Phoenix PC Users Group

NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory for your PC !

apcug

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side……………...Tue, Nov 15

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side……………..Wed, Nov 16

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

Fountain Hills………...Thu, Nov 17

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

Presentation this month:

A special HP presentation on Wed at UAT
Report on AzACC meeting Oct 29
Southwest Regional Conference in 2012
at Ft. McDowell Casino Radisson Resort
More about AzStRUT
Plans for Christmas Meetings

For date and time changes, check our
website: phoenixpcug.org

Phoenix PC Users Group

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Steering Committee:

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Happy Thanksgiving (almost)! It is going to sneak up on us pretty soon!

Elections this month, west side meeting: So far running for office - again for Secretary - Chuck Lewis; Treasurer - trying to persuade one guy; VP - maybe one so far, President - myself. Anyone is welcome to run, you must be a member however in good standing (ie. dues paid). You don't have to be a computer whiz, but that would be nice, mainly just interested in supporting other users. Please send in any nominees to **bod@phoenixpcug.org**. Also we need a publisher and editor - familiarity with MS Publisher will help but program is easy to learn & use.

Dues are due! Only $36 for 12 months, which breaks down to $3 per month - a pretty good bargain to be able to ask questions, see interesting demos, meet experts, suggest future topics, etc. We really want to build next year's membership and we have several suggestions to bring in new people such as Az STRUT students, instructors and recipients. Bring a friend!

AzACC - Arizona Association of Computer Clubs, has a monthly calendar, so we will pass that along - http://www.azacc.org/Calendar/calendar.htm Also, visit the discounts page: http://www.azacc.org/Benefits/benefits_ugd.htm

The HP representative is really coming, to UAT Wed. Nov 10. (Not sure why the mix up in Oct). We will confirm by email & phone to be absolutely sure he is coming and get his topics. Watch our website for latest details and watch for email announcements too.

Steve Jobs passing - we will collect interesting web links, any you like, please send to bod@phoenixpcug.org.

Tablets - Google Android operating system is competing well with Apple. HP Tablet with Windows 8 is planned, stay tuned for more info such as Android upgrade: 'Ice Cream Sandwich' (yes, a goofy name - too much Jolt cola?)

Year end activity - possible party, we'll work on details at Nov meetings. Also Dec is our usual 'Gadgets & Gizmos' topic with a general show & tell, lots of Q&A and more. Always a good and fun meeting.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

The impact of computers, computer systems, and other electronic devices upon education in American schools has been profound. Anyone who has seen a tennis court-sized room in the Learning Center (once called the Library) lined with row after row of monitors suitable for data retrieval, computational exercises, or other research, can not help but be impressed. Most community colleges offer courses that are partially, or even completely, accessible on-line. The For Profit on-line schools, funded mostly by US government grants, have grown to staggering sizes. When head-count enrollments at multiple "campuses" are totaled, the top two of these schools claim enrollments of over 100,000 students, the largest counting even over 500,000 registrants.**

But does it make learning any easier? Are the correct answers available? What if there are multiple methods of doing a calculation or answering an essay question? Some on-line providers do offer a feedback to student questions. However, a student has no way of knowing whether the responder has acceptable qualifications or credentials. Many students are able to complete requirements for a degree without once meeting an instructor face-to-face. Even worse, some advanced degrees may be acquired for "life experience", sheer perseverance, or a unique talent, any or all, of course, with the payment of a suitable fee. Is any employer going to hire this person?

The negative aspects that can result from the exclusive use of on-line teaching methods do not all arise from abuse, indifference, or quality of the provider. Students have rapidly developed ways to defeat electronic instruction. How does the instructor know whether or not the work submitted electronically is that of the student? What is to prevent a student from having a friend "work along side" while the calculations are performed? The completion of a complete semester's work in one week does raise eyebrows, especially if there is a poor performance on a companion written exam. Cell phones are now capable of providing text, graphs, and calculations, so the use these devices, if permitted at all, is now restricted. And what about electronically scored multiple choice exams? Don't ask.

**IPEDS Data Center, US Dept. of Education

Michael

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 2)

Topics for future meetings - hybrid drives (part flash - part mechanical) are in the news, ie. Data Doctors finds performance excellent but not pricey like SSD solid state drives.

College America - wants our support on Thurs, Nov 10, to help improve their computer education programs. Last time, we suggested students 'think different' when doing things, to distinguish themselves in noteworthy ways, doing out of the box approaches. Watch for email & website for details.

Recently in the news, Arizona students have performed better in math than before, but are still subpar nationally. STEM programs - Science-Technology-Engineering-Mathematics for education is making a strong difference. Our Phoenix PCUG along with Az StRUT - Arizona Students Recycling Used Technology, an Intel supported donation and upgrade program could help both educational programs and their students. We plan to explore this vigorously because students would learn a lot from us and hopefully their families could become Phoenix PCUG members.

We have many interesting former & current Phoenix PCUG members - IT administrators for K-12 school district and a university, college computer faculty, tech support for a national computer talk show, some Microsoft employees, several consultants and programmers, webmasters, etc. Also, a retired NBC documentary expert, a former 707 pilot, a national telecom tech and a mainframe computer pioneer. I believe we are in our 32nd year - we'll confirm that. Save any old newsletters too!

David

WEDNESDAY'S EASTSIDE MEETING WILL BE A SPECIAL HP PRESENTATION ALL MEMBERS THAT CAN SHOULD PLAN TO ATTEND

LEAVE IT ON OR SHUT IT DOWN?

Leave it on or shut your computer down?
www.skywire.com

Leave your computer on all the time or shut it down? This is one of the great debates in computerdom. Leaving it on all the time is convenient. But there are benefits to the occasional shutdown.

Now, lets throw in hibernation and standby. These pseudo-shutdowns help save power. And getting started is faster than a full shutdown. But they don't have the same refreshing benefits of one

This shouldn't be so confusing. So, just get the benefits of both using Boot Snooze. It will restart your computer and then hibernate or standby automatically. You'll get the refresh of a full reboot. But the hibernate or standby lets you get back to work faster.

