

# User Friendly

LACS  
A Computer and  
Technology  
User Group

**NOTE:** Please refer to page 2 of this issue for an update on the new dues-paying system and for the amount due in 2023.

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## LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG

An International  
Association of Technology  
and Computer User Groups



[www.apcug2.org](http://www.apcug2.org)  
[www.facebook.com/APCUG](https://www.facebook.com/APCUG)  
[www.twitter.com/apcug](https://www.twitter.com/apcug)

Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other events.

## JULY 11, 2023 GENERAL MEETING

**MeetingTime:** 7:00 to 9:00 PM — via Zoom  
**Socializing and Questions & Answers:** 6:30  
**Topic:** AnyDesk, Remote Desktop Software  
**Speaker:** John Kennedy  
East-Central Ohio Technology User Club  
APCUG Speakers Bureau  
APCUG Advisor for Regions 3 and 6



A “picture is worth a thousand words” as we are told. The same goes for being able to see another person’s computer problems. AnyDesk lets you see someone else’s computer screen and talk to them about their problems. And when they are having trouble trying to do what you tell them, you can take over their keyboard and their mouse with your mouse. John can solve a computer problem with AnyDesk in about 10 minutes that he could not solve after 25 minutes over the phone. He will also briefly compare AnyDesk with TeamViewer and Microsoft’s program in Windows 10 and 11. The free version of AnyDesk is fine for our purposes. A Help desk for a business or a large organization may need a paid version. Both AnyDesk and TeamViewer are very easy to learn.

### Meet Our Presenter

John taught elementary school for 25 years and computer skills to middle school students for 10 years. He learned and taught the Linux operating system. Since retiring, he has taught local senior citizen computer classes and spoken to many internet, conference and APCUG audiences. John also tries to help solve Windows and Linux users’ problems. He manages the APCUG Zoom Account, hosting many of its Wednesday Workshops and Saturday Safaris. John has owned many computers since the early 1980’s. He spoke to us on “Free and Open-Source Software and Alternatives to Free Software” last September.

**Tuesday, July 11, 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 before or on **July 9**. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at LeahClark424 (at) gmail.com. before or on **July 9**.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR



GOOGLE WILL SOON DELETE DORMANT ACCOUNTS

After the Washington Post published an article that Google will delete dormant accounts I asked ChatDPT about it. This is what I received after a little of my editing.

Recently, Google announced that it will be deleting inactive accounts that have been dormant for more than two years. This decision was made in order to free up user names and email addresses that are currently being held by inactive accounts.

Google has stated that this will only affect accounts that have not been used to sign in to any Google services, such as Gmail or Google Drive, in the past two years. If you have an account that you haven't used in a

while, it's a good idea to log in and make sure it's not at risk of being deleted. There are a few ways to back up all your Google data.

One option is to use Google Takeout, which allows you to download a copy of all your data from various Google services, such as Gmail, Google Drive, and Google Photos. Another option is to use a third-party backup service. Or, you can manually download and save important files and documents from your Google Drive account to your computer or an external hard drive. It's always a good idea to have a backup of your important data. in case of any unexpected issues or loss.

WELCOME TO LACS NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

Gavin Faught, LACS Treasurer

New Members (1)

Cleo Andrews

Renewals (4)

Patricia Downing

Monique Kemp



John Schaefer \*

Aldo Vendramin

\*Contributor

LACS LUNCHEON MEETING

On June 21, we had a lunch meeting at the Culver City Sizzler with about 17 people in attendance. We enjoyed each other's company, had fun, shared good food, and thanked Stephanie for organizing the event. It was great to see everyone again and we decided to meet quarterly in the future. Keep an eye on your email and *User Friendly* for the next date. We hope to see even more members and guests next time!

PAYING YOUR DUES IN 2023

LACS is starting a system where all members will pay their annual dues at the same time, in December or January, for the coming year. Use the following chart to see the prorated amount you will owe in 2023. Select the month you are due, and select the membership

