

User Friendly

Volume 43 Issue 11

November 2025

LACS

**A Computer and
Technology User Group**

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LACS WEBSITE

For information about LACS,
go to <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, NOVEMBER 11, 2025 GENERAL MEETING

Topic: Artificial Intelligence (AI):

Fun and Useful Tips

Speaker: Chris Taylor, APCUG Speaker

Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools have exploded over the last few years. They can supercharge your web searches and help you find the most relevant information; generate images and videos from text prompts; summarize web pages, YouTube videos, and PDF files; help you accomplish tasks in your programs; assist with creative writing; and more. Chris Taylor, President of the Ottawa PC Users' Group, will show you how easily it can be done and how to avoid dreaded "AI hallucinations." And you can do it all for free.

Chris Taylor worked for the Canadian Federal Government for over 36 years in user and server support, IT architecture, and IT security. He has been active in community user groups for over 45 years. He co-hosts the 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.



TO JOIN A LACS GENERAL MEETING

LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to meetings two days before the meeting. Click on it to enter.

Guests may ask for the link two days before at
leahjc@sbcglobal.net

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT/EDITOR



The Los Angeles Computer Society is grateful for every byte of fun, every click of friendship, and every spark of curiosity you bring to our group. May your holiday be free of bugs, full of bandwidth, and overflowing with joy (and pie)!

Happy Thanksgiving to all LACS members, their families, and their friends.

LACS BOARD NOMINEE, 2026

HOWARD KRIVOY
DIRECTOR



LACS has greatly enhanced my computer experience. Serving as director from 2021 to 2023 was an opportunity to give something back.

I spent several years writing advertising for JBL speakers and other audio products. I wrote on a typewriter. Remember typewriters? Next came outside sales to auto mechanics and car dealers.

My hobbies include square dancing and target shooting. I played trumpet and trombone in a marching band. I enjoy jazz, Dixieland, ragtime, and Sousa marches. I like science fiction.

My first computer was a DOS laptop. I came to LACS for advice when I had to purchase or return it. Everyone said, "Send it back." So, here I am.

Serving a new term would be an honor.

Please see the bios and pictures of the other candidates in the October issue of *User Friendly*.

It is not too late to put your hat in the ring! We still need candidates for secretary and one directorship.

We are planning the LACS Holiday Party to be in January. This will give us a chance to celebrate 2025 and to look forward to a great New Year when things aren't so hectic. Please watch *User Friendly* and your email for details, date, and time.

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

October 14, 2025

Topic: Butt, Neck, Eyes.

Surviving Screen Time

Speaker: Judy Taylour,
APCUG Speaker,

Wednesday Workshop Coordinator, and
member of the Santa Clarita Tech Club.



The meeting opened with a discussion on the need to nominate a permanent LACS board secretary. Judy Taylour commented that the AI Summary can be very helpful for generating minutes, requiring only a little editing.

Leah reported that Truxton's Restaurant is booked up from Thanksgiving to Christmas. She asked for suggestions for a venue for our holiday party.

Judy discussed the importance of maintaining good posture while using technology to prevent health issues like "tech neck" and glute atrophy. She shared personal experiences and tips for setting up ergonomic workspaces, including using a chair with lumbar support, adjusting screen heights, and taking regular breaks. A member also mentioned the benefits of yoga.

Judy provided detailed ergonomic advice, emphasizing proper posture, chair adjustments, and the use of ergonomic equipment like armrests, mouse pads, and wrist rests. She advised customizing software settings to use a single-click instead of a double-click. Jeff Marcus shared that programming a thumb button on his mouse to double-click had significantly reduced wrist strain. Judy also recommended computer glasses, exercises like using exercise bands during breaks, doorway pectoral

muscle stretches and tennis ball massages to prevent repetitive strain injuries.

Dead Butt Syndrome results from prolonged sitting, causing aching hips, weakness or numbness in the glutes, stiffness, poor posture and balance, lower back pain, or sciatica-like symptoms. When glutes go untrained, they lose shape, which affects posture, balance, and mobility. Stand and move every 20-30 minutes.

