



NEWSLETTER

The Best Accessory
for your PC!



MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, April 17

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, April 18

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

Fountain Hills.....Thu, April 19

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

Presentation This Month:

David will show a video of a presentation
by Harold Wong from Microsoft
given at the CTC Computer Tech Conference.
It covered how to use your PC to record Cable
Channels. Very complete and interesting.

At the Wed UAT Meeting
we will have a special Presentation
about Lifelock.

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

INSIDE THIS ISSUE...

COMPUTER PASSWORD TIPS AND STRATEGIES	4
GEEK BUSTERS PART DEUX	5
THE TROUBLE WITH TETRABYTES	6
TABLET OR LAPTOP?	7
IS GOOGLE COMPROMISING OUR PRIVACY?	8
BUYING A NEW COMPUTER PART 2 OF3	9
ENHANCING THE PC VISUAL DISPLAY	11
OWN THE CLOUD	12
CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE – ANTIVIRUS SOFTWARE	13
<i>Short Circuits....zzzt!</i>	15

Phoenix PC Users Group

Officers

President: David Yamamoto
 Vice President: Philip Shoemaker
 Secretary: Chuck Lewis
 Treasurer: Paul Jamtgaard

Staff Members

Membership Coordinator: Lo Hardman
 Webmaster: Bill Aulepp
 Fountain Hills Coordinator: Nancy Ogden
 East Side Coordinator: Open Position
 West Side Coordinator: Bill Aulepp
 Public Relations: Open Position
 Newsletter Publisher: Bill Aulepp
 Newsletter Editor: Michael Bishop

Contact Information

David Yamamoto: President@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Philip Shoemaker Vicepres@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Chuck Lewis: Secretary@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Paul Jamtgaard Treasurer@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Board of Directors BOD@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Bill Aulepp: Publisher@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Michael Bishop: Editor@PhoenixPCUG.org
 Bill Aulepp: Webmaster@PhoenixPCUG.org

Steering Committee:

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

THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Well, Happy Easter & April Fool's Day (both just past I know)

We had quite a conference at the CTC Computer Tech Conference at the Radisson at Ft. McDowell last month. Bill, Lo & I got to see many presentations including Abby Stokes an author, Ken Bobis, Ph.D from the Mayo Clinic, Harold Wong from Microsoft, ___ a great photographer from Arizona Highways. All were very informative and well received. Please plan on attending next year if you possibly can. It will probably be at the Radisson again. Kudos to all the staff and planners. The food & rooms were quite good.

At this month's meeting, I plan to show a video with Harold explaining Windows 7 and a PC as a video recorder, somewhat similar in general to a TiVo, with a 4 channel recording capability on cable. He extends the concept further by using Microsoft Xboxes to distribute video signals around a home. There are many more benefits including unlimited video storage, just add another hard drive as needed. So, please come and learn a great idea!

In this issue, there are a few things to be aware of such as a reference to early PCs and tablets. No, Apple was not the first to do them and won't be the last either. Google 'computer museum' and see what pops up - very amazing info.

David

(Publishers Note)

This was an early version of David's Column and because I had a bout with Kidney Stones and was in hospital for two days any additional information will appear in the Website Edition.

I would like to note that at the Wed Meeting at UAT we will have a special Presentation by Lifelock.

If you wish to learn how you can best prevent Identity Theft and insulate yourself from much of the trouble and pain if you do loose money or your good name this presentation is well worth attending.

Bill

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Whether we like it or not, it is obvious that the advance of electronic technology has changed the world forever. In the United States one of the most profound changes is in the area of Education at all levels. There have been multiple cartoons depicting a toddler helping a grandparent in the use of a computer. (It's not a joke.) Higher level institutions have had to ban the use of cell phones because of simple distraction, and because of potential use for cheating on exams. What used to be a light-up of a cigarette as college students left a classroom is now a cell phone to the ear immediately upon leaving a seat.

And whatever happened to the 3 R's (Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic)? Despite what the television commercials would have you believe, scrolling is not reading. How do you use a high-lighter with a tablet? And how long does it take to use the Index or the Table of Contents or the Appendix, (if you can even find them) then get back to the place you were "reading"? "Bookmark" means something completely different on a computer.

