



NEWSLETTER

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MAIN MEETINGS - maps on Page 16

West Side.....Tue, July 15, 2014
CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, July 16, 2014
2625 W Baseline Rd, Tempe
(one block west of Fryu's Electronics)

Fountain Hills.....Thur, July 17, 2014
Fountain Hills Library, 12901 N La Montana Drive,
Fountain Hills

Presentation this month:
Current computer topics in the news

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

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Steering Committee:

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

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FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hello everybody!

By the time you read this newsletter, the 4th of July will have come and gone. But our club is very patriotic with several of our members who served in the military. One lady even served in the Marine Corps! Awesome. Thank you for your service.

Our editor, Michael has some good thoughts about driverless cars. In my case, if I am driving somewhere, I find it very convenient to change my mind and stop to go shopping, to drop something off, etc. On the other hand, I've had a couple of accidents which could have been avoided if I paid more attention.

(By the way, how much are these cars going to cost?)

Last month, I tried out **Norton Safe Web** <http://safeweb.norton.com/> & **Online Link Scan** - www.onlinelinkscan.com Both are excellent.

Before you click to a site, check it out first with **Is This Website Safe?** from Norton Safe Web. This helpful service runs a digital background check to see if a site has malicious intent in mind or if it's OK to visit. “

Kim Komando tips this month:

Stop apps from stealing your information online - see page 14. Many other tips too.

David -

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Sometimes scientists, engineers, and developers get a little too far from sensible projects. The latest one to catch the eye of researchers in the world of electronics is the driverless car! Not to be left out, understandably, are automobile designers and manufacturers, both domestic and foreign. But what is all the fuss about? Airlines and overnight express delivery companies have been using robotics to sort luggage and packages for years, with almost perfect results. But "almost" perfect is not acceptable when it comes to transport of human beings.

Prototype driverless cars, also termed as "autonomous vehicles", have been tested and have been found to have certain capabilities. The current test cars are ordinary vehicles with large boxes mounted on the roof that contain radar, lidar, GPS, and a computer vision system.

However, in their giddiness to promote the concept the developers suggest that removing the human constraints on vehicle control will lead to fewer collisions and faster traffic flow on crowded highways. Suggestions are made that some people who are now not permitted to drive could do so. These special groups include the sick, the blind, the elderly, the intoxicated, and so on! (The system might not be too bad if it would keep teen-age texters and the cowboy "get outa my way" pickup truck drivers off the streets.)

Despite the assertion that driverless vehicles would have fewer accidents, past experience, even with the best mechanical and electronic devices, has shown that incidents would happen. Who then is responsible? Is it the manufacturer, the software writer, or the state that licenses special groups who would now be "driving"? Would insurance coverage even be available?

The major US automobile companies tried to develop semi-automatic driving systems over fifty years ago. The trials involved embedding sensors on roads that were matched with a sister device on moving vehicles. The projects were eventually abandoned for a variety of reasons, e.g., costs, maintenance, etc. But the prime reason for abandonment was that drivers refused to concede control of their vehicles. Cars and driving are synonymous with "Freedom". Look at the television ads.

Do we really need "autonomous" cars? We already have a vehicle equipped to take us places without our personal control. It is called a "taxi", and for large groups, we have a "bus" or a "train".

Michael

[2014 MEETINGS CALENDAR](#)

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

[PRESENTATION THIS MONTH](#)

Current computer topics in the news

[GENERAL MEETINGS](#)

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 12)

- Tuesday, July 15, 2014
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and (Election of Officers - Nov & Dec)
- 6:30 PM - Q and A

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map pg 12)

- Wednesday, July 16, 2014
- 6:30 PM - Q and A

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 12)

- Thursday, July 17, 2014]
- 6:30 PM - Q and A

Meetings this year 2014: Reserve UAT August for Sept-Dec

July 15, 16, 17	August 19, 20, 21	Sept 16, 17, 18
Oct 14, 15, 16	Nov 18, 19, 20	Dec 16, 17, 18

**REMEMBER:
PAY YOUR DUES! Thanks.**

The Tip Corner

Bill Sheff, Novice SIG Coordinator, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

December 2013 issue, The LVCG Journal

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How Often Should I Shut Down My Computer?

This question comes up quite often. Unfortunately there's no easy answer. Are you concerned about your electric bill? How important is it to have immediate access to your computer? What about your own personal preference?

Electricity Costs vary based upon how many watts of power your computer uses as well as what the local utility charges per kwh. Some say it costs roughly \$25 per month, however I do not think it actually runs that high. But if conservation and economics are important to you shut it down each night.

Wear and Tear does play a part, however today's hard drives usually stop spinning when idle and fans don't work as hard in sleep mode.

Many Processes continue to run which has the potential to cause memory losses.

The bottom line? When I researched this tip the suggestion was to shut your computer off when not in use. However, I very seldom shut my computer off. I put it into sleep mode before I go to sleep. So I guess this tip was not too helpful for most of you. But just be aware there are many different opinions out there, so no matter what you do, some will agree and others won't.