Computer Neck Syndrome is caused by prolonged poor posture while using electronic devices. It is caused by tilting the head down, jutting it forward to view screens, and prolonged screen time. The symptoms include neck, back, and shoulder pain; headaches; reduced mobility; stiffness; tingling or numbness; rounded shoulders; and a hunched upper back. Keep screens at eye level, take frequent breaks, and incorporate aerobic activity.

Tech or Computer Back Issues: Prolonged sitting reduces spinal mobility and compresses discs. Chairs without lumbar support or screens placed too low strain the back. Keep shoulders relaxed, head level, and feet flat on the floor.

Mouse or Computer Shoulder Syndrome is a common issue caused by poor ergonomics, repetitive movements, and static posture while working at a desk. Reaching for the mouse can keep the shoulders in an unsupported position. Judy recommended a chair with arms for support and keeping the mouse close to the keyboard. Do stretches and exercises.

Computer Vision Syndrome: Judy discussed computer vision syndrome and its symptoms, emphasizing the importance of customizing devices to reduce eye strain. She shared tips for improving ergonomics and eye health, including adjusting screen settings, taking breaks, and using computer glasses. Don't forget to blink to prevent

dry eye. Blue light exposure can disrupt sleep cycles. Judy also highlighted the importance of regular eye checkups. Small text or high contrast, and glare force the eyes to work harder.

Every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

The discussion concluded with Judy encouraging attendees to be curious about technology and to keep learning.

Windows 10 End of Life

The group discussed the end of life for Windows 10, with Judy sharing insights from Leo Notenboom that users should not be overly concerned. People continue to use Windows versions like XP and 7. Judy emphasized that Windows Defender will still receive updates until 2028. While some users may prefer alternative security programs, Microsoft's security offerings remain competitive. Be sure to practice safe computing.

The discussion concluded with Judy expressing frustration about unnecessary changes in Windows 11's interface., particularly the relocation of essential settings that make it harder for users to find familiar features. It seems more key-strokes are needed to do anything. Judy wonders why they've taken a lot of the control panel away. Leah wonders why Microsoft Publisher was retired.

Judy shared her experience in teaching computer skills to her grandchildren. She highlighted how much children can absorb technical knowledge through hands-on Learning. ❖



TERMINOLOGY MATTERS

Because Accuracy Matters

by [Leo A. Notenboom](#), April 2024

<https://askleo.com/terminology-matters/>



When it comes to technology, it seems like there's a whole new language to learn. Using the correct terminology is essential for being understood and resolving your problems.

Computers and technology, much like medicine, automobiles, and many more disciplines, have their own set of words, buzzwords, and terminology.

And just like when you go to the doctor or take your car to a mechanic, it's essential to clearly communicate what you want them to look at.

The more accurately you use terminology, the more likely you'll get the correct and desired outcome. Using correct terminology improves your odds of accurate assistance and problem-solving. Misusing terms can lead to wrong answers and even judgments about your abilities. Learning and applying the right vocabulary is key to getting the help you want.

It's Like Another Language

I hear from people all the time that it seems like you need to learn a whole other language to communicate about the technology you use. That's not far from the truth, and it can seem overwhelming.

If you're just *using* technology and never need to interact with a technician or anyone else about it, it doesn't matter what you call things.

The problems arrive when you're trying to communicate with technical professionals such as myself. This is especially true when asking for help or guidance. We need to know what you're talking about in order to give you the help you're asking for.

Judgment

In an advertisement for a vocabulary program many years ago, the catchphrase they used was: *"People judge you by the words you use."*

It's absolutely not fair. But it is very, very true.

People judge you by the words you use, and when you use the wrong words, not only is there a high possibility of miscommunication, but there's also an assumption that you're not very knowledgeable.

Just because you might use the wrong word for something doesn't mean you don't know what you're talking about. You probably do. You know precisely what you mean and what you're trying to communicate. But the person you're talking to may have a different way of saying things; using different terms to distinguish between things is a necessity.