Writing has become a lost art in two essential ways -- Composition and Penmanship. The easy parts: assuring the presence of the Subject, Verb, and Object in a sentence seems to be overwhelming to the extent that instructors are wary of placing a question requiring a written answer on an exam. Spelling, although a little more tricky, (much as a result of the rich development of the English from so many other languages), sadly, is all too common among the public at large. Punctuation? Take your pick. (We have to admit that editors and authors are not in universal agreement in that respect.) Penmanship, What's that? Physicians have irritated pharmacists for years with their scribbling, but that does not make the practice excusable for all. Style? Let's leave that for another day

But the worst loss in educational skills aided and abetted by electronic devices is in the third R – aRithmetic. It is not just the lack of a requirement to know how to perform the four simple arithmetic functions, Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division, but it is also the failure to acquire the procedures of common sense reasoning that are inherent in mathematical manipulations. Yet, it is not at all uncommon to see a student use a calculator to divide a number by one. Or multiply by zero. Sigh!

Michael

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

PRESENTATION THIS MONTH

David will show a video of a presentation
by Harold Wong from Microsoft
given at the CTC Computer Tech Conference.
It covered how to use your PC to record Cable Channels.
Very complete and interesting.
At the Wed UAT Meeting
we will have a special Presentation
about Lifelock.

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 18)

- Tuesday, April 17, 2012
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee and Election of Officers
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

EAST SIDE: University of Advancing Technology (see map page 18)

- Wednesday, April 18, 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FOUNTAIN HILLS: Fountain Hills Library (see map page 18)

- Thursday, April 19, 2012
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

COMPUTER PASSWORD TIPS AND STRATEGIES

Computer Password Tips and Strategies

By Jim Cerny, Director, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

March 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor

www.spcug.org

[jimcerny123 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:jimcerny123@gmail.com)

Most of us have several computer or internet "accounts" which provide us with many free services such as email, movies (Netflix), video communications (Skype), photo printing (at Wal-Mart, Walgreens, etc.), music (I-Tunes), banking, shopping, games, entertainment, books, and many more. In fact, your computer is the perfect window to the world and all the people and services in it! But each account you set up requires some sort of "ID" and a password. For example, your email account is your email address and it requires a password to access your email. Many other accounts will use your email address as your ID (so they can email you notices and ads) but will require another password. How do you handle all your accounts and passwords? Here are some helpful tips:

1. ALWAYS WRITE DOWN EVERY ACCOUNT AND PASSWORD YOU HAVE. I cannot emphasize this enough. Review this list every few months and make sure it is current. Keep it with you when you travel. Keeping them on a small portable "jump" drive is a good idea too. You may have set up your computer at home to easily access your email, perhaps telling the computer to "remember me" or your password for you, but when you travel or use another computer you will need your passwords! Personally, I do not ever allow my computer to "remember" any of my passwords – I enter the password from the keyboard each time I "log in" any account. That way, no matter what computer I am using, the way I access my account stays the same – I always enter my account and password.

2. Write down the internet address of the web page where you enter your account and password. Many people use a "favorite" or an icon on the desktop to quickly get to the "log in" screen for their account. This is ok, but if you use another computer you will

not have your shortcuts! So write down the web page address needed for each account.

3. The longer and more complex a password is, the safer it is. In fact, many services now require a password of 8 or more characters with some digits or other "non-letter" characters. Some accounts may require you to periodically change your password. But, hey, we are not spies guarding government secrets. Keep your passwords simple. Use unusual combinations which are easy for you but would be difficult for someone else to guess. Children's names, birthdates, and home address numbers are too easy for someone to guess since such information can be obtained without too much effort. Instead, try the make and model of your first car, a childhood favorite game or toy, the name of your superhero, the nickname you gave to your worst in-law, etc. Get the idea? Easy for you but hard for someone else to guess, and impossible to find out without knowing you personally.

4. Yes, you can use the same password for multiple accounts. Now if someone really wanted to use your Skype account or read your email and they had a hint to one of your passwords, it would be much easier for them to guess your other passwords. So your security is reduced. But, honestly now, who would really want to steal your passwords anyway? Who would care? Well, ok, maybe for banking or credit card accounts I would be more careful, but for most other accounts I do not feel the need for a super secure password, so I do use the same password or a variation of it for several accounts.

In business, things are different. Most companies are very careful about computer and telecommunication security. But for personal home use, I think you can be much less paranoid.

But remember -- If your computer is repaired or replaced, or if you use another computer, you will need to have your passwords!

