

User Friendly

Volume 44 Issue 10

October 2026

LACS

A Computer and
Technology User Group

IN THIS ISSUE

From Your President/Editor	2
LACS Elections	2
General Meeting Report	3
Adding Sight to Sound	4
Nelko P21 Label Maker	5
20 One-Minute Tech Fixes	6
LACS Information	8
LACS Calendar	9
Attending a Zoom Meeting	9
Members Helping Members	10
Officers, Directors, and Leaders	11
Am I the Only One?	12
20 One-Minute Tech Fixes, Continued	15
Special Offers	18
Laughing Out Loud	18
Membership Information	19

LACS WEBSITE

For information about LACS,
go to <https://www.lacspc.org>

LACS IS A MEMBER OF APCUG
An International
Association of Technology
and Computer User Groups

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



Watch your email for APCUG
workshops and
other upcoming events.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2026 GENERAL MEETING

Meeting Time: 7:00 to 900 PM - via Zoom

Socializing, Questions & Answers: 6:30-7:00

Topic: Touring the Web, #18

Speaker: JB Burke, President

Prescott Arizona Computer Society

There's So Much to Do ... So Little Time!

How do Robots, Passports and Drive-in Theaters relate? They do not, except they are all in *Touring the Web #18*. Plus, how long should you keep your smartphone, how to tap Costco for cash for your old electronics, news sites you may like, free online games, necessary travel docs to take with you, and do Flock cameras see your car? What could happen to us from a 1000-year solar storm? How does your state rank? What does Mars look like (2 views)? How long should passwords be and much, much more.

Meet Our Presenter

JB Burke grew up in Chicago. He graduated from the Illinois Institute of Technology in 1963. He moved to Silicon Valley in 1968 and worked in the tech sector for 40 years. In 2004, he retired, and he and his wife moved to Prescott, Arizona. He joined the Prescott Computer Society and became its President and speaker. He provides tech support for friends and neighbors and dabbles in photography. He teaches tech classes for retired folks and is a Tech Committee member of Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Yavapai College. Otherwise, he is retired!



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

LACS ELECTIONS FOR 2026-2028 BOARD MEMBERS

The Los Angeles Computer Society needs members who are willing to help keep our organization active and successful by volunteering to serve as officers. We especially need someone to serve as secretary—a vital position that includes writing and keeping the board meeting minutes. The meeting recording can be helpful. Stephanie, our vice president and program chair, has also been acting secretary. It is not fair for one person to be doing so much. Please consider sharing your time and talents with LACS.

We also need members to be backups for our board members. We never know what might happen at any given time. Remember when I was suddenly in the hospital after a car accident! If I couldn't open a Zoom meeting, it would be good to have someone else who could. I also think it would be useful if each board officer had an assistant to learn what they do and to help them out occasionally.

We will take nominations at our October board and general meetings (You may nominate yourself) for the following available positions and publish them in the November issue of User Friendly. Each candidate will submit a headshot picture and a short bio of less than 100 words.

President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer—One-year terms for 2027
Three Directors—Two-year terms for 2027-2028

For information and questions about the duties for each position, please email Leah at leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net. Thank you for your help and consideration. We hope to hear from you.

*We need
YOU!*

DONATED WINDOWS 11 LAPTOPS AVAILABLE

We now have only two donated, slightly older Lenovo Windows 11 laptops available for those who can use them. Maybe this is the Win10-to-Win11 upgrade you've been putting off, or maybe you've been sharing your laptop with your significant other, and you're tired of sharing. Maybe you're still using a Win95 desktop, and it's just time to join the 21st century.

Jim has gone through all of them, and they are all functional. They are all Windows 11 Pro or Home, up to date, and ready for final customization. One is 15 inches in size, and one is 14 inches.

PROOFREADER

We are most grateful to **Sol Schumer** for volunteering as a proofreader for User Friendly. He is a member of the Under the Computer Hood user group in San Diego. Thank you, Sol.

Would anyone else like to be a proofreader? Please let Leah know.

Thank you!

HOLIDAY PARTY

We are planning for our Holiday Party to be in January, as it was last year. Please share your ideas for a location, date, and any activities. Let's make it special!

