

# User Friendly

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## TUESDAY, JULY 14, 2026 GENERAL MEETING

**Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM - via Zoom**  
**Socializing, Questions & Answers: 6:30-7:00**

**Topic: Discovering Your Family History**

**Speaker: Susan Mueller**, Genealogist, teacher,  
and APCUG Speakers' Bureau member.

Susan Mueller's talk is for both beginners who want to explore their family history and those who have started the journey. This session is about process and research with a focus on your own family. You gather records and pictures, and interview family members. Software? Online tree? Find more names, locations, facts, and stories. Learn how to avoid mistakes.

She will introduce a variety of free online sources and talk briefly about DNA and social media. She emphasizes budget-friendly family research, including free internet databases, library archives, public records, and social media tracing tools. You will also understand this popular hobby.

**Susan Mueller** is a prominent genealogy educator and researcher, best known for her signature presentation, "The Frugal Genealogist." While she frequently presents to national computer user groups and genealogical societies—including library systems in Florida—her primary base is in Pennsylvania. She is a longtime educator for the [Erie Society for Genealogical Research](#) (ESGR) and its Special Interest Group (SIG) as well as for a local public library.



### 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

<http://www.apcug2.org>  
[www.facebook.com/APCUG](http://www.facebook.com/APCUG)  
[www.X.com/apcug](http://www.X.com/apcug) (Twitter)



### 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 at least two days before at Leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net.

### FROM YOUR PRESIDENT/EDITOR

#### TECH TRIVIA QUIZ

by ChatGPT

1. What does **CPU** stand for?
2. What year was the first **Apple iPhone** released?
3. What does Wi-Fi stand for?
4. Who founded Microsoft?
5. What does **RAM** stand for?
6. What does “www” stand for?
7. What company created the first commercially successful personal computer?
8. What does **USB** stand for?
9. Which programming language is named after a comedy group?
10. What was the name of the first widely used web browser?
11. What symbol is called an “octothorpe”?
12. How many bits are in a byte?
13. What was the first computer “bug” actually found to be?
14. Which company created the **Pong** video game?
15. What does **GIF** stand for?

#### LACS MEMBERSHIP ROSTER

A new roster was inserted in the center of the June 2026 issue of User Friendly, which was mailed to all LACS members.

**Please be sure to keep it, as it will never be available online for security reasons.** Only LACS members will have access to it. It may be removed from the center of the issue to file or to scan and save in a folder on your computer.

#### RAFFLE PRIZES

Some APCUG user groups give raffle prizes to meeting attendees in the form of gift cards. Would LACS members be interested in doing this? Would it increase attendance at the general meetings? Let me know what you think.

#### TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. Central Processing Unit
2. 2007
3. IT doesn't officially stand for anything. It's a brand name.
4. Bill Gates and Paul Allen
5. Random Access Memory
6. World Wide Web
7. IBM in 1981
8. Universal Serial Bus
9. Python (named for Monty Python)
10. Mosaic
11. #
12. 8
13. A moth
14. Atari
15. Graphics Interchange Format

### JUNE GENERAL MEETING REPORT

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

**Topic:** The AI Toolbox

**Speaker:** Hewie Poplock, APCUG

June 9, 2026

**Hewie Poplock** is a retired teacher, business owner, IT manager, and long-time technology educator. Hewie has been active in computer user groups since 1982. He presented a video about the Sarasota Technology Users Group (STUGS)



Hewie demonstrated various new AI tools and applications. AI has become a practical tool to use every day. These tools write emails, summarize articles, organize information, create images, teach new skills, plan vacations, and serve as personal assistants. Hewie showed many tools that he finds useful, including a chart of the top 50 AI products.

Hewie leads an AI discussion group on the fourth Friday of each month. Contact him at [hewie \(at\) hewie.net](mailto:hewie@hewie.net) for the link to this forum, which is open to all. And he does “Tech for Seniors” every Monday, 9:00- 10:00 AM PT at <https://www.techforsenior.com>.

LACS members and guests will find additional sources of Hewie’s work in the meeting recording; the link was sent to them by email.

Hewie demonstrated examples of ways he uses AI with these sources. See the examples and the links to these tools in the video recording.

- **NoteGPT:** for free YouTube Video Summaries.
- **Google NotebookLM:** an AI Research tool and thinking partner.
- **Gamma.App:** AI design for presentations, websites, and more.
- **Gemini AI (now called Magica):** AI assistant with over 3,200 AI Tools

Hewie showed some ways he has fun with AI. Members warned that time goes fast when using AI!

There was a question about those who use AI in nefarious ways. Hewie is in the process of preparing a presentation on this. You do have to be careful. Stick to reputable tools and use websites others recommend. Check for accuracy and sources before putting anything from AI online.

AI can be a valuable tool when used carefully. You don’t have to know a lot about AI, but don’t be totally left out.

At the end of the meeting, there was discussion on printers and ink choices.

