User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and Technology User Group

IN THIS ISSUE

LACS WEBSITE
https://www.lacspc.org

Watch your email for APCUG
workshops and
other upcoming events.

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG
**An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups**
www.apcug2.org
www.facebook.com/APCUG
www.X.com/apcug **(Twitter)**

TUESDAY, MARCH 11, 2025
GENERAL MEETING

**Topic: Automobile Software: Android Auto, Apple
Car Play, and Other Apps**
Speaker: Bill James, APCUG Speakers Bureau
Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM – via Zoom

Bill will tell us how to use and operate our car's software so that you can install your favorite entertainment, news, maps, and other software for the Android Auto and/or Apple CarPlay systems. Learn safe ways to call or answer the phone using the car's built-in voice recognition system. Learn how to write and read a text safely. What is each button for? How do you connect or pair your smartphone to your car? Bill's car has an infotainment system incorporating Apple Car Play and Android Auto.

Meet Our Presenter

Bill James has been an officer of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and an APCUG Regional Advisor. He has been active in APCUG for a long time. He worked for the Federal Aviation Administration's Logistics Center in Oklahoma City, OK for 38 years.

LACS 2025 ROSTER
Please send updates and corrections to the 2024 roster to Leah Clark. The 2025 roster will be sent in May. Let her know if you don't want your phone number or email on it. Only LACS members will receive it, and it won't be online. The roster enables members to communicate.

TO JOIN THE LACS GENERAL MEETING
March 11, 2025
LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **March 9**. Click on it to enter the meeting. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net
before or on **March 9.** See pages, 8, 9, 10, and 20 for help in using Zoom, or email Leah with questions.
See more information about LACS at www.lacspc.org.

🌼 FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR 🌼

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

The recent fire emergencies have caused me concerns when I couldn't contact friends living in burn areas.
I wished I had the phone numbers or email addresses of persons I could contact to see if they were OK. Other emergency situations, like earthquakes, can happen at any time.

I want to create an emergency contact list for LACS members. It would be accessible to only two or three board members. It would be a simple Excel spreadsheet with your name, the name of a contact, their relation to you, and their email and/or phone number.

If you want to be on the list, please give me the information you want to have on it by email or phone call.

Everyone should have a "Who to Contact in Case of an Emergency" card in their wallet, in the car, on the refrigerator door, and available to any organization they belong to.

Please let Leah Clark know if you have questions or other ideas for implementing this list.

Thank you for your help.

THE NEW SCAMS TO WATCH OUT FOR

Here is a link to the January 2025 issue of the *Consumer Reports* article on *The New Scams to Watch Out For.*
[The New Scams to Watch Out For - Consumer Reports](#)

WELCOME TUGNET MEMBERS

We were sorry that the computer user group from the San Fernando Valley, TUGNET, had to disband. LACS has invited their members to visit our general meetings, and perhaps to join LACS.

Please give them a warm welcome.

LACS LUNCHEON MEETING

The next LACS lunch meeting will be on Thursday, **March 20, 2025 at 11:30 AM** at the Culver City Sizzler at 5801 Sepulveda Blvd. At the in-person lunch meetings we have fun, good food, and lots of social and tech talk. It would be nice to have many participants in March. Those who miss our in-person meetings will enjoy getting together at our lunch meetings. It is enjoyable to be together in person. You may invite family and friends. Please RSVP to Leah Clark via email before or on Tuesday, **March 18** so we can have an idea of about how many to expect. Watch your email for updates.

AARP VIDEO SERIES ON SCAMS AND FRAUD

AARP has produced many videos explaining the different frauds.
To watch them, go to https://www.aarp.org/videos/money/scams-fraud/

LACS BOARD OPENINGS

We still have openings for a board secretary and one director position. We especially need a secretary to stay in compliance with our 501(c)(3) non-profit status. We can't keep LACS a viable organization without volunteers.

We will help you. Why not give it a try?

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By **Leah Clark,** LACS President/Editor
February 11, 2025
The Wonders of Cell Phones, Bill James

First, we welcomed six visitors from the TUGNET User Group and thanked them for joining us. Thirty-seven people attended this meeting.

Bill opened his presentation by showing a video showing the core functions of cell phones. These include making calls and sending texts for instant communication. Bill discussed many of the functions available on a cell phone and gave detailed information on each. He gave advice on several issues dealing with cell phones.

Using Cellular vs. Wi-Fi

When you get a cell phone you sign up with a cellular carrier. Cell phones can also use Wi-Fi, which is more cost-effective, faster, and conserves cellular data.

Making Video calls with Apps Like Zoom, WhatsApp, and FaceTime

You can join a Zoom meeting on your phone with an app. People can connect visually and interactively.

Email Management

Users can send, receive, and organize email any time and anywhere. You can also attach photos and .pdf documents.

Streaming Services

You can have a mobile App on your phone for Netflix, Hulu, Disney+, etc., that enables you to access their content. You can stream music and podcasts.

Syncing Your Phone to Your Computer

Syncing facilitates the transfer of files between devices, enabling you to access and manage them on a larger screen, using **Windows Phone Link**. This process allows for easy file backups. You can use a larger screen to text from your computer, and edit photos taken on a cell phone, and many other useful features.

Productivity and Organization

Run Google Calendar and Microsoft To Do on your phone to manage tasks and receive reminders. You can start a document on your phone and finish it on your computer, and vice versa. Cloud-based accessibility enables users to access and edit documents from any location.