Los Angeles Computer Society

October 2026

SEPTEMBER GENERAL MEETING REPORT

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

Topic: Delete Request and Opt-Out Platform (DROP)

Speaker: **Marissa Rosemblat**
California Privacy Protection
Agency, www.cppa.ca.gov



Marissa introduced DROP.

Cal Privacy was established in 2020, and DROP in 2023, to protect consumer privacy and to ensure that consumers and businesses are informed about their rights and obligations. Cal Privacy is the only agency of its kind in the United States.

Personal information includes name, SSN, driver's license or state ID, email and location addresses, financial accounts, browsing and purchase history, and ethnic, citizenship, and immigration status. Businesses collect information to target ads, track spending habits, and sell it to other companies. A data broker collects and sells personal information that can be used for unethical purposes.

DROP: How It Works and How to Use It.

Enter the DROP website at
<http://privacy.ca.gov> – Click on **Get Started**

Step 1—Verify you're a California resident

Step 2—Create your profile

Step 3—Submit your request

Marissa explained each step in detail. See the recording – 2:55 to 55:20.

It takes an average of 8 minutes to complete a DROP request.

There were many questions and answers after this presentation. Again, see the recording.

What you enter: emailaddress@email.com

What you see in DROP: #####@#####m

What data brokers see: 1okUeTFxXZdmj0lr4Kn...

Topic: Best practices for Keeping Safe Online
Speaker: **Judy Taylour**, APCUG Speaker

Judy (58:40) reminded us that California offers more protection for citizens online than any other state. She asked how many of us



-Had created an IRS account

-How many have a Social Security account

-How many have frozen their credit with all three bureaus and pulled their credit report

-How many have gone to the L. A. County Tax Collector's site and signed up for email notifications.

It is most important to do these things so others can't access, alter anything, or pretend to be us. Do these things to protect yourselves.

Another thing you need to do is contact your bank and add someone else to your account in case you can't access it. You should also set a limit on each credit card account, so you are notified if a purchase is made over that amount.

If you tap your credit card instead of inserting it, no one can get your number. Or use a digital wallet.

You can easily renew your license plates, etc., online with the DMV.

A member recommended scanning information like car insurance information and your driver's license and saving it on your phone instead of keeping it in the glove compartment.

Your phone can automatically back up everything to the Cloud.

All LACS members and guests received links to the meeting recording and the AI summary. If you were a guest and didn't receive it, it's because I don't have your email address. Please email Leah Clark, and I will send them to you.

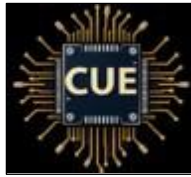
The numbers in the report indicate where to find that item in the recording. ❖

ADDING SIGHT TO SOUND

By Don Grim, Editor, Computer Users of Erie
CUE Newsletter, April 2026

<http://www.cuerie.com>

grimcyber (at) yahoo.com



In the 1970s or earlier, you listened to music without any visuals. Anything you happen to see while listening to music is in your mind, from your own dreams or imagination, and it's still a nifty visual because it matches what you interpreted from the music.

However, then came MTV in the early 1980s, and certain songs were expected to have a visual, a “music video” on TV, to try to help it become a hit.

Having a visual with a song (a music video) goes beyond lyrics and music. It can add even more magic to music! In some cases, it is nice to create your own music video so it matches your interpretation. Also, it's useful to include lyrics in a music video for viewers.

I had not designed a music video before, so I looked into it. I looked at Microsoft PowerPoint for Windows and Google Slides for a Chromebook, but I was not comfortable with either. With more time, I may have liked that better, but I tried other programs. I didn't want anything fancy, just a slideshow with a song playing in the background.

I tried NCH PhotoStage Slideshow Software, and it worked well for me. I used the free version for personal home use, which is available for Chromebook. A free version is available for Windows and Mac computers.

I didn't know much about making a music video, so I faked it and fumbled along.

Another term for that is “self-learning”.

In the past, that would involve a book, but now there is Google and AI to help answer

your questions as you learn.

