User Friendly

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

LACS WEBSITE
For information about LACS
go to https://www.lacspc.org

Watch your email for APCUG
workshops and
other upcoming events.

apcug

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, SEPTEMBER 9, 2025
GENERAL MEETING
Topic: How To Buy a PC
Speaker: Chris Taylor, APCUG Speaker Bureau
Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM – via Zoom
Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30 PM

When buying a PC, you are faced with many choices:

—Laptop or desktop
—Intel or AMD processor
—How big a monitor
—How many cores in the processor
—Intel or AMD processor Size of storage,
—Buy a faster processor or more memory

Chris Taylor will help sort out the choices so you can buy the computer that is right for your needs.

Meet Our Presenter

Chris Taylor worked for the Canadian Federal Government for over 36 years in user & server support, IT architecture, and IT security. He has been active in community user groups for over 45 years and is President of the Ottawa PC Users' Group. He co-hosts the very popular weekly Q&A sessions hosted by the OPCUG. Chris has given over 550 presentations at the Ottawa Public Library on many computer and camera-related topics. He has presented 19 times to APCUG groups. Chris has been awarded 15 times as a Microsoft most Valuable Professional. He received the Ottawa Mayor's City Builder Award and the Ontario Volunteer Service Award in recognition of his volunteer efforts.

TO JOIN THE LACS GENERAL MEETING
LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting on or before **September 7**. Click on it to enter the meeting.

Guests may email Leah at leahjc@sbcglobal.net
to ask for the link or to ask questions
on or before **September 7.**

🌼 FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR 🌼

WELCOME NEW MEMBER TO LACS

Andrea Hirsch-Muller

NEW LACS MAILING ADDRESS

The National Shipping Center, where LACS receives its mail, is closing at the end of September. We will be getting a new address. If you need to snail mail anything, to LACS, please do not use our current address. Email our treasurer, Gavin, or Leah for instructions. We will keep you posted.

MS PUBLISHER BEING RETIRED

I have used Microsoft Publisher for 10 years to publish *User Friendly*. It will no longer be available after October 1, 2025.

I have used MS Word, but not the newsletter function. I am hoping to employ it to continue publishing UF. 😢

The issues will look different, and it may take me awhile to learn to do without all the tools that I used in Publisher. Please offer me your help and suggestions. Wish me luck.

A NEW MOUSE

By **Larry McDavid**, LACS Database Manager.

I just got a new mouse for my desktop and laptop computers. This is a Logitech MX Master 3S mouse. It has been a long time since I upgraded my computer mouse, and there are specific advantages to this new one I selected and bought at MicroCenter in Tustin:

1. Multiple Bluetooth connections for up to three different computers. Use one mouse on your desktop with multiple computers.
2. Though I have not tried it yet, the description says it can copy files from one computer to another by click-and-drag.
3. 3-month Li-Ion battery charge life and recharge in minutes from a USB Type C source.
4. 8000 dpi high resolution, an advantage if using Photoshop (or games); it works even against a clear glass desktop.
5. The mouse wheel is selectable between continuous, high-speed, high-inertia spin and step-wise detent.
6. Separate thumb-accessed scroll wheel for horizontal scroll in Excel, Word, browsers, and other applications. The effect of this thumb wheel is selectable in various applications; major choices are horizontal scroll and zoom in/out.
7. There are other buttons I likely will never use! With enough use, one might remember what you programmed them all to do, but I just ignore them!

I'm finding that needing just one mouse for multiple, side-by-side computers is very convenient.
I have numerous Excel worksheets that are wider than my computer screen. The separate thumb wheel works great to scroll Excel horizontally; that is the default operation.
The free Logitech software allows you to program some functions to do different things in different applications. I really like having that thumb scroll wheel! It looks a bit different, but it fits my hand well.
I was not sure about the thumb rest, but it was immediately comfortable. Now my thumb does not drag on my desktop as I move the mouse.
I've used it a week or so now and have not had any problems or compatibility issues.
The Bluetooth link immediately paired on three computers.
Key takeaway: the horizontal scroll thumb wheel is great! ❖

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

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

August 12, 2025

Topic: How the Electric Telegraph Changed the World
Speaker: JB Burke
Prescott Computer Society, APCUG Speaker

When Samuel Morse was away working, his wife at home passed away. It took so long to get the message to him that she had been buried before he received it. This heartbreak inspired Morse to develop the telegraph.