Accessing Information Websites

Cell phones provide immediate access to much information and current news.

Social Connectivity

Social media platforms allow users to stay connected with family and friends via cell phones. It's important to be selective about who you befriend on social media.

Engaging with Clubs or Hobby Related Websites

Have dedicated websites and apps on your phone for access to hobby-related platforms.

Participating in Online Communities and Forums

Share an interest, seek advice, and build connections with like-minded people.

Devices to keep your cell phone handy

There are armband holders, belt clips, waterproof pouches, and cargo pants pockets. Never leave home without it!

Purchasing a New Cell Phone

Consider battery life, camera quality, storage capacity, and processing power.

Smartphone Form Factors and Designs

Some form factors are the candy bar style, flip phones, and foldable smartphones. Flagship designs offer cutting-edge technology. Others balance performance and cost.

Gaming phones have high performance and graphics, and rugged phones are built for extreme conditions.

Comparing Different Models

Compare different models to make an informed decision by researching and analyzing their features.

Understanding Cell Phone Operating Systems

Android powers multiple brands offering options. iPhone uses a single Apple OS. Windows Mobile supports multiple brands.

Evaluating Price and Value for the Money

Balancing the balance between cost and features to make an informed decision is crucial.

Understanding Cell Phone Providers

Providers offer different coverage, plans, and services. It'd a good idea to research customer reviews.

Key Factors to Consider

Check coverage maps to ensure service in your area, pricing plans, and customer support options.

Unboxing Your New Cell Phone

Check for included accessories and read the start-up guide.

Inserting the SIM Card

Locate the SIM card tray, use the provided tool to eject the tray, and place the SIM card in the tray. Some phones use eSIM, so they do not have a physical card.

Charging Your Cell Phone

Allow the phone to charge fully before initial use, but it's best not to leave it on the charger indefinitely. The battery may last longer if you don't let it go all the way down to zero or up to 100%.

Powering On the Device

Press and hold the power button until the logo appears, wait for it to boot up completely, and follow on-screen prompts.

Setting Up Your Google or Apple Account

Create or log in to your Google or Apple account. Enable sync for contacts, calendars, and settings.

Customizing Your Settings

Explore the settings menu to adjust the display, sound, privacy and security features, and to customize notifications.

Transferring Data from Your Old Cell Phone.

Use built-in tools to transfer contacts, photos, and apps. Follow on-screen instructions.

Emergency Setup Security and Anti-Virus

Update emergency contacts, update software to defend against threats, and establish a plan for breaches and emergencies. You can go to the App Store to download a particular anti-virus App. You can receive the code on your cell phone when using Two Factor Authentication.

Bill then opened the meeting up for Q & A. He answered a lot of questions. You may refer to the meeting recording to hear all the discussion. LACS members and guests received the link to the recording.

At our March meeting, Bill will discuss **Automobile Software**. I use Maps and GPS from my cell phone almost every time I drive more

DO YOU NEED TO SAFELY EJECT EXTERNAL DRIVES?

By **Kipp Burroughs**
HowToGeek.com**, February 2025**

Summary

✦ On Windows, **Quick Removal** allows safe drive removal without ejecting, but the feature isn't perfect.

✦ Mac systems rely on safe ejection due to background tasks like **Time Machine** backups. Linux systems heavily use write caching

so removing drives without ejecting can result in incomplete transfers and corruption.

✦ To avoid data loss, you should continue to safely remove your drives (and take steps to prevent sudden disconnections).

Safe Eject Practices on Windows

We've all seen those "Safely Remove Hardware" prompts when unplugging external drives. But in modern computing, do they still matter? It depends on your OS, file system, and write caching. Let's break down when it's necessary and when you can safely skip it.

Windows has evolved in its handling of external storage devices. In earlier versions, safely ejecting was essential due to **write caching**—a process where data is temporarily stored before being written to the drive. Removing a device without ejecting could interrupt this process, leading to data corruption.

However, starting with Windows 10, Microsoft introduced a policy called "Quick Removal" as the default for external drives. This policy disables write caching, allowing users to remove devices without using the "Safely Remove Hardware" option. While this reduces the risk of data loss, it can impact performance since write operations occur immediately. Therefore, if you're prioritizing performance and have enabled write caching, it's advisable to safely eject your drive to ensure all data is properly written.

That isn't to say that write caching has ceased to exist. It is still an option if you are in need of writing data fast. When working with HDDs, the uptick in speed can be quite noticeable. This isn't as much the case with SSDs as modern ones perform read/write tasks incredibly fast. That wicked speed comes at a cost though. [SSDs can wear down quickly](#) if they're performing excessive reading and writing of data. Write caching actually serves to mitigate this pronounced rate of degradation.

In scenarios where the drive is actively in use—such as during file transfers or when applications are accessing data—removing it without ejecting can still pose risks. It's always good practice to ensure that all operations are complete and that no files are open before disconnecting.

Safe Eject Practices on Mac

MacOS places a strong emphasis on safely ejecting external drives. If you're slow to clear out your notification center like I am, you might have a few warnings sitting there waiting for you right now, almost mocking you with that passive-aggressive smiling Finder icon.

The operating system often engages in background processes, like Spotlight indexing, which can access external storage without explicit user actions. Disconnecting a drive without ejecting can interrupt these processes, potentially leading to data corruption or loss.