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS	SELECT THE MONTH YOU ARE RENEWING OR ARE JOINING LACS													
	Yearly Rate	Monthly Rate	Dec.	Nov.	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	July	June	May	April	March	Feb.	Jan.
New/Renewal with Newsletter	\$40	\$3.33	\$ 3.33	\$ 6.67	\$ 10.00	\$ 13.33	\$ 16.67	\$ 20.00	\$ 23.33	\$ 26.67	\$ 30.00	\$ 33.33	\$ 36.67	\$ 40.00
Associate	\$12	\$1	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 8.00	\$ 9.00	\$ 10.00	\$ 11.00	\$ 12.00
Student	\$18	\$1.50	\$ 1.50	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.50	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 9.00	\$ 10.50	\$ 12.00	\$ 13.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 16.50	\$ 18.00
New/Renewal with Electronic Newsletter	\$30	\$2.50	\$ 2.50	\$ 5.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 17.50	\$ 20.00	\$ 22.50	\$ 25.00	\$ 27.50	\$ 30.00
Gift membership	\$20	\$1.67	\$ 1.67	\$ 3.33	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.67	\$ 8.33	\$ 10.00	\$ 11.67	\$ 13.33	\$ 15.00	\$ 16.67	\$ 18.33	\$ 20.00
Contributor	\$50	\$4.17	\$ 4.17	\$ 8.33	\$ 12.50	\$ 16.67	\$ 20.83	\$ 25.00	\$ 29.17	\$ 33.33	\$ 37.50	\$ 41.67	\$ 45.83	\$ 50.00
Supporter	\$75	\$6.25	\$ 6.25	\$ 12.50	\$ 18.75	\$ 25.00	\$ 31.25	\$ 37.50	\$ 43.75	\$ 50.00	\$ 56.25	\$ 62.50	\$ 68.75	\$ 75.00
Benefactor	\$100	\$8.33	\$ 8.33	\$ 16.67	\$ 25.00	\$ 33.33	\$ 41.67	\$ 50.00	\$ 58.33	\$ 66.67	\$ 75.00	\$ 83.33	\$ 91.67	\$ 100.00

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

June 13, 2023

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

Topic: **Overview of Artificial Intelligence**

Speaker: **Judy Taylour**

APCUG Speakers Bureau;

President and webmaster

SCV Computer Club



Judy Taylour gave us an overview of Artificial Intelligence (AI). ChatGPT was launched by OpenAI (founded in 2015) in 2022. OpenAI warns users never to share personal information when interacting with ChatGPT.

**ChatGPT** is a conversational artificial intelligence chatbot, an app designed to simulate conversation with human users, especially over the internet. Think of it as Google Search on steroids! It can improve your resume, create original jokes, solve math problems, and explain complex topics. It can write music, write code, create content in many languages, write essays, stories, and poetry, and edit a speech. You can also create recipes, a workout plan, play games, plan your vacation, and get complex topics explained in simple terms. Judy discussed many more applications for ChatGPT. You can have fun with it and learn about almost anything. Judy showed us the six ideas it gave her for a 5-year-old's birthday party.

Certain topics are off-limits. They include anything that happened after 2021, political debates, predicting the future, promoting harm or violence, hate speech, illegal activities, or swearing.

ChatGPT is incredibly accurate, but you must fact-check everything you get. It is still a work in progress. Do not blind-trust AI. Let ChatGPT know if it's wrong because it learns from its mistakes.

Use AI as a tool to maximize efficiency, but not as a shortcut, which could hinder your creativity. Use it to supplement your research.

AI can be misused by bad actors, creating cybersecurity risk. Judy gave an example of the grandparent scam and what you can do to prevent being a victim. AI can not replace human judgment or consider your personal tastes and emotions.

Judy noted some differences and similarities between three chatbots: ChatGPT, Google's Bard, and Bing's AI. She then asked if anyone had questions. Much discussion and many ideas followed.

After that, Stephanie showed four short videos dealing with AI. Here is a listing of some of the content of each one.

### Video 1:

- How ChatGPT works
- What can ChatGPT do
- How to use ChatGPT
- The best practices for using ChatGPT
- The limitations of Chat GPT.

### Video 2:

- AI Voice Changer
- AI Object Removal
- AI Video Editing
- AI Text Models
- AI Data Analysis

### Video 3:

- Introducing Bing AI

### Video 4:

- How to use the new Bing AI chat mode



LACS members and guests received a link to the recording of the meeting including the videos. ❖

## HISTORY OF MICROWAVE OVENS AND CAVITY MAGNETRONS

By Irv Hershman, LACS Director

I chose to write about Microwave Ovens because they have an interesting history. It was an unintended discovery. As the saying goes, it was by “accident” that it happened.



**Cavity magnetrons** are major components of RADAR (Radio Detection and Ranging). Radio transmitters send radio pulses out. When they hit their targets, reflected pulses are sent back to receivers. These pulses contain all kinds of location information.

Cavity magnetrons were invented in the United Kingdom in 1940 during World War II. This made possible electromagnetic waves with small enough wavelengths (microwaves). Britain had no money to develop the magnetrons to be used in RADAR on a massive scale. Prime Minister Winston Churchill agreed to offer the magnetron to the Americans in exchange for their financial and industrial help which Britain during WWII desperately needed.

Britain built huge towers all along its eastern coast called Chain Home (CH) stations. This early warning RADAR equipment detected when Nazi aircraft came to attack the RAF (Royal Air Force) and/or bomb British cities. RADAR was TOP SECRET in World War II. These devices contributed greatly to the United States, England, the Soviet Union, and China (known as the Allies) winning the war. Today we usually hear about RADARs in weather broadcasts on radio or TV.

### Percy Spencer – Inventor of the Microwave Oven

The inventor of microwave ovens was Percy Spencer. His father died when he was 18 months old. His mother left him in the care of an aunt and uncle. His uncle died when he

was 7 years old. Percy left grammar school to earn money to support himself and his aunt. A few years later he heard that a local paper mill was soon to begin using electricity. This was a subject little known where he lived at the time. He learned as much about it as he could. He was one of three people to install electricity in the plant.