Much of the presentation used videos to illustrate what Hewie was explaining. There was no way I could cover everything in a written report. You really need to look at the video and the AI summary. ❖

### BACKING UP GMAIL MESSAGES

By **Alan German**

Ottawa PC Users’ Group (OPCUG)

[alan.german \(at\) opcug.ca](mailto:alan.german@opcug.ca)

April 2026



A Gmail account can be accessed using a web browser (webmail) or by using an Email client such as Thunderbird. Both systems allow Gmail messages to be saved to local disk as a backup.

I like to use the Thunderbird email client since this allows me to access multiple accounts, including Gmail, on both my computer and smartphone.

On Gmail’s server, I use IMAP (Internet Message Access Protocol) to store my messages efficiently in different folders. Thunderbird reflects the folder structure on the mail server, using local disk folders

to store downloaded copies of the email messages. This effectively creates an off-line backup of the entire message base.

The individual mail folders (*Inbox*, *Sent*, etc.) are stored on my hard disk as files and sub-folders of `D:/thunderbird`. Each mail file uses the mbox format, in which all components of multiple individual messages are concatenated into a single text file. This includes the email headers, the message text, and MIME (Multipurpose Internet Mail Extensions) encoding of any attached files for each message in any given mail folder.

Email clients, such as Thunderbird, interpret the mbox file, provide a list of included messages, and, when a message is selected, display it to the user. Typically, this includes showing the sender (From) and recipient (To), the date, subject, the message text, and the availability of any attachments.

Since the mail files contain just text, they can also be read by any text editor; however, it is then up to the user to locate and view the specific material of interest from what is generally a large amount of loosely structured ASCII text.

I make regular backups of my entire data drive. This includes the Thunderbird folder, ensuring the retention of multiple backups of my current email messages. I also maintain archive folders of some older messages. In this respect, it is useful to understand how Thunderbird stores and processes messages for any given folder.

For example, I have a subfolder named *OPCUG* where I store messages I have received and sent about my computer club activities. Thunderbird uses two related

files to allow me to locate and read messages in this folder.

The file *OPCUG* (no extension) contains the actual messages, while a second file named *OPCUG.msf* provides Thunderbird with an index of the contents of the main message file. The msf file takes the form of a compact database of message elements such as senders, recipients, subjects, and dates that allow rapid processing and display of the message list for the folder without having to load the complete messages.

For the purposes of my mail archive, only the main message folder is required, so I retain the *OPCUG* file but discard the associated *OPCUG.msf* index file in the offline archive. If I were to restore the *OPCUG* folder in Thunderbird, the program would automatically create the index file. However, if I wish to simply locate and read a message from the *OPCUG* file, I can do so directly because, as noted earlier, its contents are just ASCII text. We will return to this technique shortly, as our second backup method also produces ASCII files.

The second method uses Google Takeout. This is a feature of a Google account that allows many types of data, including Email messages, to be downloaded and saved to a hard drive. The process is straightforward but involves multiple steps.

Let's start by logging in to our Google account and navigating to *Manage your Google Account > Data & Privacy > Download your data*. In the section labeled *Products*, click on *Deselect All*. Now, scroll down the list and check the box in the *Mail* section. If you only want to download one or more specific folders, click on the button labeled *All Mail data included* and, in the pop-up window, make sure that only those mail folders that you wish to

download are checked. For our current purposes, we will uncheck the box labeled *Include all messages in Mail*, then uncheck the boxes for Drafts and Sent, check only the box labeled *Inbox*, and press *OK*.

Having established the mail folder that we wish to download, we scroll to the end of the *Products* section and select the *Next step* button. Now, we can select the *Export once* radio button and leave the default file type and size as *.zip* and *2 GB*, respectively. In addition, do not change the default entry for *Send download link by email*, as this will allow us to download the message folder directly to the hard drive. Now press the *Create export* button.

On the next screen, we click the *Download* button and are prompted to verify our intent by entering our Google account password. A pop-up dialog box allows the selection of the storage location on our hard drive where the downloaded file is to be stored.

This process results in a file named (something like) *takeout-20251214T152823Z-3-001.zip* being saved to the hard drive. Unpacking the zip file produces a *Takeout* folder with a sub-folder named *Mail* that includes the file *Inbox.mbox*.

It is this latter file, obtained directly from our Gmail account, that contains the messages as ASCII text in much the same way as does the file *OPCUG* that came from the Thunderbird Email client. The next step is to inspect the contents of one of these text files and determine how to retrieve the information pertaining to a specific message.

**Figure 1** on page 6, shows the initial portion of the file *Inbox.mbox* displayed in the Notepad++ text editor. Note that the lines of text being displayed are all Email header information. In fact, the first 109 lines in the file consist solely of such headers. Of particular note in this respect is that the *From*, *To*, *Subject* and *Date* fields appear in Lines 86 through 90 respectively. The actual message text doesn't appear until Line 110. **Figure 2** (on page 6).