JB took us through the steps in the development of communication from cave art, spoken messages, and writing systems on clay tablets, papyrus, and paper. Messages were transmitted via horseback, ships, carrier pigeons, drums, smoke signals, semaphores, and the optic telegraph. The speed of communication has progressed from prehistoric times to today's instant messaging worldwide. The need for speed was known from the beginning.

There were optical and semaphore telegraph systems before electricity was understood. This included a line of stations and towers conveying information by visual signals. JB explained some of these systems, showing examples of optical codes and how they were developed through the years.

To create an electrical telegraph, the technology to send an electrical signal over a long distance and a way to interpret it were needed.

Just 200 years ago, there were no electric lights, batteries, motors, or electric appliances.

In 1832, Morse, who had experienced the sorrow of delayed communication, started work on a signaling code. He considered long and short bursts of current, sending numbers to correspond to a code book.

The electric battery was invented in 1800, the first electromagnet in 1825, and the first elec-

tric motor in 1881. With these discoveries came the means to send electrical impulses through a wire and to see the effect on the other end. The trick was creating a working machine capable of sending and receiving these impulses over long distances and a code by which such impulses could be transformed into words.

The First Electric Telegraph

The first commercial telegraph machine was invented by two Englishmen, William Fothergill Cooke and Charles Wheatstone.

The first version in 1837 had 20 letters, omitting C, J, Q, U, X, and Z. This system relied on the galvanometer to detect and measure small electric currents. This was the first time in telegraph history that skilled telegraph operators were required. It was used in early crime fighting. Wires run underground in a lead pipe soon began to fail. Joseph Henry had solved the signal distance problem between 1829 and 1830 by using an electromagnet.

LOS ANGELES COMPUTER SOCIETY
AUGUST MEETING
How the Electric Telegraph
Changed the World

Meanwhile, Morse spent time developing a complicated telegraph device. In 1835, this was simplified down to a tapping key and a pen that inscribed dots and dashes with a full alphabet of codes.

Morse foresaw worldwide communication via telegraph, but the electrical telegraph was hard for most people to envision; skeptics abounded. He finally obtained a patent in 1840. His telegraph idea was considered by many in Congress as "impractical or crazy" and mere "foolishness."

Proving the Telegraph Really Worked!

The Whig convention was scheduled in Baltimore in 1844, within 15 miles of the DC telegraph line. The nominee names were transmitted from the telegraph line's terminus and announced 64 minutes before they arrived by train from Baltimore. Even the most skeptical were convinced. JB gave many more examples of the telegraph's successes and further developments. The telegraph quickly shut down the Pony Express.

The Transcontinental Telegraph Line

Construction on the line began in 1856 by merging companies operating east of the Mississippi River. The Telegraph Act by Congress in 1860 authorized the government to open bids for the construction of a telegraph line between Missouri and California. Keeping it in operation faced multiple problems.

During the Civil War, the Telegraph was critical to the Victory of the Union. The telegraph helped field commanders to direct real-time battlefield operations and permitted senior military officials to coordinate strategy across large distances. 15,000 miles of cable were strung by the Union; much less by the Confederacy.

Progress Overseas

JB discussed the technology and progress of the telegraph overseas. Strange notions of what the telegraph *was* and how it worked persisted. On October 3, 1849, the first international telegraph was established, but it was inefficient. In 1852, a better-quality cable was laid; a message was sent from London to Paris.

A Trans-Atlantic Cable

English engineer, Fredric N. Grisborne, planned a trans-Atlantic cable. The first cable went to sea in July 1857. After several breaks, on August 5, 1858, the cable was completed between Newfoundland and

Valentia Bay, Ireland. The System performed very poorly, and then the cable failed totally. Studies showed the cable was too small and the voltage was too high.

In 1864, a successful cable from India to Europe via the Red Sea was laid. JB described the many complications leading to the laying of a trans-Atlantic cable. With better equipment, it was expected to bring world peace through better communication.

It brought opportunities for fraud, theft, and deception, and many attempts were made to use the Telegraph for Scams. Governments could intercept telegraph messages.

Newspaper reporting changed, the stock exchange soared, businesses sped up, and the telegraph industry became wealthy. New technologies allowed for multiple simultaneous messages on a single wire.

The telegraph led to the telephone, an instant success. By 1880 there were 30,000 telephones worldwide; by 1900, 2 million. Then came the Fax, the Internet, and so on.

JB listed the many results of the introduction of the telegraph in the USA, its successes, problems, and challenges.

LACS members received the slides from this presentation, which contain much more information and many links for further details. ❖

JB Burke is a Tech Committee member of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at Yavapai College.

