetooth connection. That way, no wires are going from your head to your phone, which might be in your hand or in your pocket, which might get in your way. With some of these wireless headphones, there is still a wire going from one headphone to the other that usually goes behind the head.

Bluetooth Speakers - the other use for Bluetooth. Speakers that have Bluetooth included are sold as Bluetooth or Smart Speakers. There are many of these available from Sony, JBL, Sonos, Bose, and others. Most of these speakers are powered by batteries, so they are portable, and you can use them anywhere. Many are waterproof, encouraging their use at the beach or around the pool. These speakers contain Bluetooth electronics, which allow them to connect to a device such as a smartphone or a computer,

and to be used in place of the speaker(s) on the device to provide the sound. So, if a Bluetooth speaker is connected to a smartphone and a music player app on the smartphone is started, the music will be heard on the Bluetooth speaker.

A Bluetooth speaker is usually much more powerful than the small speaker on the smartphone, and the quality of the Bluetooth speaker is typically much better than that of the smartphone speaker, so the listening experience may be more enjoyable. And if the Bluetooth speaker is powerful enough, it may even be used to fill a large room and entertain many people.

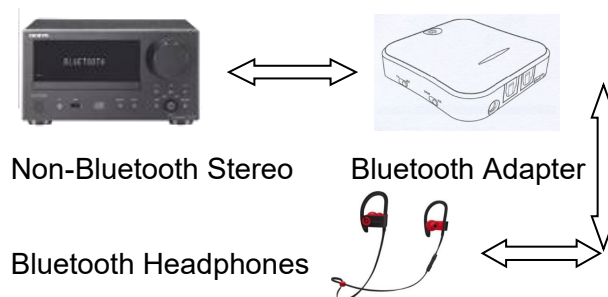
Wireless headphones and Bluetooth speakers are quite helpful when used with a smartphone or a computer with Bluetooth electronics embedded, but what about those devices that don't have Bluetooth electronics included, like an older stereo receiver or a radio? Well, this is where Bluetooth adapters come into play. Bluetooth adapters allow you to listen to your non-Bluetooth stereo or radio using your wireless headphones or Bluetooth speakers.

The adapter provides the Bluetooth electronics needed to connect to other Bluetooth devices. Bluetooth adapters from Logitech, Taotronics, Trond, 1Mii, and others should cost less than \$50. Except for the inexpensive items, most adapters can be used as a Bluetooth transmitter or a Bluetooth receiver. When the adapter is used with a non-Bluetooth source of audio (like a stereo), it is being used as a transmitter. When the adapter is used with a non-Bluetooth device that receives the audio (like a powered speaker), it is being used as a receiver. Adapters are powered by wall power or battery, or both. If your stereo is not portable, you probably don't need a portable adapter. (Be aware that some less expensive portable Bluetooth adapters cannot charge their battery and operate as a transmitter at the same time.)

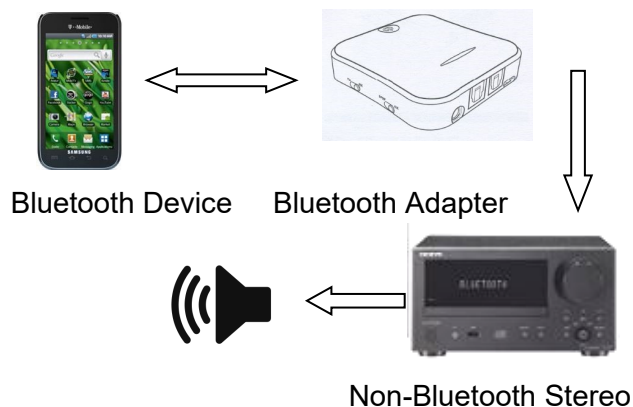
Setting up the adapter to function as a trans-

mitter is pretty straightforward. First, the audio output from your non-Bluetooth stereo gets connected to the adapter's input, typically with a 3.5 mm stereo cable. (Some more expensive adapters even support optical audio.) Then when you go through the pairing and connecting process, the audio from the non-Bluetooth stereo will be audible in the wireless Bluetooth headphones. (In the diagram, a Bluetooth speaker can be substituted for the headphones, and you would have audio as loud as the particular speaker could provide.)

Bluetooth Adapter Used as a Transmitter



Many adapters can also allow a non-Bluetooth device to operate with a Bluetooth audio device as the audio source. In this arrangement, the adapter is used as a receiver. The non-Bluetooth device receives the audio from a Bluetooth device via the Bluetooth adapter used in the receive mode, as shown in the following diagram.



So, do you need a Bluetooth adapter? ❖

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From HowToGeek.com



He's Making a Database and Checking It Twice.

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