When asking questions or seeking help, it's essential to communicate clearly.

Examples

Here are some examples that may or may not seem obvious to you, but trust me, they're not obvious to the people using them.

There's no such thing as a labtop. It's a laptop. It was originally thought of as something you would use on your lap when you

were sitting down. Ironically, it's one of the worst ways to use it; ventilation is often obstructed. There are many ways you could come to the wrong conclusion. It's easy to hear "labtop" and infer that the word comes from being used in the laboratory. That's not at all the case. This might be benign in the long run, but at a minimum, it might cause the recipient to make unfortunate assumptions about your abilities.

Image from
Canva.com



This is not a CPU. This box is a computer. It contains a CPU, among other things. A CPU, or Central Processing Unit, is a specific chip inside that box that is the

"brain" of the computer. If you say you're having problems with your "CPU" when, in fact, you mean your computer, the answers you get could be very, very wrong.

RAM/Memory and disk space are two very different things. If you say you run out of "[memory](#)" when you're actually running out of disk space, none of the answers I might propose will help you, because I'll be answering the wrong question.

Your screen is not your computer. Unless you have an all-in-one computer or perhaps a laptop, your screen/display/monitor is a separate device connected to your computer with a cable. Even in laptops, the screen is generally completely separate from the actual computer, connected only by a hinge and hidden cables.

The list goes on: Window? [Dialog box](#)? Menu? Pane? Pointer? Cursor? [Clip-board](#)? There are so many terms.

Does it matter? Well, yes and no.

Sometimes the person you're asking might be able to guess right. Yay! No harm done.

But often they won't. They'll assume you understand the terms you're using and take you at your word. Results, as they say, can then become "unpredictable."

What's the Difference Between a Clone and an Image? The difference between a clone and an image boils down to what they contain: everything, or absolutely everything.

Sometimes It's Us

For the most part, terms mean what terms mean. To the professionals who live and breathe this stuff, there's a well-defined use of terminology.

Except when there isn't.

Take, for example, two words close to my heart: *image* and *clone*. In the context of backing up, they are two different things. However, some professionals use *clone* to mean *image*, and some use *image* to mean *clone*. Sigh.

Industry Shame

It's shameful, but many technicians and support personnel judge you by the words you use. They may not be as forthcoming or as helpful if, from their perspective, you don't understand the right words.

It shouldn't be that way, but I'm here to tell you that it often is that way.

Over the past twenty-plus years, I've learned a lot about which terms people tend to use and misuse. I'm often able to interpret questions correctly — to understand what was meant as opposed to what was written.

That "translation" is something I have to keep in mind, and often is something that slows me down as I'm reading the questions that people submit.

I'm happy to do it. But I hate to say it: not everyone's like me, and, of course, I'm not the only person you'll ever ask for help.

Do This

I strongly encourage you to invest the time to learn the vocabulary of computers and technology. Try to understand what those terms mean and use them properly. You won't always get it right, but trust me, the attempt is appreciated. Be prepared for some (hopefully gentle) corrections. Accept and try to learn from those.

I do have a [glossary](#); I encourage you to browse. If there's a term missing, just [let me know](#).

One of my goals is to write about technology and explain things in terms you can understand. One place I do that is in my weekly newsletter. [Subscribe to Confident Computing](#)! Less frustration and more confidence, solutions, answers, and tips in your inbox every week. ❖

Editors note: Your browser can tell you the meaning of a word or phrase. Write "define _____" in the search box.

LIFESPAN OF VARIOUS DIGITAL RECORDING MEDIA

By **Joel Ewing**

President, Bella Vista Computer Club

Bits & Bytes, March 2025

<https://bvcomputerclub.org>

president (at) bvcomputerclub.org

Floppy Disk

Sometimes the media was bad even when new. Claimed lifespan is 3 to 5 years, although maybe 10 years under ideal storage conditions. Life may be shorter if heavily used because read/write heads physically contact the recording surface and rub oxide off the surface causing physical damage over time.

