



# NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory  
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## MAIN MEETINGS

**West Side.....Tue, Sep 20**

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

**East Side.....Wed, Sep 21**

University of Advancing Technologies  
2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe  
(one block west of Fry's Electronics)

**Fountain Hills.....Thu, Sep 22**

Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,  
Fountain Hills

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Vice President: Allen Hunt  
Secretary: Chuck Lewis  
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### Steering Committee:

**Officers and Members who are present  
at the 6:00 P.M. West Side meeting.**

### Presentation this month:

**SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR  
LATEST INFORMATION  
WHEN AVAILABLE**

For date and time changes, check our  
website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

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## THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

## FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

September, what a month!

9-11, ten years ago. Jacqueline Kennedy's 8.5 hours of audio. Be sure to have your kids, grand kids Google these topics and talk about them in school. If anyone has a personal story about these items, please let us know what you remember. It might be interesting.

Recently, I have & will continue to help a friend whose wife passed on suddenly. I suggested he record his thoughts along with friends, family, etc. Like Mrs. Kennedy's comment on why she recorded her interviews and kept memorabilia, it was because he couldn't write his own, so she helped him. Similarly, I strongly suggest we record others important to our own lives.

I did that for my aunt in her last days, who grew up & worked on farms in Glendale, Az before AC - outhouses, snakes, scorpions, but mostly many good neighbors & friends. Not too many folks live on farms these days. Lots of hot days, dusty storms, tons of vegetables.

See Google "how to interview people oral history" or <http://tinyurl.com/3qqcwdb>

Club news - we need additional newsletter editorial help since Michael does not have as much time available for the newsletter as he previously did. Also we would like a few new board members or anyone to visit our board meetings. We plan to have one soon, maybe October? We will email and post this to our website. I hope we might visit UAT during the meeting for a campus tour. The University of Advancing Technology, [www.uat.edu](http://www.uat.edu). They do interesting stuff - like attending a hacker event.

Katie Gertz has scheduled an HP presentation on November 16, from [azacc.org](http://azacc.org), AZACC is the Arizona Association of Computer Clubs. It will be Wed. at UAT, our regular meeting. If ok, we will video for viewing at Ftn. Hills. It should be excellent.

Bill and I are looking for a great free PDF to Word converter, please let us know.

See you at the meetings, and always bring a friend!

Dave

## FROM YOUR EDITOR

We have become accustomed to a continuous stream of media reports of new electronic devices, some with genuine commercial interest, some with little hope of marketing success, i.e., doodads, gimmicks, and plain old "it does what?" inventions. But the announcement of Hewlett Packard's decision to sell their Personal Computer manufacturing facility was a surprise to the stock market and the investment community. The departure of HP from this market, along with the sale of IBM PC production to Chinese-owned Lenovo five years ago has left the market largely to the "assemblers" - Dell, Acer, and others. The reason given by the HP management was the same as that of IBM, i.e., HP business model will now be concentrated on software and business services.

Many business analysts take the view that the personal computer has now become a "commodity", a product for which there is a demand, yet there is no differentiation among producers. Although there will continue to be fluctuations in sales as a function of national economies, new product announcements, holiday sales, and so on, the capabilities of the current machines now readily available on the market have been upgraded to such an extent that they all perform well on the most used and most useful functions. It is only by specialty, such as: heavy online game players, digital movie buffs, and archivists, who will search for the one best instrument that fills their particular needs.

In a related business, some futurists believe that the same process will occur within the mobile telephone industry. As noted previously in this column, the most populous nations in the world, China and India, have leapfrogged the necessity for financing infrastructure capable of handling landline telephone by embracing wireless technology. Sales of cellular phones in those countries have passed the 800 million mark. Even in these countries more than half of the population possesses a cell phone. At the current rate, every adult and teen-ager in these countries will have their own phone within five years. Granted there is still a problem of compatibility between 2G, 3G, and 4G users, even as there is in North America and Europe, (as we are reminded *ad nauseum* by television commercials). The frenetic development of

(Continued on page 4)

## MEETINGS

# CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our  
website: [phoenixpcug.org](http://phoenixpcug.org)

## *PRESENTATION THIS MONTH*

**SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR  
LATEST INFORMATION  
WHEN AVAILABLE**

## *GENERAL MEETINGS*

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday, Sep 20, 2011
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 16)

**NOTICE** — IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THE AUDITORIUM WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE

**SEE OUR WEBSITE FOR ALTERNATE ROOM LOCATION  
WHEN AVAILABLE**

- Wednesday, Sep 21, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
- 

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)

- Thursday, Sep 22, 2011
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

## UPGRADE TO SOLID STATE DRIVES?

### Solid State Drives: Should You Upgrade?

By Bob Rankin

<http://askbobrankin.com>

Solid-state [drives](#) (SSDs) are the greatest thing in mass storage, we're told. Laptop users find the faster boot time and shock-resistance of SSDs especially appealing. (See my related article [Solid State Hard Drives](#) to learn more about SSD technology.) But before you upgrade your traditional hard drive to a SSD, there are some points you may want to consider. Since I do not know if you have a laptop or a desktop PC, I'll try to cover both scenarios.

On the downside, SSDs are still very expensive, on a per-gigabyte basis, compared to traditional [hard drives](#). A modest 240 GB SSD costs about \$300 right now. But a traditional 500 GB drive sells for around \$40. That makes solid state drives about 15 times more expensive. Available SSD capacities are relatively small, probably because larger ones would cost too much. A 1 Terabyte SSD (1000 GB) currently costs over \$3,000.

If you run [Windows XP](#), you won't get the best performance from a SSD. Vista and Windows 7 include a feature that helps you get the best from SSDs. So consider upgrading your operating [system](#) before buying an SSD.

The drive interface that your computer supports is also a factor. If you have an old computer with IDE or parallel ATA interface, it is not worthwhile to upgrade to SSD. The slow interface means you will not realize enough of the [SSD's](#) speed advantage to justify the investment. Make sure your computer supports a SATA drive connection before considering the purchase of an SSD.