GEEK BUSTERS! PART DEUX

Geek Busters! Part Deux

By Bryan Lambert – www.geeks.com

In this week's [Tech Tip](#) we'll look at some common "techy" misconceptions that we'd like to dispel with "[Geek Busters!](#)" - sending myths into hiatus! Without further preamble, I give you our items for this week's Tech Tip Geek Busters!

#1 Facebook wants to charge you money for its service

It seems like a week doesn't go by that the rumor mill churns yet again that [Facebook](#) wants to charge you some kind of fee for its service. Basically, put them out to pasture - Zuckerberg and company loves your information that we all (maybe too) freely give out to want to charge us for the privilege of paying him to give it. So, feel free to grouse about the latest changes to the format but know that for now and into the foreseeable future, **That Facebook is content to just be happy mining YOUR data.**

#2 Apple "invented" the PC (or the MP3 player; or the Tablet computer).

All of these are an astounding no. Apple marketed one of the first Do It Yourself (DIY) personal computers (for an astounding \$666.66 (no, Steve Jobs is not the Antichrist either) and had a strong foothold in the market well before IBM unleashed its version of the PC onto the world a few years later - but many companies marketed computers well before Apple (some notable examples are the MITS Alter; HP 9100 (and even if you want to dig further back you can find examples like Honeywell's Kitchen computer and even the DIY Simon that you could purchase the plans for).

Ditto for MP3 players (remember the Genica Tavarua) and **tablet computers have been around for ages** (it just took Apple to make them fun and bring them out of the business world and into our lives - with tons of knock-offs coming on its heels screaming "me too! me too!").

#3 Running Windows Updates will ruin my computer

Actually, quite the opposite may be true - if you avoid running updates, especially security updates, you put your computer at risk. While it is true that every once in a while an update has some - unexpected consequences - for the most part you are better safe than sorry running the update. However, it has to be said that if you update an entire operating system, then there is the strong possibility that many of your favorite programs will not migrate well to the newer version of the operating system (not that this has ever held me back - thank goodness for Virtual Machines and especially for XP Mode on Windows 7)



#4 Dell (or Apple, or HP, or Acer; or "insert companies name here") manufacturers their own computers

While some companies may still ASSEMBLE some of their computers to order, most computer companies no longer own any manufacturing facilities or make their own computers. There are a few exceptions, but for the most part, large computer companies have third party manufacturers build their computers (which is why some of the largest BUILDERS of computers are companies that you may have never heard of, such as Quanta Computer, Compal Electronics and Hon Hai Precision (aka, Foxconn Electronics)).

Be assured that the computer you are probably reading this Tech Tip on was more than likely not actually MADE by the company that is on the label. This is one of the big reasons computers are basically considered commodity items (yes, even that shiny Apple PC - rolling off the same assembly line with Dell, HP, etc.) and tend to have similar repair rates (which also means that they also tend to use many of the same OEM parts and components as well). **This doesn't mean that your computer was made poorly; or even that one computer may be "better" than another - it just means that they are all pretty much the same.**

In Conclusion

We hope you liked this week's Tech Tip! While urban legends and myths run rampant in the tech arena, rest assured that we here at Tech Tips have your back and are ready to beat back the hounds of ignorance and set a world on fire with Geek Busters!

THE TROUBLE WITH TERABYTES

The Trouble with Terabytes

By Diane Fahlbusch, President, ICON PC User Group, NY

www.iconpcug.org

Editor (at) iconpcug.org

Technological advances, different materials and cost efficient manufacturing have made it possible for computers to leap from standard 20 GB hard drives of a decade ago and the 200+ GB drives of yesterday to breaking through the gigabyte ceiling affordably in a relatively short period of time. Now having a 1 terabyte drive is passé as 2 TB, 3 TB and even 4 TB drives are becoming commonplace. However, there are some things to be aware of before making the leap.

No, I will NOT wax poetic about my personal opinion of larger drives, including the "Scarlet O'Hara" mindset of maintenance, indiscriminate saving of files and the time for security scans. (For that you can read "*The Lurking Dangers of Larger Hard Drives*" in the June, 2010 issue of **The ICON Graphic**.) Instead, you will need to consider whether your current computer actually knows what to do with all that storage space.