The 1912 Titanic ship disaster interested him. He wanted to help prevent such tragedies from happening. He signed up with the U.S. Navy at age 18. While in the Navy he continued to learn about metallurgy, chemistry, physics, and calculus. He also worked the wireless communication equipment. On some cold days, radio operators would huddle in front of the magnetron emitters to keep warm. They were used to detect other ships. He made a note of this. After his service in the Navy ended, he went to work at Raytheon, a well-known defense contractor.

As he worked on a magnetron, he noticed that a candy bar in his pocket had melted. That led to his experimenting with eggs and corn kernels. The result was cooked food. He then placed food in an enclosed metal box that focused the energy waves and sped up the cooking process. Raytheon would later patent the device as the Radar Range on October 8, 1945. This was after the war ended in Europe on May 8, 1945.

The mesh covering on microwave oven doors lets light out but returns the waves to the food. The magnetron works on the liquids in foods but not on oils.



*A modern countertop microwave oven*

The first commercial microwave oven, the Radar Range, sold in 1946 for \$5,000 (\$66,000 in 2022 dollars) for the 6-foot-tall unit. It weighed 700 pounds. In 1967 the price dropped to \$495 (\$4,000 in 2022 dollars). By 1975, 60% of American homes had them. By 1994, 90% had microwaves. ❖

## A MIGHTY MITE EXTERNAL SSD

By **David Kretchmar**, Hardware Technician  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

<https://www.scscc.club>

dkretch \*\* gmail.com



A mystery package addressed to me appeared at our front door a few months ago. This is common at our home. At least once a month, I forget I have ordered an item, and its arrival is a pleasant surprise. I had no idea what was in the package until I opened it, and fortunately, I still remembered ordering the item.



Something different happened to me this time. I excitedly cut open the mystery padded envelope and found a wee SanDisk USB 3.2 Gen2 portable SSD. I was delighted when I noticed the drive had a one terabyte (TB) capacity.

It was 1/3 the size and a fraction of the weight of a mechanical external USB drive thanks to its M.2 SSD. Cool, I thought – this is something I can use. I guessed I might have ordered this late at night, maybe after a few sips of wine, and forgotten about it.

I soon realized my mystery package was the SanDisk SSD external drive I had volunteered to test for Newegg.com, an online reseller. YES! A free useful item is an even better deal than the drive price at online sellers.

I plugged the SSD into my tower using the cable provided, a USB-C (external drive end) to the USB Type-A (backward compatible with any standard USB port). It was instantly recognized.

### Real-World Speed



The drive is advertised as having a READ speed of up to M.2 SSD 520 Mb/second. I copied a 2 GB file from my tower's internal M.2 SSD to

the SanDisk external drive to test the real-world speed of the drive. It transferred data at about 120 MB per second, 3X faster than copying the same data to my older external mechanical Samsung external drive. This was a little slower than I anticipated since SSDs generally run from 4 to 10 times faster than a mechanical drive.

My tower's USB is mostly the older and slower 3.1 version, which I'm sure was the factor in the drive's lack of speed. I am disappointed with the data transfer speed because of the USB 3.1 and maybe the USB C to USB A cable. My tower, which is just a few months old, does have one Type-C USB port, but since I do not have a newer USB C to USB C cable, I could not test that transfer speed. This cable costs about \$10 - \$20 at Amazon or Newegg.

### The Vault



The Samsung external SSD M.2 drive comes with an ingenious encryption scheme they call **PrivateAccess** with the encrypt-

ing software installed on the drive itself. This software will ONLY run off the external drive, further increasing the device's security. Transferring data to the external drive vault is a drag-and-drop procedure using the drive's built-in encryption software. There is no back door into the vault. As you would expect, if you forget your password, the data in the vault is gone forever. This drive will dedicate only the amount of space required for encrypted data, so the balance of storage space is available for nonencrypted storage.

### The Curse and Blessing of Backward Compatibility

The drive would be much faster on newer

computers if it included a USB C to USB C cable and a USB C to USB A cable. Other external SSDs I have seen advertised come with the USB C to USB C cable. Obviously, the USB C - USB A cable is required for backward compatibility and is the most useful connection today. Still, any new computer you buy now should include a USB-C outlet. If you are offered a computer without a USB Type-C port, you know that system is likely old stock, and you should make your buying decision accordingly.

The USB cable furnished with this drive is only one foot long. This is adequate for functionality but too short for real-world usage. As a result, I prefer the external drive sitting on top of my tower rather than dangling at its side.

### Conclusions

This is a remarkable amount of fast external storage for the money. A USB Type-C to USB Type-C is necessary if your computer has a USB Type-C outlet. At the risk of boring repetition, a computer user who does not back up important files will very possibly lose those files due to a hardware failure or mischief caused by a ransomware infection.