This is a cool one-button solution. But it does have one limitation. It only works if you don't have a password on your user account. This is OK, if you're the only one using your computer. Or, maybe you just don't like passwords. If you're will ing to go without a password, Boot Snooze is great.

http://skwire.dcmembers.com/wb/pages/software/boot-snooze.php

This simple app will give you a choice to reboot and go into standby or hibernation.

1. It will then reboot your computer.
2. After the reboot, a small dialog with a countdown timer will begin.
3. After the timer is up, your computer will be put into the mode you chose.

Note: For hibernation to work, your computer must have "Enable hibernation" already checked under your Control Panel, Power Options, Hibernate tab.

Command line operation -- REQUIRED parameters are: mode=[reboot|suspend] ('reboot' will reboot and then go to the hibernate/standby delay timer.

'suspend' will skip the reboot and go straight to the hibernate/standby delay timer) method=[hibernate|standby] bdelay=# (where # is the number of minutes to delay BEFORE rebooting) adelay=# (where # is the number of minutesto delay AFTER rebooting)

e.g.: c:\path\to\BootSnooze.exe mode=reboot method=hibernate bdelay=0 adelay=5

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

For date and time changes, check our website: phoenixpcug.org

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

A special HP presentation on Wed at UAT,
Report on AzACC meeting Oct 29
Southwest Regional Conference in 2012
at Ft. McDowell Casino Radisson Resort
More about AzStRUT
Plans for Christmas Meetings

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)
   - Tuesday, Nov 15, 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)
   - Wednesday, Nov 16, 2011
   - 6:30 PM - Q and A
   -

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 16)
   - Thursday, Nov 17, 2011
   - 6:30 PM - Q and A
   -

BILL'S PONDER THIS

1. I think part of a best friend's job should be to immediately clear your computer history if you die.

2. Nothing sucks more than that moment during an argument when you realize you're wrong.

3. I totally take back all those times I didn't want to nap when I was younger.

4. How the hell are you supposed to fold a fitted sheet?

5. Obituaries would be a lot more interesting if they told you how the person died.

6. Wives come and go — Former girlfriends last forever.

7. Bad decisions make good stories.

8. You never know when it will strike, but there comes a moment at work when you know that you just aren't going to do anything productive for the rest of the day.

9. Can we all just agree to ignore whatever comes after Blue Ray? I don't want to have to restart my collection...again.

10. I'm always slightly terrified when I exit out of Word and it asks me if I want to save any changes to my ten-page technical report that I swear I did not make any changes to.

11. I keep some people's phone numbers in my phone just so I know not to answer when they call.

12. I think the freezer deserves a light as well.

13. I disagree with Kay Jewelers. I would bet on any given Friday or Saturday night more kisses begin with Miller Lite than Kay.

14. I wish Google Maps had an "Avoid Ghetto" routing option.

15. I have a hard time deciphering the fine line between boredom and hunger.

16. I love the sense of camaraderie when an entire line of cars team up to prevent a jerk from cutting in at the front. Stay strong, brothers and sisters!

17. Sometimes I'll look down at my watch 3 consecutive times and still not know what time it is.

18. Even under ideal conditions people have trouble locating their car keys in a pocket, finding their cell phone, and Pinning the Tail on the Donkey - but I'd bet everyone can find and push the snooze button from 3 feet away, in about 1.7 seconds, eyes closed, first time, every time.

19. People who forward e- mail without deleting the tons of previous recipients should be shot and then tarred and feathered.

20. The first testicular guard, the "Cup," was used in Hockey in 1874 and the first helmet was used in 1974. That means it only took 100 years for men to realize that their brain is also important. Ladies quit laughing!

Collected from various undisclosed sources
By Bill Aulepp

EBAY ADVENTURES-"SO WHAT GIVES?"

EBAY ADVENTURES
By Rick Eblaw, Vice President,
Southern Tier Personal Computing Club, NY
www.stpcc.org ekblaw (at) juno.com

Introduction If you spend some time on eBay, you'll find all kinds of interesting stuff offered for sale. There's lots of collectibles, some of which would be hard to locate unless you were willing to travel the country going to flea markets. There are items that you can find in stores that are sometimes offered at a substantial discount. And then are some items that are hard to explain...Here's a recent example.

EXAMPLE There's a fellow in China who is currently selling a lot of "Mini USB 2.0 Wireless Bluetooth Adapter Dongle" items, which you can readily find by searching eBay for "usb wireless" and sorting by "Price + Shipping: lowest first."

That in itself isn't interesting, there's no shortage of sellers offering USB Bluetooth adapters. What's interesting about this one is that the minimum bid is $0.01 (one penny) and free shipping is offered.

You don't have to be a financial genius to see that if only one person bids on one of these auctions, the seller is going to lose money.

Since the seller is in China and presumably has direct access to the manufacturer of these devices, he's probably paying just a few pennies for each one. But, he still needs to pay the international postage, and if you check the feedback you'll see a number of folks who did get their device for just $0.01. So what gives?

I had $1.08 in eBay Bucks "burning a hole in my pocket," so I figured I'd give this a shot.

On my first attempt I set my maximum bid to $0.99, and a couple of people tried to outbid me in the last few seconds of the auction, but the highest attempt was a $0.50 bid, so I won with an automatic $0.55 bid.

I then tried to bid on another, but I was only allowed to bid on one of these items from the seller in a 10-day period — so the seller was not going to allow someone to buy a whole bunch of these for $0.01 each in a short period of time.

So I found another seller of the same item for the same price and put in a maxi mum bid of $0.53, figuring that at worst I'd use up my eBay Bucks (which

is "bonus money" based on how much you bought on eBay in the previous month).

Again, I had someone else bid, but they only tried up to $0.36, so I won my second dongle for $0.41.

