

# User Friendly

**LACS**  
**A Computer and  
Technology  
User Group**

**NOTE:** Refer to pages 2, 8, and 19 for updates 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.

## SEPTEMBER 12, 2023 GENERAL MEETING

**Meeting Time:** 7:00 to 9:00 PM — via Zoom

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

**Topic:** Practicing Safe Computing in the Time of Artificial Intelligence (AI) **Speaker:** Hal Bookbinder

We all depend on reliable computing, data storage, and access across the Internet. Cybercrime and cyberterrorism have caused service disruptions, personal data being exposed, and millions of dollars in ransoms being paid. As the sophistication of cybercriminals grows, this will likely get worse. Scams can also challenge us, and Artificial Intelligence will make current scams more dangerous and will introduce new ones. Even in the absence of bad actors, computers become corrupt and storage devices fail resulting in the potential loss of years of work. This talk discusses the risks, the myths, ways to reduce the likelihood of being hacked, and how to minimize the impact of data breaches, network and computing failures that occur.



### Meet Our Presenter

Hal retired from UCLA Health in 2020. During his 25 years at UCLA, he directed all aspects of IT. As Director of IT Strategic Finance, he led efforts to reimagine IT, resulting in over \$50 million in savings, while speeding quality solutions delivery. He continues to teach at the university level. In his avocation of family research, he has identified over 4,000 relatives and traced two lines into the 1700s. Hal publishes monthly articles on safe computing which are freely available at <http://www.tinyurl.com/SafeComputingArticles>. Hal earned a BA in Math and Physics, and an MS in Operations Research from New York University, an MA in Business from the University of Northern Colorado, and a Project Management Professional certification from the Project Management Institute.

**Tuesday, September 12, 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 **September 10**. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at LeahClark424 (at) gmail.com before or on **September 10**.

More information about LACS is at [www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org).



MEMBERSHIP LEVELS			SELECT THE MONTH YOU ARE RENEWING OR ARE JOINING LACS									
			Yearly Rate	Monthly Rate	Dec.	Nov.	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	July	June	May
New/Renewal with Newsletter			\$40	\$3.33	\$ 3.33	\$ 6.67	\$ 10.00	\$ 13.33	\$ 16.67	\$ 20.00	\$ 23.33	\$ 26.67
Associate			\$12	\$1	\$ 1.00	\$ 2.00	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.00	\$ 5.00	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.00	\$ 8.00
Student			\$18	\$1.50	\$ 1.50	\$ 3.00	\$ 4.50	\$ 6.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 9.00	\$ 10.50	\$ 12.00
New/Renewal with Electronic												
Newsletter			\$30	\$2.50	\$ 2.50	\$ 5.00	\$ 7.50	\$ 10.00	\$ 12.50	\$ 15.00	\$ 17.50	\$ 20.00

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

August 8, 2023

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

**Topic:** Adobe PhotoShop Elements

**Speaker:** Gilbert Ialongo  
Former LACS Vice President and Webmaster



Gilbert demonstrated several things that can be done in Adobe PhotoShop Elements using some of his pictures. First, he showed isolating a picture from the background and changing the background. He chose a picture, clicked on **Select**, and chose **Subject**. Marching ants surrounded the subject. Then he again clicked on **Select** and chose **Inverse**. That put the marching ants around the background, excluding the subject.

He then changed the background by choosing the **Paint Bucket** icon and selected from various available colors. Gilbert then recommended making a copy of the background layer in case you messed something up.



Gilbert showed how to divide a canvas into four sections. Next, he chose and placed a copy of the same picture into each of the four sections. He selected from many different filters to modify the image. What you can do seems almost limitless. You can experiment, and you can undo anything.

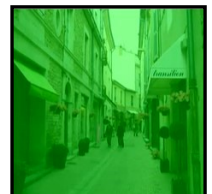
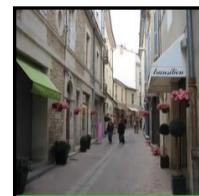
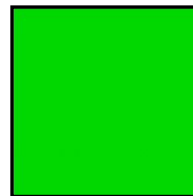


Your work can be saved as a .psd (PhotoShop file) or a .jpg file. If you save it as a .psd file, all the steps you did are still there, and you can modify anything you have done. A .jpg file only saves the final version.

**Elements Plus** gives more features for an additional fee. Different versions of Elements have different prices.

Gilbert answered questions and showed some of his photos from France with some modifications.

He demonstrated placing an image over a colored background; then, he changed the transparency of the top image to 50%.