I decided to create my first music video for the first song that I produced through AI, my “Back to Woodsfield” song. You can read how I created that song and hear the song at:

www.mathisapath.com/DonSunoSongs.html

My first music video for that song, using PhotoStage, was a flubbed failure! The video ran, but the screens looked bad and grainy, like they had weathered through a storm, and the song did not play in the video. So, I looked at it further and found it defaulted to a low screen resolution. I set it at a higher resolution. I had added the MP3 audio song at PhotoStage, but I had not yet slid it over to the work area at the bottom of the screen.

After these adjustments, I made a successful music video! The pictures were sharp rather than dull, and the song played in the background. So, in a nutshell, all I needed to create the music video was to add pictures and the song to the PhotoStage program, set the seconds for each picture to play on screen, and export it to an MP4 video file. I also saved the project. From there, I went to youtube.com and uploaded the MP4 file so the music video can be viewed by almost anyone at:

<https://youtu.be/2JBhLId-ur0>.

To find pictures, I used some of my own, and I also searched for royalty-free ones on Pixabay.com and Unsplash.com. I cropped some of the pictures to make them a little bit better to use. I could have edited the screens in PhotoStage, but I found it more comfortable to create each screen first as a page in Microsoft Word, including lyrics at the bottom of each page. I then saved the Word file as a PDF file.

Then I went to www.smallpdf.com, which allowed me to convert each page of the PDF to a JPG. You can do the same conversion at www.ilovepdf.com.

Those JPG files are the images I added to each screen in PhotoStage.

With hindsight, it probably would have been better to use landscape screens instead of portrait screens and to use a larger, more readable font for the lyrics.

It's nice to add your own selected pictures to a song, turning it into a music video of your choosing. It gives a whole new meaning to seeing what you hear and hearing what you see! ❖

NELKO P21 BLUETOOTH LABEL MAKER

BY **Bill James**

Bill's Gadgets, *Tech for Senior*
www.techforsenior.org



That little return-address label in the upper-left corner of an envelope may seem pretty ordinary, but its history has gone back more than a century—and today even this humble bit of postal technology has gone digital.

In the 1800s, businesses began printing their names and addresses in the upper-left corner of envelopes. Known as “corner cards,” these printed addresses served an important purpose: if a letter could not be delivered, the Post Office knew where to return it. Over time, the familiar envelope layout became standard—return address in the upper left, delivery address in the center, and postage in the upper right.

The system became even more standardized as the Postal Service moved toward automation. The introduction of the five-digit ZIP Code in 1963, along with two-letter state abbreviations, helped machines read and sort the growing mountain of American mail. Eventually, inexpensive sheets and

rolls of personalized adhesive return-address labels replaced the printed corner card for many households.

Today you don't even have to order personalized labels. A gadget such as the NELKO P21 Bluetooth Label Printer lets you design and print them yourself.

The P21 is a small rechargeable thermal printer that connects by Bluetooth to an iPhone or Android device through the NELKO app. Because it uses direct thermal printing, there are no ink cartridges, toner, or ribbons to replace. It prints at 203 dpi, supports different compatible label sizes, and can create reusable label designs from your smartphone.

Create your return address once in the app, save the design, and print another whenever you need one. A suitable label could contain:

JOHN DOE
123 MAIN ST
OKLAHOMA CITY, OK 73102

But return addresses are only one use. The P21 can also make labels for file folders, storage containers, cables, kitchen items, medications, hobby supplies and dozens of other things around the house or office. The printer is rechargeable by USB-C and compact enough to keep in a desk drawer or carry from room to room.

There is one limitation worth remembering: this is a small-label printer, not a replacement for a full-size shipping-label printer, and the printing itself is monochrome.

So, the return-address label has made quite a journey—from the ornate printed corner cards of the 1800s, to sheets of personalized labels, to a tiny Bluetooth printer controlled by a smartphone.

The Postal Service may have established where the return address belongs, but gadgets like the NELKO P21 show how even one of our oldest mailing traditions can get a decidedly modern makeover.



Gadget of the Week: **NELKO P21 Bluetooth Label Maker** — proof that sometimes the most useful technology is the technology that keeps the little things organized.