Not so long ago almost all computer operating systems used the partitioning scheme called the "Master Boot Record" (MBR). Unfortunately, the computer will not be able to recognize anything over 2.2 TB. So that larger drive can be installed, but the additional storage space will be useless. The MBR scheme is common on all Windows operating systems through Windows XP, as well as other operating systems from that time period. Windows Vista and the Mac OS X Leopard ushered in the new GUID partition table (GPT) which allows them to recognize the larger drives. Windows 7 and Vista users can use the larger drives as SECONDARY drive without worrying about whether it is a 32 bit or 64 bit version. But for anything larger than a 2 TB drive to be used as the PRIMARY drive, the computer MUST be running the 64 bit version of Windows 7 or Vista.

The systems boot-up firmware must be checked as well. There are many computers using a newer operating system and the GPT partition system, but still

using the BIOS firmware. This will need to be updated to the new UEFI firmware, which has become the new industry standard. Check with the terabyte drive manufacturer to see if they offer a firmware update. Of course that updated firmware is useless if the motherboard cannot run the firmware, so again, check with the manufacturer's specifications. Some will work, but you must use a different connection, such as the PCI-Express card slot.

Most newly manufactured computers ARE equipped with 64 bit operating systems, the GPT partition system AND UEFI boot-up firmware. So if you are thinking about running amok in terabyte land, these are some things to know about before upgrading, or buying that new computer. Remember **new** just means that it has not been used by anyone – it does not necessarily mean that it has the latest technology.

**DID YOU KNOW
YOU CAN GET
YOUR NEWSLETTER
ELECTRONICALLY EACH
MONTH ?**

**JUST GO TO OUR
WEBSITE
AND CLICK ON THE
NEWSLETTER PAGE OR**

**IF YOU WANT A PRINTED COPY
MAILED TO YOU EACH MONTH**

JUST SEND AN EMAIL TO:

members@phoenixpcug.org

**MAKE SURE YOU INCLUDE YOUR
EMAIL AND ADDRESS OR**

**check the box on your
membership application when paying
your dues**

TABLET OR LAPTOP, A POPULAR QUESTION

Tablet or Laptop, a Popular Question

...and More App Reviews

By Gregory West, APCUG Advisor, Region 6 & International

VP of Sarnia Computer Users' Group (scug.ca)

Can be contacted at: gwest@apcug.org

Unless you are a "hard core" computer gamer, you can now officially say goodbye to the laptop.

The day of computer frustration is coming to an end. The answer to pulling your hair out as you are trying to figure out why the laptop is so hard to use is called: "touch pads".

Recently, I was on a technology cruise out of Miami, where 400 plus geeks road the seas and clicked on computers in various seminars. Wait, that's not correct. It wasn't computers these everyday people were using. No, it was touch screen devices. Mostly iPads I must admit. This too is strange as the group was 99.9% Windows users. The average age in the 400 plus crowd was, shall I say, more than 50+. Most of them said they cannot believe the difference and ease when they switched from a laptop or desktop to a tablet.

Most people on the tech cruise, who recently bought a tablet and still owned a laptop/desktop computer, said that they "hardly ever use their computer anymore." The hot topic on the ship was the app. People were constantly sharing newfound apps for their tablets.

So what makes these tablets so popular? Price, ease of use, two click downloads for software, portability, and low price is enticing laptop/desktop are just a few of the factors enticing people to switch. Here are some tips when shopping for a tablet:

Test drive several. Ask friends who own them what they suggest. Do online searches for reviews.

Decide what exactly you are going to use it for then decide on the size. I wouldn't worry too much about the hard drive size as most of what we do on computer is heading to the cloud and soon you won't need software programs for your devices.

Make sure the tablet of choice has a USB slot for thumb drives, cameras, and other such devices. IT-world.com suggests "Decide on the operating sys-

tem. The three main choices these days are iOS, Android or Blackberry Tablet OS. Do a bit of research on all three and pick the one that will work the best for you."

One final word...Most people will tell you once they bought tablets their other computers became lonely. Just ask anyone who owns a tablet and they'll tell you they "hardly use" their computers anymore because the tablet is "so much easier to use and less hassle".

Forester.com researchers predict "Tablets will cannibalize netbooks and outsell them starting in 2012. In 2015, 23% of all PCs sold to consumers in the US will be tablets."

Happy hunting.

App Reviews..."AppZilla 2" won the App of the year award.