When I paid the sellers using my eBay Bucks, I discovered that both "sellers" had the same PayPal account, so there was really just one seller using multiple eBay accounts.

Possible Explanations
Back to the "So what gives?" question. I see at least 3 possible ways to explain this:

LOTS OF BIDDERS
1. The seller is hoping that the $0.01 price will bring in bidders, but there will be enough people bidding on these so that the final bid will be high enough to make a profit, on average, over a large number of sales.

This doesn't seem to be happening, I see lots of people getting these for $0.01, and even my two quick attempts on this didn't raise the price to a point where the seller could break even.

Loss Leader
2. The seller is offering these dongles as a "loss leader," just like a retail store, in hopes that you will buy from the seller again when you want something that is being sold at a reasonable profit.

While the "loss leader" concept has shown some success in the retail store market, on eBay and the Internet you have many choices available instantly so I don't think this concept is going to work.

FEEDBACKS
3. This is my best guess to explain these auctions: The seller is trying to quickly raise his total number of feedbacks, his positive feedback percentage, his detailed feedback ratings, and to be a "Top-rated seller."

To understand why these measures are important, you have to be familiar with the eBay rating system and the preferences of most eBay buyers.

I'm not going to go into the details here, but it's clear that the majority of eBay buyers want to buy

from the "Top-rated sellers," they like seeing big feedback numbers, and they want to see positive feedback near 100%.

WHAT IS MAGIC JACK & MAGICJACK PLUS?

WHAT IS MAGICJACK? PLUS A NEW VERSION
By Bob Rankin
http://askbobrankin.com

MagicJack is a device that enables phone calls over the Internet. The Magic Jack voip phone service competes with Vonage, Skype, NetTalk and other VOIP (voice over internet) telephone service providers. Magic Jack has been around for more than four years as of this writing. During that time, the Magic Jack product has evolved.

The original MagicJack is a matchbox-sized device that plugs into any USB port on your Internet-enabled computer. A standard RJ-11 phone jack on the MagicJack device accepts the cord of any landline telephone. The device contains all the software and electronics necessary to let you make and receive unlimited calls for just $19.95 per year. Just plug, plug, and talk.

Magic Jack is so simple and so cheap that some people thought it was a scam when it first appeared. But MagicJack has proved to be quite real. A few years ago, after hearing a couple of my friends swear by the gadget, I did some research and found that Magic Jack really does deliver what it promises. With Magic Jack, your get own number with unlimited local and long distance (USA and Canada). You pay just $19.95 per year, and you never get a phone bill. You can even cancel your land line service with the phone company and cut them out of the loop.

Over six million units have been purchased since the original MagicJack debuted. But progress requires innovation, and so we now have other Magic Jack products.

MagicJack, Plus!
The fact that your computer had to be turned on in order to make or receive calls irked some users. The new MagicJack PLUS can be plugged into a USB port and used just like the original. But it can also be plugged directly into a network router or an electrical wall socket, eliminating the need for a powered-on computer. As long as the device can get some sort of high-speed Internet connection - wired, wifi or a cellular 4G signal - it will work. So in that sense, Magic

Jack is similar to other VOIP services like Vonage or Skype, which allow you to make phone calls over the Internet

You can try Magic Jack for 30 days free of charge; just go to their Web site and order a unit. If you keep it, the original Magic Jack costs $39.95 including service for the first year. The MagicJack PLUS costs $69.95. Annual service renewals are $19.95.

The free MagicJack APP for the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch enables these Apple devices to place free calls over 3G, 4G, and WiFi networks. You do not need a voice service plan. Unlike the hardware devices, you don't get a permanent phone number with the MagicJack APP, so you cannot receive calls.

Another issue for many people was phone number portability, or the option to use your existing telephone number with Magic Jack. The company had been promising this feature for several years, and they finally made good in September 2011. If you want to dump your landline provider and still avoid the hassle of changing your phone number, you can bring your existing phone number to MagicJack for a small fee.

Using Magic Jack, you can make free calls to any phones in the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, and the U. S. Virgin Islands, or to any other MagicJack user anywhere on Earth. People who want to call you can reach you at your MagicJack phone number, no matter where you happen to be.

Another benefit is international calling. If you take the Magic Jack with you when you travel, you can call any phone in the US for free. And people can reach YOU by calling a US number. Also, if you have a family member who lives outside the US, and they have a reliable Internet connection, this can be a significant savings on overseas long-distance fees.

MagicJack service also includes free directory assistance, voicemail, call-waiting, caller-ID, and voicemail. You can also forward calls to another number temporarily. MagicJack's voice quality is excellent, by

WHAT IS MAGIC JACK — EBAY ADVENTURES

most accounts. Like any VoIP service, MagicJack needs a fair amount of bandwidth; at least 128 Kbps in both directions. Cable, DSL, and other land-based broadband works well with VoIP, but satellite connections are often problematic.

Magic Jack Problems?

Some customers with the original MJ device have complained about intermittent poor sound quality. Some things that are known to cause problems are glitches in your Internet service, network-intensive file sharing services such as Bittorrent, and downloading large files during a phone call. Depending on how beefy your computer is, video, games or other tasks that require lots of memory or processor power can also be problematic, if they are taking place during a call. And of course, if the computer is infested with malware, all bets are off.

Some users have complained they had to restart their computer each morning to get their MagicJack to work. Other have found that using a powered USB hub cured the troubles they were having. The good news is that MagicJack Plus, which does not need to plugged into the computer, should be immune from all of these problems. For the vast majority of users with a solid high-speed internet connection, voice quality or dropped calls shouldn't be an issue.

Magic Jack Customer Service

Since I posted this article, there have been quite a few people contacting me, thinking that this website is Magic Jack Customer Service. It's not... I'm a tech journalist, and this is a review. I don't have a red phone with a direct line to MJ Headquarters. But you CAN visit the Magic Jack Customer Service page online, call MJ Support (281-404-1551), or try their Main Office (561-594-2140). That's all the info I have on Magic Jack Customer Support. Really!