Available from Amazon:

<https://tinyurl.com/mt9mujus>

\$21.98 ❖

20 ONE-MINUTE TECH FIXES THAT ACTUALLY HELP

By **Cyn Mackley**

Cyn's Tech Tips

cynstechtips@cynmackley.com

These are **60-second fixes**— little things you can do to your PC, phone, or tablet right now that can free up storage, save battery life, improve performance, or make your technology less annoying.

You don't need to be a computer expert. You don't need to buy anything. And we're definitely not spending Saturday afternoon reorganizing 38,000 photos into folders labeled by year.

- Pick one. Spend a minute. Make something a little better.
- Feeling ambitious? Do two.
- Look at you, overachiever.

1. RESTART THE DARN THING

Let's begin with the oldest trick in the tech-support book. If your PC, phone, or tablet is acting weird, **restart it**.

- Don't turn off the screen.
- Don't close the laptop lid.
- Don't put it down for an hour and hope it uses that time to think about what it's done.
- Actually, restart it!

A restart clears temporary processes, can finish pending updates, and gives the operating system a fresh start.

- Does it fix everything?—No
- Does it fix a ridiculous number of things?—Yes

Your 60-second fix: Find the power controls and choose **Restart**

2. CLOSE SOME OF THOSE MANY BROWSER TABS

Look at the top of your browser. How many tabs are open?

- Five? Fine
- Twelve? Understandable
- Forty-seven? We need to talk.

Open tabs can consume memory, and some websites continue doing things in the background even when you're not looking at them.

Your 60-second fix: Close every tab you don't actually need.

And that article you've kept open for three weeks because you're definitely going to read it? You're not. Close it.

3. **DELETE ONE GIANT VIDEO**

Videos are storage hogs.

That 14-minute video you accidentally recorded inside your purse may be taking up a surprising amount of space.

Open your Photos or Gallery app and look through your videos.

Your 60-second fix: Find one large video you definitely don't need and delete it.

Bonus points if it's 11 minutes of the floor because you didn't realize the camera was running.

4. **EMPTY THE TRASH**

You deleted the files. Great.

Unfortunately, many devices don't remove them immediately.

Windows puts deleted files in the **Recycle Bin**. Phones and tablets often have **Trash** or **Recently Deleted** folders.

Until those are emptied, your unwanted files may still be taking up space.

Your 60-second fix: Empty the Recycle Bin or check your Photos/Gallery app for **Recently Deleted**. Just make sure there's nothing in there you actually want first.

Once it's really gone, it's really gone.

5. **FIRE ONE STARTUP APP**

Turn on your Windows PC and half the programs you've ever installed may immediately report for duty.

- Spotify is ready.
- Teams is ready.
- Some printer utility from 2019 is VERY ready.

You didn't ask for any of them.

On Windows, press **Ctrl + Shift + Esc** to open **Task Manager**; choose **Startup apps**.

Your 60-second fix: Find one program you recognize that doesn't need to start every time Windows does and disable its automatic startup.

- You're not uninstalling it.
- You're just telling it, "**I'll call you when I need you.**"
- Don't recognize something? Leave it alone.

6. **DELETE ONE APP YOU NEVER USE**

We all have them.

- The game you played twice.
- The restaurant app from a vacation three states away.
- The photo editor you downloaded, hated, and immediately replaced.

They're still there.

Your 60-second fix: Find one app or program you're absolutely certain you no longer use and uninstall it.

- One down.
- 63 questionable life choices to go.

7. **FIND OUT HOW FULL YOUR DEVICE REALLY IS**

A nearly full device can get cranky.

On Windows, go to:

Settings > System > Storage

On a phone or tablet, open **Settings** and search for **Storage**.

Your 60-second fix: Look at how much free space you actually have.

That's it. We're just gathering intelligence.

If you're nearly full, you now know where your next cleanup project needs to start.