The size of the drive matters, too. [Desktop](#) PCs typically have 3.5 inch drive bays, while laptops need 2.5 inch drives. Netbooks may use 2.5 or 1.8 inch drives. Adapters are available for loading a 2.5 inch drive into a 3.5 inch bay, but otherwise you need to match your SSD's size to the bay exactly.

#### Are SSDs Always Faster?

It's true that a system with an SSD will boot up a lot faster. But you may be surprised to learn that SSDs are not faster than traditional hard drives in all [applications](#). SSDs excel at short, random write operations, but long writes of large data files can be slower than even a 5400 rpm hard drive. Thus, an SSD is not the best choice if your work involves large files, such as [video](#) recording and editing.

Battery life is a significant advantage for SSDs on laptops. Because they have no moving parts, SSDs use far less power than traditional hard drives. You could get an extra couple of hours from a battery charge.

How long an SSD will last is still a matter of controversy. Nearly all consumer-class SSDs use MLC (multi-level cell) technology that stores more than one bit on each memory cell. That makes MLC SSDs much cheaper than the enterprise-class SLC (single-level cell) SSDs. But MLC can take far fewer write cycles than SLC before wearing out. A newer technology called eMLC makes MLC SSDs last three times longer.

SSDs make the most sense for laptop owners. The ruggedness and battery efficiency of SSDs are ideal for mobile computing. All computers will boot and shut down faster with SSD. For rapid writing of small data blocks, SSD cannot be beaten. But for working with large files, the performance of SSDs may not be worth the cost.

For desktops, the relatively new hybrid hard drives are appealing to me. These drives combine traditional magnetic spinning platter technology with solid state storage. See my related article [Hybrid Hard Drives](#) to learn more about this alternative.

Bottom line, I think SSDs are great for laptops, as long as you can justify the higher cost and reduced storage capacity. But for desktops, where storage appetites are generally larger, I'd say it's better to wait, because of two factors. The technology and reliability will certainly improve over time, and the cost will go down as manufacturing volumes increase.

### FROM YOUR EDITOR

*(Continued from page 2)*

the cell phone industry in these countries has been greatly benefited by the provider service low cost, typically one-half to one-fifth of the rate in the "rich" countries of the world. Maybe once everyone in Asia has a cell phone we can persuade their providers to come to the United States so that we can get relief from the inflated monthly prices of our current providers.

*Michael*

## ULTRA INTELLIGENT MACHINES

### Dick's Clicks

Dick Ramette, President, Computer Club of Green Valley, AZ

Summer 2011 issue, Green Bytes

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I'm still gob smacked by Time Magazine's Feb. 21 cover article, "2045 - The Year Man Becomes Immortal." Since these ideas have been around for a few years I'm surprised to be thus surprised.

Just imagine - according to this vision, in a few decades ultracomputers and human brains will be at one with each other. Our descendants will be able to live free of disease, in regenerated bodies of any desired condition, until they're ready to "log out." All this will follow explosive advances in GNR (genetics, nanotechnology and robotics).

If you missed this, you can read it online at:

<http://www.time.com/time/health/article/0,8599,2048138,00.html>

Unfortunately, this online version omits a truly exciting graphical summary of computer evolution since 1900 and projections to 2045, which you can find at:

<http://www.time.com/time/interactive/0,31813,2048601,00.html>

The recognized guru for this prognostication is Ray Kurzweil who, at age five had the idea he would become an inventor. He holds 39 patents and 19 honorary doctorates. He received the National Medal of Technology in 1999 from President Clinton, and is called by Bill Gates "the best person I know at predicting the future of artificial intelligence."

*Singularitarianism* is a matter of understanding, not of faith. However, its "bible" is Kurzweil's 2005 book, "The Singularity is Near: When Humans Transcend Biology (Amazon, paper, \$13.78) the title invoking both curiosity and apprehension. By "Singularity" Kurzweil means the achievement of highly advanced human capabilities through interfaces between the human brain and supercomputers that exceed today's capabilities by factors of billions. We will

"reverse engineer" the brain. On p. 127: "Ultimately, we will be able to port our mental processes to a more suitable computational substrate. Then our minds won't have to stay so small."

Bloodstreams will be suffused with swarming nanobots that fix all sorts of ills, receiving wireless in-

structions to eradicate diseases, including the disease of aging, By "Near," he means within our grown children's lifetimes. "Immortal" includes the possibility that human brains and minds will be uploaded and stored digitally, as well as living indefinitely in perfect health.

In early chapters Kurzweil summarizes the evidence that all the key factors in technology are racing toward the future at a steadily increasing rate. Human beings have evolved to think linearly, and therefore greatly underestimate the power of exponential changes that will affect us profoundly, naively dismissing them as "Not anytime soon!" IMHO, those who have not read the book should be reticent about expressing opinions.

I think CCGV members will find *The Singularity is Near* fascinating, even though most of us will miss the predicted excitement. You can find a Wikipedia article on *Singularitarianism*, here:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Singularitarianism>

But, oh, what big questions come to mind. If one's life ends only by accident, murder or suicide, what will that mean for retirement, birth rate and population? In a world that offers perfect virtual reality will anyone bother with movies, restaurants, cruise ships, football games, or recreational sex?"

Will nations accept world government by artificial intelligence, or will there be international cyberwars? Will the new benefits be shared only by the rich and elite? Will it be possible to download, say, Yo-Yo Ma's cello genius into, say, Sarah P's brain? What will the word "education" come to mean if knowledge can be downloaded?

If nearly everything is perfectly run by Ultra-AI, where will biological humans find ambition and personal inspiration? Might biological humans be forced into robot roles, subservient to vastly greater machine intelligences?