I broke down and bought an app for my iPhone, AppZilla 2. Ninety-nine cents is a fair price to pay for an app that houses 120 apps with just one click. Apple reports this app "surpasses 2,000,000 downloads!" AppZilla 2 works on the iPhone, iPad, and iPod touch. Sorry droid users!

With 120 apps in one app it will take some time to test drive them all. Some are kinda corny but still fun. As a Google user of Docs, mail and much more, I like the way this app has corralled all the Google products for ease of use. They call this the "utility" app and rightfully so as there are levels, app for flashlight mode on your phone, path finder so you never get lost, night vision, password keeper, parking meter reminder with alarm, police scanner for many cities, and many more I haven't tried but sure will. I give this app a 10+.

Gregory can be reached at: gregory@alternatcloud.com

Visit the free website for 50+ learning computers: <http://alternatcloud.com>

IS GOOGLE COMPROMISING OUR PRIVACY?

Is Google Compromising Our Privacy?

By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS

www.compukiss.com

sandy (at) compukiss.com

Recently Google announced consolidating the privacy policies for all of its services. These include about 60 different services like the popular Google search engine, the Google-owned YouTube video website, Gmail, and the Android operating software for mobile phones. Because of the scope and popularity of these services, this move got the attention of everyone from state and federal representatives to advocacy and security groups. But more than anything else, it left consumers with a throbbing headache as they pondered how this would affect them and if they should be concerned enough to stop using Google services.

Data-protection agencies and lawmakers around the globe requested Google delay this implementation so they could review the new procedure but Google did not comply. The new privacy policy went into effect March 1, 2012.

Although Google states that this new privacy policy is aimed at making Google services easier to use, it doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that their primary aim is to target users with advertising that is relevant to their interests, making Google's ads more valuable. The aggregation of information from different areas enables Google to target the interests of their users more accurately. For instance, if you search for gardening information with the Google search engine, play videos of how to plant seeds on YouTube, and get brochures of the latest horticultural offerings in Gmail, Burpee and other seed and plant companies may be willing to pay Google more to blanket you with their ads.

If you are interested in gardening you might actually be happy to see ads for gardening tools and seeds, but this is not really the point. The point is that we are putting private information about ourselves in the hands of others. The problem lies in two areas.

First are the unintentional consequences. As we recently saw in the proposed SOPA and PIPA legisla-

tion, even acts made with the best intention can backfire creating more harm than good. When you add that to the fact that technology is moving at the speed of light, we are becoming more and more data-dependent, and new ways to manipulate data are being invented every day, it gets a little scary.

Second, and possibly even more disturbing, is that power and money can corrupt even the most honorable people and companies. History tells this story over and over again. Google's informal corporate motto is "Don't be evil." Yet it was recently found that Google was circumventing the users' privacy settings in the Safari web browser. Even though the Safari browser was set to refuse tracking cookies, Google was adding hidden code that allowed it to implement browser cookies from third-party ad sites that Google operates. When this was made public, Google stopped the practice. But, other devious practices could be revealed or be implemented in the future. Believe me, this is only the tip of the iceberg.

Although Google's current proposed aggregation of data may be somewhat benign, what it will empower them to do in the future is problematic. With the use of data from mobile devices Google will be able to track our physical locations and actions. With data from our consolidated online profile they may be able to foresee our every move.

If you want a prediction of what this type of unseen tracking can do, check out the movie called "Antitrust." It was produced in the year 2000 when Microsoft was the big, bad, corporate entity. It shows what can happen when a company gets too much power, too much technology, and too much money. When you watch the movie, remember to add ten years of technology to the mix. In the year 2000 they didn't have the mobile technologies and data-tracking capabilities that we have now. If you watch this movie and really ponder how large and powerful Google has become, the throbbing in your head may become a much larger headache.

BUYING A NEW COMPUTER

Buying a New Computer – Things to think about (Part 2 of 3)

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG,
Florida

February 2012 issue, Sarasota PCUG Monitor

www.spcug.org

pcugedit@verizon.net

Last month we discussed manufacturers, laptop vs. desktop, and looked at the CPU. Now it's time to think about a few more things.

Let's look at a laptop first because there aren't as many considerations. Because of a laptop's physical size and configuration, there are only a few things that can vary and therefore make you make a decision. The first one is Display size. Today, display sizes seem to be between about 14 and 18 inches. Larger displays can give you more webpage space, but will probably lead to heavier laptop, a consideration if you are going to carry it around a lot.