Laptop Abilities

Here are a few items you might want to consider when searching out your next laptop. By this time we know that Windows 8 is here and alive and well. But if you still prefer the Windows 7 look Classic Shell and Pokki are two apps that will give you that comfortable Win7 look. And speaking of apps you can get an app that turns your laptop camera into a surveillance system that will automatically start recording when someone enters the room, or even set it up so you can turn on your camera from a remote location and view a live feed.

You can also download a face recognition app, which uses the camera to scan your face during startup to ensure that it's really you who is logging on to your machine. But, while this is more fun than punching in a password, it's a little less secure. Holding a photograph of you in front of the computer would work. There are other apps that can turn your laptop into an easy-to-use photo booth. Look for one that lets you accessorize portraits with digital costumes, add thought-bubbles, and even alter the color to make the photos look old-fashioned. These apps and software are usually not pre-installed, so until you download them, your camera will be less functional.

Many of the laptops, and all the tablets utilize a touch screen. There are finger and hand-swiping commands to be learned. Different brands can have different movements, so look them up to learn how to switch between programs and windows, shrink and zoom in, drag-and-drop, and more. Lenovo's 10-point multi-touch displays offer a wide-range of intuitive gestures that use up to all ten of your fingers. And, if you have Windows 8, you can use Customized Flicks to create your own touch screen commands.

Look for a laptop that has as a minimum an HDMI port, USB drives, headphone output, microphone input, and a DC-in. An SD card reader slot would be useful also, however USB connections could do.

If your plans also include an external USB3 device you want your new laptop to come with a USB 3.0 port. Data transfer is up to ten times faster with a USB3. And you may want to see if there is a firewire port so you can hook up digital cameras. But whatever they have, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with all its capabilities.

You might have noticed I did not comment whether it should be a Mac or PC. Today both contain almost all the programs you need. The cost of a Mac and associated programs are usually more expensive than the PC. This is because there are a lot more PCs out there which make it cheaper per unit. Most young people prefer the Mac, but that is because of the great marketing job done by providing Macs in the schools. If your laptop is also going to be used in business, it should be compatible with the equipment at the office.

CTRL + ALT +DELETE

Occasionally a program gets stuck. It stops working and will not close no matter what you do. The answer is CTRL + ALT +DELETE. This opens a window with a few options: Lock, Switch User, Log Off, Change Password and Start Task Manager. The Task Manager will show all programs that are in use. Sometimes you can see that a program is not functioning if it says 'not running', however it might show that the program you are having trouble with is still running. This can be true or not. It could be hung up in a memory loop, or really just taking a very long time to respond. In any event you can just highlight the program you are having trouble with and click on End Task, and the program will be shut down. Using the Task Manager means you do not have to shut down the computer in an incorrect manner.

CryptoPrevent (4.2.4)

There is a bad program going around called Cryptolocker which locks up your files and you can only unlock them by paying money. CryptoPrevent is a tiny utility to lock down any Windows OS (XP, Vista, 7, 8, and 8.1) to prevent infection by the Cryptolocker malware or 'ransomware', which encrypts personal files and then offers decryption for a paid ransom.

Additionally, due to the way that CryptoPrevent works, it actually protects against a wide variety of malware, not just Cryptolocker!

You can get it here: <http://www.foolishit.com/vb6-projects/cryptoprevent/>

This tip was provided to me by one of my readers. Thanks.

Has Your Browser Been Hacked?

Many of you have noticed that without warning a new toolbar appears in your browser. Or when you click on a site you get misdirected to another site touting some product.

Since there is no such thing as a free lunch, and many legitimate companies are allowing this to happen what can we do to minimize this unwanted intrusion.

Some times this comes from a cookie or temp file that ended up on your computer due to a casual click in a site. More often than not it appears when you are installing an update from a legitimate program. In more simpler times when an update is downloaded all we had to do is install it normally. We never thought of clicking on the custom update button. But that is what we have to do. If we click on the normal update button, bundled with the update are all the Advertising, Loading toolbars, Redirection, and other marketing tools. Sometimes the boxes to add toolbars are shown in the opening screen, but more and more they

appear within the custom install and there we are able to decline to add those pesky toolbars. So what you have to do is read everything you upload. The advertising media is big money and doesn't seem to be going away soon.

Fortunately, most of these marketing bullies can be uninstalled or deleted quite simply. So if you see some new icons show up in your browser, try to figure out what they are. Depending on your browser, there should be a section on "add-ons". Visit that and see if some strange toolbars are installed there. And go to the Programs and Features in the Control Panel to uninstall. Just remember: it is all about money.