Quote of the Month:

"Let an ultraintelligent machine be defined as a machine that can far surpass all the intellectual activities of any [person] however clever. Since the design of machines is one of these intellectual activities, an ultraintelligent machine could design even better machines; there would then unquestionably be an 'intelligence explosion,' and the intelligence of [humans] would be left far behind. Thus, the first ultraintelligent machine is the last invention that [humans] need ever make." Irving John Good, 1965

## IS THERE A TABLET PC IN YOUR FUTURE?

### Is There a Tablet PC in Your Future?

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

[www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com) / [sandy \(at\) compukiss.com](mailto:sandy(at)compukiss.com)

Apple's iPad tablets are flying off the shelves and many competitors are introducing similar tablets. Here's a brief synopsis of the tablet situation and what it means to you.

In just nine months in 2010, Apple sold more than 15 million iPads. In the first month of sales, the iPad 2 sold millions more. According to some industry experts the iPad is the fastest growing new product in history. Perhaps, though, the most important thing about the iPad is that it has ushered in a new era in computing. Steve Jobs calls it the Post PC age. Although I agree that this is a new era in computing, there is nothing Post PC about it. The iPods, iPhones, and iPads that Mr. Jobs is talking about, all run on computer processor chips. They all perform functions that are similar to those performed by computers. No, this is not the Post PC era. Rather, it is the era of ubiquitous computing. If you look up the word "ubiquitous," you will find that it means omnipresent, pervasive, permeating, universal, and ever-present. This is what mobile devices like the iPhone and especially the iPad bring to us.

I expect that tablet PCs like the iPad will continue to grow in popularity. Although as of this moment, no other manufacturer has yet been able to equal the design, implementation, and price point that Apple has set, the march of the tablets has only just begun. There is plenty of competition in the making. Apple boasted 9.5 billion in revenue from the iPad in the last nine months of 2010, so everyone else is hurrying to get their version of the tablet PC to market.

Motorola recently released the Xoom, an Android tablet that is a competitive but pricey alternative to the iPad. Research in Motion, the creators of the BlackBerry, released their tablet called the Playbook in April. This will, of course, be based on their own BlackBerry operating system. Asus, Dell and LG Electronics will be introducing new tablets based on the Android operating system in the next few months. Samsung has announced that they will revamp their Android Galaxy Tab tablet and introduce two updated versions soon. HP is scheduled to roll out its first tablet based on the webOS operating system sometime in June. So within the next few months, we will have at least eight tablets from major manufacturers running four different operating systems.

If you are wondering why you should care about this, here's the scoop. Tablets are an entirely new category of computers. In most cases, they will not

replace personal computers, but will augment them. There will still be computers running infrastructure, businesses, and hospitals, but both professionals and

home users will find tablets extremely useful for their day-to-day living.

Since tablets have touch screens. You don't need a keyboard, mouse, or stylus. This makes them extremely portable. Also most tablets have very long battery lives, so you aren't tethered to the wall by a cable. Because tablets use apps rather than traditional software programs, they are much easier to use and more stress-free than computers.

App stores like Apple's iTunes store and Android's Marketplace have hundreds of thousands of apps available, so a tablet PC can be quickly and easily personalized to perform only the functions that the user needs or wants. This gives users a more intimate relationship with their devices.

In fact, this relationship is not only revolutionary, it is often somewhat magical. I recently watched my three-year-old granddaughter play with a Disney fairy app on an iPad. She gently moved the iPad to and fro to make Tinkerbell and her friends fly over the breathtaking scenery sprinkling fairy dust over the land. She was thoroughly enchanted. I also watched a 70-year-old man who was equally mesmerized by the interactive audio and video of a magazine site that he was viewing on his iPad. These devices are engaging for everyone. People from three to 103 can use and enjoy them.

Tablets are so empowering that I predict that they will become indispensable to everyday living. Who wants to walk into another room to get over to the computer when they need a recipe or want to look up a word. It is much easier to just grab a tablet PC off the coffee table. You can use it to watch television when you are on the go, to check the weather in the morning, or to read a book or listen to music as you endure the wait in the doctor's office.

Teachers are using tablets with great success because they are enthralling to children. Doctors are using them as a point-of-care device that can not only document the patient's progress, but can also help doctors explain procedures to patients. Artists are using them to create new masterpieces.

More and more applications are being found for tablets every day. With the new tablets that will be appearing in the next few months, this will be a very interesting category of devices to watch. Keep your eyes open, there may be a tablet PC in your future.

## CREATE STRONG PASSWORDS

### Create strong passwords

Strong passwords are important protections to help you have safer online transactions.

#### Keys to password strength: length and complexity

An ideal password is long and has letters, punctuation, symbols, and numbers.

Whenever possible, use at least 14 characters or more.

The greater the variety of characters in your password, the better.

Use the entire keyboard, not just the letters and characters you use or see most often.

#### Create a strong password you can remember

There are many ways to create a long, complex password. Here is one way that may make remembering it easier:

What to do	Suggestion	Example
	Think of something meaningful to you.	Long and complex passwords are safest. I Know My Sentence
Turn your sentences into a row of letters.	Use the first letter of each word.	Iacpasikms (10 characters)
Add complexity.	Make only the letters in the first half of the alphabet uppercase.	IACpAsIKMs (10 characters)
Add length with numbers.	Put two numbers that are meaningful to you between the two sentences.	IACpAs56IKMs (12 characters)
Add length with punctuation.	Put a punctuation mark at the beginning.	?IACpAs56IKMs (13 characters)
Add length with symbols.	Put a symbol at the end.	?IACpAs56IKMs" (14 characters)

#### Test your password with a password checker

A password checker evaluates your password's strength automatically. Try our [secure password checker](https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/security/pc-security/password-checker.aspx).  
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-gb/security/pc-security/password-checker.aspx>

#### Protect your passwords from prying eyes

**The easiest way to "remember" passwords is to write them down.** It is okay to write passwords down, but keep them secure.

#### Common password pitfalls to avoid

Cyber criminals use sophisticated tools that can rapidly decipher passwords.