Another parameter you may find advertised with a laptop is Battery Life. This becomes important if you are going to use the laptop without ac power for long periods of time, like on a flight from New York to Florida. (For really long flights, you might want to have a second battery.) Today's typical Lithium-Ion batteries will provide from around 3 to around 6½ hours of use time. To get the longer use time, the battery will probably be larger and therefore heavier, again a consideration only if you intend to carry it around a lot.

All computers, laptops included, rely on two types of memory, volatile storage, called RAM (Random Access Memory), and Non-volatile storage, typically a Hard Disk Drive (HDD). The sizes of both of these are decision to be made. We haven't discussed the Software Operating System (OS) yet, but today the OS will probably be Windows 7, Home Premium. So for a Windows 7 computer, it is suggested that a

minimum of 2 GB of RAM be included. (If the CPU is a 32-bit CPU then the maximum would be 4 GB. If the CPU is a 64-bit CPU then today the maximum is 16 GB, for Windows 7 Home Premium and 192 GB for Windows Enterprise, Professional, and Ultimate, but the particular laptop hardware will probably limit

the RAM to something less.) Note that increased memory does not yield any substantial increase in weight, so get as much as you can.

Now for the Hard Disk Drive. Most, if not all, laptops have only one HDD, although it can be partitioned into many logical drives, e.g. C:, D:, etc. For a Windows 7 computer, it is suggested that the HDD size be at least 200 GB. The OS and applications could take as much as 100 GB, leaving only 100 GB for data (documents, pictures, videos, music). Today, most machines will have between 400 and 1,000 GB of HDD space. Note that increased HDD size does not yield any substantial increase in weight, again, so get as much as you can.

Sooner, than later, all laptops are called upon to access the Internet. This can be accomplished by a wired connection to an Internet Service Provider (ISP), or a wireless connection to the ISP. All of today's laptops provide both of these connection capabilities. The wired connection is provided by an RJ-45 plug somewhere on the back or side of the laptop. The wireless connection is provided by 802.11 b, g, or n Local Area Network communications radio transmitter and receiver built into the laptop motherboard (the antenna is usually someplace in the laptop cover).

802.11 wireless communications is available in many public places like airports, some shopping centers, and libraries, and is referred to as Wi-Fi, which stands for Wireless Fidelity. This type of wireless communications uses the 2.4 GHz band for communicating with a wireless access point, which is typically part of a router. The router in turn connects to

(Continued on page 10)

BUYING A NEW COMPUTER

(Continued from page 9)

the ISP, through a modem. The b, g, or n specifies the particular signaling technique and communications protocols to be used. 802.11n is the newest and the most capable, having the fastest transfer rate (200 to 300 Mbps). 802.11g is the most ubiquitous, and is backwards compatible with the older 802.11b. n is backwards compatible with both g and b. Today all laptops are at least g compatible and many newer laptops are n compatible. The wireless communications capabilities are probably not a decision factor, unless you specifically want the newest 802.11n capability.

Laptops typically have an optical CD/DVD Drive which is capable of reading and writing CDs and DVDs. Some of the newer, and more expensive laptops, are including a Blue-ray Drive which is capable of reading and writing Blue-ray Disks (BD). These BD drives are backwards compatible with DVDs and CDs so they can read and write all three types of optical storage disks. (Just a quick review of capacities - CDs hold 700 MB, DVDs hold 4.7 GB, and BDs hold about 25 GB.) The optical drive is only a decision point if you are specifically interested in reading and/or writing BD disks, otherwise there is little difference between manufacturers optical drive products.

Most of the newer laptops have a camera, typically just above the display in the center. The camera faces the user so it can be used for audio/video telecommunications such as Skype and Google Talk. This is definitely a decision point if you intend to use the video calling capabilities. A camera usually does not add much to the price and may prove to be a useful capability in the future.

All laptops have audio capabilities, usually a microphone input, provided by a 1/8th inch mono mini-jack, and a stereo output provided by a 1/8th inch stereo mini-jack. The microphone input can be used for audio/video telecommunications like Skype and Google Talk. The stereo audio output can also be

used to drive a set of good external speakers or even the audio of some older televisions. Audio capabilities are not a decision point.

All laptops have an external Monitor output. On older laptops the output connector is a 15 pin VGA female connector. On newer laptops the video output is available on an HDMI (High Definition Multimedia Interface) connector along with audio. HDMI is the best way to connect your laptop to a newer television.