CD and DVD

Unrecorded (blank) CDs and DVDs have 5 to 10 years of shelf life! Life expectancy of recorded CDs and DVDs may be as short as 2 to 5 years or could be as long as 10 to 25 years depending on the media quality and conditions under which they are stored. Improper handling can scratch the surface and destroy data. Use of inappropriate markers or adhesive labels on a DVD can also render data unreadable.

Hard Disk Drives

It is reasonable to expect a HDD that is heavily used to last 3 - 5 years. Moving mechanical parts will eventually fail. I have also seen lightly used HDD drives that have lasted as long as 10 years, but usually by that time they are obsolete for other reasons. There are reports that under ideal storage conditions a hard drive can be stored for 20 years and still retain its data. Magnetic signals tend to deteriorate with time and can also be affected by

temperatures over 90° F or by exposure to other magnetic fields. Exposure to excessive humidity can corrode internal components and shorten the HDD life.

Flash Storage (Thumb Drives)

These devices are typically designed to last 3 to 5 years based on "normal" usage, although some manufacturers offer much longer warranties, even up to a lifetime warranty. Every write or erase cycle shortens the device life by a little bit, but these devices can be designed for durability and longevity if you are willing to pay more. Storage at elevated temperatures also shortens their life. I've used maybe 25 different thumb drives over the last 25 years, but most of them are lightly used. One is still working after over 20 years. One has completely failed, and that was one I was given that had an unknown history.

Solid State Drives (SSDs)

These are faster and more durable than thumb drives (which also contain solid-state storage). Like thumb drives, write and erase cycles eventually will wear out the device, but current SSDs are designed to spread the wear more uniformly across the physical storage. For that logic to work well, some recommend you should always leave 10% to 30% of the SSD storage space unused. The Operating System or a user may write data repeatedly in the same logical sectors of the SSD, but internally the SSD will store the data in different physical memory locations to distribute the wear across all parts of its storage. Most SSDs can last over 5 years and the most durable units over 10 years

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LACS INFORMATION

HOW TO JOIN LACS' MAIL LIST

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

New LACS members will receive an invitation from Groups.IO to join this list with two weeks to accept. Other LACS members may join the list by sending an email to Larry McDavid, Groups.IO Manager. See the roster for contact information. They will receive an invitation to join. Contact Larry with any questions about joining.

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.

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 knows 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*.

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 mail it to Los Angeles Computer Society
6201 W. 87th St. # 4095
Los Angeles, CA 90045

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 and indexes of *User Friendly* at <https://www.lacspc.org>.

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LACS CALENDAR

NOVEMBER



LACS Board Meeting

Monday, November 3

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting

Tuesday, November 11

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

November 2: Daylight Saving Time Ends

November 3: LACS Board Meeting

November 4: Election Day

November 11: LACS General Meeting

November 11: Veterans Day

November 27: Thanksgiving Day



**Thank you,
Veterans**

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

November 11: Chris Taylor
Artificial Intelligence (AI):
Fun and Useful Tips

December: No board or general
meeting

January 24: Holiday Party,
tentative date

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

ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

LACS members who are on our PC email list and guests 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 problems.**

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

You can put an icon to the link to a meeting 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**.

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MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone or during the hours listed below. Please select a topic from the list below 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, email Leah Clark at the address below. 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, to make corrections, or to ask questions, please email Leah Clark at leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net

Android Smartphones	Mozilla Firefox	Photoshop Elements - 2
Apple devices – 7	MS Excel - 5, 7, 8	Quicken - 5, 8
Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5	MS Word - 1, 5, 8	Thunderbird - 4
Genealogy – 5	MS Outlook - 1, 5	Utilities - 4, 5
Groups.IO – 9	MS PowerPoint – 5, 7	Windows – 4, 5
Hardware – 4	PDF 5 - 8	WordPerfect - 5
Lotus Word Pro, Approach – 4		Zoom – 2, 6

Preferred Time for Phone Calls			
Number	Name	From	To
1	Loling Beckman	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Leah Clark	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
4	Jim Mc Knight	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Stephanie Nordlinger	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
6	Mark Presky	Any	Any
7	Paula Van Berkom	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Joan Wilder	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
9	Larry McDavid	Contact by email	

Note: Times are Pacific times.