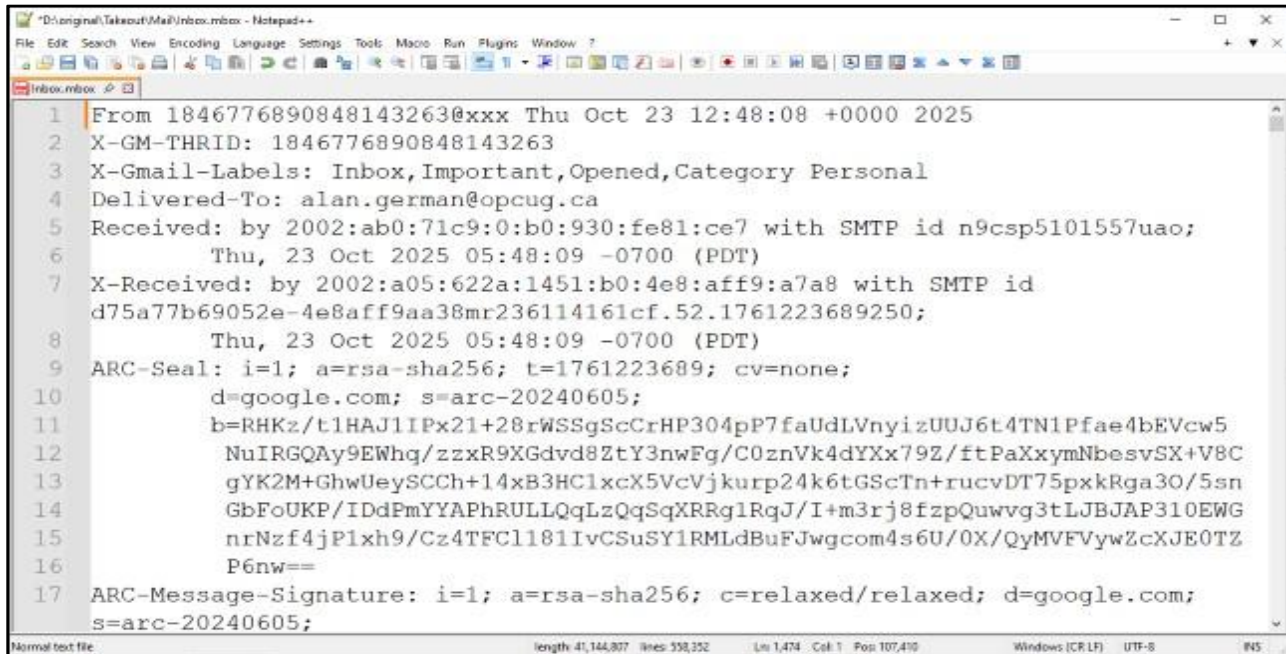
Clearly, with such vast amounts of ASCII text being used for a relatively short message, locating and reading the actual message text requires some understanding of the mbox file format. Individual messages always start with *From*, so this can be used as a search term, with *Match case* set in Notepad++, to quickly move through the file. However, this doesn't provide much useful information about the individual messages, so more efficient searching might well be achieved by using more specific terms such as *From: Chris Taylor* or *Subject: [Suggestion Box]*.

Although Google Takeout provides a way to download message folders, it does not include an option to reverse this process to restore the offline folder. Interestingly, one method to do this is to use Thunderbird as an IMAP client for Gmail. The required mail folder is implemented in Thunderbird as described above, and the folder is then synchronized to Gmail's server as part of the normal IMAP process when the mail server is accessed by the client.