The Vault feature of this drive is an outstanding personal privacy consideration. It would also be impossible for any ransomware software to corrupt files stored in the Vault. ❖

## NEW STUDY FINDS REGULAR INTERNET USE MAY IMPROVE COGNITIVE LONGEVITY IN OLDER ADULTS

By **Hewie Poplock**

Sarasota (Florida) Technology User Group  
APCUG Speaker

[www.thestug.org](http://www.thestug.org)

As published in WAUCTALK  
Wisconsin All-Computer  
Users Club

<https://wauc.apcug.org>



A recent study discovered that individuals over the age of 50 who used the internet regularly had a 50% lower risk of developing dementia compared to those who did not use it.

New research suggests that despite its drawbacks, being online could have an overall positive impact on older adults. A study conducted by researchers from New York University analyzed data from a government-funded project called the Health and Retirement Study, which tracks the well-being of a representative sample of older Americans. The study found that regular internet use was associated with a reduced risk of dementia in those over 50, and the most significant possible benefit was seen in people who reported two hours or less of internet use compared to none.

The authors found that regular internet users were half as likely to meet the criteria for dementia as those who reported no use at baseline, even after accounting for other factors like their pre-existing health. The study is the longest of its kind to examine this possible relationship, and the authors suggest that more research is needed to determine the best balance between staying online and staying mentally sharp.

The study also found a possible U-shaped association between hours spent online and dementia risk, where people who spent the least and the most time online (between 6 to 8 hours a day) seemed to have the highest dementia risk. However, the lowest risk was seen in those who spent two or fewer hours on the internet a day. The authors suggest that there may be a point of diminishing returns, where excessive online engagement may have adverse cognitive effects on older adults.

Despite these findings, the authors acknowledge that there are still many unanswered questions about the link between internet use and reduced dementia risk. For

example, it is unclear whether using the internet can directly cause a reduction in dementia risk or if there are other factors.

Additionally, the authors note that people who develop dementia may start to use the internet less and less over time, which could impact the observed relationship between internet use and dementia risk. Nevertheless, the study highlights the potential benefits of internet use for older adults and underscores the importance of further research in this area. As the population ages, finding ways to reduce the risk of dementia is becoming increasingly important, and the authors suggest that internet use could be one way to achieve this goal.

*This article has been obtained from APCUG with the author's permission for publication by APCUG member groups. ❖*

## INTERESTING INTERNET FINDS

by **Steve Costello**

scostello \*\* sefcug.com

While going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often encounter things that might interest other user group members.

### How to Change Your Name on Zoom on PC or Mac

<https://www.groovypost.com/howto/change-name-on-zoom/>

Do you Zoom? If so, did you know you can change your name? Check out this post to learn how to change your name on Zoom.

### Why A Laptop Stand Is the Next Desk Accessory You Need

<https://www.howtogeek.com/830241/why-a-laptop-stand-is-the-next-desk-accessory-you-need/>

I see many people using a laptop without a stand. However, I always use a stand with my laptop. In fact, I have several different stands.

Check out this post to learn why you should also always use a stand with your laptop.

### Faster And Safer Internet? Here's How...

<https://askbobrankin.com/faster-and-safer-internet-heres-how.html>

Do you want to know how to have faster and safer internet? I am sure you do, so check out this post from Bob Rankin. I have done this on PCs, Linux, and Android devices for years.

### Make The Mouse Easier To Use

<https://askleo.com/make-the-mouse-easier-to-use/>

Have you ever thought about making your mouse easier to use? If so, check out this post from Leo Nottenboom if you use Microsoft Windows.

### Share What You Want!

<https://cynmackley.com/2022/10/24/share-what-you-want/>

Sometimes I want to only link to a specific part of a story. Now thanks to Cyn Mackley's post. I know how to do it. (Note: I have tested this, and it works with Google Chrome and Vivaldi but not Firefox. I found and am using the "Link to Text Fragment" add-on for Firefox.)

### Why Don't We Have World's Fairs Anymore?

<https://www.mentalfloss.com/posts/why-dont-we-have-world-fairs-anymore?>

This is a subject I have not thought much about, but I was intrigued when I started reading this post. The reasons given make a lot of sense to me.

*This work by [Steve Costello](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License](#). ❖*



## LACS INFORMATION

### PAY DUES BY PAYPAL OR ZELLE

**To pay by PayPal**, go to this link: [www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024](http://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: [lacomputersociety@gmail.com](mailto:lacomputersociety@gmail.com). The wording may be a little different on your bank's site. Email questions to Gavin at [gmfaught@gmail.com](mailto:gmfaught@gmail.com).

### HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS now has **one** active general list: [PC@LACS.Groups.IO](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto: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](http://www.jimopi.net).

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

### HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to [www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org). Click on **Member Forms** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update**, select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out, and email it with your changes to or snail-mail it to [Membership@lacspc.org](mailto:Membership@lacspc.org)

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

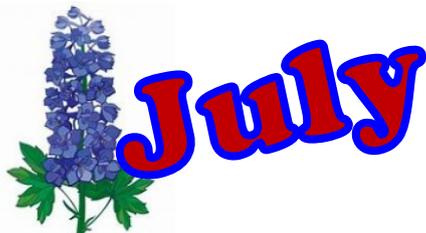
### ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

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, July 3, 2023

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

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

Please log in early so we can start on time.