Avoid creating passwords using:

**Dictionary words in any language.**

**Words spelled backwards, common misspellings, and abbreviations.**

## SMART COMPUTING MAGAZINE - SUPPORT



*There is a way you can support your user group.* Smart Computing Magazine will give a subscription to the Phoenix PC Users Group to be used as a door prize, raffle, etc., for each five subscriptions received from our group. Subscriptions can be applied for with the subscription coupon below or by phone as long as you use our group's unique source code number (**8305**) when beginning the subscription.

For each paid subscription using the source code 8305, our user group will be credited one credit. Results are calculated each quarter, and credits will accumulate until the group reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time they will contact the PPCUG.

In the event our group does not reach the five paid subscription mark by the end of the quarter, credits will be carried over into the following quarter until the amount reaches five paid subscriptions, at which time a free subscription will be issued.



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## HOW TO BACK UP SECURELY

### How to Backup Securely

By Mark Tiongco

[www.geeks.com](http://www.geeks.com)

This Tech Tip addresses some frequently asked questions about how to safeguard your computer data on a personal and business level. It assumes that you DO NOT have gigabytes of music and movies that require extensive security measures to protect.

1.) How should I begin to secure important data on my desktop computer or laptop?

First, it makes sense to designate 1 or 2 specific folders on your computer as the main folder for confidential file back-ups for several reasons. If you have to do a quick back-up, all you do is copy that folder to an external drive for an instant back-up.

Second, It provides a centralized location for all important data. Instead of having to hunt down the menu, sub-menu, sub-sub-menu of where you normally download company financial spreadsheets, you can set your browser and programs (such as Quickbooks, etc.) to save/download all important files to this folder.

Third, let's say you only save ALL important files on a flash drive/external hard drive. If your notebook gets lost/stolen, the thieves only have the programs and not the actual confidential files which are on the cheap flash drive.

2.) Great, now how do I actually back-up my designated BACK UP folder(s)?

Here's where it gets tricky. You have several back-up options such as:

A.) Cloud – Services such as Carbonite and Mozy offer low-priced back-up solutions. You basically upload all your confidential files to their cloud servers and are able to access them anywhere in the world where there is Internet access. The main issue is that, from a business security perspective, you have no idea where your data is stored. If, for example,

it's stored in a server farm in China which gets hacked, then you're in trouble.

B.) External Hard Drives – These nifty devices come in portable 2.5" and larger 3.5" flavors and offer more than generous dumping grounds for all things important. Once you plug it in, your OS recognizes it and pops you up with a folder showing it as a (giant) external drive with a letter (i.e. G:) Some even feature OTB (One Touch Backup) so you press one button and it backs up either your entire system or certain portions of it. Some external hard drives offer plug-in encryption that prevents unauthorized access. The issue with this solution is that you have to lug it around, which means it has a chance of getting lost/stolen and the formality of performing a back-up might become time-consuming to some.

C.) Flash Drive – These little drives are more nimble, have zero moving parts and are highly portable. Unfortunately, this is also its Achilles' Heel as its relatively small size makes it prone to becoming misplaced or stolen. Also it does not have the capacity of a larger external drive. The good news is that some flash drives have built-in encryption which can be useful if it lands in the wrong hands.

D.) Home/Office Network Attached Storage Drive – Also called NAS, this is an excellent solution for comprehensive back-up protection as these hard drives function as dumping grounds for an entire home or office network. It provides a centralized location for files, folders and documents which any connected computer can access and come in large drive sizes. However, security precautions should be utilized if the NAS has built-in measures as an unsecured NAS may be prone to prying eyes. For example, a NAS without security protocols activated while connected to a home Wi-Fi network is prone to being breached. Because of this, it's crucial to configure the NAS security as well as the router/network security for optimal protection.

E.) Backing up to CD/DVD/Blu-Ray – Optical media back-up is actually a very cost-effective solution because CDs and DVDs are very cheap nowadays. Furthermore, if you're looking to close the books for a

*(Continued on page 10)*

## BACK UP SECURELY

## KEEP IPADS AND TABLETS CLEAN WITH SIDEKICK

*(Continued from page 9)*

certain month on your business, burning to a CD-R or DVD+R sets the data in stone so it can't be manipulated on the disc. The problem is that if you have lots of data to back-up, the formality of using several CD-R or DVD-R discs to save might also become time consuming. In addition, you would have to make sure said back-up discs are placed in a safe place where the chance of it getting stolen is minimized.

3.) Which back-up method should I pick?

While the above solutions offer many ways to back up your confidential data, the best way to minimize a data breach/loss is to follow a combination of multiple back-up solutions and proactive behavior. For example, it would be a good idea to store important sensitive data on your flash drive and encrypting it with TRUE Crypt while also saving duplicate file copies on your home NAS drive via secure VPN connection. If your flash drive is lost/stolen, True Crypt prevents the drive from being used without proper credentials and you can still access the very same duplicate files on your NAS server.

Regarding proactive behavior, you should be mindful of back-ups so you don't lose something you wish you saved 2 weeks ago.

There are also programs out there that can help secure data such as:

- Folder Lock – Locks and can hide any folder you wish from prying eyes.
- True Crypt– secures drives with extensive hardware encryption.
- Acronis Drive Cleaner – Completely erases all drive data with several methods (DoD, Gutmann method, etc.) – works great if you're planning to get rid of old computer hardware.

Remember, it's all about being proactive and being mindful of what back-up security solutions to use for your personal or business needs!

### Keep iPads and Tablets Clean With SideKick™ from LensPen®

By Terry Currier, President of the WINNERS WINDOWS users group, CA  
June 2011 issue, Winners Notepad  
[www.windowsusers.org](http://www.windowsusers.org)  
[winnersug@aol.com](mailto:winnersug@aol.com)

I saw this company at CES and was impressed with their product. iPads and tablets are great, stylish products. But the touch-screen action leaves a trail of oily fingerprints that soon cover the whole surface. A cloth isn't effective and some sprays and tissues can make the fingerprint mess even worse. In reality you should not use a glass cleaner on you monitor or tablets, because they have a special coating on them. While I did find a wet paper towel works pretty good on the iPad the SideKick works the best.