*(The background was green in Gilbert's example)*

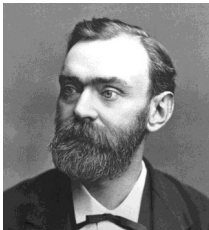
Options in Adobe PhotoShop Elements are almost endless, and much time can be spent with it. LACS members received the

## THE NOBEL PRIZES

By Irv Hershman, LACS Director

### Early Years

**Alfred Nobel** was born on October 21, 1833, in Stockholm, Sweden. His family moved around a lot. He was a chemist, engineer, inventor, businessman, and philanthropist. He was fluent in six languages: Swedish, French, Russian, English, German, and Italian.



Nobel's father moved to Saint Petersburg, Russia, after various business failures. He became successful as a manufacturer of machine tools and explosives. Later, the family joined Nobel's father.

As a boy, Alfred was interested in engineering, especially explosives. He learned the principles from his father at an early age.

### Dynamite

Alfred invented dynamite in Geesthacht, Northern Germany. It was a good alternative to black powder explosives. Nobel came up with a solution to safely detonate nitroglycerin by inventing the detonator, or blasting cap, that allowed a controlled explosion to be set off from a distance using a fuse.

By the time of his death, his business had established more than 90 armament factories. 355 patents were issued to him. He was elected a member of the Royal Swedish Academy of Science.

### The Merchant of Death

In 1888, Nobel was astonished to read his own obituary, titled "The Merchant of Death Is Dead," in a French newspaper. It was Alfred's brother, Ludvig, who actually had died. The article made Nobel apprehensive about how he would be remembered. This inspired him to change his will. On December 10, 1896, Alfred died in his villa in San Remo, Italy, from a cerebral hemorrhage. He was 63 years old.

According to his will and testament read in Stockholm on December 30, 1896, a foundation established by Alfred Nobel would reward those who serve humanity.

### Nobel Prizes

To widespread astonishment, Nobel's last will specified that his fortune be used to create a series of prizes for those who confer the "greatest benefit on mankind" in physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and peace.

Nobel bequeathed 94% of his total assets, \$186 million, to establish the five Prizes.

### Peace Prize

The Norwegian Nobel Committee awards the Nobel Peace Prize annually "to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies, and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses."

The Peace Prize can be awarded to organizations of more than three people. The Switzerland-based International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) is the most honored organization for the prize and one of the most widely recognized organizations in the world, having won three Nobel Peace Prizes (in 1917, 1944, and 1963). Co-founder Henry Dunant won the first-ever Peace Prize in 1901. The third time it won, the prize was shared with the League of Red Cross Societies.

In 1968 a Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel was also established.

Every year in early October, the winners are announced. On December 10, the so-called Nobel Day, award ceremonies take place in the Swedish capital of Stockholm and the Norwegian capital of Oslo for the Peace Prize. A banquet follows.



Each recipient, known as a "laureate", receives a green gold (an alloy of gold and silver) medal plated with 24 karat gold, a diploma, and a monetary award of \$922,800. Before December 10, the laureate gives a speech on the topic in which he or she won. Although the prizes are not awarded posthumously, if a person is awarded a prize and dies before receiving it, the prize is presented.



### X-Rays invented by Wilhelm Röntgen

On November 8, 1895, Röntgen, a German scientist, discovered X-rays. He was the first person to win the Nobel Prize in Physics, awarded in 1901.



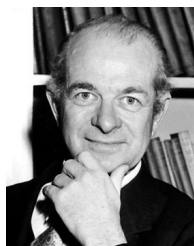
### Marie Curie



Marie Curie won twice, once in 1903 for physics for research of radiation phenomena, and in 1911, a second Nobel prize in Chemistry for the discovery of polonium and radium. She is the first woman to receive two Nobel Prizes.

### Linus Pauling

Linus Pauling won twice, for Chemistry and Peace.



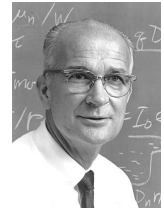
### Sir Winston Churchill



The 1953 Nobel Prize in Literature was awarded to the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, Sir Winston Churchill (1874–1965), "for his mastery of historical and bio-graphical description as well as for brilliant oratory in defending exalted human values."

### The Transistor

Bell Labs (a division of AT&T) scientists John Bardeen, Walter Brattain, and William Shockley won the 1956 Nobel Prize in Physics for inventing the transistor, a small semiconductor device that revolutionized the world. Bardeen won a second time in 1972 for an explanation of super conductivity.



John Bardeen Walter Brattain William Shockley

**We went to the moon and back because of the transistor.**

### Malala Yousafzai

At the age of 17, a Pakistani girl was known for her advocacy for education for girls. Malala became the youngest person to win the Nobel Peace Prize.



### Atlanta, Georgia

Atlanta, Georgia has had two Nobel Peace Prize winners, President Jimmy Carter and Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



**A personal note:** If someone would have told me when I was ten years old that, as an adult, I would carry a smartphone around with me all the time, I would have told that person they were out of their mind.