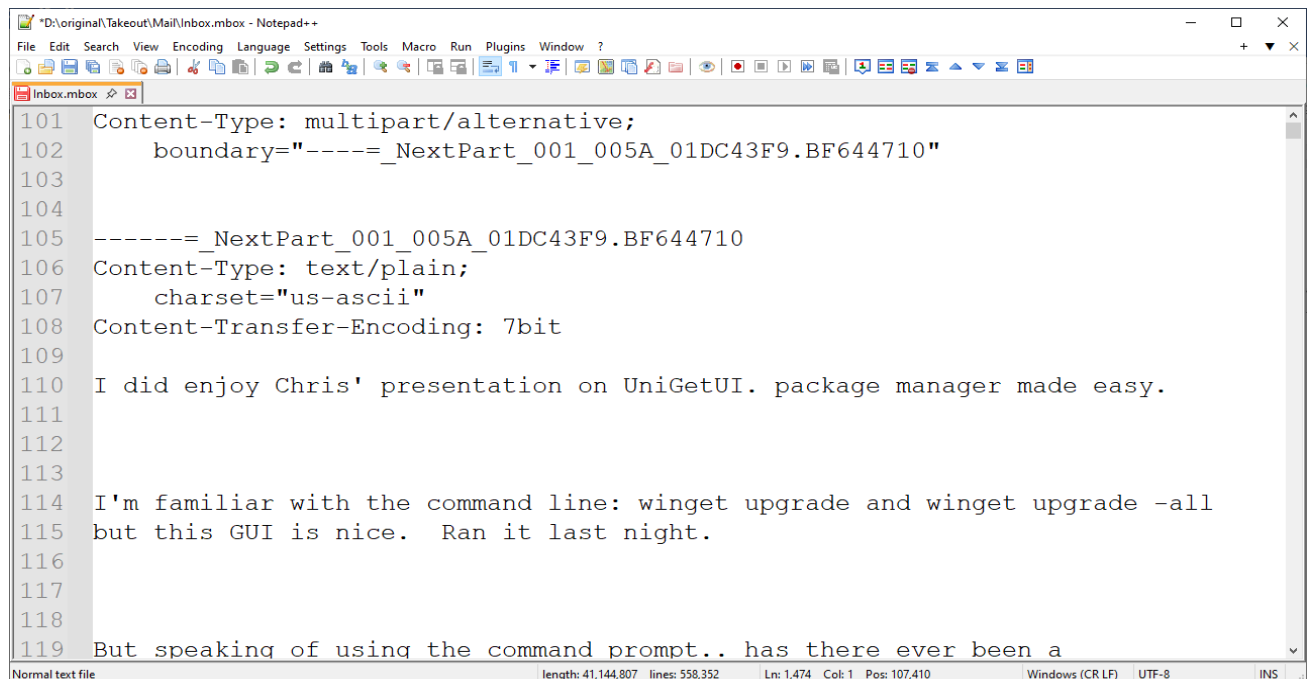
# Los Angeles Computer Society

## July 2026



```
1 From 1846776890848143263@xxx Thu Oct 23 12:48:08 +0000 2025
2 X-GM-THRID: 1846776890848143263
3 X-Gmail-Labels: Inbox,Important,Opened,Category Personal
4 Delivered-To: alan.german@opcug.ca
5 Received: by 2002:ab0:71c9:0:b0:930:fe81:ce7 with SMTP id n9csp5101557uao;
6 Thu, 23 Oct 2025 05:48:09 -0700 (PDT)
7 X-Received: by 2002:a05:622a:1451:b0:4e8:aff9:a7a8 with SMTP id
8 d75a77b69052e-4e8aff9aa38mr236114161cf.52.1761223689250;
9 Thu, 23 Oct 2025 05:48:09 -0700 (PDT)
10 ARC-Seal: i=1; a=rsa-sha256; t=1761223689; cv=none;
11 d=google.com; s=arc-20240605;
12 b=RHKz/t1HAJ1IPx21+28rWSSgScCrHP304pP7faUdLVnyizUUJ6t4TN1Pfae4bEVcw5
13 NuIRGQay9EWhq/zzxR9XGdvd8ZtY3nwFg/C0znVk4dYXx79Z/ftPaXxymNbesvSX+V8C
14 gYK2M+GhwUeySCCh+14xB3HClxcX5VcVjkurp24k6tGScTn+rucvDT75pxkRga30/5sn
15 GbFoUKP/IDdPmYYAPhRULLQqLzQqSqXRRg1RqJ/I+m3rj8fzpQuwvg3tLJBJAP310EWG
16 nrNzf4jPlxh9/Cz4TFCl181IvCSuSY1RMLdBuFJwgcom4s6U/0X/QyMVFVywZcXJE0TZ
17 P6nw==
18 ARC-Message-Signature: i=1; a=rsa-sha256; c=relaxed/relaxed; d=google.com;
19 s=arc-20240605;
```

Figure 1. The file "Inbox.mbox" displayed in Notepad++



```
101 Content-Type: multipart/alternative;
102 boundary="-----_NextPart_001_005A_01DC43F9.BF644710"
103
104
105 -----_NextPart_001_005A_01DC43F9.BF644710
106 Content-Type: text/plain;
107 charset="us-ascii"
108 Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
109
110 I did enjoy Chris' presentation on UniGetUI. package manager made easy.
111
112
113
114 I'm familiar with the command line: winget upgrade and winget upgrade -all
115 but this GUI is nice. Ran it last night.
116
117
118
119 But speaking of using the command prompt.. has there ever been a
```

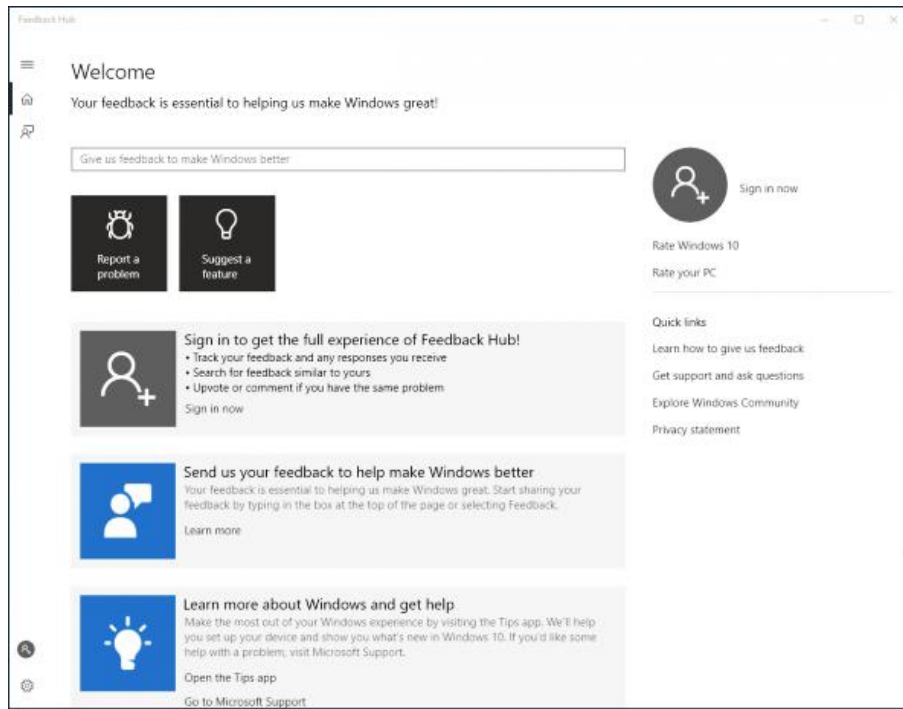
Figure 2. The start of the text for the first message in the file Inbox.mbox