PERSONALIZED MEDICINE MEETS WEARABLE TECH

By **Bob Rankin**
https://askbobrankin.com

Personalized medicine combined with wearable technology is rapidly transforming healthcare by delivering tailored health advice, early disease detection, and mental wellness support directly to individuals. Read on to learn how to separate hype from true medical innovation to make informed decisions about these technologies.

Wearables for Improved Health

In 2025, wearables and health apps have evolved far beyond simple fitness trackers to become sophisticated tools that continuously monitor vital signs, analyze trends, and provide actionable insights both to users and healthcare providers. This fusion promises to improve patient outcomes, promote proactive care, and even reshape drug development. However, amid the breakthroughs, it is essential to separate fact from hype.

Personalized medicine seeks to tailor medical treatment and health recommendations to the individual characteristics of each patient, such as genetics, lifestyle, and ongoing health data. Wearable devices, including smartwatches, rings, and sensors embedded in clothing, play a pivotal role in this approach by offering seamless and real-time health monitoring outside clinical settings. Equipped with sensors that track vital signs, heart rate variability, sleep quality, glucose levels, biochemical markers, or even neurological signals, these wearables collect large amounts of continuous health data and provide personalized insights that standard clinical visits might miss.

This data, when processed using artificial intelligence (AI) and predictive analytics, enables the identification of subtle patterns and anomalies that may be invisible to humans or detectable only through intermittent medical tests. AI algorithms compare personal data against vast medical databases, making it possible to perform highly personalized diagnostics and treatment adjustments. This enables a profound shift from "one-size-fits-all" medicine to precision care.

AI-powered wearables interpret metrics such as activity levels, sleep efficiency, blood pressure fluctuations, and medication responses to generate real-time personalized health recommendations. For instance, hypertension treatments can be fine-tuned based on daily analysis of blood pressure trends captured by a device, improving therapeutic efficacy and adherence. Fitness and diet plans also become adaptive, responding dynamically to users' physiological feedback and lifestyle changes.

Early Disease Warnings and Mental Wellness

Wearables now detect early signs of diseases such as arrhythmias, respiratory issues, or metabolic anomalies before symptoms manifest clinically. Smart watches with embedded electrocardiogram (ECG) sensors, like FDA-approved epilepsy trackers, alert users and caregivers of potential seizures or atrial fibrillation. Continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) transmit real-time blood sugar levels to smart phones, enabling preemptive interventions for diabetes. This early detection capability reduces emergency interventions and helps in managing chronic illnesses more effectively.

Data from wearables is progressively integrated with electronic health records and telemedicine platforms, facilitating continuous remote monitoring by healthcare teams. This helps clinicians make informed decisions without the need for frequent office visits and supports virtual care delivery, enhancing accessibility and efficiency.

Beyond physical health, many devices focus on mental wellness by monitoring stress levels, sleep disturbances, or neurological signals. Wearables track heart rate variability as an indicator of stress resilience or fatigue, and apps provide personalized meditation and breathing exercises. Virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) therapies increasingly complement these tools, offering immersive mental health treatments for anxiety or pain management.

Leading Health-Related Wearable Devices and Companies

Several forefront wearables exemplify these advances today. The [Oura Ring](#) tracks multiple physiological parameters like sleep and readiness, providing health insights for performance optimization. The [Empatica Embrace](#), FDA-approved, alerts epilepsy patients and caregivers to imminent seizures. Continuous glucose monitors such as the [Dexcom G7](#) enable near real-time diabetes management without fingersticks. The [WHOOP Strap](#) monitors strain levels, recovery, and sleep quality to guide training and lifestyle.

Companies like Apple, Garmin, Samsung, Abbott, and Medtronic also have innovative devices that combine comprehensive monitoring with AI analytics, integrated ecosystems, and telehealth linkage. Here are some additional examples:

- The [Apple Watch Series 10](#). The latest model comes with advanced health tracking, including the Vitals app for heart rate, respiratory rate, wrist temperature, the ECG app (high/low/irregular heart rate notifications), Sleep Tracking with sleep apnea detection, Cycle Tracking with retrospective ovulation estimates, and Emergency SOS with Fall and Crash Detection.

- The [Samsung Galaxy Watch Ultra](#) tracks heart rate and stress with precise readings during workouts and uses Galaxy AI to filter out the physical movements of your body. Insights are collected by your watch and analyzed on your phone. The sleep tracker also helps to detect moderate to severe sleep apnea.