If you use **Time Machine** on an external drive, it is configured by default to [run a little backup operation each hour](#), so there is a very good chance of interrupting that process. Since Time Machine involves some delicate indexing, I've found it notably susceptible to damaged data in the event of getting interrupted.

To safely eject from a Mac, you can drag the drive icon to the Trash, which transforms into an Eject symbol, or select the drive and hit Command+E. Waiting for the drive's icon to disappear from the desktop ensures that all read and write operations have ceased, making it safe to unplug the device.

I personally find this to be counterintuitive, and even after years, it evokes a certain cognitive dissonance to drag a drive with all sorts of my stuff to the trash bin. Still, it's a neat little trick!

Safe Eject Practices on Linux

Linux systems handle external drives with a focus on flexibility and performance. Many distributions employ write caching to enhance speed, meaning data may not be immediately written to the disk. Removing a drive without ejecting can cause incomplete data transfers and corruption.

The process to safely eject varies depending on the desktop environment. Typically, you can right-click on the drive icon and select "Unmount" or "Eject." Alternatively, command-line tools like umount can be used to safely unmount drives.

It's particularly important to ensure safe ejection on Linux, especially in customized setups where specific configurations might affect how drives are managed.

What Happens When You Skip Safe Eject?

Intentionally removing external drives without ejecting can yield varying outcomes across operating systems. The risk is minimized but not eliminated on Windows systems with "Quick Removal" enabled. Users have reported instances where failing to eject led to corrupted files or the need for disk repairs.

On MacOS, skipping the eject process can disrupt background tasks, leading to error messages upon reconnecting the drive or, in worse cases, data loss. Linux users might encounter incomplete file transfers or corrupted data, particularly if write caching is active.

The type of drive also plays a role. Traditional hard drives (HDDs) are more susceptible to issues from sudden disconnection due to their mechanical components. While more resilient, solid-state drives (SSDs) and USB flash drives can still experience data corruption if removed during active write operations. ❖

THE CLOUD—WHAT IS IT? WHERE IS IT? WHY IS IT?

By **Phil Sorrentino**
Sarasota Technology Users Group
Thestug.org, May 2024

Basically, the cloud is there to help explain the Client-Server Technology that is the foundation of our digital computing experience. **Clients** are our devices like computers, smartphones, and tablets. The clients are connected to the servers by the internet, either through Wi-Fi and an Internet Service Provider (ISP) or through the cell phone system and a Wireless Service Provider (WSP). Servers are at the other end of the internet.

For most of us, it isn't easy to envision what is at the other end of the internet when we barely know what's at our end. So, the concept of a "cloud" grew out of having to describe the servers and where the servers were when we really didn't know where they were located. So, the cloud was invented to show, typically on engineering design diagrams, where the servers were located with respect to the clients and the internet. When the internet got into the public eye, the media must have latched onto some of these diagrams with the fuzzy area shown on them that represented the location of the servers. Through some mystical phenomena, **Cloud Computing** was born.

So, the cloud is just a representation of where the servers are located when we really don't know where they are physically located. Servers are physically located in data centers all over this country and even worldwide. As a large multi-product tech company, Google has servers in 35 data centers in more than 10 countries, including the US, India, Qatar, and Ireland. Google's Gmail servers are located in many US locations, including Oregon, Georgia, Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Yahoo's servers are located mainly in California.

As you might expect, Microsoft servers are located worldwide: in the US, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. The servers for Tik-Tok, a Chinese company, are probably located in China, maybe Singapore, though they also have servers in the US in Virginia and Oregon. The idea of servers located in certain parts of the world has surfaced as a data security concern for many American users. So, you see, the cloud is not one specific place; it is the totality of all the data centers that house the servers connected to the internet, all over the world. I wouldn't even venture a guess as to how many servers there are in total.

Here is a brief opportunity to consider the difference between the terms **App** and **Software**. Software, in the past, tended to describe the computer instructions that were running on a computer locally. The term "App" is mainly used to describe computer instructions running on a (client) device like a smartphone in conjunction with other computer instructions running on a server. So, an App is software that provides just part of the processing power used to solve a problem. Both the App, which is the client, and the server software, which runs on the server computer, are needed to solve the problem. This explanation is to show that for every app we use, there is a Server that is at the other end of the internet (in the cloud) and is part of the solution

So, for every App on your smartphone, there is a server, somewhere in the cloud that is being used. **And the amazing thing is that we don't have to know where the server is, how to get to it, or how to use it.** The components of Client-Server technology take care of all those details. All we have to do is learn how to use the features of the App in question. Some Apps operate entirely locally, but from what I see, they are in the minority. I have over 150 Apps on my phone, and less than 10 operate strictly locally.

Most things we do with our phones require a server at the other end of the internet. Your

emails are maintained on your email server, allowing you to access them with any of your devices that provide the server with the correct User Name and Password. This enables you to manage your email from any device and location.

Shopping by smartphone or computer requires a store server. The major shopping destinations (Amazon, Walmart, Best Buy, Etsy) have shopping servers that display and describe the goods that are for sale and accumulate your desires in a "cart," arrange to take your money, send you an email receipt, and send your order for the desired merchandise to be gathered at a warehouse and delivered to your physical address.

A server mostly does home automation, lighting, and security camera control. The home automation App on your smartphone lets you set up a schedule for a light or outlet in your home or the settings for a motion-sensing camera in your backyard. Still, the home automation server turns the light on and off according to your established schedule. It's the home automation server that recognizes the motion in your backyard and directs the camera to take a video clip that you can view when you have time.