Los Angeles Computer Society

October 2026

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 **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, 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 **Member Forms**, select the DOC or PDF form you need. Fill it out and email it with your changes to Leah Clark

at leahjc (at) sbcglobal.net 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 the link in the online version (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>

Los Angeles Computer Society

October 2026

LACS CALENDAR

October

LACS Board Meeting

Monday, October 5

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting

Tuesday, October 13

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

October 12: Indigenous Peoples' Day
October 31: Halloween



A cross stitched
gift from a Hopi
woman, about
1970



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

October 13: Touring the Web
JB Burke, APCUG

November: 10: 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

October 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	Mozilla 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	Zoom — 2, 6
Lotus Word Pro, Approach — 3		

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	9:00 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 Berkom	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	Joan Wilder	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

Note: Times are Pacific Times

Los Angeles Computer Society

October 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 Benton	2027
Director	Mark Presky	2027
Director	Jim McKnight	2026
Director	Paula Van Berkom	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 Berkom	

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

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

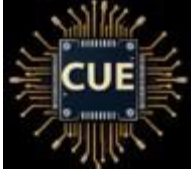
Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member, or other member. **Only LACS members may receive a roster.**

Please note: The 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.

AM I THE ONLY ONE?

By **Tom Kuklinski**

Webmaster at Computer Users of Erie
CUE Newsletter, April 2026
Grimcyber (at) yahoo.com



A few weeks ago, I looked at the chaotic mess that was my photo collection and declared, “Enough is enough.” After thirty years of digitizing, scanning, and hoarding memories like a digital squirrel, it was finally time to bring order to the madness.

Let me take you back to the Stone Age of storage. Once upon a time, I could fit my entire digital life on a single 1.44 MB floppy diskette and feel like a tech wizard. That was a glorious upgrade from the old 5.25-inch floppies that held a measly 360 KB. Soon I had a shoebox full of them, each one labeled in my terrible handwriting. Then technology smiled on us with CDs— 640 glorious megabytes! I thought I’d died and gone to heaven. DVDs came next, and suddenly I had space I didn’t even know what to do with.

Life was good. Then came the pocket digital camera, and I completely lost my mind.

No more scanning faded prints. Now I could capture every precious (and not-so-precious) moment in real time. I photographed everything—sunsets, sunrises, my lunch, my cat sleeping, my cat not sleeping, the weird stain on the ceiling that looked like Elvis. The quality was decent, the memories priceless. I told myself my future children would thank me for this digital treasure trove.

Fast-forward a few years, and the smartphone arrived like a glorious wrecking ball to the old way of doing things. One tiny device in my pocket started taking better pictures than my

fancy dedicated cameras. Photos, videos, burst mode, night mode—I was hooked. I fell headfirst into the trap, blissfully unaware of the monster I was creating.

About ten years ago, I sat down at my computer with noble intentions. “I will organize everything by date,” I declared. Hours turned into days. I proudly copied it all to an external hard drive and spent evenings happily scrolling through my life, showing friends and family like a proud grandpa with a new wallet full of pictures.

But I never stopped taking more photos. Of course not. Why would I?

Over the next decade, I became a backup evangelist. Google Photos, Amazon Photos, iCloud, OneDrive—I spread my memories across the cloud like a cautious investor diversifying a portfolio. Every few months, I’d promise myself I’d finally consolidate everything “when I had time.”

Then came the past several months, when I finally ran out of excuses.

I started by digging out boxes of old paper photos I’d inherited from my mom. I couldn’t throw them away—too many stories were hidden in those faded images. So I scanned for hours, days, even. Then I began the great download: pulling every photo from every cloud service and scattered drive I owned. My master plan was simple: dump it all onto one giant storage device, delete the duplicates, and organize it once and for all.

I figured I had maybe 30 gigabytes. Cute, right? Am I the Only One?

When everything finally landed in one place, the total came to 404 gigabytes. Four hundred and four. Mostly duplicates, of course, but still. My humble little collection had quietly grown into a digital beast.

Downloading that much data made my computer wheeze like an old man climbing stairs.

Windows slowed to a crawl. Errors popped up. But I pushed on, even putting off doing my taxes because “the photos come first.” (Uncle Sam can wait. My memories can’t.)

On a brighter note, I treated myself to two shiny new 2-terabyte USB thumb drives—bargain price from Amazon, brand name Dianww. I tested them first, copied some files, and everything looked perfect. I was ready for the final victory lap.

Day after day, I transferred files. Finally, the moment came: 404 GB safely tucked away on the drive. I leaned back in my chair, smiled like a proud parent, and thought, “It’s done. My life’s memories are secure.”