The Running of the Nerds 2014

Lou Torraca, President, MOAA – The TUG, Hawaii
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Who needs Barcelona and the bulls when we have Las Vegas and the Nerds? Yup, The International Consumer Electronics Show kicked off in Vegas 7-10 January with 150,000 folks running with the Nerds, wanting to see as many of the 3,200 exhibits as possible. For the media, the show starts with 3 events, CES Unveiled on Sunday night at the Mandalay Bay, Digital Experience at the Mirage on Monday night and Showstoppers at the Wynn on Tuesday night. Monday is an all-day extravaganza of press conferences, each one an hour and fifteen minutes, then a fifteen minute break to run to the next one. I also went to one that previewed the China information technology expo (CITE) sponsored by the government in April and another one that previewed IFA, held in Berlin in September and which they bill as the world's leading trade show for consumer electronics and home appliances. So, with all that said, how do u get to see anything? Fortunately, the first three events take place in ballrooms and as many as 200 vendors display their best products, which, BTW, include cars, which look like the next Tech Hot spot!

From streaming music to BING search to self-parking there was a lot of buzz about all the various models displayed. TVs were also a big hit with UHD, and curved screens causing a lot of oohs and aahs... biggest was when, with the push of a button, the curved screen was returned to a flat screen. But be prepared for sticker shock.....an LG 84inch UHD is priced at \$17,000. !!!!!



OK, back to the real world, here are a few gadgets that caught my eye.

DISH Super Joey

The eight-show system involves Dish's Hopper (pronounced Happah by folks from Boston or who went to BU J) DVR and a new Super Joey add-on box for separate rooms. The catch is that four of those shows have to be from the broadcast networks ABC, NBC, CBS and Fox. Dish also unveiled Joey boxes that can run wirelessly with the help of a router that sits next to the Hopper. Previously, Joey boxes had to be connected by separate coaxial cables. Now they just need power outlets. Improvements in Wi-Fi technology made the new wireless setup possible.

ASUS PadFoneX: Combines a smartphone with the convenience of a tablet

Easily dock the smartphone into the tablet docking station and u have a full tablet with all of your files and customizations in one place. U can charge the smartphone wirelessly or while docked for extended battery life. 4 U Techno nerds, this ASUS Padfone X device powers with 300~2266mHz MSM8974AB and Adreno 330 chipset. Other specs include 1920×1200 resolution, 2GB RAM, 16GB ROM and it will run Android 4.4 OS. Very impressive!



The Martian Notifier

It doesn't advertise to the world that it's a tech gadget. On the contrary, it looks almost completely like a regular watch, save for a small horizontal screen on its face. That's where you see those notifications, which have replaced voice control as the newer model's bread and butter. It lets you customize your own vibration patterns for each different type of notification. So, if you have your arms full, the pattern of vibrations you feel will let you know right away what kind of notification just came in. Just an email... no rush. That's a text... might be the one you're waiting for. You customize the patterns for each type of alert and instantly know what type of notification is coming in without looking at the watch. Smartwatches in general keep you from having to look at your phone so often - but the Martian takes that a step further and keeps you from even having to look at your watch so often. If u have one or have a friend with one... u no what I mean.

Kolibree Smart Toothbrush

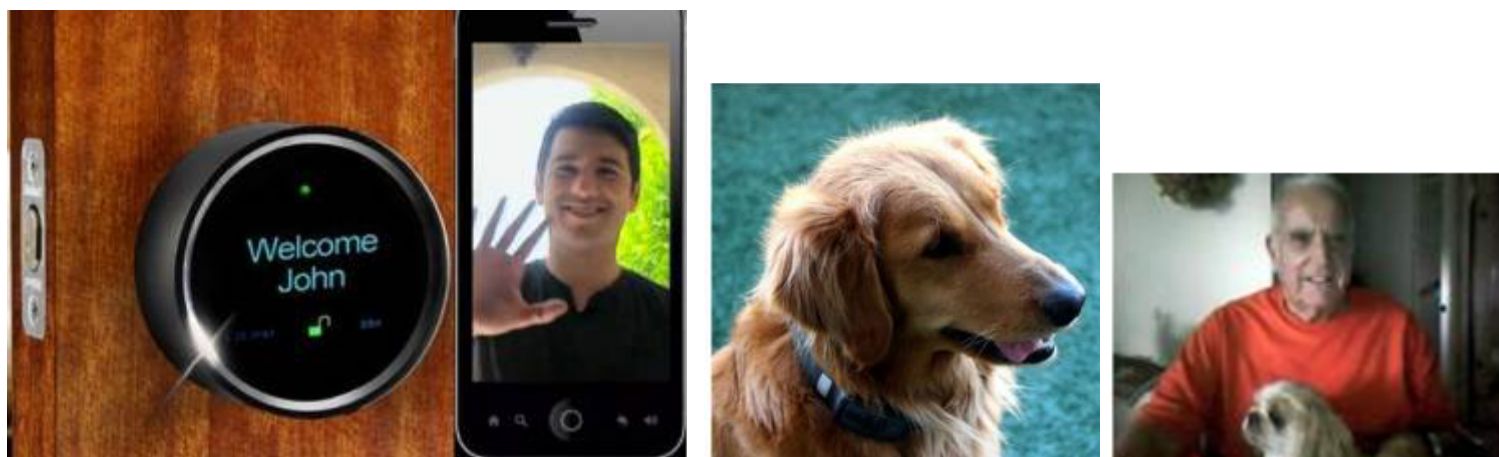
Toothbrushes have joined smartphones, smartwatches and smart beds in the ranks of devices with artificial intelligence, NBC News reported.