### LACS General Meeting

**Topic:** AnyDesk,

Remote Desk top Software

**Date:** Tuesday, July 11, 2023 via Zoom

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

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

Please log in early so we can start on time

**July 3:** LACS Board Meeting

**July 4:** Independence Day

**July 11:** LACS General Meeting



### VISIT OTHER APCUG COMPUTER USER GROUPS AND SEE THEIR NEWSLETTERS

Many APCUG groups allow members of other groups to attend their meetings. LACS heartedly welcomes visitors from other user groups, and we are welcome to join other group's meetings.

Go to [www.APCUG2.org](http://www.APCUG2.org) . Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**. A list of groups sharing meetings is arranged by time zones.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

**July 11:** AnyDesk

John Kennedy

**August 8:** Adobe PhotoShop Elements

Gilbert Ialongo, LACS

**September 12:** Practicing Safe Computing, Hal Bookbinder

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](mailto: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 your browser's search or into your address bar. Or click on the link on the online version to see the referenced place.

### 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](mailto: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 - 1, 8, 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 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**

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## GOOGLE'S BARD AI

### An Early Look

By Tom Burt

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV

<https://www.scsccl.com>

Gigabyte Gazette, June 2023



Google recently opened up Bard, its generative artificial intelligence engine, for access by the general public. This form of AI is currently the hottest new trend in the computer world. Chat GPT, by Open AI, is the one making most of the headlines and is Microsoft's choice for inclusion with its Bing search engine. However, I decided this month to explore Bard to get a sense of what it can do.

#### Connecting to Bard

To try out Bard, use your web browser to go to <https://bard.google.com>. Once there, you will see a page like the one below. I selected the "dark" theme to improve readability here.

In the left-hand pane, there are links; the top center area has Bard's responses to inquiries; near the bottom is the Prompt window in which to enter inquiries.