### TIP OF THE DAY: TELL MICROSOFT WHAT YOU THINK

By Leo Notenboom

<https://AskLeo.com>

May 27, 2026



*The Feedback Hub. (Screenshot: askleo.com)*

In Windows 10 and 11, there's a utility called **Feedback Hub** that collects user feedback. This is the official way to get feedback to Microsoft. (If you don't find it, you can install it from the Microsoft Store). Use it to report your dissatisfaction with changes or to suggest new features

Naturally, there's a catch, and that catch is managing your expectations.

I'm sure Microsoft gets thousands upon thousands of feedback reports every day. It's unlikely that there's an individual, or even a team of individuals, whose job is to read every single one. I could be wrong, but I'd be shocked. I'm certain the responses are analyzed, trends are discerned, and those are then taken to the appropriate decision-makers within the company — Maybe.

In other words, just because you complain about something doesn't mean it's going to get fixed.

However, if thousands of people complain about that same thing, this is one way it gets attention. The decision(s) may still not be what you want, but they could be. Speaking up en masse through official channels is one way to make things known. I shouldn't have to say this, but I will anyway. One of the fastest ways to get your feedback ignored or discarded is to be rude and abusive. The people you want to see it will not, and it will not impact Microsoft's direction. ❖

# Los Angeles Computer Society

July 2026

## LACS INFORMATION

### HOW TO JOIN LACS' MAIL LIST

LACS has an active, general email list, [PC@LACS.Groups.IO](mailto: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](http://www.jimopi.net).

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

### 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 **lacomersociety@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](http://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](http://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. 87<sup>th</sup> 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 the link in the online version ([www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org)) 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>

### LACS CALENDAR

# JULY



#### LACS Board Meeting

**Monday, July 6**

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

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

#### LACS General Meeting

**Tuesday, July 14**

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

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

**July 4:** Independence Day



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

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

Go to [www.APCUG2.org](http://www.APCUG2.org). Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**.

#### UPCOMING MEETINGS

**July 14:** Discovering Your Family History

**August 11:** TBA

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

#### 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**.

# Los Angeles Computer Society

July 2026

## 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 — 5	Moxilla Firefox — 3, 7	Photoshop Elements — 2
Apple devices —7	MS Excel — 5, 7, 8	Quicken — 5
Anti-Malware and Backup —3, 5	MS Word —1, 5, 8	Thunderbird — 3
Genealogy — 5	MS Outlook —1, 5	Utilities — 3, 5
Groups.IO — 4	MS PowerPoint — 5 ,7	Windows — 3, 5
Hardware — 3	PDF— 5, 8	WordPerfect — 5
Lotus Word Pro, Approach — 3		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
3	Jim McKnight	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
4	Larry McDavid	Contact by email	
5	Stephanie Nordlinger	9:00 AM	9:00 PM
6	Mark Presky	Any	Any
7	Paula Van Berkomp	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Joan Wilder	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

**Note:** Times are Pacific Times

# Los Angeles Computer Society

July 2026

## OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, AND LEADERS

POSITION	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2026
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2026
Acting Secretary	Stephanie Nordlinger	2026
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2026
Director	Loling Beckman	2027
Director	Donna Barton	2027
Director	Howard Krivoy	2027
Director	Mark Presky	2027
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkon	2026
Director	<b>Open</b>	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. 87<sup>th</sup> 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 2026 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 >.

### HOW TO ACCESS YOUR HOME COMPUTER WHILE TRAVELING

By [Patrick Campanale](#),  
How-To Geek, June 2025



As you get ready to head out on your summer vacation, have you thought about setting up remote access on your desktop? If not, you should. Using remote desktop software is the best way to access your computer when you're traveling, and it's actually really easy to set up.

#### What's the Difference Between Remote Desktop and VPN?

You might have heard both the term [remote desktop protocol](#) and [virtual private network](#) (RDP and VPN) and thought they were the same thing. While similar, remote desktop and virtual private networks are vastly different.

**Remote Desktop Protocol** (RDP) allows you to control a computer from another computer remotely. This can be done over your home's local network or over an external network.

With a remote desktop client, you're essentially using your computer from another computer. You'll see your desktop, icons, files, and everything as if you're sitting in front of that computer.

On the other side, **Virtual Private Networks** are quite a bit different. With a VPN, you can access your home's network as if you were locally whenever you're remote. For instance, if you're on vacation and you want to access files on [your network-attached storage \(NAS\) at home](#), a VPN would allow you to do that.