Kolibree has introduced what they are calling "the world's first connected electric toothbrush." The smart toothbrush senses how long and how well the user brushes and tracks down the user's performance on their phone. Besides tracking down tooth brushing performance, the electric toothbrush also teaches users how to brush right and it also tracks brushing habits.

The gadget comes with a mobile app compatible with iOS and the Android operating system that connects with the toothbrush via a Bluetooth connection. When the brush is in use, it syncs to the smartphone sharing information on how it's being used to the mobile app. Users can then share that information with their dentist, friends, family, or anyone else they choose. They can even post their results on social media. Somehow I can't see any of my grandkids/greatgrandkids posting their brushing info on Facebook... but who knows!! On the other hand, parents trying to teach their young ones about brushing may have a winner here.

GOJI Smart Lock

It will not only get unlocked when it senses your smartphone near it, but will also greet you with your name. The entire thing works through Bluetooth connectivity! Once you have the Goji smart lock installed on your door and a free app on your smartphone, you are all set to lock away your door of your room / cabinet / locker and keep your precious things safe from intruders. And when you are back, the lock senses your smartphone and unlocks the door automatically. And there's more. The Goji lock also has a built-in camera that takes pictures of all those who arrive. The lock connects to the home's Wi-Fi connection and relays images and alerts to residents' smartphones. So what if you end up losing your smartphone itself? Well you can cancel that particular phone's access. All you need to do is cancel Goji access for your lost phone using Goji's website or their 24-hour call center. You can cancel Goji access for your lost phone and request access to be transferred to another phone, effective immediately. You can regain control over your home access without changing or re-keying locks or worrying about anyone using your lost phone to gain access.



Voyce Band

Introducing a "smart" dog collar. It's called VOYCE. (I was surprised it wasn't called iSmart but there really are other folks as smart as the Apple ones!!) Created by a team of bio-medical engineers, veterinarians and dog behaviorists, the collar essentially tracks everything your dog is up to throughout the day. This includes all pertinent health data and, of course, info as to what that pooch put in its mouth. Since my best buddy is Pooky, my Shih Tzu, this was my favorite at CES.

While u catch ur breath with all that techno stuff, I'll be putting together a new list of gee-wizzers, so stay tuned, but stay safe out there on the www.

Aloha, Lou

Windows Media Center – Pictures, Videos and TV, too

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, FL

October 2013 Issue, PC Monitor

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Microsoft gave us a gift when they included Media Center in Windows. Windows Media Center (WMC) is a media player (organize and show pictures, slideshows and videos) and a digital video recorder (view and record live TV). Pictures and videos are really no big deal, Windows Media Player, WinAmp and VLC all do a fine job. The real gift is the ability to watch and record TV. It is possible to configure Media Center to handle up to 4 TV signals. Originally WMC was a separate version of Windows XP (Windows XP Media Center Edition), but it was later included in Vista (Home Premium and Ultimate), and finally all versions of Windows 7 (except Starter). Unfortunately, it is not included in Windows 8, but is available for Windows 8 Pro as an add-on for \$9.99. (It was free for Windows 8 Pro early adopters up until January 31, 2013.)

WMC uses TV tuners to record and play back TV from a standard antenna, cable or satellite signal. Digital tuners support TV broadcasts in High Definition or Standard Definition. A TV tuner is a device you use to connect an analog or digital TV signal to your computer. TV tuners come in two basic model types: external TV tuners, which usually plug into a USB port on your computer (the only choice if you are using a laptop), and internal TV tuner cards, which you must install inside your computer. In order to watch and/or record TV using Media Center, you'll need to physically connect a TV signal to the TV tuner on your computer. This typically involves connecting one end of a coaxial cable to your tuner and the other end to your TV signal source (e.g. over-the-air antenna, cable TV jack in the wall, cable TV set-top box, or satellite TV set-top box).

WMC can record TV programs manually, on a One-Touch-Record basis, or it can schedule recording shows using an included Program guide (that is customized to the local TV broadcaster). Recordings can then be put on to a DVD or portable media player (given that there are no copy restrictions). While watching live TV, WMC buffers the program so that the user can rewind, fast-forward or pause the live show, allowing users to review a spectacular touch-down pass or simply skip the commercials.

The User Interface is a little different than what Windows users are used to. The menus are very large, making them suitable for viewing on a big screen TV from your most comfortable chair. With the addition of a Media Center Remote, the user can control the operation from his/her easy chair without having to go to the computer keyboard (a wireless keyboard also gives the desired result). As expected, the "Close", "Restore Down", and "Minimize" buttons are in the upper right of the display, and note that a "Back" button is a left facing arrow in the upper left side of the display. These buttons appear when the mouse is moved. You can record a live (currently airing) TV show (the show is recorded from the moment you press the "Record" button). Obviously, if you're halfway through watching a show before you start recording, the first half won't be recorded. (Microsoft has not yet conquered time travel.) To start recording a show, Click the "Start" button, click "All Programs", and then click Windows Media Center.