Then, because the universe has a wicked sense of humor, I found one more folder of photos I’d forgotten about.

I started copying them over. The transfer bar crept along... and crept... and crept. Then—bam—Windows threw up error 0x80070570: “The file or directory is corrupted and unreadable.”

My heart stopped.

I ran chkdsk. It chugged along for two full days. Two. Days!

When I researched the error, the truth hit me like a brick: those cheap “2 TB” USB drives sold online are often complete frauds. They’re usually only 8 GB or 64 GB in reality, with clever hacked firmware that lies to Windows and pretends they’re massive. You can copy files happily until you hit the real limit... then everything after that point turns into digital garbage.

I sat there staring at my screen, whispering, “Please don’t do this to me...” I’ll tell you how I fought back, what I discovered, and how (spoiler alert). I eventually gave this saga a very happy ending.

Let’s talk about the next big challenge: actually, organizing all those digital photos so they’re safe, easy to find, and not a complete headache.

Sounds simple, right? Yeah... it took me many weeks. Many days I did the work across a real mix of devices and operating systems because that’s my life: Windows 11 Pro, Linux Mint 22.2, an iPhone, and my Google Pixel 10 Pro XL. I used an old 10-year-old Toshiba 2TB external hard drive, a bunch of USB sticks (more on those later), and Firefox as my main browser.

My Favorite Phone App for Old Paper Photos

One tool that made a huge difference is an app called Photomyne (photomyne.com) on my Pixel smartphone. It’s fantastic. You point it at old, printed photos; it scans them, straightens them up, and even fixes crooked or sloppy shots into nice, clean digital versions.

You can colorize, crop, and tweak them right there. It also lets you store photos on their site if you want. The app is fast, surprisingly good, and available on both Android and iPhone. I highly recommend it if you have boxes of old family pictures lying around.

Where I Store My Photos

I had spread my collection across a few services:

- Google Photos (my main go-to)
- Amazon Photos
- I tried iCloud but bailed once I saw the paid storage price.
- Microsoft OneDrive used to be free-ish, but they tightened things up, and I didn’t like how they handled files, so I moved on.

Here's the quick reality check on free storage options:

- Amazon Photos: Unlimited full-resolution photos if you're an Amazon Prime member (videos use a small 5 GB allowance). This is a fantastic perk if you already have Prime.
- Google Photos: 15 GB free (shared with Gmail and Drive). Pretty generous for light users.
- Apple iCloud: 5 GB free — fills up fast.
- Microsoft OneDrive: 5 GB free now

I ended up buying a paid Google One Plan because it gave me plenty of room plus some nice extras.

Why Google Photos Won for Me

My household is a total mixed bag. My wife lives in the Apple world with her iPhone and iPad, while I bounce between Android, Windows, and Linux. I needed one service that worked smoothly everywhere without constant headaches. After testing everything, Google Photos came out on top for my setup.

Here's Why I Like It So Much

- It works beautifully on Android (native and seamless).
- The iPhone app is excellent too.
- On Windows and Linux, the web version (photos.google.com) is fast and powerful.
- The AI search is ridiculously good — you can type “beach photos with the kids in 2024,” and it actually finds them.
- Automatic face grouping, location tags, and “Memories” make browsing fun instead of frustrating.

For about 50 GB of photos, the 100 GB Google One plan is cheap and gives me breathing room.

The Runners-Up

- Microsoft OneDrive (through Microsoft 365) is a strong second if you live in Windows and use Office apps. It feels very native on a PC, but the organization tools aren't quite as smart as Google's.
- Apple iCloud is fantastic if you're all-in on Apple devices, but it feels clunky on Android, Windows, and especially Linux.
- Amazon Photos is great for unlimited storage if you're a Prime member, but the search and organization features are pretty basic compared to Google.

The USB Stick Disaster (Lesson Learned)

Oh, and about those “2TB” USB SSD sticks I bought... they turned out to be complete frauds. I tested them with two free Windows tools: H2testw (from h2testw.org) and Validrive (from grc.com/validrive). Both confirmed the sticks were lying about their capacity. Three of them went straight into the trash. Expensive lesson: cheap bottom-feeder deals can bite you.