A VPN connects you to your network, but not to a remote viewing session of your computer. Technically, you can use a VPN to access your network and then initiate a local remote desktop connection, but that's not ideal unless you have a very specific reason for doing it.

In short: use a virtual private network to access your home network and use remote desktop clients to control your computer remotely.

#### Choose the Remote Desktop App That Works for You.

Now that you know the difference between remote desktop and a VPN, what RDP client should you use?

There are quite a few out there. To name a few of the top ones, you have **TeamViewer**, **RustDesk**, and **Chrome Remote Desktop**. I chose these three to feature because they each have distinct pros and cons, and they all work on Windows, macOS, and Linux for remote access.

[TeamViewer](#) is extremely popular, easy to use, and works on all platforms. However, TeamViewer does have a commercial component to it, and if they detect that you're using it for commercial use, even if you're not, there will be incessant pop-ups trying to get you to pay for the service.

#### Why I Choose Chrome Remote Desktop

I've tried a lot of remote desktop apps over the years. I spent the better part of a decade using TeamViewer, I've tried SplashTop, and I also use RustDesk. There have also been times I've used LogMeIn, AnyDesk, RealVNC, GoToMyPC, Parsec, and many others.

Needless to say, I've tried many remote desktop apps. After all of that trial, however, I've settled on one as my primary for personal use: **Chrome Remote Desktop**.

I use Google Chrome, and my life happens on my Google account. I'm all in on the Google ecosystem for web use, even though I'm a die-hard Apple fan on the hardware side. Because of this, it's just natural for me to use Chrome Remote Desktop.

Chrome Remote Desktop works well for me because it's easy to use and set up on any of my computers. Installing it takes a minute or two, and I now have unattended access to that computer.

However, unlike most other remote desktop apps, I can access my computers without installing any software. Yes, I have to install software on my own computer to enable remote access, but I don't have to install anything on the computer I'm accessing from. I also have the option to use mobile apps on my iPhone, iPad, Android device, or even a Chromebook to remotely back into my Windows desktop.

If I'm visiting a friend's house and need to access my computer back home, I simply log into my Google account (using a passkey for extra security), click the computer I want to access in Chrome Remote Desktop, and that's all.

It's super simple, and I don't have to remember to remove any software from their computer when I'm done since it's all done through the web browser. I also don't have to remember any additional login information since it is all tied to my Google account.

### **How to Use Remote Desktop to Access Your Home Computer**

Every remote desktop software has a slightly different approach to set up, but all are pretty self-explanatory. But let's walk through the process of setting up remote access with Chrome Remote Desktop.

First, navigate to <https://remotedesktop.google.com/access>. This is the page you'll use to set up remote access and to access your remote computers in the future.

Once you log in to your Google account, you'll see an area at the bottom of the page labeled "Set up remote access." Click the download button in the bottom right of this card.

With the file downloaded, click Accept & Install. This will bring you to the downloaded file for you to run. Now run the installer and install it like you would any other program. Once you're finished, head back to the web page.

On the web page, you should now see a text box with your computer's name in it. Simply type the name you want your computer to be called, then click Next.

Next, you'll choose a PIN to log in to your computer. This PIN must be at least 6 characters long, but can be longer if you choose. You'll need to enter this PIN every time you want to log in. However, there is an option on login to have that computer remember the PIN so you don't have to enter it every time. Use this option only on your own personal computers for security purposes.

Once you enter the PIN, click Next, and some security pop-ups might appear. On macOS, you'll have to grant Chrome Remote Desktop a few security permissions so that it can do things like record and view your screen. Windows isn't quite as granular when it comes to security permissions, but just follow any pop-ups that come up.

After all that is done, you're ready to go! Now, you can visit the remote desktop access page from any computer with an internet connection, log into your Google account, and enter your PIN to access your system remotely.

This is a great tool to have before you head out of town, as it'll allow you to use your desktop at home as if you're sitting at it, even from thousands of miles away. ❖



*Computer on Vacation by ChatGPT*

### WHAT IS A NAS, AND DO YOU REALLY NEED ONE?

By [Patrick Campanale](#),  
How-To Geek, June 2025  
January 2026



Are you looking at buying a NAS, but have no idea what a NAS even is? A NAS can be many things, but here, I'll break down what a NAS is, what it isn't, and whether you actually even need one.

#### So what is a NAS?

The definition is way simpler than you might think.

You've probably seen the term NAS used quite often around here, but what exactly is it? NAS stands for **Network-Attached Storage**. Most often, "a NAS" refers to a network-attached storage server. This can be a single hard drive attached to your network, like the [Synology BeeStation](#), or a full-on enterprise appliance like I run in my homelab.

The simplest definition of a NAS is any type of storage that is accessible over the network. If you can access the storage without being directly connected to it over the network, then you're running a NAS.

#### How does a NAS differ from a USB HDD or SSD?

##### Network Access.

You might already have a few [USB HDDs](#) or SSDs lying around, and think, "How is a NAS any different from what I have?" This is actually a conversation I had with a childhood best friend recently. She's a wedding photographer and buys about 10 to 15TB of [USB SSDs](#) per year for her photography business.