On the Windows Media Center start screen, scroll to TV, and then click "Live TV". Move the mouse so that the playback controls appear, and then click "Record".

WMC provides a Guide that is customized to your own local provider and typically displays a schedule for the next 12 or 13 days. To schedule recordings using the Guide, scroll to TV and then right-click the program that you want to record, and then left-click "Record" to schedule the recording of that program. You can also search to find a TV show or movie that you want to record. On the WMC start screen, scroll

to TV, and then click Search. Click the category that you want to search by (such as Title), and then follow the instructions to start the search. On the search results page, click the TV show that you want to record, and then click "Record" to schedule a recording of that program. In order to record your favorite TV show every week, you can automate the process by scheduling the recording of an entire series. On the WMC start screen, scroll to TV, and then click Guide. Locate the TV series that you want to record, click it, and then click "Record Series".

Once you have recorded shows, they can easily be watched. From the WMC start screen, click TV and then click Recorded TV. This will display all the shows that have been recorded in order of "date-recorded", "title", or "original air date". This display is a horizontal scrolling list of thumbnails that represent each of the recorded shows. To move left or right, hover around the end of the list to illuminate the arrow for that direction, then click the arrow to move the list. Select a show to watch by clicking the thumbnail.

This will display a summary of the show selected. To watch the show, click "Play", (or click "Delete" to remove the recorded show, or "cancel series" if you've changed your mind about the future recording of this show). When you click "Play", the show will start with playback controls in the lower right hand side of the show. These controls will disappear in time, but to get them back, just move the mouse. Click "Pause" to temporarily stop the program. Click "Play" to resume the show. Click "Rewind", to watch something again, or click "Fast Forward", move ahead in the show. Click the "Volume Increase" button (the plus to the right of speaker) or the "Volume Decrease" button (the minus to the right of speaker) to increase or decrease the volume, or click the "Mute" button (the speaker) to turn the sound on or off. When you've finished watching the show, move the mouse, and then click "Stop".

WMC provides many additional features, many of which allow you more specific control of the recording process. You can set up Media Center to automatically record a specific channel at a specific time. And, you can set up Media Center to automatically record TV shows and movies based on keywords that are associated with a program such as actor's name, director's name, or even a word that appears in the title. (Then in the future, when a TV show or movie airs that matches keywords you specified, the program will automatically record.) But even without these extra features, WMC turns your computer into a very capable Digital Video Recorder that you can use to time-shift TV shows.

Chromecast –Watch On-line entertainment on your big screen TV

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

December 2013 issue, PC Monitor

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Chromecast is a new device from Google, aimed at getting your on-line entertainment on to your living room TV (or any TV with an HDMI input). For video streaming, Chromecast may be similar to AppleTV and Roku devices, though I haven't used either of these. Chromecast is an exciting device for both consumers and developers alike, because it offers a new, inexpensive (\$35) and simple way to stream entertainment from a Website or a computer to your living room big screen HDTV. (By the way, a less elegant way to accomplish this is to connect your TV directly to your computer, via HDMI, and then go directly to the websites with the computer. This is not usually convenient because of the locations of the computer and TV and the cables and wires needed to set this up.) Chromecast is small and it plugs directly into the back of your TV, keeping it completely out of sight.

Wikipedia adds: "Chromecast is a digital media streaming adapter developed by Google. The device, a 2.83 inch dongle, plays audio/video content on a high-definition television by streaming it via Wi-Fi from the Internet or local network. Users select the media to play on their television from the Google Chrome web browser on a personal computer or from a supported App on their mobile device."

Chromecast's basic features are as follows:

- 1080p output video resolution
- Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n
- USB powered
- Compatible with Android and iOS devices

The minimum system requirements needed to take advantage of Chromecast are as follows:

- HDTV with HDMI input
- Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n network
- For use with a Tablet or Smartphone:
 - Android OS 2.3 and higher
 - Apple OS iOS 6 and higher
- For use with a computer:
 - Windows 7 and higher
 - Mac OS 10.7 and higher

Chromecast works with devices you already own, including Android and Apple tablets and smartphones. It also works with the Chrome Browser for Windows and Mac. A Browser, with the Chromecast extension, allows you to send the contents of a "Browser Tab" to your HDTV allowing you to experience photos, videos, and music on your HDTV. It turns any TV with an HDMI input into a smart TV, albeit only as smart as the Chromecast device

Chromecast allows you to view on-line entertainment on your living room HDTV; however, currently it seems to be limited to Netflix, Hulu plus (not Hulu), YouTube, Google Play TV & Movies, and Google Music. Indications are that many others such as Pandora, HBO Go, Vimeo, and Redbox, are in the pipeline. You will need an account with any of the pay services, such as Netflix or Hulu plus (YouTube is free, so far).