So there are both pros and cons to the device, but I can say that it's definitely not a scam, and works well for most people as a landline replacement. MagicJack is a very easy, highly portable, and affordable VoIP solution. It's been around a long time in "Internet years," and it will probably continue evolving. If you want to cut your phone bill, MagicJack can be a good way to do it.

Normally, to achieve these sorts of numbers you have to sell a lot of items over a fairly long period of time, which is why most buyers feel that they can trust" a "Top-rated seller" -- they've got a "proven track record."

This seller is effectively trying to "buy" a solid reputation in a short period of time at a relatively low cost -- the loss on each individual sale of these dongles is the business cost of building his reputation - he's basically giving away USB Bluetooth dongles to get a large number of positive feedback ratings.

Why Multiple Accounts

You might wonder why a seller would use multiple eBay accounts.

If a seller gets too many negative feedbacks in a short period of time, eBay may ban the account, or require the seller to take specific actions to "repair their reputation."

Even a handful of negative feedbacks in a week will turn off buyers even if eBay doesn't take any action, so many of the "big sellers" have multiple accounts so that they can "throw away" an account that has been "poisoned" by negative feedback ratings.

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

ACCIDENTS HAPPEN

By John Curth

Phoenix PC Users Group　　jlcurt (at) hotmail.com>

Last year I purchased a new 1 TB hard drive for my 3 year old computer since it was now out of warranty/guarantee, but mainly because the price was right for the new hard drive.

The replacement went in really fast and easy plus I also installed Windows 7 on it that I received from Microsoft a few months before. Everything is cool.

As time moved on I made a decision to utilize the old hard drive and thought I would try to use it to do a backup for me. My normal backup process has been to save the files that I install not saving any of the programs or updates. My thought here is, since I have the CD/DVD's for the programs that I want on the computer, it isn't necessary for me to save them, so I gave it a try to see what it is all about.

I had to purchase a cable connection which came with its own power supply for the hard drive and connect it to my USB port. In this case I had a problem with a flakey power supply but was able to exchange it for one that worked. While in that mode of finding out why I couldn't access the drive, I used my old school texts for answers. I hit upon a couple of different answers that unfortunately for me were not correct.

One of them being was that I needed to change the BIOS settings for the computer because what I was looking at was a notation on my existing hard drive that the backup contained no "mbr" and wouldn't allow me access. I took a DOS class back in 1995 at Glendale Community College and remembered that "mbr" was installed when you formatted a new hard drive and stands for Master Boot Record.

With that being the case, I considered starting from scratch again. In fact I still have MS DOS 6.2 but it's on floppy disks. That wasn't going to help since I didn't have a floppy drive on this computer. I looked into somehow getting a CD that can be used as a - Boot Disk - or possibly even making one.

Do you remember hearing "Resistance is Futile" in this case it was just that? As my actual problem was the power supply that came with my original pur-

chase and once changed to a new one the hard drive came to life and it now contains my entire backup.

Now again time goes forward and I wish to view pictures that I have from back then on this computer. The digital copies that contain the pictures are all on 3 ½ inch floppies and again this computer doesn't have a floppy drive so now I must purchase another. Back to the store and find what I wanted was really easy as the new one will plug into the USB drive and comes up as: A Drive.

I looked at that HOT and HEAVY, wow am I seeing things? I wondered if I could put the number 1 floppy in it from MS DOS 6.2 and would it boot? And so I did just that. Guess What? It did in fact boot and wanted to install the MS DOS program onto the hard drive. Did I do it, no; I was just window shopping so to speak at this time.

And now - the pictures that are on the floppies that I want to see on this computer. I inserted one of them and viewed the files on the floppy. I tried to run the Setup.exe file but Windows 7 didn't like that idea at all. It wasn't going to have any of that madness. In this case, I assumed that it had to do with the basic structure of the Setup file being too old.

On the web I went and did a search of the company that I purchased the pictures with to possibly download an up to date Setup.

The original company was located in Texas and has been bought out and so was that company and now the new owners are in California are the holders of the program files. I sent them an email requesting help with a run program to help me view the pictures in Windows 7. The very next day I received an answer from their Customer Support people telling me that nothing can be done about it since those files are lost.

So after all that searching and time I'm now at a new dilemma and very reluctantly I dug out my old computer with Windows XP on it. There it was the old program and this computer does have a working 3 ½ inch floppy on it. With that being the case, I was now able to transfer the pictures to a brand new 4 GB flash drive and then transfer all of the photos to the new computer with Windows 7 on it.

Windows Live Photo Gallery picked right up on them since they were all .jpg extensions fortunately.

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 SEND TEXT MESSAGES FOR FREE

HOW TO SEND TEXT MESSAGES FOR FREE

By Bob Rankin

http://askbobrankin.com

Text messaging is a wildly popular feature of cell phones, and one of the industry's fattest cash cows. But ironically, the growing popularity of smartphones is threatening the enormously profitable SMS text message, as free text messaging services that use data connections challenge traditional cellular SMS service.

Text messages brought a whopping $20 billion to cell phone companies last year; Verizon alone earned $7 billion in text message revenue. Profit margins are high, too. The cost of delivering a text message is estimated at one-third of a cent. Most wireless operators charge 10 to 20 cents per text message, or a flat monthly rate of around $20 for unlimited text messaging. International text messages can cost even more.

Free text messaging services have been around for several years. There are many web-to-phone text services like Txt2Day that let you send a text message from your computer to any cell phone. Txt2Day promises you won't get spammed as a result, and they won't share your number with anyone. And in order to prevent anonymous harassment, all messages are tagged with the sender's IP address. Txt2Day will provide this info to law enforcement when requested, and will also filter out most common "abusive" words. Unfortunately, you cannot always receive a reply via these web-to-text services.