**Editor's note:** *If someone had told me when I was ten years old that some day I wouldn't have to go to the library to get information from encyclopedias, I would have thought they were out of their mind. ❖*

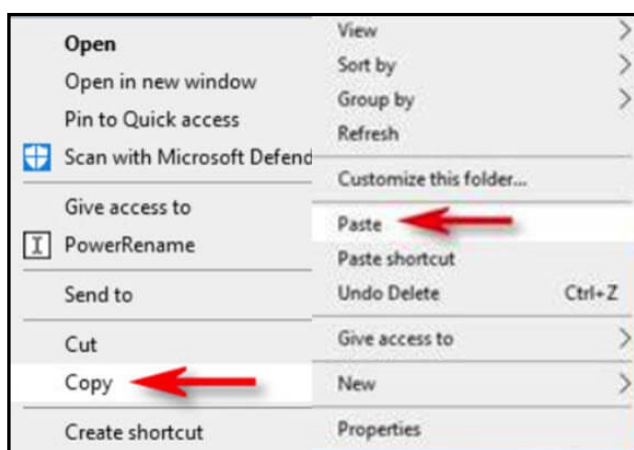
## A BETTER CUT AND PASTE

### Dave's Computer Tips

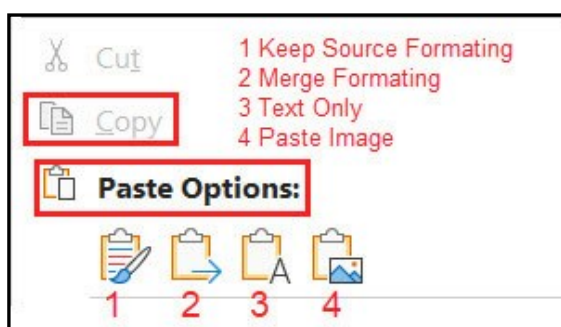
<https://davescomputertips.com>

One of the first things users learn on a computer is how to cut and paste. Because it is used so often while using a computer, Windows gives us several ways to do basically the same thing and most of the methods we have been using are not the best ones.

**Right-Click** – In most applications we have the ability to right-click and Copy an item like a file or folder in File Explorer and then right-click and Paste it somewhere else.

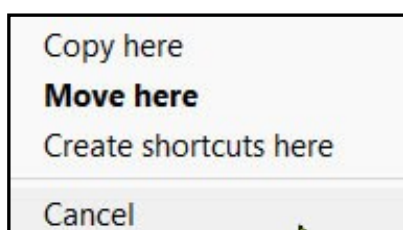


In applications like Word, once an item has been copied it can be pasted in several different formats as shown below.



### Drag & Drop –

We can also **Copy** by right-clicking on a file or folder and dragging and dropping that item to another folder.



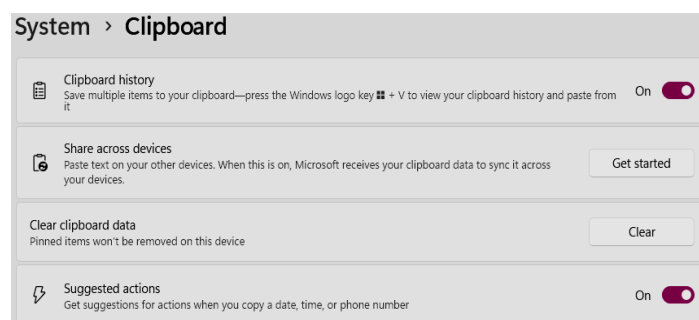
**Control C and Control V** – In most applications we can simply use the keyboard to copy [Ctrl] + [C] and then use [Ctrl] + [V] to paste.



### Clipboard History

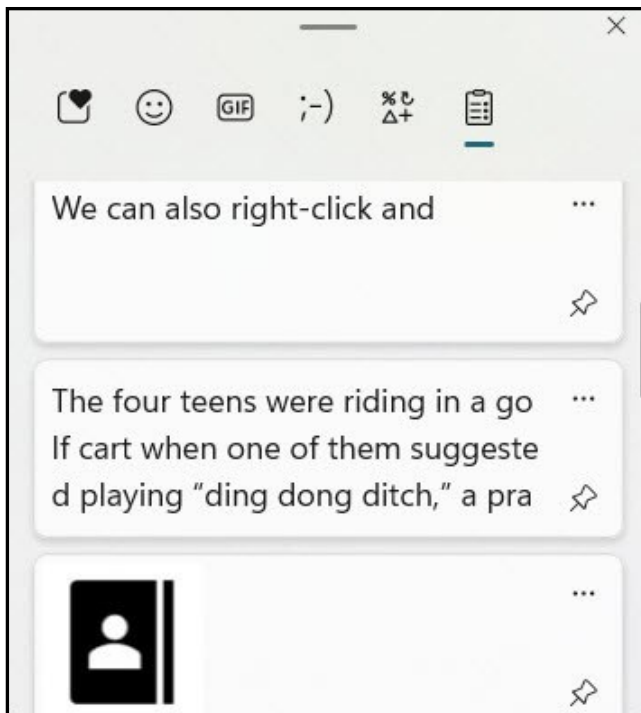
Windows can record your copied items and store them on your system. It is called Clipboard History. You can even copy on one device and have the Clipboard History sync them across your other devices.