Chromecast is packaged in a very neat, compact box. Included in the box are the Chromecast device (it looks like a flash memory device with an HDMI connector), an HDMI extension cable (for hard to reach HDMI connections), a micro-USB to USB cable (to supply power to the device), a power supply adapter (if a convenient USB port is not available), and a tiny 14 page product information pamphlet. The "Getting Started" directions are printed on the inside of a swing-out cover and are clear and simple. Chromecast plugs into your TV's HDMI port, while the power is supplied by connecting the devices micro-USB port to a USB port, on the TV (if available), or to the external power supply that plugs into ac power (recommended). Because Chromecast accomplishes its magic using your Local Area Network, aka Wi-Fi, you will need to enter the password to your Wi-Fi network during the setup process. The Setup, in a nutshell, is simply, Plug the device into your TV, Connect it to your Wi-Fi, and let it do its thing. The setup is really easy to do and it took only a few minutes, although the TV screen did go dark for a few tense moments while the Chromecast was rebooting leaving an uneasy feeling until the "ready to cast" screen appeared. Once Chromecast was "ready to cast", streaming from an Android tablet or the Chrome browser was easily accomplished.

(Note: It is a good idea to follow Google's directions to download the Setup App on to your mobile device first. With this done, setup was very easy.)

Google's uses the term "cast" to indicate streaming. The "cast" icon appears in the tablet App or in the Chrome browser in order to enable "cast"ing to the Chromecast device. The "cast" icon is a rectangle with a symbol in the lower left corner that looks like a Wi-Fi symbol.

Using a tablet, the Chromecast App is used in conjunction with YouTube (or other Chromecast enabled App, such as Netflix). After you start YouTube (or Netflix) on the tablet, touch the "cast" icon towards the top of the screen. A window will open to allow selection of the tablet display or the Chromecast device (that has been discovered). Select the Chromecast device and the YouTube video will be shown on the HDTV hosting the Chromecast device. The tablet acts as a controller to direct the video/audio from the source to the Chromecast device for use on the TV. Could it be any easier? (Return to this window to return YouTube back to the tablet display.)

Google has set up a website at <https://support.google.com/chromecast/> for product information and it includes some very good directions for using Chromecast. This site is a very good Help resource for getting started with, using, or just learning about Comcast's capabilities.

Google has indicated that YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu Plus are just the beginning. Many others have voiced their support, and many independent developers have started to develop Apps for this new device. It's only a matter of time before Chromecast has many new uses.

Backups and Disk Cloning

Recap of October 2013 Meeting by Anne Moss, Secretary, Northern Neck Computer Users' Group, NJ

October 2013 issue, The Computer Link

www.nncug.org

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Brian Riley, Vice President of the NNCUG, gave a Membership Meeting presentation on computer backups and cloning of hard drives. Most of his presentation centered on what you can do to get your computer working quickly after a virus infestation or hard drive failure.

He explained that while backing up is necessary, the problem is that you have to have a working operating system and backup software to restore the backup you made. This may entail having to reinstall the operating system and backup software before you can even start to get your computer back.

He then explained the difference between cloning a disk and making a disk image. With cloning a disk, you get an exact copy of the disk, that if inserted into your machine, will allow you to resume work from the point the clone was made. Disk imaging on the other hand, which is how backups work, makes a copy of the contents of the disk in some kind of compressed format (zipped), which then has to be restored by a program that can read that format.

Usually this is done with a "restore" disk, which is a bootable CD or DVD that contains enough of an operating system to run the backup software that can restore your drive, but requires you to make that disk ahead of time. If you haven't done that (and most backup software, including what comes with Windows 7, has utilities to make one of those disks), you need to restore from the original Operating System Install disks. This is a time consuming process!

Brian showed us what he called a “toaster” drive, which is a USB or ESATA device that allows you to put a regular 3 ½ “ (desktop hard drive) or 2 ½” (laptop drive) in a slot, and run your backup or clone to it.

Tiger Direct has a listing of toaster drives here (NewEgg and Amazon have them also)

http://www.tigerdirect.com/applications/category/category_slc.asp?MfrId=0&CatId=2785

He then explained that if you have chosen a computer that has your C: accessible from the outside of the machine, you can take that disk and easily and quickly replace the damaged or infected drive with it.

Brian explained he had made a clone of the laptop drive he was giving the presentation on the night before, he simulated the computer becoming infected with a virus, shut it down, replaced the hard drive, and rebooted continuing the demonstration, all within three minutes.

He pointed out making a clone is not the complete answer to backups: clones do not do versioning of your files for example, and it is still important to do a regular backup.

There are two key questions you have to ask yourself in choosing a backup method:

- How important is my data? Is merely having a second copy of it enough, or does it have to survive a catastrophic event like a fire? If it is the latter, you must have an offsite backup, if it isn't then just a backup copy will do.
- How much important data do I generate in what period of time? If you spend all day working on a project, then you probably want a backup on a daily basis. If redoing everything you have done for a week isn't a problem, then a weekly one will do. If all you do is play games on your computer and answer e-mails on line, then you probably don't need more than a clone – your data isn't changing.