A notable exception is Google Voice's free text messaging service. You can text to any SMS-enabled phone in the U. S. or Canada for free, and receive replies. Of course, your correspondents will have to pay their carriers' usual text message charges.

Most mobile carriers also have an email-to-text feature that allows you to send a message to a special email address that forwards to the recipient's cell phone. For example, you can send an email to 123-456-7890@vtext.com, and Verizon will deliver it to the user with that cell phone number. If you want to send a photo, change the domain to vzwpix.com. Users on other major carriers can be reached as follows @txt.att.net (AT&T); @tmomail.net (T-Mobile); @messaging.sprintpcs.com (Sprint). For a comprehensive carrier list, see SMS gateways. Recipients can reply to your message, if their carrier allows them to send texts to an email address. The downside of course, is that you have to know in advance which carrier the recipient uses.

Free Apps For Texting

Apple has just added free text messaging to its iOS operating system. The service, dubbed iMessage, will let users send and receive text, photos, and video to other iOS users over a WiFi or mobile data connection. As is typical in the closed Apple ecosphere, the service works only between Apples devices, including the iPhone, iPad, and iPod Touch.

But don't worry... there are other free text messaging apps that work on Android or Blackberry, and will operate across platforms.

TextPlus provides free texting through an app available for iOS and Android devices. You get a TextPlus phone number to use with the app, similar to a Google Voice number. TextPlus does more than simple SMS messaging. You can join "communities" which are essentially chat rooms. You can send group texts to multiple contacts. You can even attach a voice message to a text message. TextPlus uses 3G or WiFi connections and works with tablets as well as smartphones.

Not quite free, but close, is an interesting text service from TigerText.com. TigerText messages can be set to "expire" after a period of time. The messages reside on TigerText's server, not on anyone's phone. TigerText messages cannot be saved, copied, or forwarded by their recipients. You can probably think of several politicians who might wish they were TigerText customers. TigerText is free to try for 30 days, after which the service costs $1.99 per month or $19.95 annually. It's available for iPhone, Blackberry, Android, and Windows 7 devices.

Just as Skype, Vonage, and other VoIP services drove down the cost of voice calls, free text messaging services based on IP networks are undermining cellular carriers' overpriced text services. And that's a good thing for consumers

Read more: http://askbobrankin.com/free_text_messaging_services.html#ixzz1bjHZtZdZ

GEEZ-GMAIL

GEEZ - GMAIL
By Abby Stokes abbystokes(at)yahoo.com
www.abbyandme.com

When I'm asked what free webbased e-mail I recommend it is **NOT** Gmail, www.gmail.google.com/.

I know, I know, your kids and grand kids are all over you to use Gmail instead of AOL. I agree that AOL is inconsistent and not as compatible with many handheld devices, but Gmail's design is not particularly "user-friendly" (a misnomer when referring to anything   computer). I would suggest Yahoo <https://login.yahoo.com/> over Gmail, but I understand that your family has more influence over your decisions that I do.

So, if you're going to take the plunge and use Gmail, let's make it as "friendly" as we can by customizing it to meet your needs. My first criticism is that e-mails stack on top of one another**:**
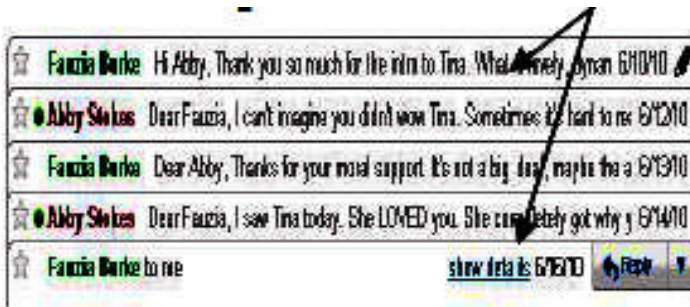
For a newbie what you see above can be conceptually confusing and, for those that have dexterity issues, this format is difficult to manipulate - it requires very good aim.

I hear you daughter snapping back that one could click on **Expand All** in the right sidebar. The problem with this option is that Google then presents the oldest e-mail on top and the most recent must be scrolled down to - not an optimal choice for someone just learning to scroll or who has memory issues. Rather than debate the good, bad, and ugly of Gmail, let me offer you a way to reformat the Inbox. This stacking is referred to as "conversation view."

To turn conversation view off:
1) Click on **Settings** (top right)
2) Scroll down until you see
Conversation View:
 3) Click in the circle (aka radio dial) to the left of
Conversation view off
4) MOST IMPORTANT - Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on **Save Changes**

I am asked regularly "How can I change the font to be larger on all of my outgoing e-mails?" This is a courtesy to the reader that most older users are more apt to opt for. It is an elusive option with Gmail, but it does exist.

 To enable change font style:
1) Click **Settings** (top right)
2) Click the **Labs** tab (far right)
3) Scroll down to **Default Text Styling**
4) Click in the circle to the left of **Enable**
5) MOST IMPORTANT - Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on **Save Changes**

While you're visiting Settings or the Lab tab, take a look around and see what else you might want to customize. Make a note of the original setting - in case you don't like the change you've made, you can revert to what it was.

For those teaching Gmail to an new user, be sure to really hit home that the arrow to the right of Reply is where the most common actions will be hidden - Forward, Print, Reply   All, etc. Why did Gmail choose to hide these features? Mine is not to wonder why. Mine is just to show you how.

You're capable of learning anything - well-designed or not. Just keep in mind when you think the problem is you, it's more likely a thoughtless design choice.

Take a deep breath and rise above it!