To set it up, go to **Settings > System > Clipboard**. Once set up, everything you copy, regardless of the method used, will be entered in the Clipboard History. This is particularly useful if you tend to copy and paste the same items over time.



Access your Clipboard history by pressing the [Win] + [V] keys on your keyboard. It will display a list of your copied items where you only must click on them to paste them again as often as you wish. (See screen shot of an example of a clipboard history on page 7.)

An added benefit of using Clipboard History is having access to Emojis, GIFS, Kaomojis, Symbols, and of course, the history of your copied items.



Using the keyboard shortcut to copy and paste has been my standby for more years than I care to admit, but having the items I copied available to me at any time is handy. It also does not hurt having the cell phone style Emoji and GIFS ready to paste into my writing. ❖

## THE ANTIKYTHERA MECHANISM

### A 2,000-Year-Old "Computer" From Ancient Greece

From <https://www.interestingfacts.com/>



Credit: [Hercules Milas](#)/ Alamy Stock Photo

[The Antikythera Mechanism](#) is one of the [most astounding](#) archaeological finds in history. Discovered within the ruins of an ancient [Greco-Roman shipwreck](#) in 1900, it was brought to the surface the following year as part of the world's first major underwater archaeological excavation.

Initially, the mechanism — in dozens of corroded, greenish pieces of bronze — was overlooked in favor of the many bronze and marble statues, coins, amphorae, and other intriguing items the shipwreck contained. But in the 1950s, science historian [Derek J. de Solla Price](#) took particular interest in the machine, convinced that it was an ancient computer. In the early 21st century, advanced imaging techniques proved Price correct.

Of course, this is an analog computer we're talking about, not a digital one. About the size of a mantle clock, the Antikythera Mechanism was a box [full of dozens of gears](#) with a handle on the side. When the handle turned, the device calculated eclipses, moon phases, the movements of the five visible planets — Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn — and more. It even included a dial for the timing of the ancient Olympics and religious festivals.

Nothing else like it is known from antiquity (the machine has been dated to around the first century BCE), and nothing like it shows up in the archaeological record for another [1,000 years](#).

Scientists aren't sure exactly who made the device, although the ancient Greek astronomer and mathematician Hipparchus has been suggested as the creator, and the [famed mathematician and inventor Archimedes](#) may also have been involved. While its origin will likely remain a mystery, the mechanism's purpose has grown clearer with time — and its existence has completely altered our understanding of the history of technology. ❖



## 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.

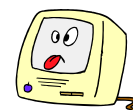
Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The name of the recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is: **lacompetersociety@gmail.com**. The wording may be a little different on your bank's site. Email questions to Gavin 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. 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 [Membership@lacspc.org](mailto: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, September 4

**Date:** Monday, September 4, 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: September 12

**Topic:** Practicing Safe Computing

**Date:** Tuesday, September 12, 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. Allow extra time to be sure you have the link, to get or update your Zoom software if you have not used it before or recently, or to solve other issues before the meeting starts.

★ **LACS Lunch at Sizzler: September 20**  
See page 2 for information. Please join us.

### August 1-September 16:

APCUG Digital Photo Contest

**September 4:** Labor Day

**September 10:** Grandparents Day

**September 11:** Patriot Day

**September 15:** Rosh Hashanah

**September 23:** Autumn Begins

**September 24:** Yom Kippur

### 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 groups' 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

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

**October 10:** Members' Favorite (or disliked) Programs, Apps, and Websites  
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  
Android Smartphones - 8  
Apple devices - 11  
Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8  
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3  
Genealogy - 8  
Groups.IO - 8

Hardware - 7  
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7  
Mozilla Firefox - 7  
MS Excel - 8, 11, 12  
MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12  
MS Outlook - 1, 8, 10  
MS PowerPoint - 8, 11  
MS Publisher - 2  
PDF 24 - 8

Photoshop - 10  
Quicken - 8, 12  
Thunderbird - 7  
Utilities - 7, 8  
Visual Basic - 5  
Websites - 5  
Windows - 7, 8  
WordPerfect - 8  
Zoom - 2, 9

Preferred Time for Phone Calls			
Number	Name	From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
5	Ialongo, Gilbert	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
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 Berkomp, 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	2023
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2023
Secretary	Marcia Jacobs	2023
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2023
Director	Sylvia Davis	2023
Director	Howard Krivoy	2023
Director	Mark Presky	2023
Director	Irv Hershman	2024
Director	Emil Rozek	2024
Director	Annette Tossounian	2024
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2024
Immediate Past President	Stanley Johnson	
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
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](http://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](mailto:leahjc@sbcglobal.net) and she will mail you a copy. Only LACS members may receive a roster.