So... Am I the Only One?

- I now keep my photos in three places for peace of mind.
- Google Photos for quick searching and easy access anywhere.
- Amazon Photos (thanks to my Prime membership)
- And on a real, trustworthy external hard drive ❖

20 One-minute Tech Fixes That Actually Help

Continued from page 7

8. **TURN OFF BLUETOOTH WHEN YOU DON'T NEED IT**

Bluetooth is great when you're using wireless headphones, a smartwatch, your car, or another connected device.

If you're not using any of those things, you may not need it running.

Your 60-second fix: Swipe down to your quick settings and turn off Bluetooth if you're not using it.

Just remember you'll need to turn it back on the next time you want your earbuds.

Otherwise, you'll spend five minutes wondering why technology has betrayed you.

9. **TURN DOWN THE BRIGHTNESS**

That beautiful glowing screen requires power.

If your phone or tablet is shining with the intensity of the surface of the sun, you're spending battery life on brightness you may not need.

Your 60-second fix: Pull down your quick settings and lower the screen brightness a little. You don't have to plunge yourself into darkness. Stop using your phone as a lighthouse.

10. **EVICT A BROWSER EXTENSION**

Browser extensions can be very useful.

They can also accumulate until you've forgotten what half of them do.

In Chrome or Edge, open the browser menu and look for **Extensions** or **Manage Extensions**.

Your 60-second fix: Remove one extension you recognize and no longer use. If you see something you don't recognize, don't immediately delete it. Find out what it is first.

But if you installed **SUPER AMAZING COUPON MASTER 3000** in 2022 and haven't used it since, perhaps it's time.

11. **SILENCE ONE ANNOYING APP**

Does every app on your phone really need permission to interrupt you? No.

- The weather app? Maybe.
- Messages? Probably.
- The app for the pizza place you ordered from once in Cleveland?
- It does not have breaking news.

Your 60-second fix: The next time an unwanted notification appears, use your phone's notification controls to silence or disable notifications from that app.

- One less beep.
- One less buzz.
- One tiny victory.

12. **CHECK FOR UPDATES**

You don't have to install a giant operating system update in 60 seconds.

We're just checking whether one is waiting.

On Windows:

Settings > Windows Update

On a phone or tablet, search **Settings** for **Software Update** or **System Update**.

Your 60-second fix: Check for available updates. If one is waiting, schedule a convenient time to install it.

If you've been clicking **Remind Me Later** since the Obama administration, perhaps today is the day.

13. DELETE FIVE SCREENSHOTS

Screenshots reproduce when nobody is looking.

- You take one to remember a confirmation number.
- One to send somebody a funny Facebook post.
- One because you can't believe what somebody just said.

Three years later, they're all still there.

Your 60-second fix: Open your screenshots and delete five you don't need.

- Don't organize them.
- Don't analyze them.
- Five. Delete. Done.

14. STOP AN APP FROM TRACKING YOUR LOCATION

Some apps genuinely need your location.

- Maps? Obviously.
- Weather? Makes sense.
- Your grocery store's coupon app?

Maybe it doesn't need to know where you are every waking moment.

Your 60-second fix: Open your device's privacy or location settings and look at which apps have location access. Find one that doesn't need constant access and change its permission. Don't randomly disable location for everything. We're making sensible choices, not disappearing into the wilderness.

15. DELETE FIVE THINGS FROM DOWNLOADS

The Downloads folder is where files go to be forgotten.

- Old PDFs.
- Program installers.

- Menus.
- Receipts.
- Five copies of the same document because every time you needed it, you downloaded it again.

Your 60-second fix: Open Downloads and delete five things you know you don't need. Just five. Tomorrow, if you're feeling wild, you can do five more.

16. KILL THE FROZEN APP

An app freezes. We click it again.

Nothing. We click harder, apparently believing the mouse can sense determination.

Still nothing.

On Windows, open **Task Manager** with **Ctrl + Shift + Esc**, select the frozen program, and choose **End task**.

On phones and tablets, open your recent apps and close the misbehaving one.

Then reopen it.

Your 60-second fix: Stop repeatedly poking the frozen program and give it a fresh start.