A USB storage drive must be plugged into your computer to access it. You also have to worry about [bit rot](#) on the drives if they stay

unpowered long enough. While USB HDDs, and, more specifically, USB SSDs, are very convenient to take with you places, they're no replacement for a NAS. With a NAS, your data is accessible anywhere on your network without having to plug in a drive. For instance, in my free time, I do woodworking and laser engraving, and [I even run a YouTube channel](#) around it. There are times when I am in my workshop and want to work on editing a video. Because I keep all of my footage on [my NAS in the office](#), I can just remotely download the files from the NAS to my MacBook Pro in the shop and start working on my video.

When I'm done, I just push the files back to the NAS, and then they're no longer on my laptop. If I used a USB drive for this, I'd have to leave the shop, find the [USB drive](#), bring it to the shop, do the data transfers that way, and it's all just a headache. A NAS makes this experience much smoother.

A NAS also offers much more storage capacity than USB storage drives. My primary storage server has 60TB of storage, and it's nowhere close to maxed out. If I were to fill it with 24TB drives (which would cost a fortune, but is still possible), I'd have a total of 240TB of storage with two-drive redundancy, or 264TB with single-drive redundancy.

There's no single USB storage drive on earth, at least, available to consumers or known to this man, with that type of storage capacity. A NAS is simply the best solution if you need mass storage at your house, plain and simple.

#### Can't you just plug a HDD or SSD into your router?

Technically, yes.

So, you have a [8TB external hard drive](#) and want to [plug it into your Wi-Fi router](#) to make it network accessible, and therefore, a NAS? That's entirely fine, and yes, that does constitute as a NAS, but let me tell you why that's not always the best idea.

With a dedicated NAS server, like a Synology, QNAP, UGREEN, or any of the other brands, you have [built in redundancy](#). I just talked about that with my big 12-bay monster, but it applies with smaller 2-, 4-, or 6-bay NAS systems too.

Your hard drive or SSD that's plugged into your router *is* a NAS. It's *network attached storage*. However, if that drive fails, you have no backup. The data is gone.

With a dedicated NAS server, you can set it up so in that way you are redundant to one, two, or more drive failures. While this is *not* a backup, it is a plan that can help prevent data loss. The way RAID (or parity, depending on the system you use) works is by distributing data so that if a drive fails, the remaining drives can emulate the missing data until you can replace it.

This redundant functionality is what sets a NAS apart from a standard USB hard drive or SSD, and it's why a dedicated NAS appliance is better than just plugging a drive into your router.

However, are you tight on funds and all you have is a USB hard drive and a router with a USB port that handles file sharing? That's a great place to start! Down the road, you can migrate those files to a dedicated NAS and possibly even [shuck the hard drive](#) out of its shell to add it to the NAS array.

### **Do you really need a NAS?**

It really depends.

It's hard for me, a writer on the internet, to tell you if you actually need a NAS. My photographer friend spending \$2,500 per year on 10 to 15TB of external SSDs? Yes, she needs a NAS (and she's going to be buying one very soon). My friend who runs a small 3D printing and CNC manufacturing business, on the other hand, does *not* need a NAS, because his files are small enough that he just stores them in Google Drive.

A NAS is really only good if you have a lot of data to store. My NAS has 60TB of usable storage on it, with about 70% of that storage in-use right now. There's no possible way that I could have that much cloud storage for any reasonable amount of money. Plus, having it in the cloud wouldn't do me much good when I try to access it at home, if I had to wait for it all to download from the cloud instead of just move across my network.

So, do you need a NAS? It's going to come down to your own use cases. Do you need to store a lot of data at home with drive-failure redundancy and the ability to expand storage in the future? If so, then yes, you do need a NAS.

Do you just need a little more storage than your MacBook came with, but you don't need access to that storage anywhere on your network? If so, just get a portable SSD like the [Crucial X10](#).

A NAS is a great tool when you have a use for it, but it's a waste of money if it's going to sit largely unused in your setup. ❖

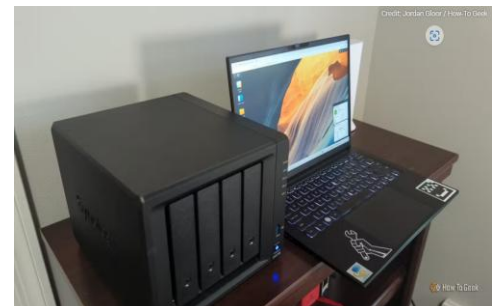


Image from How-To Geek

### KEEPING PROGRAMS UP TO DATE WITH UNIGETUI

by **Chris Taylor**, President  
Ottawa PC Users' Group  
Canada

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(at) opcug.ca



One of the pillars of computer security is keeping up to date on security patches. It is almost axiomatic to say all software contains security vulnerabilities. Vendors (hopefully) find the vulnerabilities and fix them before the attackers do. But you still have to get those patches installed on your computer. Microsoft has Windows Update and any apps installed through the Microsoft Store can auto update. Some programs, such as web browsers, do a good job of keeping themselves updated. Some programs provide a menu option such as Help > About > Check for updates. Some— WinRAR comes to mind—do a terrible job. In November 2023 a security vulnerability in WinRAR was discovered and patched. Unfortunately, WinRAR had no way to auto-update. It didn't even have a way to check for updates through a menu option. You had to manually update the program, assuming you even heard there was a security vulnerability! Each software vendor must engineer its own method of updating. In short, patch management in Windows is a mess.