THE REGISTRY: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

THE REGISTRY:
What's it All About?
Phil Sorrentino president(at)spcug.org
Sarasota PCUG, FL www.spcug.org

The Windows Registry is a place in your computer that maintains information relating to all of the essential components of your System: the Operating System (OS), Applications (Apps), Users, and Hardware. It is a database that defines your System and how it operates. (A "database" being an organized collection of data for one or more uses, typically provided in digital form.) Entries in the Registry change whenever you make a change to any of these areas. You can think of it as a "scratch pad" that remembers all the details of how your System is setup, and how you like to use it. The Registry can be manually changed using the Registry Editor, "regedit", but this should only be undertaken with the utmost of care and caution. Before you attempt to change the Registry make sure you have detailed directions from a well-known, trusted source. Mistakes made to the Registry, at worst, could make your computer unusable, requiring you to start all over with a fresh installation of the OS.

Most mistakes may only create a problem with a certain part of the computer's operation. In these cases, restoring the Registry can fix the mistake. So, make sure that before you attempt to change the Registry, you "backup" the Registry. This can be done by creating a Restore Point, or Exporting the Registry to a safe place on your hard drive. If you determine a mistake was made, you then could go back to the Restore Point before you made the changes to the Registry, or you could Import the old Registry from the "a priori" saved Registry. Again, don't do this unless you have very good direction and you are very convinced that you have to make the changes.

So what does The Registry look like? And how is it organized? The Registry is organized in a hierarchical fashion, just like folders on our computers. Think about "Documents". It typically contains Pictures, Music, Video, etc., and if you look into any of these, you will further find folders that are there to organize that particular type of file, pictures, music, or videos. Similarly, the Registry has basically five* high level items; in the registry they are called "Keys", but you can still think

of them as folders. (You may also see these keys referred to as "hives".) The names will look strange to most of us, with the possible exception of those that may have developed software code sometime in the past.

These five are:

HKEY_CLASSES_ROOT,

HKEY_USERS,

HKEY_CURRENT_USER,

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE, and

HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG.

KEY	Contains Information Relating To:
HKEY_ CLASSES_ ROOT	Computer's User Interface
HKEY_ USERS	Each User's Account
HKEY_ CURRENT_ USER	The user that is currently logged in to Windows
HKEY_ LOCAL_ MACHINE	Hardware and Software found on this particular computer
HKEY_ CURRENT_ CONFIG	The machine's current configuration

See, I told you they would look strange. Each of These keys contains a specific type of information "shown in the following table:

THE REGISTRY: WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

(Continued from page 13)
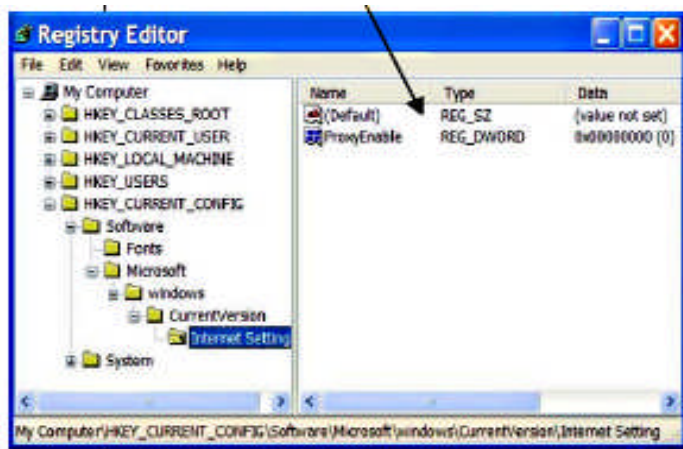
MICROSOFT WORD 2010

(*There are actually other High Level Keys in the Registry, but they are not accessible with Regedit, and hence cannot be easily changed. These keys are more dynamic and contain information relating to the computer's runtime operations.) Regedit works very much like Windows Explorer (which has been called the keys to the kingdom, many times by yours truly). Select an object in the left pane and its contents is shown in the right pan An example of an open Registry is shown in the next column :

Notice the hierarchical arrangement of the folders in the HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG.

"Software" followed by "Microsoft" followed by "windows" followed by "CurrentVersion" and finally "Internet Settings" which is selected and the contents of which are shown in the right pane.

As with folders this implies that "Internet Settings" is contained within "Current Version" which is contained within "windows", which is contained within "Microsoft" which is contained within "Software" which is contained within the HKEY_CURRENT_CONFIG registry key.

Selecting the lowest level key in the left pane displays the contents in the right pane. The contents are individual items that control some operation within the computer.

Each item has a Name and a Data Type and a Data Value. Data Types can take on only certain Data Values, only those values determined by the Data Type.

These again are details that, I think, will only look familiar to someone who has been involved in programming in the past. However, it is good to see

these so that if you try to change the registry you will better understand the directions being given. Here are some of the Data Types and a brief description of their Data Values.

Name	Data Type	Data
Binary Value	REG_BINARY	Raw Binary Data
D Word Value	REG_DWORD	Integer that is 32 bits long
String Value	REG_SZ	Fixed Length Text String
Q Word	REG_QWORD	Integer that is 64 bits long

So, I guess by now I've lost most of the readers, but if you do want to use Regedit, the above information will be useful because the directions to change the registry look very cryptic, even after becoming familiar with the above information. A typical set of directions to change the Registry may look like the following. (This change to the Registry was made to fix a networking problem.)

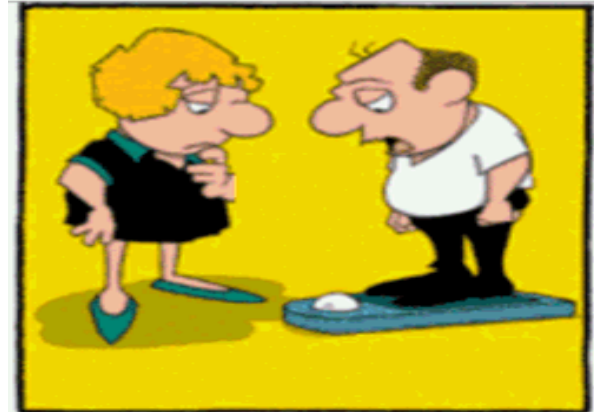Click Start, select Run, type regedit, and press Enter.