Things that cause data loss come in many forms: from “happy clicking”, where you accidentally overwrite something you have been working on all day with an inappropriate up-date; virus infestation that makes your machine unusable and may scramble the contents of your hard drive; hard drive failure (sooner or later they all fail); or catastrophic event such as a fire or burglary.

Even if you are using anti-virus software, your machine can become infected by a virus that was built to get around that software. Often the first thing these viruses will do if they manage to get a foot-hold on your machine is turn off your anti-virus software.

Brian suggested a simple step: since many viruses work on the account level, you should always create a second account on your machine with administrative privileges.

This may allow you to log in as that other user and run your anti-virus software that has been disabled under your main account.

He also suggested you should hover over any link with your mouse to see where it is sending you. Depending on the application, the address the link is sending you to will be displayed in a tool-tip or on the bottom of the screen. If that address goes somewhere unexpected, don't click on it!

What backup software should you use?

Windows 7 ships with backup software, and allows you to make a restore disk. It doesn't do cloning, it isn't easy to tell what it is backing up, and the backup requires a disk larger, sometimes double the size, of the drive you are using as your C: In other words you would need a one terabyte drive to back up a 500 gigabyte one.

It was suggested using Macrium Reflect, which is available as either free or paid software. The major difference for the

home user between the two is the free version can't do incremental backups (that is, only backup the files that have changed since your last full backup). You can read more about it on their website:

www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx

Along with the free version, the Standard version costs \$49.99, and the Pro version costs \$58.99.

There is cloning and backup software available from other vendors also.

Acronis is another backup/cloning program. Brian and Rob stated it is much more Bloated but not as user friendly as Macrium.

If you are interested, reviews of 10 of the top contenders for 2013 can be found here:

<http://data-backup-softwarereview.toptenreviews.com/>

Brian emphasized that if your concern is getting your computer up and operating as quickly as possible from a simple hard drive failure or virus infestation, then cloning is the way to go.

He also made the point that one does NOT have a backup UNTIL it is confirmed that the data can be RESTORED from the backup!



Online Newsletters <http://www.phoenixpcug.org/newsletters>

Make a web link shorter. <http://www.tinyurl.com>

Stop apps from stealing your information online

<http://www.komando.com/downloads/259515/stop-apps-from-stealing-your-information-online/all>

Save big on prescription drugs

<http://www.komando.com/tips/12137/beat-the-system-smart-and-safe-ways-to-save-big-on-prescription-drugs/all>

Show picks

<http://www.komando.com/show-picks>

One simple step to keep your browsing secret

<http://www.komando.com/tips/12331/one-simple-step-to-keep-your-browsing-secret/all>

Short Circuits...zzzt!

Now is the season when school yearbooks manage to make headlines. Most stories are about controversies concerning the suitability of the pictures of the graduates. Students claim "censorship" by school officials, who in turn, label some photos as "immoral", or just "in poor taste". Deletions, altered photos, black tape, and even cut-outs, have been used to meet administrative norms. But thankfully, the acrimony generated in these situations is easily eclipsed and forgotten by when heartwarming stories of Service dogs graduating with their companions are told. Not only do the animals graduate, they also have their pictures in the yearbooks - at the insistence of all of the students. Maybe there is hope yet for the next generation! *Various*

A man stuck overnight at the Las Vegas airport took the opportunity to make a video of himself lip-syncing to a popular record and posted it on the Internet. The video showed the man sitting by himself in a waiting area, riding up an escalator and walking through the deserted terminals of the airport. Returning home from a job, he volunteered to take a later flight and would not fly out until early morning. He spent three to four hours shooting the video and sang the song at least 50 times. "I thought, If I stay here, it's going to be empty and I should do something," he said. "By the end of it, it was frustrating because my battery was dead and my phone was full." *USA Today*

Gasps can be heard on an Internet video taken by a tourist on a swamp boat tour in south Louisiana as their guide jumps in the water to feed chicken and marshmallows to two alligators. At one point the guide puts a marshmallow in his mouth and lets one of the gators snatch it away. The video has been shared more than 100,000 times. It also has attracted attention of local and state wildlife officials. No charges had been filed yet. But legal or not, wildlife officials say the video shows the unidentified guide took a risk. "There is no taming an alligator," said a Wildlife Ranger. "They have very poor depth perception, and they can't tell where the food ends and your arm begins," she said. "That's why we don't feed them". *AP*