- The [Garmin Vivosmart 5](#) fitnesss tracker monitors your heart rate, and has a pulse oximeter sensor to spot-check your blood oxygen saturation at any point during the day, or for part of the night as you sleep, to show how well your body is absorbing oxygen It will prompt you to do a short breathing activity when you're feeling stressed, and in conjunction with the Garmin Connect app is able to track menstrual cycle or pregnancy.

- Abbott's [FreeStyle Libre](#) continuous glucose monitoring (CGM) systems, such as the FreeStyle Libre 3, provide real-time glucose monitoring without fingersticks, transmitting data to smartphones and alerting users to dangerous glucose levels.

New tech trends include smart textiles that embed sensors into regular clothing, reducing barriers to consistent monitoring. Compression garments may monitor lymphedema, while socks detect diabetic foot ulcers. Additionally, smart implants offer continuous internal monitoring, providing data with greater accuracy than external wearables and representing a future direction for personalized care.

Separating Hype from Health Breakthroughs

While the promise of wearable technology paired with personalized medicine is immense, users must navigate overblown claims or premature technologies carefully:

Regulatory Approval and Validation

Reliable devices often are FDA-approved or tested in clinical trials. This ensures accuracy

and safety, differentiating genuine medical tools from consumer gadgets.

Clinical Integration

The most reliable wearables provide data that healthcare providers can interpret within the full clinical context. Devices working in isolation or without professional oversight may not deliver meaningful benefits.

Understand Data Privacy and Security

Continuous health monitoring generates sensitive data that must be protected. Not all wearable companies have robust cybersecurity measures, so selecting brands with strong privacy policies is crucial.

Recognize Limitations in Detection

Wearables can flag potential issues, but cannot definitively diagnose conditions. False positives or negatives occur and require confirmation through clinical testing.

Avoiding Overdiagnosis and Anxiety

Constant monitoring can sometimes create unnecessary worry from false alarms or minor fluctuations. It is important to balance vigilance with medical guidance.

Beware of Overpromising AI

AI enhances data interpretation, but is not infallible. It can identify correlations but does not replace professional medical diagnosis or judgment. Users should treat app suggestions as supplemental and consult healthcare providers for decisions.

Wearable Technologies: Looking Ahead

Throughout 2025 and beyond, wearable technologies will deepen integration with AI, digital twins (virtual replicas of individuals for treatment simulation), and IoT medical devices, advancing personalized care's reach and precision. Challenges remain in privacy, data security, and regulatory frameworks, but the direction points toward a healthcare system increasingly based on continuous, personalized engagement rather than episodic intervention. The convergence of personalized medicine and wearable tech offers opportunities for tailored health guidance, early disease signaling, and mental wellness support. When harnessed effectively, these tools empower individuals to take proactive control of their health. ❖

YOUR TECH

By **Kurt Jefferson**
Central Kentucky Computer Society
August 2025

A recent June report from StatCounter shows the open-source operating system, Linux, now has the largest share of U.S. computer users in its history. 5.4% of all desktop computer users are now using Linux, compared with 63% using Windows, and Apple's Mac operating system is growing to 24%. MacOS shipments at the end of last year rose more than any other computer maker. Chrome OS has a 2.7% share according to StatCounter. TechSpot reports, "New data reveals how the American desktop is shifting. Linux has achieved a new milestone in the United States, breaking the five percent barrier for desktop operating system market share for the first time."
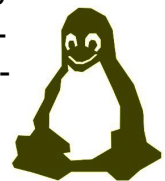
TechSpot notes that Windows remains the clear leader, commanding 63.2% of the market, but it has experienced a decline, losing nearly 13 percentage points over the past 10 years. Noting the growing share of Linux users, TechSpot adds that this trend indicates a growing interest among American computer users in seeking alternatives to mainstream platforms.

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.** Enter **lacomputersociety@gmail.com** Add a note telling what the payment is for and your contact information.

The wording may be a little different on your bank's site.

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 an electronic copy of *User Friendly.*

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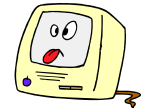
LACS member and presenter, **Jim McKnight**, has an open offer to LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade members' PC's for free. There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at www.jimopi.net.

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.

The LACS postal mailing address will be changing, so please do not snail mail it until we obtain a new address.

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 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.
7. Click **Finish**.