SideKick's carbon compound is similar to the one found in printer's ink; why newspapers have been an effective way to clean windows for generations.

The cost for SideKick is \$19.95. A package of two replacement cleaning pads is \$14.95. Each pad gives 150 cleanings. [www.lenspen.com](http://www.lenspen.com)

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OUR MEMBERSHIP  
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INTERESTED GUEST  
TO A MEETING  
WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL**

## USING CAUTION WITH USB DRIVES

### Using Caution with USB Drives

Author: Mindi McDowell

Produced 2008, 2011 by US-CERT, a government organization.

<http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/STYY-XXX.html>

Note: This tip was previously published and is being re-distributed to increase awareness.

USB drives are popular for storing and transporting data, but some of the characteristics that make them convenient also introduce security risks. What security risks are associated with USB drives?

Because USB drives, sometimes known as thumb drives, are small, readily available, inexpensive, and extremely portable, they are popular for storing and transporting files from one computer to another. However, these same characteristics make them appealing to attackers.

One option is for attackers to use your USB drive to infect other computers. An attacker might infect a computer with malicious code, or malware, that can detect when a USB drive is plugged into a computer. The malware then downloads malicious code onto the drive. When the USB drive is plugged into another computer, the malware infects that computer.

Some attackers have also targeted electronic devices directly, infecting items such as electronic picture frames and USB drives during production. When users buy the infected products and plug them into their computers, malware is installed on their computers.

Attackers may also use their USB drives to steal information directly from a computer. If an attacker can physically access a computer, he or she can download sensitive information directly onto a USB drive. Even computers that have been turned off may be vulnerable, because a computer's memory is still active for several minutes without power. If an attacker can plug a USB drive into the computer during that time, he or she can quickly reboot the sys-

tem from the USB drive and copy the computer's memory, including passwords, encryption keys, and other sensitive data, onto the drive.

Victims may not even realize that their computers were attacked.

The most obvious security risk for USB drives, though, is that they are easily lost or stolen (see Protecting Portable Devices: Physical Security for more information). If the data was not backed up, the loss of a USB drive can mean hours of lost work and the potential that the information cannot be replicated. And if the information on the drive is not encrypted, anyone who has the USB drive can access all of the data on it.

How can you protect your data? There are steps you can take to protect the data on your USB drive and on any computer that you might plug the drive into:

- \* Take advantage of security features – Use passwords and encryption on your USB drive to protect your data, and make sure that you have the information backed up in case your drive is lost (see Protecting Portable Devices: Data Security for more information).

- \* Keep personal and business USB drives separate – Do not use personal USB drives on computers owned by your organization, and do not plug USB drives containing corporate information into your personal computer.

- \* Use and maintain security software, and keep all software up to date - Use a firewall, anti-virus software, and anti-spyware software to make your computer less vulnerable to attacks, and make sure to keep the virus definitions current (see Understanding Firewalls, Understanding Anti-Virus Software, and Recognizing and Avoiding Spyware for more information). Also, keep the software on your computer up

*(Continued on page 12)*

## ENERCELL

USING CAUTION  
WITH USB DRIVES**Enercell**

A review by George Harding, Treasurer, Tucson Computer Society, AZ  
April 2011 issue, TCS eJournal  
www.aztcs.org  
georgehardingsbd (at) earthlink.net

One of the portable batteries I received for review at the Consumer Electronics Show is the Enercell. The unit is quite small, only about 2" X 3". It charges with a built-in USB plug, which swings out from the bottom of the device. It charges its Li-On battery in a reasonable period. The top of the device has a small, circular button and four very small LED lights to indicate the degree of charge. The battery is good for up to 8 hours. Once charged, you turn it on with a very small slider switch on the side of the unit. You then attach the battery to your mobile device with one of the wires that comes with the unit. Connecting wires include one that fits the Apple devices, iPhone, iPad and iPod, a wire for devices that use a mini-USB connection and one for those that use a micro-USB connection.

This is one of the smallest, most convenient portable batteries I've seen. It would fit easily into a shirt pocket or purse with room to spare. If you're out of touch with power or don't have your charging cable, the Enercell can top off your mobile device with ease. Whether it's an iPhone, MP3 player, digital camera, GPS receiver, you can charge them all with an Enercell.

The warranty is fairly short, being only 90 days. Most electronics fail, if they're going to, well within the 90 days.

About: Enercell  
Manufacturer: Radio Shack  
www.radioshack.com  
Price: \$30

*(Continued from page 11)*

to date by applying any necessary patches (see Understanding Patches for more information).

<http://www.us-cert.gov/cas/tips/STYY-XXX.html>

\* Do not plug an unknown USB drive into your computer – If you find a USB drive, give it to the appropriate authorities (a location's security personnel, your organization's IT department, etc.). Do not plug it into your computer to view the contents or to try to identify the owner.

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MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION  
WHEN PAYING YOUR DUES**

## DUAL MONITORS FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

### Dual Monitors: Five Good Reasons to Upgrade

By Bob Rankin

<http://askbobrankin.com>

Category: Hardware , Video

"I'm considering dual monitors because my 17-inch monitor seems to be shrinking. Sometimes it seems like I spend more time scrolling and tabbing between programs than on actual work. But I'm still not sure... should I upgrade to a 30-inch monitor, or go with a dual monitor setup?"

### Dual Monitors For Increased Productivity

If you've ever wished for a bigger computer screen, here's an even better idea. Use a dual monitor (or multi monitor) setup to extend your desktop across two or more screens. Both Windows and Mac computers have the ability to simulate one BIG screen using a dual or multi monitor configuration. Adding a second monitor will be cheaper than upgrading to a super-size screen, and there are other advantages too.

I've used two monitors on my PC for the past several years. My system has dual 24-inch flat-panel monitors and I love it. I set both monitors on my desk, side by side, and a bit of software magic creates the illusion of one giant screen. I can open a website on one screen, and a word processor on the other, then copy and paste from one screen to another. I can even open a spreadsheet and stretch it across the full width of both screens if I want.