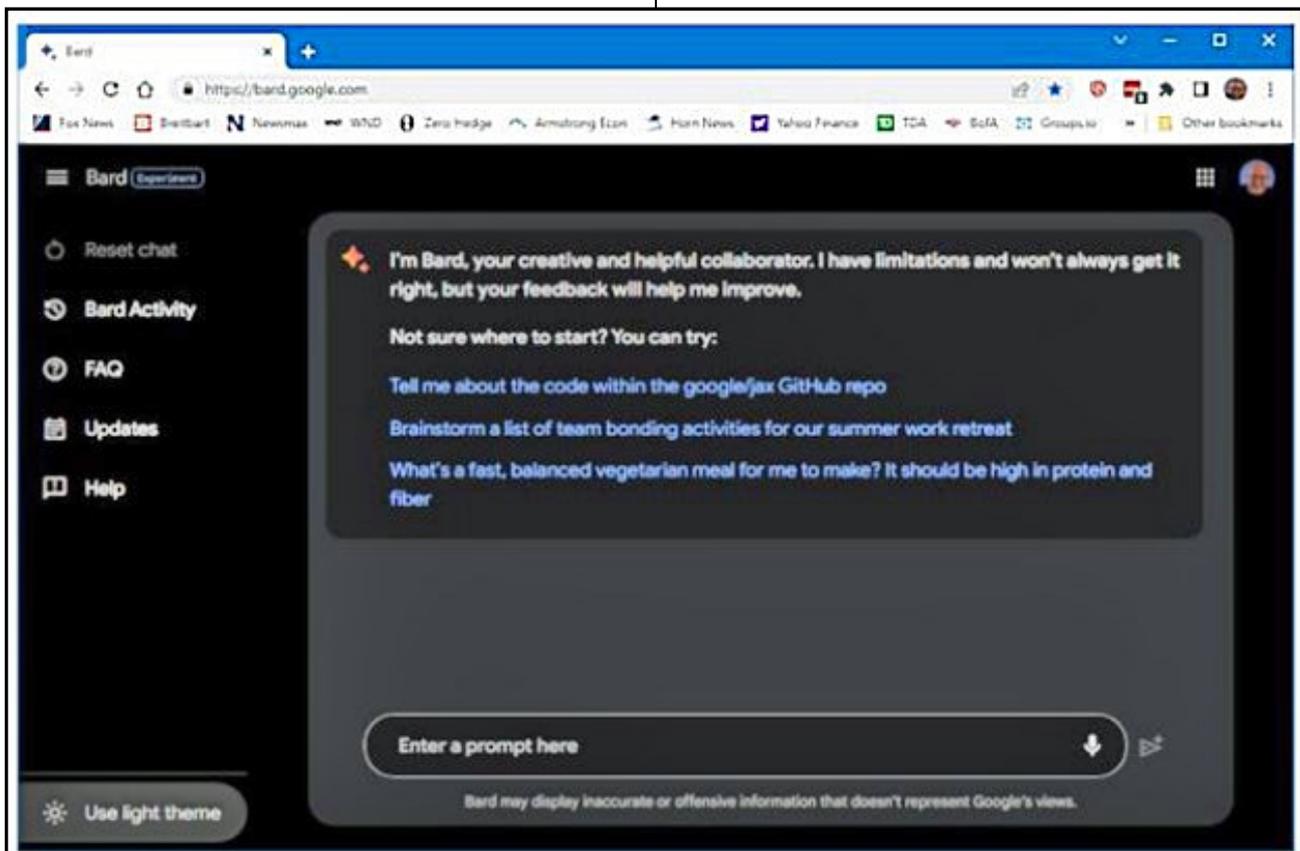
#### Example 1

My prompts to Bard and its responses are shown in italics. I first tried an open-ended question about investing.

**Prompt:** *I'm 50 years old. I have \$20000 saved. How should I invest it toward my retirement?*

**Response:** *Here are some tips on how to invest \$20,000 towards retirement at age 50:*

- 1. Set realistic goals. How much money do you need to retire comfortably? Once you know your goal, you can create a plan to reach it.*
- 2. Make use of tax-advantaged accounts. Retirement accounts, such as 401(k)s and IRAs, offer tax breaks that can help you save more money.*



**3. Invest in a diversified portfolio.** This means investing in a variety of assets, such as stocks, bonds, and real estate. This will help reduce your risk and maximize your returns.

**4. Rebalance your portfolio regularly.** As you get closer to retirement, you'll need to adjust your portfolio to become more conservative. This will help protect your savings from market volatility.

**5. Get professional help.** If you're not sure how to invest your money, consider working with a financial advisor. They can help you create a plan that meets your specific needs.

Here are some specific investment options to consider:

- **Target-date funds:** These funds are a good option for investors who don't want to spend a lot of time managing their investments. Target-date funds automatically adjust their asset allocation as you get closer to retirement, so you don't have to worry about doing it yourself.
- **Index funds:** Index funds are a low-cost way to invest in a broad range of stocks or bonds. They're a good option for investors who want to keep their costs low and who don't want to spend a lot of time picking individual stocks or bonds.
- **Exchange-traded funds (ETFs):** ETFs are similar to index funds, but they trade on an exchange like stocks. This makes them more liquid than index funds, which can be a plus for investors who may need to access their money quickly.

It's important to remember that there is no one-size-fits-all answer to the question of how to invest \$20,000 towards retirement at age 50. The best approach will vary depending on your individual circumstances and goals. Talk to a financial advisor to get personalized advice.

The quality of the written text is very high. Grammar, spelling and punctuation are perfect. The financial advice is sound, but not very

exciting. This is what any financial advisor would say.

### Example 2

I asked Bard to generate some program code to calculate N-factorial.

**Prompt:** Write me the code in C# for a function to compute the value of n-factorial.

**Response:** Sure, here is the code in C# for a function to compute the value of n-factorial:

```
C#
public static int Factorial (int n)
{
    if (n == 0)
    {
        return 1;
    }
    else
    {
        return n * Factorial (n - 1) ;
    }
}
```

Use code with caution. [Learn more.](#)

This function works by recursively calling itself to calculate the factorial of the numbers smaller than n. For example, to calculate the factorial of 5, the function would first call itself to calculate the factorial of 4, which is 24. Then, it would multiply that result by 5 to get the final answer of 120.

Here is an example of how to use the function:

```
C#
int factorial = Factorial (5);
```

Use code with caution. [Learn more](#)

This would print the value 120 to the console.

The solution Bard returned is elegant and simple. However, I was skeptical that it would perform well with large values of "n".

I clicked the “View other drafts” dropdown and found the following alternative algorithm (Bard’s commentary not included):

### Response 2:

```
public static int Factorial (int n)
{
    if (n < 0)
    {
        throw new ArgumentOutOfRangeException ("n");
    }
    int result = 1;
    for (int i = 1; i <= n; i++)
    {
        result *= i;
    }
    return result;
}
```

This solution is also elegant but is much more efficient. It could use some additional safety checks to guard against overflow if “n” is very large.

### Example 3

I’m a frequent searcher for recipes, so I thought I’d test Bard in that arena. Often, I have to manually adjust the ingredient portions to cook for only two.

**Prompt:** Give me an easy recipe for Chicken Paprikas for two people.

**Response:** Sure, here is an easy recipe for Chicken Paprikash for two people:

#### Ingredients:

- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/2 cup chopped onion
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon black pepper

- 1/2 cup chicken broth
- 1/4 cup sour cream
- Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish (optional)

#### Instructions:

1. Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the chicken and cook until browned on all sides.
2. Add the onion and garlic to the skillet and cook until softened, about 5 minutes.
3. Stir in the paprika, salt, and pepper. Cook for 1 minute more.
4. Add the chicken broth to the skillet and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer for 10 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked through.
5. Stir in the sour cream and parsley. Serve hot over egg noodles or rice.