## WHAT IS A BURNER PHONE, AND WHEN SHOULD YOU USE ONE?

By **Tim Brookes** and **Chris Hoffman**

[How-To Geek.com](https://www.how-to-geek.com)

A **burner phone** is a cheap, prepaid mobile phone that you can destroy or discard when you no longer need it. In popular media, criminals often use burner phones to evade detection by authorities. You might use a burner phone for privacy reasons, as a last resort, or during an emergency.

A **burner SIM** is a related term, and refers to a cheap, prepaid SIM card that you can insert into another phone. You may plan on only using the SIM card for a limited period of time and not linking it to your real identity.

### What Is a Burner?

A burner phone is a cheap, prepaid mobile phone that the owner generally doesn't intend to use long term. These phones have traditionally been purchased with cash to avoid any kind of paper trail that would tie the phone number to an individual.

The term was popularized in the hit 2002 HBO series **The Wire**, where "burners" were used to avoid detection by authorities. Once a number was suspected of being compromised, the device was discarded or "burned" so that the trail would go cold.

Since the rise of iPhones and Android devices, burners are more commonly referred to as "feature phones" or "dumb phones," since the smartphones of today didn't exist in the early 2000s. While the term "burner phone" is still common, SIM cards could also be used in such a manner.

Instead of purchasing an entirely new device, a burner SIM can be used in a smartphone to switch between numbers for a variety of reasons. Some smartphones can accommodate more than one SIM at a time for this purpose.



With that in mind, some of the applications of a burner phone rely solely on having a second dedicated device you can use.

### Why Would You Use a Burner?

You might use a burner phone or a SIM to protect your identity. If you can manage to procure a handset or SIM card that isn't linked to your real-world identity, you can use the number without fear of being identified.

There are all sorts of reasons that someone might want to remain anonymous. Maybe you're phoning in an anonymous tip to an employer. Maybe you would like to use a secure messaging service like Signal or Telegram without disclosing your primary phone number.

Maybe you're trying to avoid giving your main phone number to marketers who will likely send you follow-up messages---like when you're viewing a real estate listing or looking for insurance quotes.

Since burner phones are feature phones, they are severely limited in their abilities. Most lack cameras or access to a modern browser, and are instead limited to phone calls and text messaging. Since they are relatively lightweight devices, they have excellent battery life, too.

Many such devices will last for days on a single charge, and sometimes even months if you use the battery sparingly. This makes burner phones ideal for use in an emergency. They are often found in emergency survival kits since they can be charged and turned off until they are required. A burner phone is a spare phone with long battery life that doesn't need an expensive cell phone plan---what's not to like?

### A Burner Doesn't Guarantee Anonymity

If you're buying a burner phone for privacy reasons that extend beyond simply using the number to send anonymous Signal messages or avoiding spam, be aware that no cell phone provides you with true anonymity.

It's all about your "threat model"---what threats are you trying to protect your privacy from?

Just think about the process of getting a burner phone from the store. Let's say that you drive to a store, buy the burner phone with a credit card, drive home, and turn it on.

In the process of this:

- If you took your normal phone with you, your cellular carrier will know that you were at the store at the time the phone was purchased.
- License plate cameras on the route may have captured your license plate and recorded your movements.
- A camera in the store may have recorded you buying the phone. Your credit card company will have a record of you buying the phone.
- When you turn the phone on at home, the cellular carrier your phone uses will have a pretty good idea of where your home address is.
- And if you carry your burner phone and normal phone at the same time and both are powered on, anyone looking at cellular phone records can get a pretty good idea that those phones are owned by the same person.

Yes, that's a lot of ways that you could be traced by an adversary with serious resources. If you're really trying to evade government authorities---well, good luck. You'll need it.

On the other hand, if you just want a new phone number that isn't directly and easily linked to your identity by the companies you deal with and those you call, that'll do fine.

And if you're not looking for anonymity and just want a secondary cell phone with long battery life for use in emergencies, all this doesn't really matter.

### Where to Get a Burner Phone or SIM

Convenience stores and electronic retailers will sell prepaid SIM cards and burner phones. Walmart, Best Buy, Target, and other similar stores will have a good selection of cheap devices or SIM-only plans that allow you to call and text, and not much else. You can often buy prepaid SIM cards from corner stores like 7-Eleven and drug-stores like Rite Aid.