Over the years, a number of programs have sprung up to tackle the problem. Update managers check the software installed on your computer to see if there is a newer version available. A few programs, known as vulnerability managers, check specifically for security vulnerabilities. I am most concerned about security vulnerabilities rather than updates for features, performance and the like.

I have used the (wonderful, but now defunct) Secunia Personal Software Inspector, Glarysoft Software Update, Patch My PC Home Updater, and SecTeer VulnDetect. All have been helpful, but none tracked all the software I have installed.

In May 2021, Microsoft released the Windows Package Manager (WinGet) as an open-source project. WinGet provides a way to install and update programs. As a command-line program, WinGet can be scripted and scheduled, enabling automatic updates of programs in the WinGet repository.

The concept of a software repository is so powerful that many software vendors started adding their programs to the WinGet repository, which now includes over 9,000 programs.

Unfortunately, many Windows users shy away from command-line utilities and scripting. So, while WinGet is a capable way to keep software up to date, it does not see much traction. In August 2022, Marti Climent tackled this problem by releasing the open-source project WinGetUI, a graphical user interface front end to WinGet. In 2024, it was renamed to UniGetUI when additional software repositories were added.

Browse to <https://www.marti-climent.com/unigetui/> to install UniGetUI. Several sources are available, but probably the easiest is the button pointing to the Microsoft Store. February 2026 Gigabyte Gazette 15 UniGetUI installs to the system tray, in the bottom right of the taskbar, near the clock. It will pop-up when there are programs on your computer with updates available. Don't be surprised if the first time it runs, it finds a huge number of updates!

Click the tray icon or Open UniGetUI in the pop-up to open the program. There is a lot of depth to UniGetUI, but the main areas are:

- update all selected by clicking the Update selection button.
- Ignore any updates by clicking ignore selected packages.
- In the left panel:
  - Discover Packages lets you search for other programs in the software repository and install them February 2026 Gigabyte Gazette 16.
  - Installed Packages lets you see all programs installed on your computer with version numbers and whether they are managed through UniGetUI. Any program with Source listed as Local PC, may not be updated by UniGetUI.
  - Settings has many configuration options for UniGetUI, including what software repositories are used. I recommend at least WinGet, but check if any others make sense for your situation. The frequency UniGetUI checks for updates (the default is every 10 minutes, so you might want to change this, whether you want updates to be applied automatically, and much more. Be sure to explore the capabilities.

I have had periodic failures updating some software through UniGetUI. Following the instruction to *Click Here* for more details never helped me decipher what went wrong nor solved the problem! Click the chevron to the right of Update selection and choose Interactive update, which usually allows the update to complete properly. If it still fails, I click *Ignore selected packages*, and then look to update the program through another means such as installing the latest version from the vendor's website.

Is UniGetUI a panacea? Not really. There are programs that are not in any software repository, especially commercial software. But with over 9,000 programs in the WinGet repository, there is a good chance most of the programs on your computer are covered. And it certainly helps; it is a very rare week that goes by without UniGetUI updating at least a couple of programs on my computers.

More details about UniGetUI can be found on Martí Climent's website at: <https://www.marticliment.com/unigetui/>.

I gave a presentation on UniGetUI at Q&A on October 22nd. I covered a lot more detail on how to use it. You can access the slides at: [https://opcug.ca/qa\\_recordings/20251022\\_PowerPoint.pdf](https://opcug.ca/qa_recordings/20251022_PowerPoint.pdf) and the audio track at: [https://opcug.ca/qa\\_recordings/20251022\\_Audio.mp3](https://opcug.ca/qa_recordings/20251022_Audio.mp3).

### Bottom Line

UniGetUI (free and open source)

Version 3.3.6

Martí Climent

<https://www.marticliment.com/unigetui/>

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# Los Angeles Computer Society

July 2026

## FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

Go to <https://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 / Que / Informit / Sams Program – 35% Discount**

Contact: [community@informit.com](mailto:community@informit.com)

Enroll in the program at <http://bit.ly/2dK4L> for well-known Pearson technology brands, including Addison-Wesley Professional, Cisco Press Exam Cram, IBM Press, Prentice Hall Professional, Que Publishing, and Sams Publishing.

- **Take Control Books – Apple and Windows eBooks**

Use the form at <https://apcug2.org/contact-us/> to request the discount code.

Subject – General

Body of form – Name of your computer club and discount code.

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## LAUGHING OUT LOUD



From ChatGPT



“I had a good day. For a little while, my computer and I were both functional at the same time.”

## 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

July 2026

## 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](mailto: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. 87<sup>th</sup> 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email of Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Publish Contact Info in the roster [ ] Yes [ ] No

To Contact in Case of an Emergency: 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

**First Class Mail**

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## **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](mailto: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 so 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.