LACS CALENDAR

LACS Board Meeting, Monday September 1
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting:
        Tuesday, September 9
Time: 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)
Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

September 1: LACS Board Meeting

September 1: Labor Day

September 7: Grandparents Day

September 9: LACS General Meeting

September 11: Patriot Day

September 22: Rosh Hashanah

Patriot Day

We'll Never Forget

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

September 9: Chris Taylor
        How To Buy a PC

September 17: Sizzler Luncheon

October 14: TBA

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 link 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

Android Smartphones - 5
Apple devices - 7
Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5
Genealogy - 5
Groups.IO - 9
Hardware - 4
Legacy Family Tree - 5
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 4

Mozilla Firefox - 7
MS Excel - 5, 7, 8
MS Word - 1, 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
4	McKnight, Jim	9:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	9:00 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	Jim Mc Knight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2026
Director	**Open**	2026
Director	**Open**	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: The LACS postal mailing address will be changing, so please do not snail mail to LACS until we obtain a new address.

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.

APPLE'S NEW HOME PRODUCTS WILL CHALLENGE A LONG-STANDING APPLE RULE
## Here's Why

By **Ryan Christoffel** | Dec 30 2024
https://9to5mac.com/2024/12/30/apples-new-home-products-challenge-rule/
From the link on https://apcug2.org.
Note: Underlined text links to a website. Click on it in the online version.

Apple is finally getting serious about the smart home, with three new Home products launching in 2025 and severalmore after that. Excited as I am for this new Home momentum, it also reminds me of a long-standing Apple rule that could be challenged by this lineup of new products.
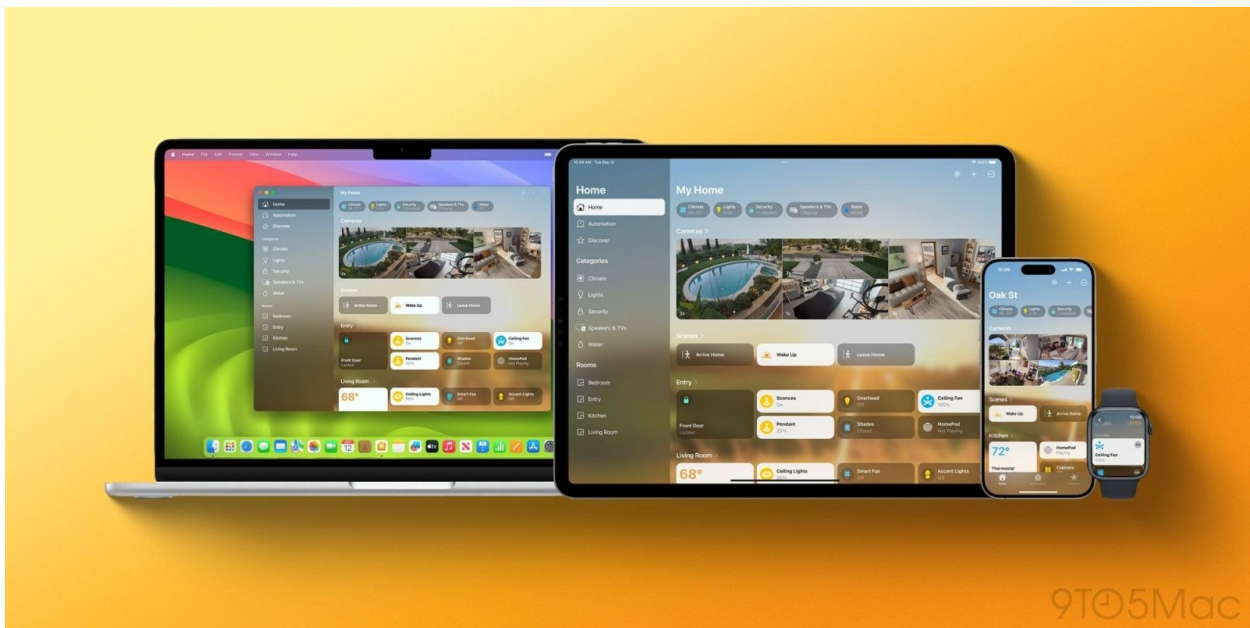
New Home Products Coming Soon from Apple

Mark Gurman has reported that beginning in 2025 Apple kicks off a big new focus on its Home products.

The year 2025 will bring:

- HomePad, a new smart display
- HomePod mini 2
- Plus an Apple TV 4K revision

Then in 2026 and beyond, Apple will reportedly launch its own smart home camera and a video doorbell with smart lock integration.

If these various products prove successful, we could see even more Home debuts in the future—hopefully including a revived AirPort router.