You should expect to pay between \$10 and \$50 for a cheap burner, depending on the features you want. Plans start at around \$10, but ultimately, it depends on your intended usage. Most burners are used purely for texting and calling, and any additional features on top of that (touchscreens, cameras, etc.) may be surplus to requirement and a waste of battery life.

**The Tracfone TCL Flip 2** is a simple flip phone with 4G LTE and Android 11 that provides up to 6.8 hours of talk time on a single charge for just \$20. It even has a camera. AT&T's version of the Flip 2 is significantly more expensive at \$86. Tracfone also offers a similar \$20 flip phone, the **Nokia 2760**.

Tracfone also offers the **Nokia C100**, a more traditional 4G LTE smartphone with a larger screen, 32GB of storage, and Android 12 for \$50. You can buy them online or find Tracfone phones in stores near you. You might want to buy one at a store with cash for maximum anonymity rather than ordering it online.

The cheapest phone will be locked to a specific carrier. If you want to bring your own SIM card and use your phone with another carrier, look for an unlocked burner phone. For example, the RCA Reno smartphone features Android 11, 4G LTE, and 16GB of storage for just over \$60 at the time of this writing.

Be sure to look for a burner phone that supports the cellular provider you'll get a SIM card from.

The RCA Reno Smartphone, an unlocked GSM phone, is compatible with T-Mobile and other carriers using the T-Mobile network.

If you're really looking for anonymity, how far you want to go in anonymizing your purchase is up to you. You could ask someone else to buy it for you, or ask them to purchase you a gift card, which you then might use to buy the phone. You could also use cash in person. For the sake of anonymity, you probably want to avoid using your credit or debit card, so purchasing from an online retailer is probably not the best idea.

If you're only purchasing a burner to throw into a survival kit or to keep in the car for emergencies, you can comb the web for the best deals without worrying about privacy implications. Amazon, eBay, or your preferred local service provider are great places to start.

### **What About Google Voice and Other Services?**

If you're simply looking for a second number that you can use to call and text from a computer, or to use with a service like Signal or Telegram, consider VoIP services. Google Voice, Skype, and other internet telephony providers can give you a number that you can use for basic texting and calling.

Google Voice only works in the U.S., but it's free and easy to sign up for. You can register a new Google Account to use with your new number and take precautions like hiding your IP address using a VPN. Other providers exist, but they will likely charge you for a number (and that may require linking your card).

### **Burn After Reading**

If you're using a burner for privacy reasons, make sure that you take appropriate steps to distance your identity from your purchase. If

your interest in a burner is purely for emergency or backup use, make sure that you charge the phone before you stow it, and consider an AA battery charger.

Wondering how you can charge your burner while away from a power outlet? Go to

<https://www.howtogeek.com/684381/how-to-charge-your-smartphone-while-camping/>

### **About The Authors**

**Tim Brookes** (852 Articles Published)

Tim Brookes is a freelance writer based in Melbourne, Australia. When he's not writing he's being distracted by cats, riding bikes, or cooking something delicious.

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Chris Hoffman is the former Editor-in-Chief of How-To Geek. Chris has personally written over 2,000 articles that have been read more than one billion times---and that's just here at How-To Geek. ❖

## **SO LONG LASTPASS – HELLO NORDPASS**

By **Bob Woods**, Co-Webmaster

Under the Computer Hood User Group

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For several years, I used LastPass as my password manager. The free version allowed my PC and Android devices to use the same encrypted vault. In 2021 there was a change. Only paid accounts could have PC and Android using a shared vault. The free version no longer did. This required one vault for the PC and another for Android devices.

Because of this, a few UCHUG members changed to the free open-source BitWarden for their multi-platform password management, which uses the same vault across all platforms. I tried BitWarden and did not care for the interface. LastPass either auto-filled



or only required a single mouse click to fill in the login information. BitWarden usually needed two or three clicks. But it may have just been me or an incorrect setting. At any rate, I didn't want to change. So, I created an account for my Android devices and exported the PC vault. I also had different master passwords for each version. It required me to manually sync the two different vaults, but I was willing to accept this inconvenience for free.

Then, last year one of the LastPass backup servers was breached, and some user information was stolen. LastPass Corporate informed their users, and they assured everyone that sensitive data (usernames, passwords, credit card information, etc.) was encrypted and safe. This prompted me to re-evaluate password managers. After online reviews of password managers, I decided to give NordPass a try.