Using your phone as a GPS to help you navigate to a new destination requires a Server. The app on your smartphone gets the destination from you and your current location by using the smartphone's location services. It sends that information to the server, where the destination and current locations are used to calculate the route to get to the destination. The route information is then sent back to the smartphone so it can provide the best navigation steps needed to get you to your destination.

So, if you thought you didn't use cloud computing, hopefully, now you will see that we all use cloud computing for most of our computing activities. ❖

LACS INFORMATION

HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS has an active general email list: PC@LACS.Groups.IO which goes to all members on the list. Members will receive meeting notices and Zoom links via this list. You can also ask questions, offer suggestions, and help others.

New LACS members should receive an invitation to join our list with two weeks to accept. Other LACS members who want to join the list should send an email to Larry McDavid, our Groups.IO Coordinator. (See your roster for contact info.)
He will send you an invitation to join. If you have any problems or questions about joining, please contact Larry.

USING PAYPAL OR ZELLE

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

Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle.** Follow the instructions. The recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society.** Select **Send by email**. The email address is: **lacomputersociety@gmail.com**.
The wording may be a little different on your bank's site.

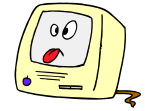Email questions to Gavin Faught. See our roster for his contact info.

To pay LACS by PayPal, go to this link: www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024 and then click on **Send**. 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. Enter the amount to pay, then click on **Add a note**. Say what the payment is for. If it is for dues, add your physical and email addresses, preferred phone number, and if you want a hard copy or the electronic version of the newsletter.

FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?

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

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

CHANGE CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to www.lacspc.org. Click on **Join LACS** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update,** select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out; email it with your changes to Leah Clark. See the LACS roster or pages 9 or 10 of UF.
Or 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 few days before the meeting. **Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it or have a 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.
7. Click **Finish**.

LACS CALENDAR

March

LACS Board Meeting, Monday, March 3
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, March 11
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

March 1: Ramadan Begins

March 3: LACS Board Meeting

March 4: Mardi Gras

March 9: Daylight Saving Time Begins

March 11: LACS General Meeting

March 13: Purim Begins

March 17: St. Patrick's Day

March 20: LACS Luncheon

March 20: : Spring Begins

March 31: World Backup Day

VISIT OTHER APCUG COMPUTER USER GROUPS AND SEE THEIR NEWSLETTERS

LACS heartily welcomes visitors from other user groups, and we are welcome to join other groups' meetings.

Go to www.APCUG2.org . Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

March 11: Automobile Software— Android & Apple, Bill James

March 20: LACS Luncheon Meeting See page 2.

April 8: Google from 30,000 Feet, Rob Truman

May 13: Gmail from Start to Finish, Rob Truman

Please watch your email and User Friendly for changes and updates.

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.

If you have any questions or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day, contact Leah Clark at

leahjc@sbcglobal.net

ZOOM RECORDINGS

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

HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the color edition) in User Friendly usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Click on the link in the online version to see the referenced place. You can also copy and paste it into your browser's search or address bar.

USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES AND INDEXES

See back issues of *User Friendly at* 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 right.

MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone or during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then contact a person whose number is listed next to it.

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

If you are experienced using a particular program or hardware, please volunteer to be a consultant. You don't have to be an expert. To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please email Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net or call her at 424-261-6251.

Android Smartphones - 5

Apple devices - 7

Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5

Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3

Genealogy - 5

Groups.IO - 9

Hardware - 4

Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 4

Mozilla Firefox - 7

MS Excel - 5, 7, 8

MS Word - 1, 3, 5, 8

MS Outlook - 1, 5

MS PowerPoint - 5, 7

MS Publisher - 2

PDF - 5, 8

Photoshop Elements - 2

Quicken - 5, 8

Thunderbird - 4

Utilities - 4, 5

Windows - 4, 5

WordPerfect - 5

Zoom - 2, 6

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
4	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
7	Van Berkom, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
9	McDavid, Larry	Contact by email	

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

TITLE	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2025
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2025
Secretary	**Open**	2025
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2025
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Benton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Irv Hershman	2026
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	**Open**	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2026
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Email Lists	Larry McDavid	
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: https://lacspc.org

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

Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member or other member. If necessary, you may leave a message at the above number. **Only LACS members may receive a roster**.

Please note: The 2024 roster was in the middle pages of the May User Friendly. It was mailed to all LACS members, including those who usually receive only the electronic version. The roster will not be sent to anyone electronically. Be sure to keep it where you can find it when you need it.

DOES THE CONTROL PANEL STILL EXIST?

By **Phil Sorrentino**
philsorr@yahoo.com
Secretary, Newsletter Contributor
Sun City Center Computer Club
https://scccomputerclub.org/

Good question. When Settings appeared in Windows 8 in 2012, it looked like Microsoft may have been laying the groundwork for moving most of the Control Panel features over to Settings. That may be true, but here we are, eleven years later, and the Control Panel still exists. The control panel exists along with Settings in Windows 10 and 11, though the organization of each changes slightly between Windows 10 and 11.

So, how did we get here? Just a little history. Our very old friend *Control Panel* has been part of Microsoft Windows since version 1.0. Each of the early versions introduced new applets (small software applications).