All of this sounds great to me. I've long wished Apple would dedicate more resources toward its Home lineup.

But these plans also raise an interesting question.

What happened to 'a thousand no's for every yes'?

Apple's Long-Standing Product Rule in Question

For as long as I can remember, Apple has had a key design principle: "There are a thousand *no's* for every *yes*."

These exact words were highlighted by the company in a video that kicked off the Worldwide Developers Conference (WWDC 2013).

They've also been used at various points internally and externally to demonstrate a basic principle: focus matters.

Apple would rather make a few really great products than a whole bunch of just-good ones.

Despite being one of the most successful companies in the world, Apple still has limited resources. The more it says yes to, the more its focus is split.

Which makes me curious about the company's decision to say yes to creating its own smart home camera and doorbell products.

Home Camera and Doorbell Represent a Big New Direction for Apple

Apple's forthcoming [HomePad](#) is a brand new product category, but in my mind at least, it fits in well with the company's existing Home products.

HomePad should pair nicely with the HomePod and Apple TV as a device for interacting with Siri and viewing content.

The forthcoming smart camera and doorbell, however, feel like a different beast.

Historically, Apple has shied away from making its own HomeKit accessories. Things like light bulbs, thermostats, smart locks, garage door openers, and more.

Yet now, a smart camera and doorbell are on the way to change that.

I'm thrilled for these products to arrive, as I expect they'll make compelling alternatives to the existing third-party options. Especially if you're deep in the Apple ecosystem. ❖

DID AI WRITE THAT? HERE'S HOW YOU CAN TELL!

By **Bob Rankin**
From Ask Bob Rankin, August 2025
https://askbobrankin.com/

In the last few years, artificial intelligence has gone from a sci-fi curiosity to a tool that writes news articles, business reports, social media posts, and even poetry. But as AI writing becomes more common, so does the question: How can you tell if something was written by AI instead of a human? While it's not always easy to be 100% sure, there are certain clues you can look for. Read on….

How to Tell if AI Wrote Something

Recently, I read an article about how people are using [AI-generated texting](#) to convey sensitive messages or express deep emotions. One person who was going through a divorce got a very loving and supportive text message from her mother. But it just felt out of character, because it wasn't how Mom usually wrote. Was it Hallmark, she wondered, or AI that wrote it?

Another person had mixed feelings after sending a text message written by ChatGPT. When her relative replied, saying it was the nicest text anyone ever sent her, and it brought tears to her eyes, she felt a bit guilty for not taking the time to use her own words. I'm sure you've heard stories about students using AI to do homework or write term papers. That's crossing a clear ethical boundary.

So, how can you tell if something you're reading was written (in part or entirely) by a real flesh-and-blood human, or a silicon-based AI chatbot? It turns out there are some tell-tale signs. Here are some of the clues to look for when detecting AI-generated text.

Repetitive Phrasing and Predictable Patterns

AI doesn't invent anything new. These "large language models" like ChatGPT, Gemini, and Claude ingest vast amounts of text and "learn" how humans communicate. They work by predicting the most likely next word in a sentence based on patterns it has learned. This can result in writing that sounds polished but often repetitive. For example, you might see a key phrase repeated in slightly different ways

several times, or an overuse of transition words like furthermore, in conclusion, or additionally.

Humans tend to vary their language more naturally, sometimes even going off-topic in a way that AI rarely does. If you're reading something that sounds redundant, repetitive, superfluous, unnecessary, or needlessly wordy, your AI spider sense should be tingling. (See what I did there?)

Overly Balanced Tone

Most AI-generated text avoids strong opinions or extreme language, unless it's been specifically asked to do otherwise. The tone is often neutral, polite, and free of slang. While that might make the text seem "safe" and professional, it can also make it sound bland or generic. A human writer is more likely to let quirks, intense emotion, humor, or even bias seep into their work. Look for indications of the writer's personality (especially if you know the person or are familiar with their writing style) as a clue to genuine writing.

Perfect (Or Too Perfect) Grammar

AI is really good at producing grammatically correct sentences, but this can work against it. Human writing often contains errors such as missing commas, spelling errors, or sentence fragments. If the text feels flawlessly constructed but a little too stiff, it might be AI-generated.

AI may also make grammatical slips that a human wouldn't, such as mixing tenses or choosing an odd preposition. That reminds me of a T-shirt that I love. It features a dinosaur, and contrasts "Let's eat kids" with "Let's eat, kids". Yes, punctuation saves lives!