My reasons to try were:

1. They are highly rated in many password manager reviews.
2. They recently had and passed an independent security audit.
3. They have never been breached. LastPass has. In 2022, LastPass suffered significant security incidents. User data, billing information, and vaults (with some fields encrypted and others not) were breached, leading many security professionals to call for users to change all their passwords and switch to other password managers.
4. NordPass is based in Panama, which has no mandatory data retention laws and does not participate in the Five Eyes or Fourteen Eyes alliances. This means that the company isn't legally required to keep logs or share them with governments.
5. Your NordPass vault is encrypted with the XChaCha20 encryption algorithm. XChaCha20 is more modern and faster than AES 256-bit. For an explanation, go

to [XChaCha20 Encryption vs. AES-256: What's the Difference? | NordPass](#)

6. They have a family plan that allows up to 6 independent accounts. You can also share your vault with a family member. For example, this will allow me and my wife to have a synced vault.
7. The software is multi-platform. Even the free version can be used on all my devices using the same vault.

After loading the NordPass free version, it asked for some account setup info: username, password, and Master Password. You should make it different from your account password, as it will be the magic key to decrypting your vault. I used a phrase that would be easy to remember containing the normal mix of upper/lower case, symbols, and numbers. You will use this key on all your devices to decrypt the vault. **DO NOT FORGET WHAT THE MASTER PASSWORD IS!** You are the only one that knows what it is.

NordPass support cannot help if you forget it. There is one thing that may help. When you create your master password, you will receive a 24-character alphanumeric recovery code. The recovery code will allow you to create a new master password. You should lock this code away in a safe place. During the Windows setup process, you will be prompted to install the browser extension for whatever browsers you have installed. Setup will help you get and install the extension as needed.

After the setup, I exported my password vault from LastPass and imported it into NordPass. Everything went in without a hitch. Next, I went into settings, turned off launching at startup, and set the auto-lock to four hours. That way NordPass will only launch if I needed it, as there are times I am not doing anything that would require a login. Also, the four-hour timeout will keep

NordPass from requiring a re-login unless I go over four hours or shut down.

I set the password generator for upper/lower case numbers and symbols. I also set it for 16 characters.

Next was to install NordPass on my Android phone and tablet (both Samsung). The app is available in the play store and can be installed easily. The app also installs into your browsers, so there isn't a separate extension installation that I had on the Windows PC.

You can launch the NordPass app on Android devices, but I find that just going to a site requiring a login will bring up NordPass as a selection for a spelling selection atop the on-screen keyboard. You select NordPass, which will open the window to input the Master Password. Then you can populate the login info for the site you are accessing.

On my phone, I left auto lock at five minutes as a trial time. If I go to another location requiring login info within five minutes, I do not need to input the Master Password again. Better to be more careful with the phone auto lock settings than the PC on my desk at home.

After using NordPass for a few days, I liked how it worked. Since I wanted to have NordPass available to my wife and share the vault with her, I opted for the family plan. The cost for the two-year plan is \$68.00. But with six separate accounts available, I can offer an account to both my wife and my son.

Also, the paid plan offers a weak and reused password check and a data breach scanner to scan the web for data breaches. I spent some time doing some cleanup. When checking for weak passwords, a change password button will launch a browser to the site needing a password change. Unless you want to create a new password, NordPass will manually offer to autofill the new password per your password settings and save it to the vault.

I am happy and comfortable with NordPass. However, if you have never used a password manager or are looking for an alternative to one you may be using, go to <https://nordpass.com/> and check the personal free version. ❖

### WHAT ARE POP3, IMAP, AND SMTP?

#### The Backbone of Email on the Internet

by [Leo A. Notenboom](#)

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POP, POP3, IMAP, and SMTP are all acronyms used in configuring email. We'll look at what they mean and how they relate.



Image: [canva.com](https://canva.com)

The computer world is full of confusing acronyms, and email has its share of them. Understanding a few common acronyms at a high level can make configuring email programs a little less confusing.

POP3 and IMAP are half of the email puzzle; SMTP is the other. POP3 and IMAP are protocols (or languages) used to get your email, while SMTP is the protocol used to send it.

#### The Acronyms: POP3, IMAP, SMTP

- **POP3:** Post Office Protocol version 3, used to download email.
- **IMAP:** Internet Message Access Protocol, used to access email via multiple devices.
- **SMTP:** Simple Mail Transfer Protocol, used to send mail from one computer or server to the next.

**POP: Post Office Protocol**

A communications "protocol" is the language computers use to talk between themselves.

**POP** is the language used between a computer fetching email (usually your computer, running an email program called a "client," like Thunderbird or Microsoft Office's Outlook) and the server holding your email (usually that of your email service provider, such as Gmail, Outlook.com, your ISP, or others.)

The "3" in POP3 indicates that we're all using version 3 of the POP protocol. It underwent revisions before it became what it is today. POP and POP3 now mean the same thing.

**IMAP: Internet Message Access Protocol**

**IMAP** is another protocol used by email programs to access your email. IMAP can be used instead of POP3; it works entirely differently. Those differences make it the preferred protocol in today's always-connected world.