#### Tips:

- For a richer flavor, use chicken thighs instead of breasts.
- If you don’t have Hungarian paprika, you can use regular paprika. Just be sure to use a good quality paprika, as the flavor will be more intense.
- If you don’t have sour cream, you can use plain yogurt or heavy cream.
- Serve with a side of your favorite vegetables, such as roasted potatoes, green beans, or broccoli.

#### Enjoy!

I like the above response because it doesn’t bury me in many pages of pictures and hype about the cook. It just gives me the recipe. It is simple and would yield a tasty meal for two – just what I was looking for.

### Conclusions

Google Bard taps into a deep reservoir of knowledge on the web and does a great job of synthesizing it into useful responses. It combines natural language recognition

(understanding the prompt) with the ability to create responses that read like they were written by a human.

All the responses I've shown above were generated in less than 10 seconds.

I expect it will be very interesting in the coming years to explore how Bard and its AI cousins evolve. Google currently has disclaimers throughout the Bard site warning that it is experimental and to not rely on its responses to be accurate or unbiased.

Give it a try yourself!

If this topic interests you or you have questions, email me at [tomburt89134@cox.net](mailto:tomburt89134@cox.net). I may work up a class on this topic for later in the year. ❖

## TIME FOR A PC TUNEUP?

### Try These Free Tools

By **Bob Rankin**

*Ask Bob Rankin*

<https://askbobrankin.com>



A perspicacious *AskBob* reader says, "I know I need to clean up my hard drive every once in a while. But are there any other regular PC maintenance tasks you recommend doing on a regular basis?" Well, yes! Here are more than ten free programs you can use to clean up and tune up your Windows computer...

### Keep Your Computer Running Fast and Reliably

Just like a car, your computer needs regular maintenance to continue performing at its best. Waiting until accumulated minor problems make your computer run intolerably slow is bad for it. A neglected PC works harder than it should, and then the hardware can start to fail. You may experience a sudden catastrophic crash, like a car engine seizing up because you never bothered to change the oil.

Fortunately, some free PC maintenance tools make it a breeze to keep your system in top shape. Their functions generally include hard disk management, optimization of system settings, and deletion of unnecessary, duplicate, or temporary files. Some free PC maintenance tools include maintenance scheduling, diagnostic tests, backups, malware cleanup, and system-tweaking options for advanced users.

Savvy users perform PC cleanup and tune-up operations at least once a month.

Here's what I recommend and some free computer maintenance



tools to help you do the job. Unless otherwise mentioned, they all work with Windows 7, 8, 10, and 11 computers.

**[CCleaner by Piriform](#)** is a popular PC cleaner/optimizer/privacy tool that's developed a sterling reputation over many years. CCleaner zaps temp files, web browser history, cookies, and form inputs, to remove all traces of your online activities. It also mops up after Windows, cleaning out your Recycle Bin, removing unneeded log files, deleting memory dumps, and pruning obsolete registry entries. CCleaner does not include a defrag module, but Piriform also offers the free **[Defraggler](#)**, which does the job quite well.

**[The Glary Utilities](#)** is another PC maintenance suite, downloaded over 40 million times. It, too, does registry, privacy, defrag, and junk files cleanup. It includes an application uninstaller that is more sophisticated than Windows Add/Remove app; for example, you can tag multiple applications to be uninstalled in one operation. It also includes a startup programs manager, a memory manager, and a nifty utility to remove

unwanted context menu items. Cleanup can include a sweep for duplicate files, empty file folders, and broken shortcuts. It will back up and restore all your hardware device drivers. The latest version claims to be 800% faster at analyzing your PC for potential problems.

**PrivaZer** is a hard drive clean-up utility on steroids. It removes junk files and wipes away traces of activity that could compromise your privacy. PrivaZer zaps duplicate files, temporary files, log files, unneeded Windows update files, and old Windows installs left over from a system upgrade. In addition to cleaning files and filesystems, PrivaZer does a thorough scrubbing of your Windows registry, and will also remove web browsing history, saved passwords, and cookies.

**A few notes about defragmenting your hard drive:** Traditional magnetic hard drives installed in most computers do benefit from defragmenting, as it speeds up disk access. However, SSD (solid-state) hard drives do not require defragmenting, and some people believe that you can shorten the life span of an SSD by defragging. I don't think that's true of newer SSDs, but it's still a best practice to defrag only magnetic drives. Treat hybrid (magnetic/SSD) drives the same as magnetic drives. Also note that Windows 7, 8, 10, and 11 have automatic defrag built in, but you may still benefit by running a third-party defragger a few times per year.

My article [Here's How to Optimize Your Hard Drive](#) has links to several programs that will help you identify large, duplicate, or unwanted files that are clogging up your hard drive. You'll also find links to recommended software that will help you permanently erase a hard drive, recover accidentally deleted files, or fix damaged drives that won't boot up.