Being much younger, the Settings App was first released with Windows 8. In Windows 8, the "PC Settings" App was designed as a simplified area optimized for touchscreen devices. It included a small portion of Control Panel functionality on a two-panel full-screen interface. Windows 8.1 improved the Settings App by including capabilities previously part of the Control Panel and providing a redesigned organization. It also added a small "Control Panel" link at the bottom of the left panel to allow users to open the Control Panel. Unfortunately, that helpful link did not remain in later generations of Settings.

However, you can always get to the Control Panel by typing "Control" into the search bar in the taskbar. Settings categories change with each generation released.

In the **first generation** Settings App, the categories were: PC and Devices, Accounts, OneDrive, Search and Apps, Privacy, Network, Time and Language, Ease of Access, Update and Recovery, and finally Activate Windows, which shows up only if Windows isn't activated.
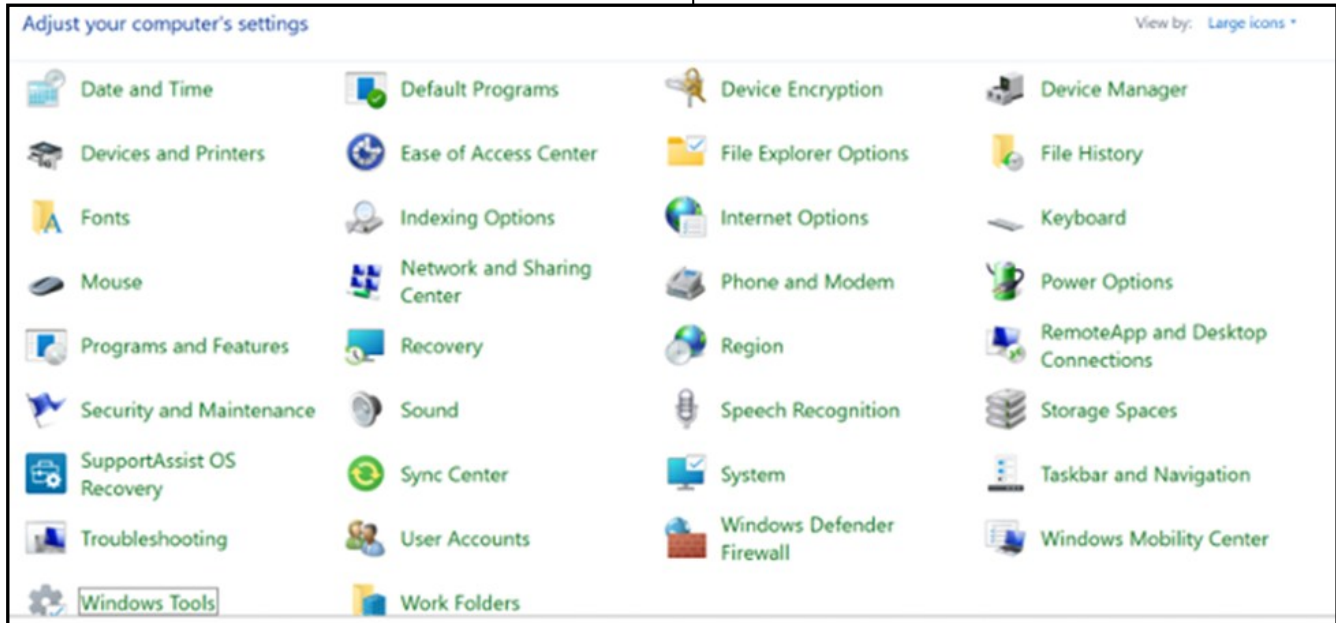
The **second generation** of the Settings App was included with all releases of Windows 10 in 2016, 2019, and 2022. It included more capabilities that were previously parts of the Control Panel. Windows Update, part of the Control Panel before Windows 10, was now exclusively a part of Settings. This second version brought some changes to the categories. It contained the following: System, Devices, Phone, Network & Internet, Personalization, Apps, Accounts, Time & Language, Gaming, Ease of Access, Search, Cortana, Privacy, Update & Security, and finally Mixed Reality (but only if a connected device met the HoloLens requirements).

The **third generation** of the Settings App is found in Windows 11. This version has been significantly redesigned with a new layout and updated icons. A persistent navigation sidebar has also been added, providing links to various settings capabilities within the app. The Windows 11 Settings App now contains the following categories: System, Bluetooth & Devices, Network & Internet, Personalization, Apps, Accounts, Time & Language, Gaming, Accessibility, Privacy & Security, and Windows Update.

The control panel is not apparent or easily found on Windows 10 or 11. If you don't have the Control Panel icon on your desktop, you can use the Search bar on the taskbar to find it. Though it doesn't seem obvious or intuitive, in either Windows 10 & 11, if you want to put the Control Panel icon on your desktop, go to Settings-Personalization Themes,

select "Desktop icon settings," and then check the box next to Control Panel and click Apply. The Control Panel seems to be relegated to the background in Windows 10 and 11. Though

there are some differences, once you get to the Control Panel in either version, it seems to work just about the same.