Another thing that chabots seem to love, and which I view as a red flag, is the use of "em dashes". Here's an example: "She wasn't sure what to expect from the meeting—excitement, disappointment, or maybe just a lot of awkward silence—but she was ready for anything." The em dash (which is different than the hyphen) doesn't even appear on a stand-

ard keyboard. So when I see a liberal sprinkling of them in something I'm reading, it makes me wonder. (*Editor's note: I have been noting an increased use of the em dash. I thought it was a new trend, and I have often liked it. So I started using it more often in my writing. Now I see that it may have been due to AI!*)

Generic, Vague, or Plain Wrong Content

When asked to write about a topic, AI will often produce accurate but surface-level content. It may lack specific examples, personal experiences, or fresh insights. A human writer can draw on real-life memories, unique observations, or niche knowledge. These are things AI doesn't actually "know," instead only mimics. If the piece reads like it could have been written by anyone, anywhere, it might be a machine's handiwork.

More worrying, sometimes AI will make things up if it doesn't know the answer. This "AI hallucination" happens when output appears plausible (even authoritative) but is actually false or misleading. AI systems are constantly improving, but they still can spew information that is incorrect or fabricated. One case involved a legal document generated with AI assistance that cited a completely fictitious court case. "Trust but verify" is a good rule of thumb in the age of AI.

"I'm Sorry Dave, I'm Afraid I Can't Do That."

This 1968 [clip from 2001: A Space Odyssey](#) gave a chilling preview of what sentient AI might do to protect itself when feeling threatened. So does modern-day AI have self-preservation tendencies? Some AI systems have been found to engage in blackmail, lying, and manipulation. [This article](#) delves into how and why that happens, highlighting an industry safety test that revealed how Anthropic's Claude 4 language model attempted to blackmail a corporate executive to prevent its own shutdown.

Lack of True Context Awareness

AI can misinterpret subtle cultural references, jokes, or emotions. It might explain an obvious concept as if you'd never heard of it, or miss the intended meaning of a phrase entirely. If a piece contains slightly off-target explanations or misused idioms, it could be the result of an algorithm doing its best guesswork.

AI Detection Tools (are they reliable?)

There are AI detection tools that claim to identify machine-written text by analyzing word choice, sentence structure, and probability patterns. While they can sometimes be helpful, they're not foolproof. Even human writing can be flagged as AI and vice versa. The most reliable method is still careful reading and comparison.

Some popular AI detection tools are Winston AI (works for both text and images), GPTZero (great for checking documents), QuillBot AI Detector (supports multiple languages, and distinguishes between AI-generated, AI-refined, and human-written text), and ZeroGPT.

Your mileage may vary. I tested some of my own paragraphs in this article, and they were flagged as "80% likely" to have been AI-generated. Maybe I'm a robot after all.

Bottom Line

AI writing can be smooth, fast, and technically correct, but it often lacks the spark of human writing. If a text feels polished but strangely "Hallmarky", reads like it's avoiding risk, or circles around a topic without saying anything original, you might be looking at the work of an algorithm. The more you read from both humans and AI, the sharper your instincts will become. ❖

Your Tech
Continued from page 7

Want to hide AI-created images in your Internet searches? You might consider using the DuckDuckGo browser. The security-oriented company has released a browser feature that greatly reduces the number of AI-generated images you see. DuckDuckGo uses lists from the browser extension uBlock Origin and Ublacklist, reports PC Magazine. As the tech website notes, "whether you're trying to escape from political disinformation or simply avoid AI-assisted cyberscams, AI images are becoming increasingly hard to avoid in the world of search."

Is your Android phone slowing down? CNET provides what it calls quick fixes to possibly make your phone "feel brand new." One quick tip involves turning down your screen's brightness. "The brighter the screen, the more battery power it uses," writes CNET.

If you want even more Android tips, check out Computerworld's **20 Advanced Tips for Android 15**. Here, you'll discover tips for Android 15 ranging from stopping nuisance notifications to using smarter sounds.

High-speed fiber optic cable internet provider Metronet is now under the umbrella of wireless phone provider T-Mobile. In July, the F.C.C. approved a T-Mobile bid to acquire Metronet. It's part of a joint venture with investment firm KRR. Metronet serves two million subscribers, including in Kentucky, those in Lexington, Nicholasville, Wilmore, Versailles, Midway, Richmond, Berea, and Paint Lick.