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OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND LEADERS

POSITION	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2025
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2025
Acting Secretary	Stephanie Nordlinger	2025
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2025
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Barton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkon	2026
Director	Open	2026
Director	Open	2026
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.io Manager	Larry McDavid	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity	Mark Presky	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkon	

Lacs Mailing Address: 6201 W. 87th St. # 4095, Los Angeles, CA 90045

LACS Website: <https://www.lacspc.org>

Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member, or other member. **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 electronically to anyone. Be sure to keep it where you can easily find it when you need it. If you don't have the roster, please contact Leah Clark at < leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net >.

10 CHEAP TECH ACCESSORIES YOU CAN NEVER HAVE ENOUGH OF

How-To Geek, August 2025

By **Tim Brookes**

While we're in favor of curbing overconsumption, having a few spare, frequently used accessories on hand is never a bad thing. They're cheap enough to give away if you don't find a use for them, and they can save you a trip to the store when you're trying to get a project done. Here are ten things you should consider adding to your cart the next time you're checking out.

USB-C Converters



USB-C converters take a Type-A USB connector and convert it into a modern Type-C connector. They're perfect if you have a MacBook or similar laptop that's dropped support for the old Type-A standard but still want to connect old hard drives and peripherals like optical drives or MIDI controllers. They also let you get more life out of old charging cables, keeping them out of landfill for a few years.

The problem is that these converters are tiny, and they have a habit of going missing. Whether you leave them on an old hard drive that you never plug in or they've fallen to the bottom of the drawer, it's often worth adding a pack to an existing order when you're checking out. Just make sure that you pay attention to the speed rating. Ideally, you want [USB 3.0 USB-C converters](#), if you're using them to transfer data.

Flash Storage

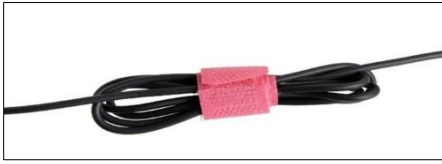


When was the last time you plugged a USB flash drive into your computer? Despite the whole world going cloud storage mad, USB drives still have a place. I use them every time I need to print something at my local office supply store, since emailing documents to the store often fails completely (and I don't own a printer). You can pick them up relatively cheaply, and many even come with USB-C

connectors (or both) for maximum compatibility.

On top of this, it never hurts to have a few memory cards around, too. I have a small collection of SD, microSD, and CompactFlash cards to choose from if ever I need to hack a Nintendo Wii or use an old digital camera.

Cable Organizers



If it feels like cables are the bane of your life, you have my sympathy. They're a necessary evil, and it's not likely that they're going away any time soon. The best you can do is manage the problem, we've got two full guides about

[managing messy cables around the home](#) and [organizing the cables that live on your desk](#).

[Spiral cable wraps](#) are perfect for binding cables together into a single cluster as a long-term solution. If you find yourself often adding devices and looking for a way to keep unwrapped cables tidy, you might want to invest in some [adhesive cable clips](#) or alternatively some of [LTTStore's magnetic cable management arches](#). For a permanent run, try cable staples instead.

Failing this, never underestimate the power of zip ties. You should already have some around the house, but it never hurts to keep a pack in the garage, your car, and the home office, too

Extension Leads and Power Boards



I've made peace with the fact that I can never find a spare power board or extension lead when I need it. My existing boards are full of plugs, and my leads are absurdly long for the small run I require. I'm making an effort to change that by stocking up on decent power banks and a few smaller extensions.

Having a power board that's too small means sacrificing devices when it's time to add something else. Sure, I'm probably not going to use my original Nintendo Switch a lot now that I have a Switch 2, but it would be nice to keep the dock powered up just in case.