Personally, I find that all the extra desktop space makes me more productive and greatly enhances the fun of computing. When I am forced to use a computer that has a single screen, I notice the limitations right away, as the extra scrolling and alt-tabbing becomes tedious.

### Here are five good reasons to have dual monitors:

Published studies indicate that having a dual monitor in a workplace setting can increase productivity by 20 to 50 percent. For example, if you're a computer programmer, it should be obvious that having your source code on one side and your program on the other side of a dual monitor display would be very helpful.

1. Real multi-tasking requires enough screen space to keep two or more apps in full view simultaneously. If you have ever tried to size and align windows on a single monitor, you'll appreciate the ability to have several apps fully open at the same time. Customer service reps and web designers are additional examples of people that would benefit from dual monitors.

2. Cutting and pasting between documents is much easier when you don't have to alt-tab between them and scroll up or down so much. If you create newsletters or PowerPoint presentations, you'll identify with this.

3. Picture and video editing is a whole new experience with dual monitors. You can have all of your editing tools on one screen while you work on the project in the other. You can compare before and after views of the same work, or supersize panoramic pictures.

4. Comparing products is easier when you have dual monitors. You can show two video cameras' specs side by side in separate browser windows, for example.

5. Video and gaming take on a whole new dimension with dual monitors. You can view much more of a virtual world and see bad guys coming from a distance. Streaming video on one screen and work on another is a good way to be productive while waiting for an action scene.

### Hardware Required For a Dual Monitor Configuration

Okay, that was six reasons, and I'm sure I could list more if I rubbed a few brain cells together. But let's move on to the actual nuts and bolts of adding a second screen to make your dual monitor dreams come true.

Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7, and Mac OS X have built-in support for dual monitors. Setting up dual monitors takes about five minutes. But first, you need to make sure you have the right hardware. Almost all laptops have a VGA, DVI or HDMI port

*(Continued on page 14)*

# DUAL MONITORS FOR INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

where you can plug in a secondary monitor. If you have a spare monitor, and the video cable required to connect it, that's all you'll need. If your video cable has a different connector than your laptop, you can buy an adapter to make ends meet.

On a desktop, you will need two video connectors on your PC, matching connectors on the two monitors, and of course appropriate cables. Some desktops come with two video ports, but you have only one, you can add a second video adapter, or swap yours for a dual-port model. Adding or swapping a video adapter sounds geeky, but it's actually a pretty easy upgrade. After popping the hood on your system unit, the video adapter simply plugs into a slot on the motherboard. If you know how to use a screwdriver, you can do this.

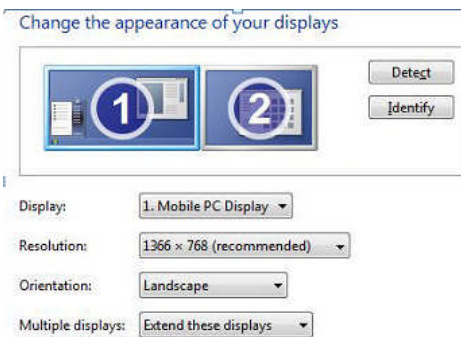
Some computers, however, simply lack the capacity for internal hardware upgrades. In these unfortunate cases, there are ways to get around this limitation, such as the Matrox Graphics DualHead2Go, which functions almost identically to a standard video card, yet is actually an external device that makes use of your existing video out port. With DualHead2Go, you can add an additional display to your PC or Mac desktop, or another two monitors to a laptop.

## Connecting a Second Monitor on Windows 7

Here is how to set up dual monitors on Windows 7. First, open Control Panel, choose Hardware and Sound, then under the Display heading, choose "Connect to an external display."

Connect your second monitor to the computer. The Display window will flicker

(or go blank for a few seconds), then you'll see a dual-monitor setup screen like the one shown here. If you don't, click the "Detect" button. If that does not work, check the monitor's connection to your computer.



Once the second monitor is detected you need to choose how the two monitors will operate. There are three options:

**"Duplicate these displays"** shows the same display on both screens. This is handy when monitoring a presentation on a laptop while it is displayed on second, larger screen. **"Extend these displays"** makes one big screen out of the dual monitors. You can actually drag objects across the boundaries of the two monitors. This is the setting that most people use, and the one I recommend. **"Show desktop only on 1"** or **"Show desktop only on 2"** disables one of the monitors.

Adjust the screen resolution of the monitors as desired, press Apply, and you're done.

## Connecting a Second Monitor on Vista or XP

If you have Windows Vista, right-click on the desktop, and the "Personalize appearance and sound" window will appear. Click on Display Settings.

On an XP system, right-click on the desktop, click on Properties, then click on the Settings tab.



You should now see a Display Settings or Display Properties dialog.

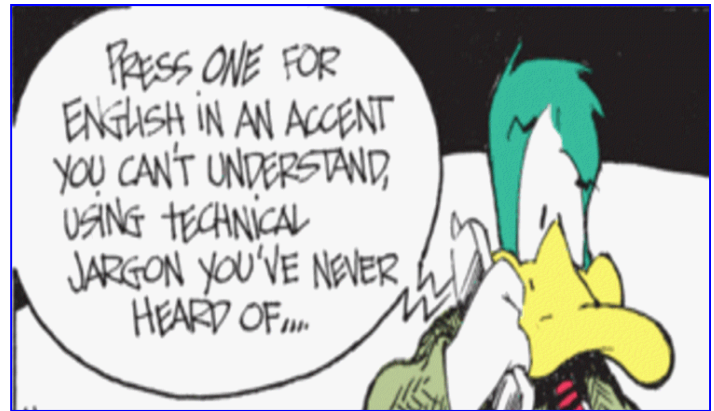
Right-click the newly connected display (labeled "2") then select "Attached" to activate it.

I recommend that you check the box next to **"Extend my Windows desktop onto this monitor"** so you can utilize the combined space of both monitors as one large monitor.

Dual monitors are not for everyone. They take up a lot of desk space, obviously. But if you are a programmer, graphic artist, website designer, support technician or gamer, dual monitors will boost your productivity and definitely look cool on your desk.