[EaseUS Todo Backup](#) is a popular free software tool for making backups. The Free Edition offers backup, disk cloning, and the ability to transfer your system to a different PC. It

can schedule your backups to run automatically, which I consider a must.

The [NirSoft](#) website provides a collection of freeware, including Windows password-recovery tools, network monitoring tools, and some privacy-related utilities.

**Speccy and Belarc Advisor** are two diagnostic programs I rely on when a computer doesn't seem to be running optimally. See my article [Should You X-Ray Your Computer?](#) to learn how they can help you identify overheating and other potential problems.

The **Windows Memory Diagnostic Tool** is built into Windows 7 and higher. To run it, click the **Start** button and type **memory** in the search bar. Click **Windows Memory Diagnostic** in the search results. You can choose to restart and check for memory errors or tell it to check for memory problems the next time you start your computer.

### **Don't Forget About Security**

Finally, it should go without saying that you need to be vigilant about computer security. Here are the two most important pieces of advice I can give on that subject:

1. **Keep Your Software Updated.** See my related article [Here's Why You Must Keep Your Software Updated \(and how to do it for free\)](#) to learn how to scan your computer for software vulnerabilities, and how to make sure you have the latest versions and security patches.
2. **Use Anti-Malware Protection -**  
[Avast!](#) is a popular free anti-virus program with a rich feature set and ease of use. Avast! claims it's #1, with 230 million users worldwide. It is updated regularly. The Avast Free Anti-virus protects against viruses, spyware, rootkits, and even zero-day attacks that no one's heard of yet. Its Home Network Security scans your network for weaknesses that could admit malware or hackers. Protec-

tion is offered for PCs, Macs, and Android mobile devices.

Each of these free PC maintenance programs has additional bells and whistles for advanced users or troubleshooting. Some have premium versions that you can purchase to get additional features. Read the product features lists carefully if you have a particular issue that you want to resolve. In my opinion, all of these freebies will do a good job of tuning up your computer for top performance. Try a few of them, and then uninstall the ones you don't want to continue using. ❖

## THE APPLE WATCH IS GETTING A SOFTWARE OVERHAUL

By **Corbin Davenport**

How-To Geek

[@CORBINDAVENPORT](#)



It has been almost a decade since the first Apple Watch was introduced, and the watchOS software has already changed forms a few times. This year, Apple is planning another (arguably minor) overhaul to the smartwatch experience.



Apple announced watchOS 10, the next major software update for the Apple Watch. The core experience is the same, with your watch face on the main screen, other faces available on left and right swipes, and notifications from a top swipe. However, turning the digital crown will now reveal the **Smart Stack** — a scrollable list of widgets that adapt to you. It's like an upgraded version of the Siri watch face, but it is compatible with any watch face.

Apple said in a press release,

“A new Smart Stack contains widgets that display timely information that adapts to the user’s context and can be revealed with a simple turn of the Digital Crown from any watch face. For example, at the beginning of the day, Weather will show the forecast, or when traveling, the Smart Stack will show boarding passes from Wallet. Calendar and Reminders will reshuffle to the top to display upcoming meetings or tasks, and apps that are running, such as Podcasts, will also move up so they are



readily available. Smart Stack also enables users to enjoy

a beautiful watch face, like Portraits, while still offering a way to quickly access the information they care about.”

Apple is also updating most of the core watch apps with a tweaked design language. The primary goal is to show more information on the screen simultaneously, without needing to scroll to see everything constantly. The built-in Weather, Stocks, Home, Maps, Messages, World Clock, and other apps will have visual updates in watchOS 10.



The upcoming update will also include new watch faces,

improved support for cycling and hiking workouts, and more features in the Maps app. It should arrive later this year.

*Corbin Davenport is the News Editor at How-To Geek, an independent software developer, and a podcaster. He previously worked at Android Police, PC Gamer, and XDA Developers. ❖*

**FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS**

Go to <https://www.apcug2.org> for all aspects of computing and operating systems.

**TECHBOOMERS.COM**

For learning how to use internet-based websites and 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](http://Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx)  
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**LAUGHING OUT LOUD**

I tried to say, "I'm a functional adult," but my auto correct changed it to "fictional adult," and I feel like that's more accurate.

I can still remember a time when I knew more than my phone.



From How-To Geek.com

**Q:** Why did the computer go to the beach?

**A:** To surf the web!

**Q:** Why did the computer go to the bar?

**A:** To get a byte to eat!

**Q:** Why did the computer go to the dentist?

**A:** To get its Bluetooth fixed!

*Editor's note: These jokes were generated by ChatGPT!*

**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.

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     Printed Newsletter     \$ 40  
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 Family-Associate           12  
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 A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.  
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 — **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created by members.

**NOTE: See page 2 of this issue for an update on the new dues-paying system and for the amount due for each category of membership in 2023.**



Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Check # \_\_\_\_\_



**New or Renewal Membership Application**

See note above for amount changes for 2023

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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? \_\_\_\_\_

# First Class Mail

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## 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.