Navigate your way to the following Registry key:

HKEY_LOCAL_MACHINE\SYSTEM\CurrentControlSet\Services\Netbt\Parameters.Key:DhcpNodeType Value Type: REG_DWORD - Number Valid Range: 1,2,4,8 (B -node, Pnode, M-node, H-node) Default: 1 or 8 based on the server configuration Change value to 0.

There are times when a change to the Registry is just what the doctor ordered, but try never to get into the situation where it is necessary. A more prudent plan is to create an Image of your System when it is operating properly and go back to that whenever you get into trouble from a virus attack or a hardware failure. The Registry might be a nice place to visit (and appreciate) but you don't really want to spend very much time there.

Short Circuits...zzzt!

Help # 1. Police say a Bangor, Maine man was arrested this week for repeatedly calling 911 to ask for a ride. Officers found the man just after 1 a.m. Tuesday near his home. Police checked his cell phone and determined he had been making the calls in which he used profanities. The officers told the local newspaper that the man was "belligerent and nasty" when he was asked to get out of the road and stop yelling profanities. He then allegedly made an obscene gesture at police before he was arrested on charges of disorderly conduct and obstructing a public way. *Associated Press* Oct. 27, 2011

Help #2. Authorities say a 5-year-old looking for her mother in Ohio backed a car out of the driveway, then called 911 for help. Police say that she backed the car out after returning from school to an empty house. Apparently her mother had gone to the hospital with an emergency and her father never got the message. Worried that her mother was not at home, the girl decided to look for her in her mother's Lincoln Navigator. She backed down the sloped driveway and came to a stop on grass across the street. She then dialed 911, explained the situation and asked for quick help getting the car back home, because she said her mom would be upset with her. *Associated Press* October 25, 2011.

Help #3. A 21-year-old Northern California man was left hanging at a playground swing set overnight after he got stuck in the diaper-like seat for nine hours. Vallejo police say the man made a $100 bet with his friends that he could fit into a child's (Continues next column)

I WISH I COULD FILL UP ON SPAM AND COOKIES ALL DAY AND STILL BE AS THIN AS MY COMPUTER

WHEN DID WE START HAVING TO WATCH A SHORT AD BEFORE WE SEE OUR WEIGHT

swing at Blue Rock Springs Park . With the help of liquid laundry detergent, he managed to slide his legs into the seat. Authorities say that's when he got stuck - and his friends took off. A groundskeeper found the man screaming for help the next morning. Firefighters cut the chains off the swing and took him to the hospital, where a cast cutter was used to remove the seat. *Associated Press* Oct. 25, 2011

Help #4. Authorities in Southern California say they rescued a man stuck inside a hollow tree trunk by following the sounds of his screams down into a creek bed. The Orange County sheriff's deputies found the man stuck up to his chest inside a narrow hole in the trunk, which extended about four or five feet underground. Firefighters took about 90 minutes to free him once they found him, apparently when they stopped laughing.. It is unknown why the man climbed into the hole near the base of the tree. *Associated Press* Oct. 25, 2011

Help #5. Colorado Springs police say a man's girlfriend unexpectedly came home just before another woman was due to visit, so he called police to report his new acquaintance as a burglar. The man had invited a woman he met online to come to his home after 3 a.m. so they could get better acquainted, but his girlfriend came home first. When the other woman arrived, he called 911 and falsely reported an intrusion. He was cited for a misdemeanor. *Associated Press* Oct. 26, 2011
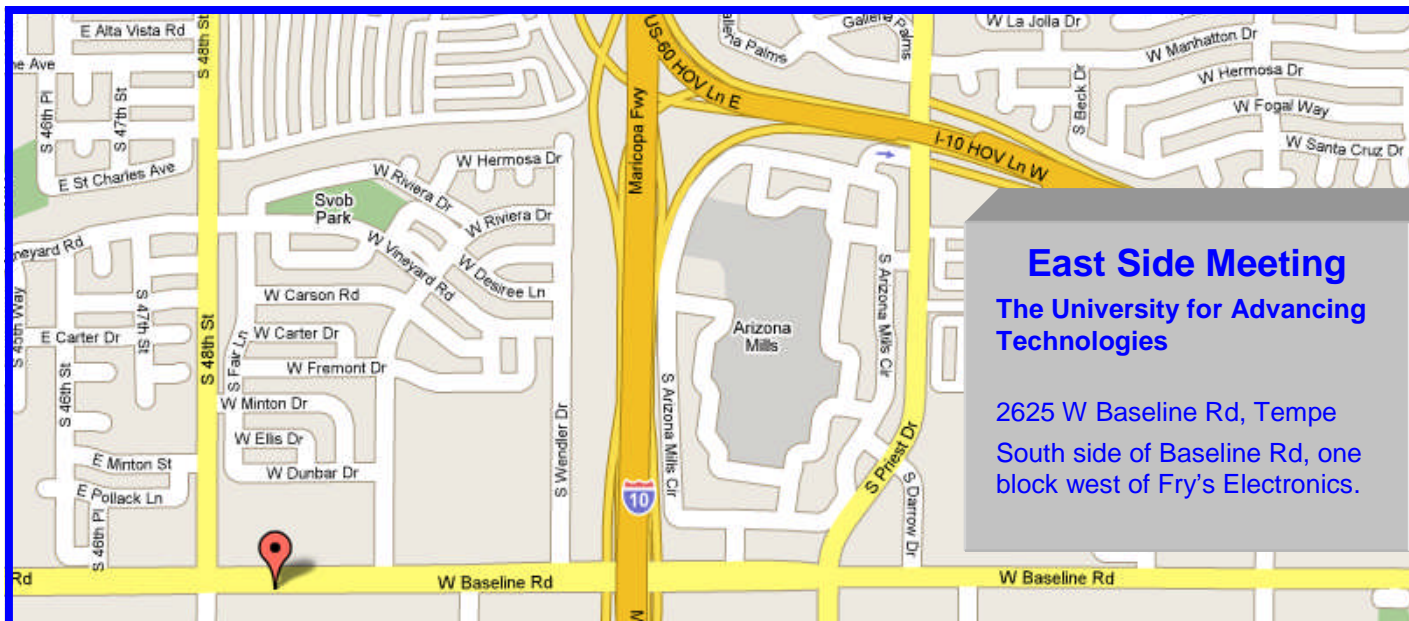
These Items are based on articles from the noted sources and have been adapted by the Editor.