## Short Circuits...zzzt!

**Can you hear me now?** Dutch prosecutors are charging a woman with stalking after she allegedly called her ex-boyfriend 65,000 times in the past year. The victim filed a police complaint due to the persistent phone calls. Police arrested the suspected stalker, seizing several cell phones and computers from her home in Rotterdam. The prosecution spokesman the woman argued to judges at a preliminary hearing she had a relationship with the man and the number of calls she placed to him wasn't excessive. The man denied they had a relationship. The court ordered her not to contact him again. Sept. 8, 2011, *Associated Press*



**I Said, "Go Straight"**, A North Carolina woman whose car was found stalled on some railroad tracks says she was just following the directions of her global positioning system. Police responding to the stalled vehicle were able to warn a train to stop before it hit her car. The woman has been charged with driving while impaired. She was also ordered to surrender her driver's license for 30 days because she refused to take a breathalyzer test. Police say she told them her GPS had directed her onto the tracks and the car stalled and she wasn't sure whether she should abandon it.

Sept. 6, 2011, *Associated Press*

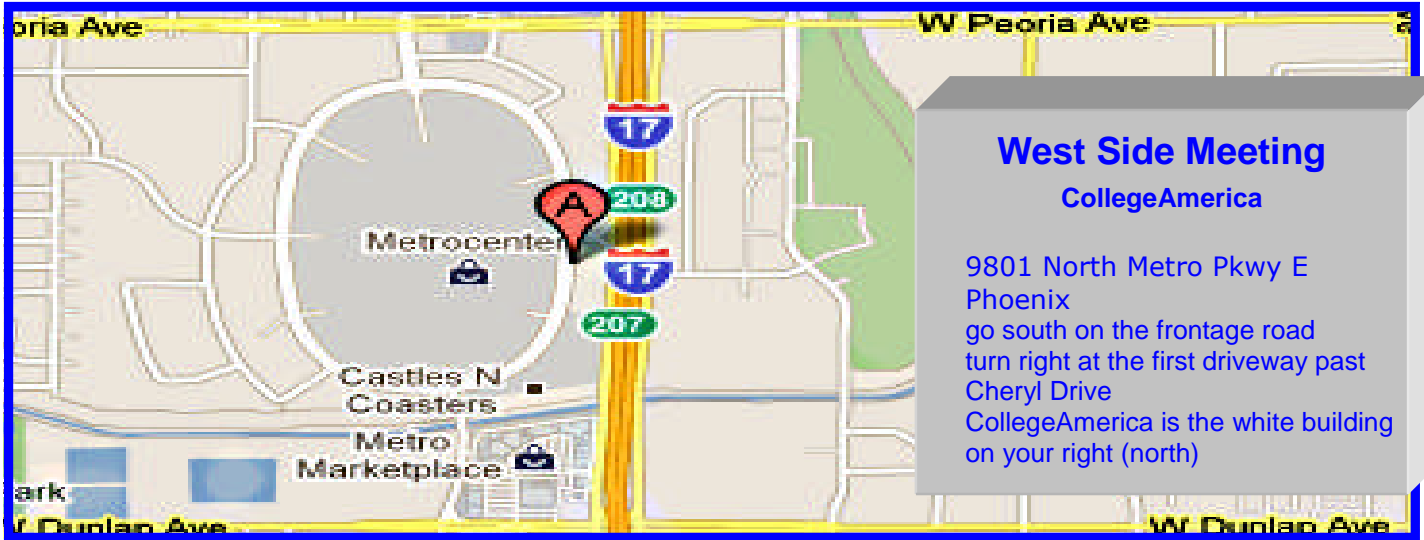


**Do you 1, take 0...**After a Houston couple couldn't get a friend to serve as the minister at their wedding, they decided to create their own. At their marriage, a computer will conduct the ceremony. Well, technically, a computer program the bridegroom wrote will serve as the minister. At the wedding, to be held in the backyard of the groom's parents, the couple will stand before a 30-inch monitor. In a robotic voice, the computer will greet the guests, say how the couple met and go through the ceremony. The ceremony won't be legally binding. The couple still have to get a justice of the peace to sign their paperwork. Juan A. Lozano, *Associated Press*, Jul. 29, 2011

**You are here for what?** A Connecticut man has been sentenced to probation for posting a bogus ad about an orgy at the house of a neighbor with whom he had been feuding. Court records show the man pleaded guilty to risk of injury to a child. He has been sentenced to three years of probation and 200 hours of community service. He also has been ordered to pay for the neighbor's house alarm system. Police he posted the Craigslist and several strangers knocked on the neighbor's door. One man went to the wrong home, became abusive to a young girl, and was arrested. The man posting the ad says that he regrets his actions. Sept. 7, 2011 *Associated Press*