One overlooked factor when it comes to power banks is color. White power boards and cables can stick out like a sore thumb if you have wood floors or dark furniture, so I'm only buying black ones from now on. I'm also never buying a power board that doesn't include surge protection. If you really fancy an upgrade, consider a smart power board like the [Kasa HS300](#), which offers six outlets that can be individually controlled.

Portable Power Banks



I have two 10,000mAh rugged power banks that I picked up more than half a decade ago. That capacity has probably greatly diminished by now, but they've been incredibly useful. The only problem is that they're big and heavy, which makes them fine for packing in a hiking backpack and terrible for carrying in your pocket.

On top of this, I don't have any form of reliable backup power that could keep my internet connection alive during an outage or run a fridge, like [something from the Anker SOLIX range](#). If the city I live in floods (and it does, regularly), I could be without power for up to a week while the transformers are replaced. I should probably have a plan for that.

Not having a [clip-on MagSafe charger](#) like the [Anker 633 MagGo](#) (\$60) for my iPhone seems like a missed opportunity. This is one of the easiest ways to expand your device's battery life, and they can be peeled off to shed the weight when you no longer need them.

Microfiber Cloths



Microfiber cloths are very good at cleaning because they have lots of small fibers that can capture and dislodge dust and debris. They're lint-free, which means they won't leave things behind, and they're great at lifting oily residue like fingerprint grease. You can wash them and reuse them, but eventually you'll want to replace them as you would any other.

In fact, they're so good at sucking up particles that it can be hard to get them clean again once you've used them. For that reason, you should always have a few new ones to hand for especially tough cleaning jobs.

Thankfully, they're cheap and have way more uses beyond cleaning gadgets like smartphones or your laptop's screen. For sensitive surfaces like displays, it's a good idea not to use microfiber cloths with deep grooves since debris can become lodged within them and cause scratches. Instead, use a shallower polishing cloth like the ones you'd get with a pair of glasses.

AirTags and Other Item Finders



AirTags might not immediately fit the description of "cheap" considering Apple is asking \$30 apiece, but this drops to just under \$25 when you buy a \$99 four-pack. On top of this, these item finders are routinely sold for even less at other retailers, with Amazon listing them at \$23 each or \$70 for a four-pack at the time of writing.

Though [AirTags aren't your only choice](#), they're arguably the best of the bunch, especially if you have an iPhone. They integrate with your device's Find My app and support precision finding, which can turn locating your missing items into a simple game or "hot or cold."



HDMI Cables



Though everything that needs one comes with an HDMI cable, I somehow never seem to have enough. This is especially true given the advent of HDMI 2.1, which requires cables that can handle the higher 48Gbps throughput necessary for a 4K HDR signal at 120Hz. They're [great for traveling](#) too, especially if you have a laptop with you and want to stream your own content or play games on the hotel's TV.

The good news is that you don't have to spend very much money at all on an HDMI cable. The [best HDMI cables are cheap](#), from budget brands like [Cable Matters](#) (\$10). If you do decide to spend a bit more, make sure it's on a durable cable with braiding and other features that warrant the added expense, like the [Zeskit Maya Certified HDMI 2.1 cable](#) (\$15).

Isopropyl Alcohol (Wipes)



Isopropyl alcohol isn't just a great thing to keep in your first aid box; it's a solid all-around cleaning solution. It's great for sanitizing your devices without causing damage, and can even dislodge residue left by stickers or clean up sugary spills from inside gaming controllers. It's one of the first things you should try to fix analog stick drift if your controller starts acting up.

Smart Plugs



Smart plugs are cheap enough that you can stock up on them and keep a few handy whenever you find a use for them. They're a great way to turn existing "dumb" electronics like lights and dehumidifiers into smart devices, and they're probably [the most cost-effective smart home upgrade you can make](#).