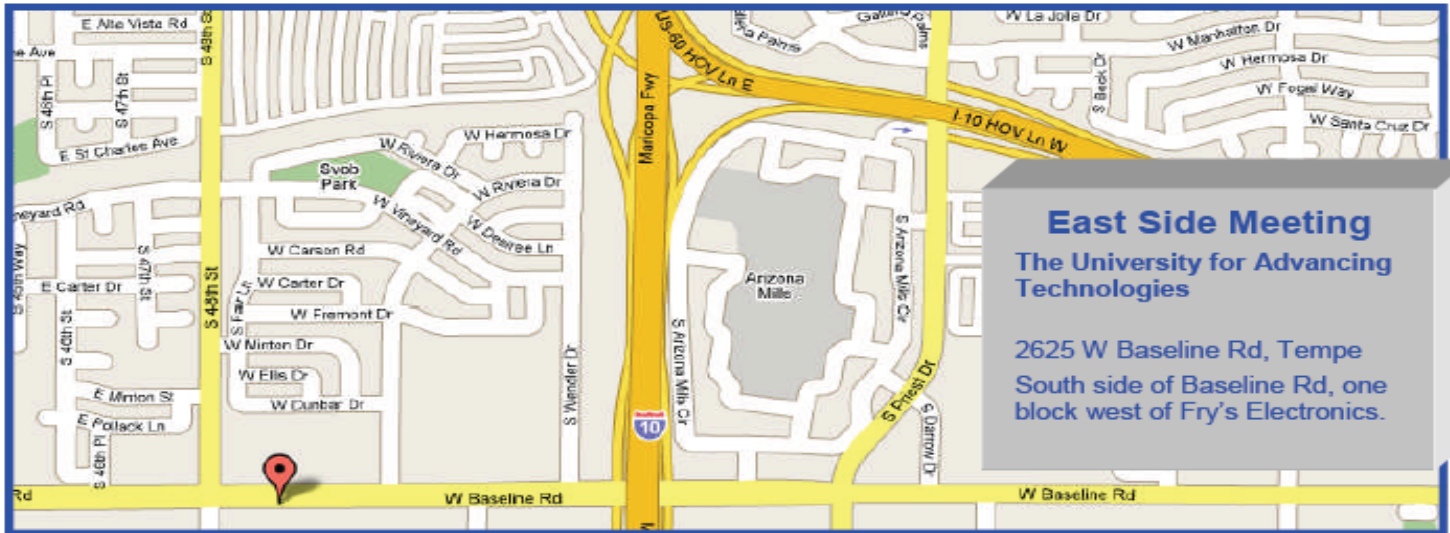
HOW TO GET THERE



West-Side-Meeting

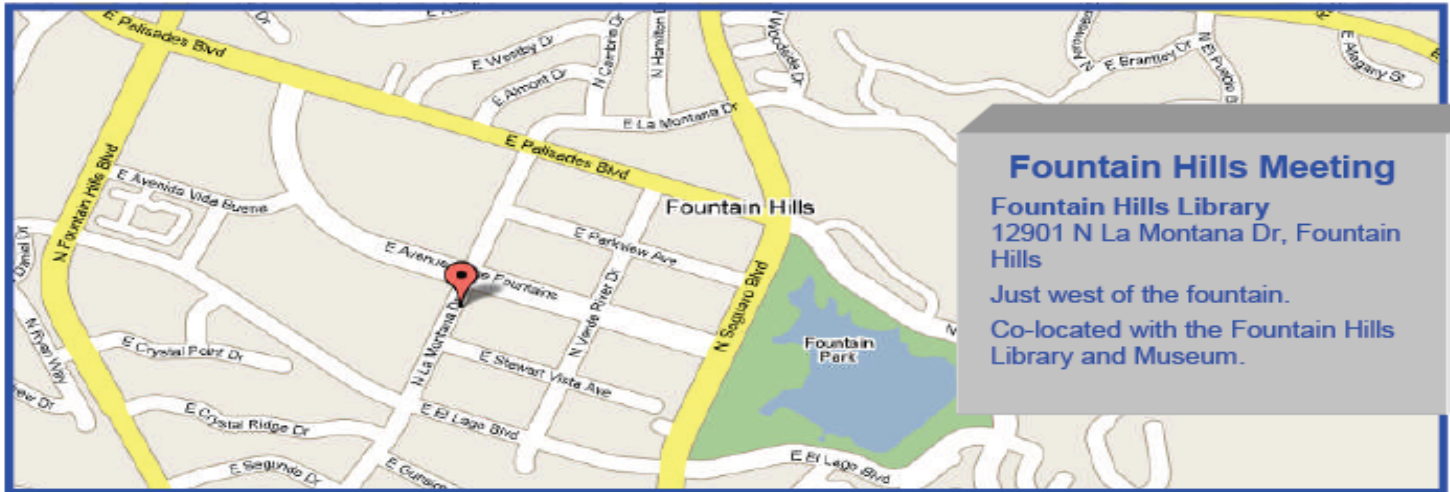
CollegeAmerica
www.collegeamerica.edu/phoenix
 9801-N-Metro-Parkway-East
 Phoenix, AZ 85051
Phone (602)-257-7522
 Google map error, "the red A" is actually east side of Metro Parkway

Exit Peoria Ave west, past I-17, turn first left, go south on the frontage road, turn right at the first driveway past Cheryl Drive, CollegeAmerica is the white building on your right (north). North of Castles & Coasters amusement park.



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.

**2014
DUES \$36**

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First: (Print Legibly) _____ Initial: ____ Last: _____

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Home or Cell 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 a timely fashion, via e-mail, or the club web-site.

Receive Electronic PDF 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 ____

Mail this completed form with payment to:

**Phoenix PC Users Group
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