Adjust your computer's settings			View by: Large icons ▾
Date and Time	Default Programs	Device Encryption	Device Manager
Devices and Printers	Ease of Access Center	File Explorer Options	File History
Fonts	Indexing Options	Internet Options	Keyboard
Mouse	Network and Sharing Center	Phone and Modem	Power Options
Programs and Features	Recovery	Region	RemoteApp and Desktop Connections
Security and Maintenance	Sound	Speech Recognition	Storage Spaces
SupportAssist OS Recovery	Sync Center	System	Taskbar and Navigation
Troubleshooting	User Accounts	Windows Defender Firewall	Windows Mobility Center
Windows Tools	Work Folders		

Windows 11 Control Panel

Settings is much more prominent than Control Panel on Windows 10 and 11. On Windows 10, Settings is immediately available after the Start button is left-clicked. (See the gear icon?) If you right-click the start button, you will also see an entry for "Settings" in the menu. Either method gets you to the same Settings App.

On Windows 11, the Settings (gear) icon is probably in the Pinned area of the start menu. If you don't see it there after you left-click the start button, it might be on a second-level display of the Pinned icons. If there are two dots on the right side of the display of icons, click the smaller one (or the arrow that appears when you hover over the dot). That will reveal another group of "Pinned" icons.

If it is there, you are set. If it is not present, click **All apps** and you will see it in the "All apps" alphabetical list. Right-click Settings and click "Pin to start," it will be easier to find the next time you need it.

You can also click **More** and then **Pin to taskbar** to pin it to the taskbar if you expect to use it often. You will also notice **App settings** next to a gear icon. This will take you to the "Apps – Installed Apps – Settings" screen, which provides some general control over apps.

In Windows 11, no matter how you get to the Settings App, the persistent navigation sidebar controls the action. The left panel is the Navigation panel, and the right panel presents the capabilities selected in the navigation panel.

Initially, "Settings" starts with "System" in the navigation panel, and the System capabilities are shown in the right panel. Choosing a capability by clicking on a capability in the right panel gets you to the capabilities presented on the next screen. After you reach a capabilities screen, clicking the **arrow** next to **Settings** at the top left corner will get you back to the Settings screen. This "back

arrow" is used throughout the Settings App to get you back to the previous screen.

So, for now, at least, the Control Panel is still an integral part of Windows 10 and 11, though it seems that without the Search bar, it might not be easy to find. Maybe, as time passes and we get updates, more Control Panel capabilities will be moved into Settings. Control Panel may eventually disappear, but only Microsoft knows what the future holds for Control Panel. ❖

THE LATEST KINDLE

By **Cianna Garrison**
How-To Geek, January, 2025
www.howtogeek.com

Summary

Its price point and convenience make it hard to beat the Amazon Kindle 2024 (Gen 11). While it's a budget-friendly, intro-level eReader without many bells and whistles, it does its job (almost) flawlessly while keeping the interface uncluttered, simple, and speedy.

 Even in the budget department, the Amazon Kindle is a stellar value, from its light and compact design to its adjustable front light and 6-inch display.

Pros

- Ultra-lightweight build makes it comfortable to hold for hours
- Very compact and portable
- Bright screen with Dark Mode function
- Simple UI that gets straight to the point

Cons

- No IP rating
- No reading speed stats like some other eReaders have
- No color screen

Price and Availability

The Amazon Kindle (2024) is now available to order on Amazon or Best Buy. It retails for $109.99 in black or green.

Specifications

- **Resolution:** 300ppi, 16-level grayscale
- **Storage:** 16GB
- **Brand:** Amazon Kindle
- **Screen Size:** 6in
- **Supported formats:** Kindle Format 8 (AZW3), Kindle (AZW), TXT, PDF, unprotected MOBI, PRC natively; PDF, DOCX, DOC, HTML, EPUB, TXT, RTF, JPEG, GIF, PNG, BMP through conversion.
- **Battery:** Up to 6 weeks of charge
- **Size:** 6.2 x 4.3 x 0.32in (157.8 x 108.6 x 8.0mm)
- **Weight:** 5.56 oz (158g)

The classic Kindle design gets a more portable upgrade in the Kindle 2024, which is, in my opinion, one of its highest selling points. Amazon calls it "the lightest, most compact Kindle." I found this claim 100% accurate. Having reviewed other eReaders of various sizes, I was pleased when I unboxed this one and saw how small it was. I found the basics inside the box. The Kindle 2024 in a gorgeous matte green shade, a USB-C charging cable, and a quick start guide.

The latest Kindle is ultra-lightweight, making it comfortable to hold for hours and is highly portable.

Although it isn't feature-packed, it does well for readers who want an uncomplicated eReader.

The Kindle 2024 features a simple User Interface (UI), quick processing for enjoyable reading, and a long-lasting battery with speedy charging.

Comfortable, Lightweight, Easily Portable

The latest Kindle weighs less than 6 ounces. To truly show its size, I compared it to my Samsung Galaxy S24 Ultra. While the Kindle is wider, its length is shorter, and its weight has less heft than my brick of a smartphone.

Because of its tiny size, I could fit it in nearly any purse I owned. But most impressively, it also could fit in large coat pockets without making me feel weighed down. Holding it in my hands for hours at a time was much more comfortable than larger devices, and it didn't fatigue my hands or wrists as much which is a pro for anyone who marathon-reads as I do.

Its body has two unassuming logos for Kindle and Amazon on the front and back of the device. The power button and the USB-C charging port are on the device's bottom edge, which I found to work well when using the Kindle. If the power button had been on the side, I would have accidentally put it to sleep periodically as I was reading.