There are plenty of cheap models out there to choose from, like the [IKEA Tretakt](#) (\$10), or you can splurge on a fancier model like the [Kasa Smart Plug HD103P2](#) which includes energy monitoring. Pair your smart plugs with an inexpensive Home Assistant setup so that you can run all sorts of automations, like turning lights on at the right time of day or getting an alert when your washing machine stops using power (to indicate your washing is done). ❖



HOW DO I DOWNLOAD ALL ONEDRIVE FILES TO MY PC?

There are a couple of ways.

By **Leo A. Notenboom**, April 2024

<https://newsletter.askleo.com>

Downloading all your OneDrive files isn't particularly difficult; it's just not particularly obvious. I'll show you two ways to do it. OneDrive is confusing to many people. It can be difficult to understand where your files are at any point in time on your PC or online. Some folks want to download everything. They may want to quit OneDrive or just make sure all OneDrive files are included in their backups. Depending on your situation, there are a couple of approaches.

The disk to which you're downloading must have enough room for all your files. I know this sounds obvious, but OneDrive includes several features that make it look like all the files in your OneDrive are present on your machine, just not taking up space. You might think you have enough room, but you might not. To see how much space your entire OneDrive is taking, visit OneDrive.com online, sign in to your account, and click the gear icon in the upper right. Then click on Settings. Click on Manage storage on the left (if it's not opened by default).

Check the number under "Total used". Your hard disk must have at least one-tenth of a gigabyte of space available to be able to download all your OneDrive data. Using the OneDrive app, the OneDrive app on your PC will download all of your OneDrive files if configured properly. Click on the app icon in the notification area. Then click on the gear icon in the resulting pop-up and click on Settings.

Ensure that "Make All Files Available" is checked. OneDrive can hide certain folders and files from your PC.

Another approach is to download all your files from OneDrive.com online yourself. This is a fine option if you don't have the OneDrive app running or want to download in segments because you don't have enough room on your hard disk. Begin by visiting OneDrive.com in your browser and signing in to your account. Make sure that *Files* is selected on the left. OneDrive.com often defaults to views that don't include all of your files or show them in the folder structure you've set up. *Files*, or *My Files* gives you access to all of your OneDrive files and folders.

Scroll down to view *My Files*. This will display all top-level folders and files stored in your OneDrive and your Personal Vault.

If you right-click on an empty folder, no download option appears, as there's nothing to download. If you download a folder containing subfolders and files, the contents of that entire folder will be downloaded as a single zip file. If you download an individual file, it's a simple file download like any other. Sadly, it appears your personal vault cannot be downloaded as a folder, but you can click on it to see its contents and then download the contents the same way as above.

Multi-selecting: If you have multiple top-level folders, it's tempting to select them all in order to create a single download of everything. Unfortunately, it appears that either the Download link will not appear or attempts to use it will silently fail. I'm hoping this is a bug that will be resolved in the future. Fortunately, within folders, multi-select works fine.

Click on the empty circle in front of each file or folder you want to download (or click where it should be since the circles are hidden until at least one is selected). Right-click on any of the selected items and click

Download. A zip file containing all the selected items will be downloaded.

Where to download? There's one thing I want to caution you about. If you're running the OneDrive app on your PC and you're downloading files manually from OneDrive.com online, be careful where you place your downloads.

Specifically, do not download them to the OneDrive folder on your PC. That's the job of the OneDrive app. It will notice that you've placed a file into your PC's OneDrive folder and then dutifully uploaded it to OneDrive. That's typically not what you're looking for if you're doing a manual download.

If you manually download something from OneDrive.com, place it in a folder outside of your PC's OneDrive folder. Sadly, because of OneDrive's horrific "backup" feature, that does not include your Documents folder or any of the default Windows folders. I recommend you create a new folder somewhere on your machine (e.g. C:\Users\<username>\MyLocalFiles) and download your OneDrive files there.

Of course, if you're manually downloading directly to an external drive, as is one of the common intents for this question, you'll avoid this problem.