HOWTOGETTHERE
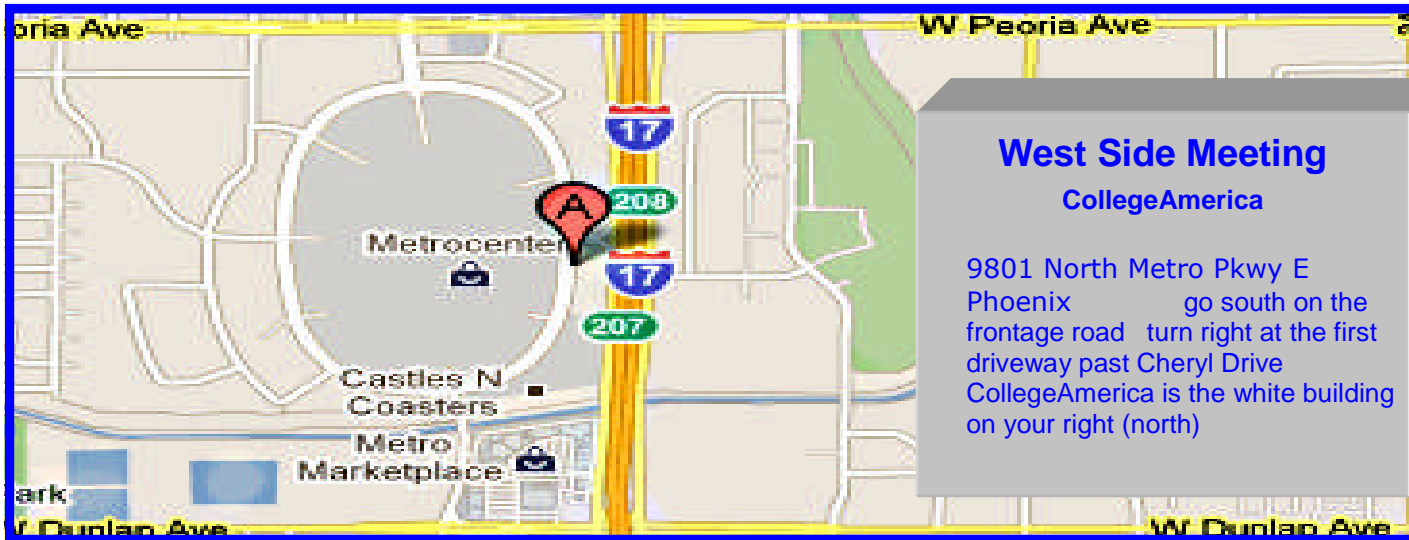
West Side Meeting

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.
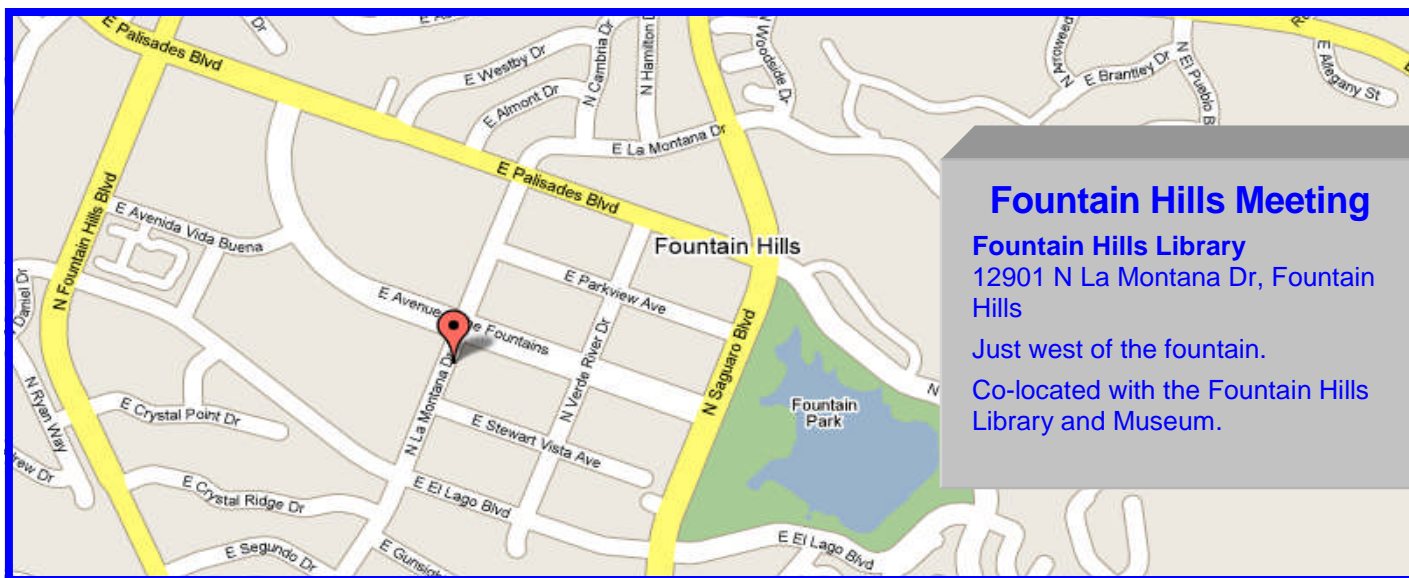
Fountain Hills Meeting

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, 2012

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

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

November 2011

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group
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