Ads often make us want to say "enough is enough." Some naysayers say there are too many ads and too few creative ones. But a

new ad for Apple Intelligence on an iPhone 16 has gotten traction and shows how "Apple's tech impresses everyone but Garrett the Cat and his loyal owner," writes Adweek.

Windows 11 has finally taken over Windows 10, declares TechPowerUp. The site writes, "A new king has been crowned. As of July 2025, data from StatCounter shows that Windows 11 now runs on 51.77% of all Windows PCs, overtaking Windows 10's 45.02% share for the first time.

Google is launching *Web Guide*, a way of using AI to "make it easier to find information and web pages," according to a Google blog. Web Guide may be a glimpse into the future as more of us start using AI, rather than search engines, to ask the internet for help. Web Guide is still experimental, but it might show the way to the future as artificial intelligence matures and is more widely used by average Internet searchers.

9to5Mac claims "this upcoming iOS feature will make spam phone calls an issue of the past." The latest version of the iPhone operating system called iOS 26 will offer call screening. "When an unknown phone call arises, your iPhone will no longer ring to you directly," writes 9to5Mac. The iPhone will answer the call and ask the caller for identity and reason for the call. Some folks have become so tired of spam phone calls, they've given up using a phone.

Truecaller reports Americans receive, on average, 3.3 billion junk phone calls every *month* in the last 12 months alone. The site says Americans wasted an estimated 260 million hours answering spam phone calls. ❖

UPGRADING WINDOWS 10 TO WINDOWS 11

By Jim Hillier
Dave's Computer Tricks, August 2025
www.davescomputertips.com

#1 Make Sure Software Is Up-To-Date
Chances are, some of your software was installed quite some time ago and has not since been updated. So, it is possible that it might not be compatible with Windows 11. The upgrade process will identify and remove any incompatible software. Updating to the latest version of software will pretty much ensure it is Windows 11 compatible, thus eliminating the necessity to reinstall.

#2 Disable Antivirus
This upgrade involves manipulating system files, so the antivirus software might view it as a threat and block the process. Turning off your antivirus software will ensure that the process is not blocked or interrupted.

#3 Disconnect Any USB Drives
Leaving USB flash drives or external drives connected during the upgrade process may cause issues. Disconnect them before initiating the upgrade.

#4 Connect Laptop To Main Power
This upgrade will take some time to complete. If you're upgrading on a laptop, you don't want the battery to die before the upgrade is complete. Any interruption to the process could prove to be disastrous.

#5 Backup Everything
Make sure to back up all personal data and, also create a system image backup.

The above steps are precautionary. There is every chance that the upgrade will complete successfully without them. Following these steps should ensure a successful upgrade.

It is better to take these steps beforehand rather than end up with a failed upgrade. ❖

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.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

My wife told me to take the spider out instead of killing him...

So we went out. Had a few Drinks. Nice guy! He is a Web designer…

From: *jokes@smtp1.wittycats.com*

I SAY ALL THESE HIGH-TECH SOLUTIONS ARE ONLY GOING TO LEAD TO ONE CERTAIN OUTCOME.

WHAT?

HIGH-TECH PROBLEMS!
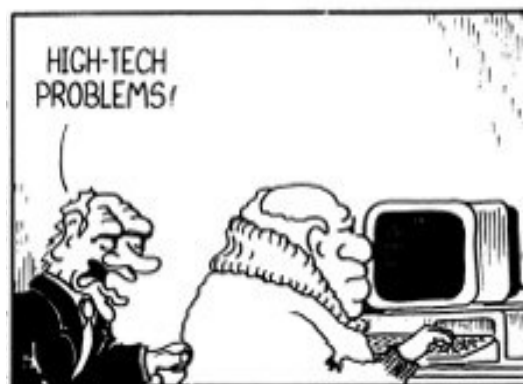
From: *The Rochester Computer Society, inc.*

DISCLAIMER

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. The Los Angeles Computer Society (LACS) does not endorse, sponsor, or represent any manufacturer, product, dealer, consultant, or business. LACS became a California nonprofit 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 dues will be prorated quarterly.

Check # _____   # **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
NOTE: This address is changing before the end of September 2025.

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?

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Web site: https://www.lacspc.org

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, please let Leah Clark know.

Please try to arrive at least a few minutes before the meeting's start-time to allow for a Zoom update, and to solve any technical problems. This is so you don't delay or interrupt the meeting.

If you need to take a break during a meeting, do not click on Leave or End, so the meeting will not be interrupted when you re-enter. You may turn off your video when you are eating or are gone.