Anger is not currently a supported troubleshooting protocol.

17. TURN ON BATTERY SAVER

You're at 18%. No charger.

Three hours until you get home.

Windows PCs, Android devices, iPhones, and iPads all have battery-saving features designed for exactly this situation.

Your 60-second fix: Open your battery or Quick Settings and turn on **Battery Saver**, **Low Power Mode**, or your device's equivalent. It won't create electricity out of thin air.

But it can help stretch what you've got.

18. ***FIND THE APP EATING YOUR BATTERY***

Your battery is disappearing suspiciously fast. Instead of blaming the battery immediately, find out who's been eating lunch on your dime.

On your phone or tablet, open **Settings > Battery** and look at battery usage by app.

The exact wording varies by device.

Your 60-second fix: Look at the top battery users.

If an app you barely use is somehow consuming a huge chunk of your battery, you've found something worth investigating. Congratulations.

We have a suspect.

19. ***FORGET ONE TERRIBLE WI-FI NETWORK***

Your phone sees a familiar Wi-Fi network and connects automatically.

Wonderful!

Except the network barely works.

Now your phone technically has Wi-Fi while absolutely nothing loads.

Your 60-second fix: Open your Wi-Fi settings, select a network you no longer want your device to join, and choose Forget Automatically.

This is especially handy for old hotspots and public networks your device keeps desperately trying to resurrect.

Some relationships aren't worth saving.

20. ***BACK UP ONE THING YOU COULD NOT STAND TO LOSE***

We'll finish with the most important 60 seconds on this list.

Think of something on your computer, phone, or tablet that would make your stomach drop if it disappeared tomorrow.

- A family photo.
- An important document.
- Your contacts.
- A manuscript.
- A video of someone you love.

Now ask yourself:

Is there another copy somewhere?

If the answer is no, fix that.

Your 60-second fix: Copy one irreplaceable file to cloud storage, an external drive, or another device.

- Because hard drives fail.
- Phones break.
- Laptops get stolen.
- Coffee gets spilled.

And the absolute worst time to start thinking about backups is **five minutes after you needed one.**

20 MINUTES. 20 SMALL IMPROVEMENTS.

You certainly don't have to do all 20 at once.

That's the whole point.

Waiting until you have three free hours to "deal with the computer" is an excellent way to ensure that you will never, ever deal with the computer.

Instead, steal a minute while the coffee is brewing. Do one tiny thing.

Because when it comes to keeping technology running smoothly, **60 seconds of actually doing something beats six months of saying, "I really need to take care of that."**



Los Angeles Computer Society

October 2026

FOR HELPFUL TRICKS AND TRICKS

Go to <https://apcug2.org/> for many 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

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.

COPYRIGHT © 2026

by the Los Angeles Computer Society, a tax-exempt IRC Section 501(c)(3) non-profit California corporation. All rights reserved. *User Friendly* is published monthly. Subscriptions are included in membership dues. Reproduction of any material here by any means is expressly prohibited without written permission, except that other non-profit User Groups may reprint LACS articles in substantially unaltered form if credit is given to the author and this publication and an email is sent to LACS via its website, www.lacs.org, reporting the reprint user group and the name and date of the publication. Product and company names are trademarks of their respective owners.

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

LACS, A Spooktacular Computer Club

By ChatGPT

Why did the computer go trick-or-treating?
It wanted more **bytes**!

What is a computer's favorite Halloween treat?
Microchips!

Why was the computer afraid of the Internet?
There were too many creepy **websites**!

Why did the witch get a new computer?
Her old one had a bad **spell checker**!

Why did the skeleton avoid the computer?
He didn't have the **guts** to log in!

Why did the ghost join the computer club?
He wanted to improve his **web presence**!

This Halloween, remember to back up your files—or they may disappear without a trace.
Now that's scary!



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

October 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

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

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 _____

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

Editor.....	Leah Clark
Indexer.....	Leah Clark
Proofreaders.....	Jim McKnight, Stephanie Nordlinger, Sol Schumer, and Charlotte Semple

User Friendly is published by the
Los Angeles Computer Society
6201 W. 87th St. # 4095, Los Angeles, CA 90045

<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 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.