**IMAP Versus POP3**

**POP3** downloads all your email to the computer you're using. After your email program fetches email via POP3, that email resides only on your computer and nowhere else.<sup>1</sup> It's perfect when you only read your email from a single location: your PC.

It was designed at a time when a continuous connection to the internet was uncommon — as in the old days of dial-up internet. You would connect, download your email, disconnect, and work on your email offline. Then later, you'd repeat the process to send replies.

IMAP leaves the master copy of your email on the email server. IMAP is simply a way of looking at that master copy from a connected device. A computer connected via IMAP may or may not actually download your email to your computer, but most do. It's ideal if you want to access the same email account from several devices.

You need three pieces of information to configure a POP3 or IMAP account.

- The name of your email provider's server that holds your email. Perhaps something like mail.randomisp.com.
- The account ID your email service assigned you. Most commonly, it's your email address, but it doesn't have to be.
- Your password.

Once configured, you can access the email your email service collects on your behalf.

**SMTP: Simple Mail Transfer Protocol**

SMTP is the protocol used to send mail from one computer to another.

When you're using a desktop email program like Thunderbird, it's the protocol used when you hit "Send" to transfer your email message from your computer to that of your email provider. Most people need to realize that it's also the protocol used behind the scenes to transfer your message from server to server as it makes its way to the server on which your recipient receives email.

Configuring an SMTP server generally requires the same three things you need for POP3 or IMAP.

- The name of your email provider's server that will accept your outgoing email. It could be the same as your POP3 or IMAP server or something different.
- The account ID your email service assigned you. Most commonly, it's your email address, but it doesn't have to be.
- Your password.

**Webmail Works Differently, Mostly**

All of this only applies to email programs you run on your own computer, like Microsoft Office Outlook, Thunderbird, etc.

Web-based email, such as Outlook.com, Gmail.com, Yahoo, and the like, display

*(Continued on Page 18)*



**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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**What Are POP3, IMAP, and SMTP**

(Continued from page 17)

email directly from their servers in your web browser. There's no configuration needed other than signing in. They may use SMTP (and perhaps even IMAP or POP3) behind the scenes to get and send email, but that's nothing you'd ever need to see, know, or worry about.

**Footnote & References**

1: Yes, there are options to "leave on server," but those are, in a sense, hacks added to overcome protocol shortcomings. The primary intent is to keep one master copy of your email in your email program on a single device. ❖

**LAUGHING OUT LOUD**

Dear God: Yesterday was an awful day for me — My husband ran off with his secretary, My son pierced his eyebrow, My daughter tattooed the bald spot on her head, My dog mated with the neighbor's cat, My neighbor sold her house to a mental institution, My Mom told me I was adopted, My boss told me I was laid off, My sister was arrested for prostitution, My house has termites, My car was stolen, All that came in the mail was bills, A plane crash landed on my garage, OJ Simpson came to my door selling rug cleaner, And my TV blew. Lord, please be with me today. I was able to live through all that misery yesterday. And I will be able to make it through anything today! But please....

**DON'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO MY COMPUTER!!!!**

**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.

## MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION and BENEFITS of MEMBERSHIP

### Annual Membership Dues:

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

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

**Associate members** live in the same household or work at the same address as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*, but may read it on the LACS website. **Students** must prove full-time status. A member may give a 1-year, 1-time **gift** to a non-member.

### Monthly general meetings

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

### Members also enjoy these special benefits:

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

— **Get FREE help** by phone or email (See your roster) from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly*.

— **Get help by email** by using our group email list. Send your questions to [PC@LACS.Groups.IO](mailto:PC@LACS.Groups.IO)

— **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's email list.

— **Free APCUG** (International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups) **Webinars, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information.** Check *User Friendly* and your email to see what's offered.  
— Occasional **free software and computer books**, if you review them for *User Friendly*.

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

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

**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 # \_\_\_\_\_

# LACS

## New or Renewal Membership Application

See note above for amount changes for 2023

Please mail your dues and this form to:

**Los Angeles Computer Society, 11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802**

### Please PRINT Clearly

☐ New      ☐ Renewal

☐ New / Renewal with printed newsletter - \$40.00      ☐ Associate - \$12.00      ☐ Student - \$18.00

☐ New / Renewal with electronic, no paper, newsletter - \$30.00      ☐ Gift Membership - \$20.00

☐ Contributor - \$50.00      ☐ Supporter - \$75.00      ☐ Benefactor - \$100.00      ☐ Other

Name: First \_\_\_\_\_

Last \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Associate: First \_\_\_\_\_

Last \_\_\_\_\_

(Same address as a primary member)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail of Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Publish Contact Info in Roster ☐ Yes      ☐ No

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

# 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.