While I've also used eReaders with smart pens and more controls, the simplicity of the Kindle Gen 11(2024) is what makes it a great entry-level eReader or a highly portable option for bibliophiles who want to read without worrying about what else their eReader does.

Sadly, the Kindle 2024 is not water-resistant, which is a real bummer for readers who enjoy a book and a bath or a poolside read. You can still take the chance of getting it wet at your risk, but I prefer to prevent the inevitable, especially if you have butterfingers, as I do.

The Kindle Gen 11's Display is Crisp and Bright

The Kindle Gen 11 (2024) also has an upgraded display. Amazon bumped up the brightness by 25%, and I noticed it was a lot easier for me to read in any environment and achieve the perfect, comfortable reading experience. What else made it a pleasure to read was its higher contrast ratio, which made the dark print better stand out against the white background.

At 330ppi, the Kindle 2024 had an excellent, crisp display that was easy to read, whether I was reading an ebook, browsing books in my Kindle library, using the internet browser, or looking for new books in the Kindle store.

I'll be the first to tell anyone that I typically avoid eReaders because I get sick of staring at screens all day only to stare at yet another screen. (Aside from the other complaints, which are the enjoyable book smell, the feeling of paper underneath your fingers, and the satisfying action of turning a page). However, the Kindle 2024 has such a pleasant feel, weight, and crisp display that I overcame this avoidance and found myself constantly reaching for it at night.

In addition to the adjustable brightness, it also included Dark Mode, which exists on earlier Kindle models. With the higher contrast ratio, however, I found Dark Mode to work better than before.

It was easier to read the white type against the black, and this setting was a godsend when it came to nourishing my current reading obsession in the wee hours while preventing further eyestrain.

A Simple, Easy-to-Use UI and Speedy Processing

While the [Kindle Paperwhite SE (2024)](#) is perhaps the winner in the speed department as the "fastest Kindle ever," the Amazon Kindle (2024) also takes its speed up a notch with faster processing that makes reading *so* much easier and all the more enjoyable. One of my gripes with past eReaders has been their speed. A constant refresh of the screen or lag every time you turn the page can make reading feel more like a chore. Luckily, one of Amazon's upgrades for the Kindle 2024 is faster processing.

In my time with the Kindle 2024, I sped through five books in two weeks. This was partially due to my penchant for reading, it

was also due to the Kindle's speed, convenience, and stand-out performance. Because I experienced next to no ghosting upon turning pages, didn't have to wait for or feel distracted by slow page turns, and didn't have the dreaded hand fatigue from a heavy or awkward build, I could not put the Kindle down.

The simple UI has two well-organized sections for the Home page (which shows your library and Kindle book suggestions in various categories) and for the Library page, where all the books you own or have downloaded live**.**

Kindle Unlimited

For my reading library, I opted to use a [Kindle Unlimited](#) free trial (after the trial, it's $11.99 per month), which gave me access to four million books and the ability to borrow and read up to 20 books at a time. I could also have imported other ebooks I owned by emailing the files and downloading them on the Kindle or connecting my smartphone to my laptop to transfer files to the Kindle app. Also, any ebooks and audiobooks I had already purchased from Amazon autopopulated in my library, so I had plenty of options.

I downloaded Minka Kent's "The Stillwater Girls" to listen to via Bluetooth. While I *used* the audiobook capability, I felt this feature was serviceable but imperfect. However, it's still useful for road trips, flights, and other travel when you don't want to put your eyes on a page. The interface wasn't as smooth as using the Audible app on my phone, and there was a slight delay when going back or forward 30 seconds.

I mostly read titles from **Kindle Unlimited**, including bestsellers in the suspense category, like Alex Michaelides' *The Silent Patient* and Freida McFadden's *The Housemaid*. While you can purchase plenty of options in

the Kindle store, Kindle Unlimited offers excellent value for people who want to read various titles at a monthly price. The only bummer here is you don't own any of the ebooks you've downloaded through Kindle Unlimited.

Features and Settings

While there aren't many features on the Kindle 2024 to speak of that aren't basic, I appreciated the simplicity of a top drop-down menu, where I could easily adjust the brightness, toggle on Bluetooth or Dark Mode, and access the Settings page.

Under Settings, the most customization you can do is to filter or personalize the lock screen ads (yay, bloatware), connect to your Goodreads account, manage the language options and dictionaries, set a security pin, and adjust the sleep timer.

There are some convenient (albeit still basic) features you can access while reading that are standard for Kindles. These include highlighting text, writing basic notes, and looking up words in the integrated dictionary. When I highlighted a word or phrase, I could swipe right from the dictionary to a Wikipedia page or swipe again for Google Translate to look up words from other languages.

One feature I wish was included in the Kindle 2024 is a simple reading speed statistics page. I've seen this incorporated into other eReaders (like the [Kobo Elipsa 2E](#)) and am unsure why Amazon hasn't taken the initiative to include it in their standard Kindles. Checking my reading speed isn't essential, but I enjoy seeing how long it takes me to get through a book or how many pages I've read in an hour, and I know many other readers would appreciate this, too.

A Long-Lasting Battery and Quick Charging

Depending on how much reading I did, the Kindle 2024's battery life varied. When I was lightly reading (only for an hour or so at

night), the battery drained slowly, maybe about 5 to 10% per day. Amazon claims its battery lasts up to six weeks, but this is based on keeping the Wi-Fi off, reading at a brightness level of 13, and only reading for 30 minutes daily. If you did, you might get those six weeks of battery life, but I expect more readers would have an experience more aligned with mine. I read for at least one hour per day most days, left Wi-Fi on, and usually had the brightness at a minimum of 17.