*These Items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.*

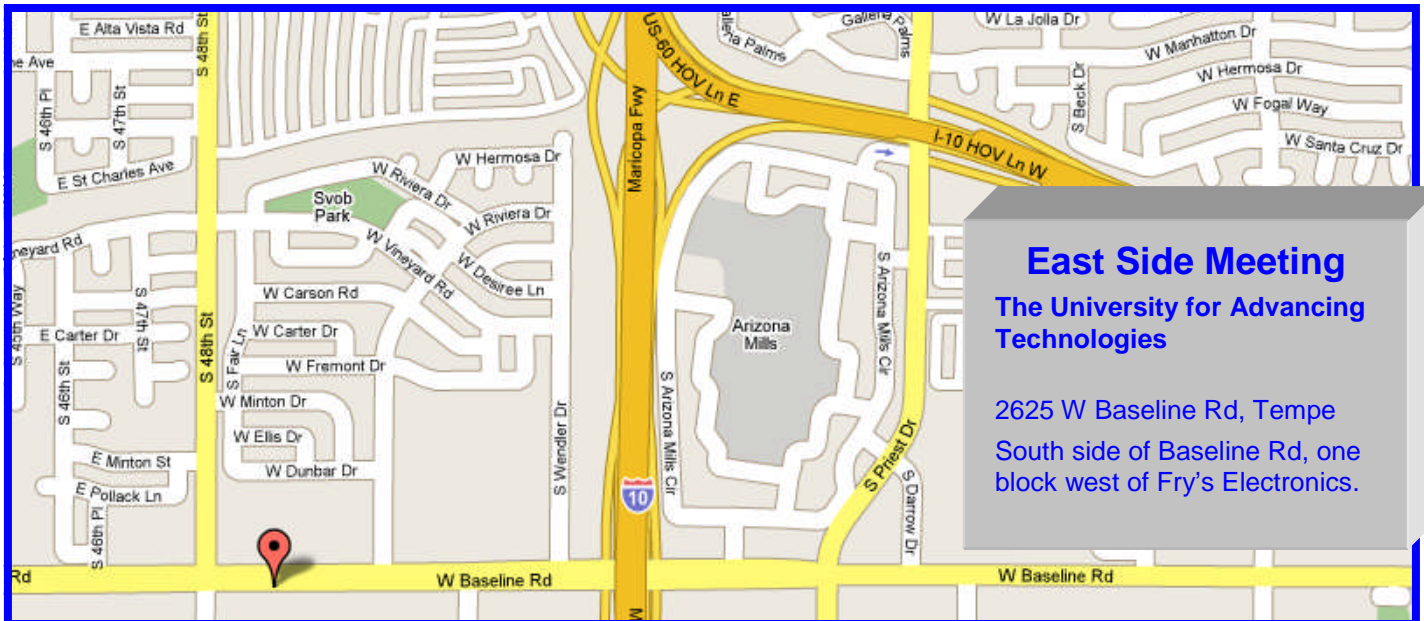
# HOW TO GET THERE



## West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

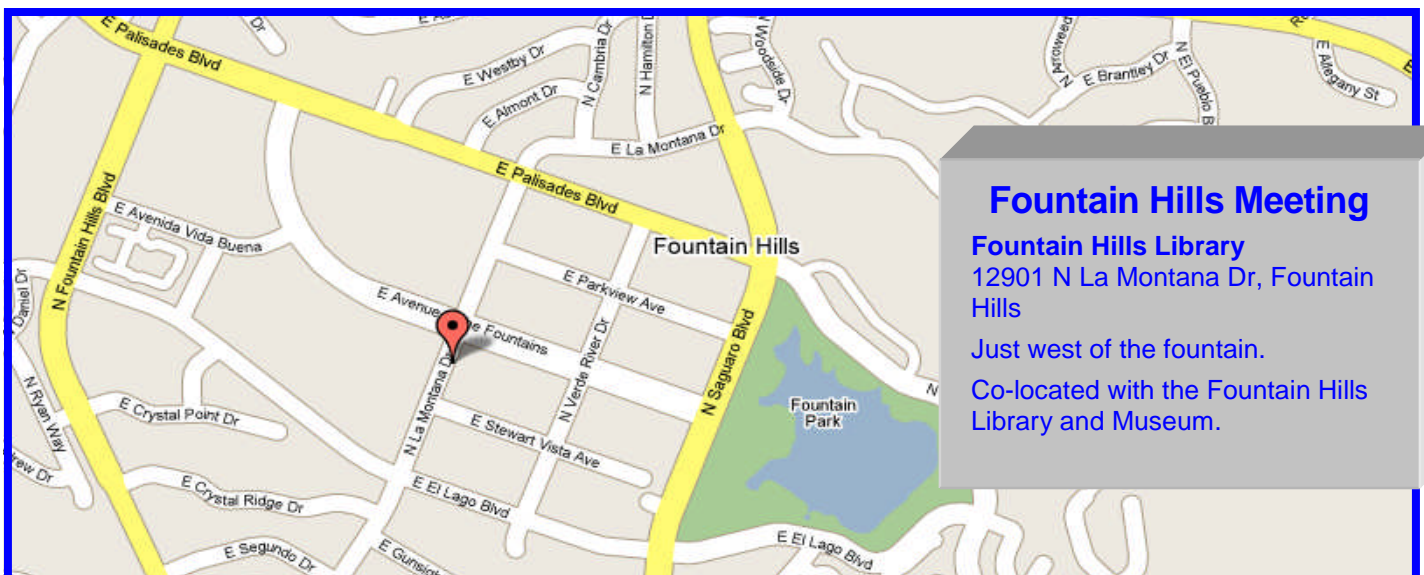
9801 North Metro Pkwy E  
 Phoenix  
 go south on the frontage road  
 turn right at the first driveway past  
 Cheryl Drive  
 CollegeAmerica is the white building  
 on your right (north)



## East Side Meeting

The University for Advancing Technologies

2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe  
 South side of Baseline Rd, one  
 block west of Fry's Electronics.



## Fountain Hills Meeting

Fountain Hills Library  
12901 N La Montana Dr, Fountain Hills

Just west of the fountain.  
 Co-located with the Fountain Hills  
 Library and Museum.



# MEMBERSHIP DUES

**The Official Policy of the Phoenix PC Users Group is that we do not condone software piracy in any form.**

*DUES \$36  
THROUGH  
DEC 31, 2011*

## Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

First: (Print Legibly) \_\_\_\_\_ Initial: \_\_\_ Last: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Ext: \_\_\_\_\_

Please note: We DO-NOT share phone numbers outside the club, and will generally only use your phone information, if we cannot contact you in timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site

Receive Electronic newsletter in place of printed one:  Yes  No

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_ (Print Legibly)

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

Release my address to vendors ?  Yes  No Note: Phone numbers **will not** be listed.

May the club share your e-mail address with other members only?  Yes  No

With club approved vendors?  Yes  No

Please do not share my e-mail address

Mail this completed form with payment to:

**Phoenix PC Users Group**  
PO Box 7127  
Phoenix, AZ 85011-7127



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# September 2011

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group  
"Users helping users to understand computers"

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