Do this

Personally, I rely on the first approach, which uses the OneDrive app. I have Files On-Demand turned off and all folders visible. The app ensures that the OneDrive folder on my machine always contains all of the 568 gigabytes of files I have in OneDrive. If you have the disk space, I recommend this approach so that the files

stored in OneDrive are automatically backed up by your image backup. If, you need to download from OneDrive.com directly, that's now an option as well. ❖

Lifespan of Various Digital Recording Media

Continued from page 7

Many SSDs have a wear indicator that counts down from 100% to 0%, which shows how much longer they can be used. One recommendation is that an SSD should be replaced once its media life remaining is less than 10%. Some SSDs may be better at retaining data in storage than others. An SSD should be able to retain data without power in storage for a minimum of 2 to 5 years, while some SSD manufacturers claim retention for 15 - 20 years without power.

What This Means if Indefinite Archival is Required

Since all media has some finite lifetime, and in some cases the drives that can access a particular media may become increasingly difficult to find, no archive media can last forever. This means either the old archived data must be copied from the old media to new media, or new backups must be made to new media before the old backup media has reached end-of-life.

This is one of the current limitations of digital archival, in that current record media can only be dependably stored for decades at best. Contrast that with archival of printed documents on high-quality paper that can be expected to survive in readable form for centuries if properly stored. ❖

Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

November 2025

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 [Discounts & Special Offers For User Groups – APCUG](#) for discounts and special offers for members of User Groups on books, media, and training sites, including these:

- **Pearson Technology** websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.

[InformIT: The Trusted Technology Source for IT Pros and Developers](#)

The code for print books is **ITCOMMUNITY**, and the code for eBooks is **DIGITALCOMMUNITY**

- See books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theater at [Routledge Focal Press](#). They offer discounts to User Group members.

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

From *HowTo Geek.com*



"To save money, we sold all our new computers and bought computers from the 80s. Get ready to be frustrated."

1. Our club newsletter is like an old computer — every issue takes a little longer to load!
2. My laptop's battery is like my motivation: starts strong, fades quickly, and needs frequent recharging.
3. The Zoom meeting froze — but no one noticed because we were all only pretending to listen anyway.

From *Chat GPT*

TECH LIFE UNITY (TechBoomers)

<https://www.techlifeunity.com>

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

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. LACS became a California non-profit corporation on July 17, 1991. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

November 2025

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 address as regular members; 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.

Benefits of LACS Membership

Monthly meetings with presentations via Zoom.

Monthly Newsletter, *User Friendly* —

Your article submissions and free ads to sell your computer items

Free help by email or phone — See page 10.

Group mailing list to contact or ask questions of all members at PC@LACS.Groups.IO

Important news and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's mail list.

Webinars, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information free from APCUG, an International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

Annual Holiday Party

Social interaction with others who have interests in computers and technology

In-person luncheons at a restaurant

Renewals are due in January. New members' dues will be prorated quarterly.

Check # _____ New or Renewal Membership Application.

Date _____ Dues may be paid by Zelle, PayPal, or check. If paying by check, make it out to "Los Angeles Computer Society" and mail it with this form to **6201 W. 87th St., # 4095, Los Angeles, CA 90045**

Please Print Clearly ☐ **New** ☐ **Renewal**

☐ New/Renewal with printed newsletter - \$40 ☐ Associate - \$12 ☐ Student - \$18

☐ New/Renewal with electronic, no paper newsletter - \$30 ☐ Gift membership - \$20

☐ Contributor - \$50 ☐ Supporter - \$75 ☐ Benefactor - \$100 ☐ Other

Name: First _____ Last _____

Name of Associate: First _____ Last _____

City, State, Zip + 4 _____

Email Address: _____ Email of Associate _____

Preferred Phone: _____ Publish Contact Info in the roster ☐ Yes ☐ No

Emergency Contact: Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____

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

Los Angeles Computer Society Newsletter

First Class Mail

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<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, let Leah Clark know at leahjc@sbcglobal.net.

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 when you re-enter. You may turn off your video while you are gone.