However, my reading soon became a marathon, not a sprint, so in general, my battery life on the Kindle lasted about five days before I needed to charge it. The good news is that charging the Kindle didn't take long. I regularly got about a 26% charge after just 16 minutes on the charger and hit 100% in roughly an hour or so.

Should You Buy the Amazon Kindle Gen 11 (2024) eReader?

The [Amazon Kindle Gen 11 (2024)](#) is one of the best options available in the entry-level eReader category, especially if you prefer the convenience of Kindle's vast library of titles. Its uncomplicated, well-organized UI makes it easy to focus on reading rather than a plethora of clutter. At the same time, its speedy processing, lightweight design, and crisp display will keep you reading comfortably whether you're at home or traveling.

However, you may want to increase your budget if you prefer an eReader with more features, such as better annotation, note-taking, or a color screen. For a more paper-like feel, opt for the [Kindle Paperwhite SE (2024)](#) or enjoy color on the [Kindle Colorsoft Signature Edition](#). If you want to annotate like a pro, the [Kobo Elipsa 2E](#) or [Onyx Boox Note Air3 C](#) performed well in that department, though they're in a higher price range. ❖

Editor's note: A LACS member told me that there is currently a line of 2025 Kindle Models available on Amazon.

FYI

Durham Personal Computer Users' Club
Ontario, Canada
By **Dan Delong**
PC Monitor, January 2025

Instant Translator Earbud

While attending a Montreal conference, decades ago, in which one of the speakers spoke French entirely during the presentations, those not fully conversant in this second language could wear a headset (to listen to simultaneous translation). Translation was carried out by a skilled human translator. AI has now improved to the point that it can handle translating 40 languages, and many accents, with 98% accuracy, with a device as small as an external earbud. Conversations are aided by a paired app on a smart phone, and can be recorded as text on a linked-in device. A pair of AI Interpreter earbuds cost almost $700USD. https://www.timekettle.co

Digital Twin

If you could create a duplicate of yourself, what tasks would you ask this clone to perform? One busy person has recently created a digital twin that can carry out mundane tasks for her. She may be the first to do so. When her busy (and wealthy) friends see the full benefits of a digital twin assistant– especially the owner's increase in free time to think, solve, and create— then everyone will want a digital assistant. To some degree, current AI assistants already do this. Facebook has one to make and respond to your comments, as well as some fake users that make comments in order to keep users engaged. https://www.makeuseof.com/facebook-ai-generated-people/ ❖

FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS
Go to https://www.apcug2.org for all aspects of computing and operating systems.

SPECIAL OFFERS
Go to the APCUG website at https://apcug2.org/discounts-special-offers-for-user-groups/ for discounts and special offers for members of User Groups. Several book, media and training sites offer discounts including the two mentioned below.

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

- See books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre at Routledge Focal Press . They offer discounts to User Group members.
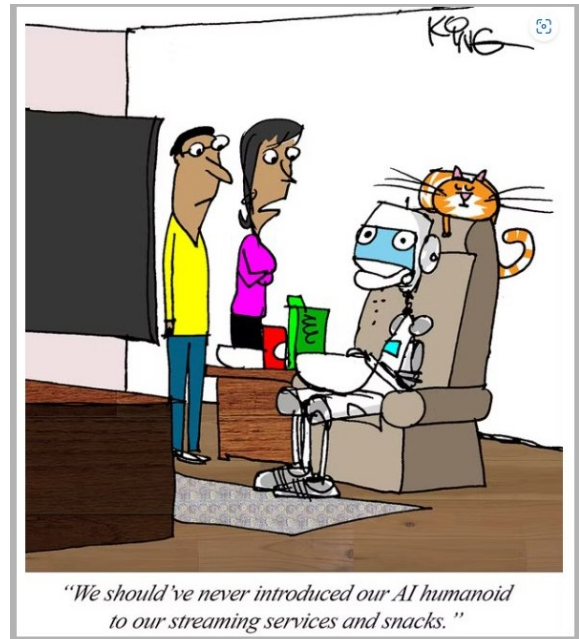
TECH LIFE UNITY
Formerly TechBoomers

https://www.techlifeunity.com

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

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

"We should've never introduced our AI humanoid to our streaming services and snacks."

Cartoon from https://www.howtogeek.com

Jokes from Laugh Factory
https://www.laughfactory.com/jokes/technology-jokes

Sam: Did you know Microsoft just bought Skype for ten million dollars?
John: Really!? They could have downloaded it for free.

Q: Why couldn't the blonde add 10 + 5 on a calculator?
A: She couldn't find the "10" button.

Q: What do computers eat for a snack?
A: Microchips!

—Suzy is so stupid she put airbags on her computer in case it crashed.

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 use the same mailing 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

— **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.

— **Annual Holiday Party**

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

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

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All renewals are due in January. New members will pay | **the annual amount when they join.**

Check # _____   *LACS*   **New or Renewal Membership Application**

Date _____   **Dues may be paid by PayPal, Zelle, or check. If paying by check, make it out to "Los Angeles Computer Society", and mail it with 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?

Revised Jan. 2025, ljc

First Class Mail

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. **Just click on the link**. If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know.

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 you to re-enter.

You may turn off your video when you are gone.