All laptops have USB 2.0 interface ports. The number of ports may be a decision point. And the newer USB 3.0 may show up on some newer, more expensive laptops. Some laptops (not many) may have other types of interface ports such as Firewire or eSATA. This is definitely a decision point if these types of interfaces are needed.

So far we've looked at all the important things for the purchase of a laptop. Next month we'll cover Desktops and some other miscellaneous things to consider.

**WHEN WE GET
TOGETHER SOUND OFF**

**WHAT SUBJECTS DO YOU
WANT COVERED**

**LET US KNOW
AND
YOUR INPUT WILL BE
IMPLEMENTED
IN FUTURE MEETINGS**

ENHANCING THE PC VISUAL DISPLAY

Tips and Tricks for Enhancing the PC Visual Display,
By Bonnie L. Snyder, Member, Pikes Peak Computer
Application Society, CO
February 2012 issue, Bits and Bytes
<http://ppcompas.apcug.org>
BonnieLS21 (at) gmail.com,
<http://tvvip.org>

If you are in need of assistance in seeing the screen on a PC, there are several options available to help you do this. If you are using Windows 7, for instance, there is a built-in screen magnifying program that is head and shoulders above the one in Windows XP. You can run it at any time (provided your video can use the Win 7 Aero display) by pressing Windows key – plus on the keyboard. Pressing Windows key – plus additional times will increase the magnification with each press, and Windows key – minus will decrease the magnification with each press.

Once you are in the magnification program, you can set up the program with the options you want. To do this, go down to the taskbar and click on the magnify icon. A window will open toward the top of the screen and an icon that looks like a “gear” will allow you to choose your options, including having the magnification load automatically at startup. You can change options on the fly by using Windows key – L for Lens mode, Windows key – D for Dock mode, Windows key – F for Full screen mode.

An interesting freeware program you might want to try is aRuler for Windows. It works under Win XP and Win 7. Initially it loads a ruler that you can use to help focus on the line of text you wish to read. It is configurable in length, and the ruler’s visual display can be changed to the user’s preference. It also includes a screen magnification option from 1X to 4X. < <http://www.arulerforwindows.com/> >

One of the things that can cause visual fatigue when reading on a computer screen is the brightness of the display. There is a freeware program called Tinted Window which works in both Win XP and Win 7 that can mitigate this problem. Once loaded (it is a

Java executable so it doesn’t install), Tinted Window comes up in a small window. Right-click on that window and you can set up the color of the tint you wish. The window also allows for full screen or just a lens. < <http://www.softoxi.com/tinted-window.html> > A quick and easy way to magnify the information on the screen is to hold down the Control key and roll the mouse roller forward. The more you move the roller forward, the larger the display will be come. This feature does not work in all programs, so you’ll have to just try it for each one. Interestingly, in Firefox, the most recent magnification done this way is “remembered” so that when initially magnified with the control key, mouse roller, it will be already magnified. You can lower the amount of magnification by rolling down. This feature works in both Windows XP and Windows 7.

Display Tuner (Dtuner) is really nice freeware for adjusting many facets of the video and audio. When you run it (after installation), an icon remains in your system tray so that you can access it any time you feel the need to make the video display better for the comfort of your eyes. Again, this program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7. < <http://bit.ly/yJcvO6> >

Is that mouse cursor just too small? Well, Bigger Cursors can solve that problem. This is another freeware. All you have to do is unzip the cursors into the Windows/Cursors folder and then select the one you want via the Control Panel/Mouse listing. Once chosen, the cursor will remain that way until you wish to change it. This program works in both Windows XP and Windows 7. < <http://bit.ly/xDcXRV> >

Next month I will tell you about more display adjustments that will make screen viewing more comfortable for you.

OWN THE CLOUD

Own the Cloud with ownCloud!

By Drew Kwashnak, Member, Danbury Area Computer Society, CT

January 2012 issue, DACS.doc

www.dacs.org

dacseditor (at) dacs.org

I love the cloud. I love the accessibility, and freedom it provides. Unfortunately that freedom is limited because the host can go offline; hold my files for ransom, or worse! Then there is question about privacy and lack of control over your own content. Proprietary formats create a vendor-lock-in that traps you unwittingly to their services.

Maybe one solution could be a "private cloud" where it gives you the advantages of the cloud, yet you have full control over the content. That's the premise behind ownCloud1.

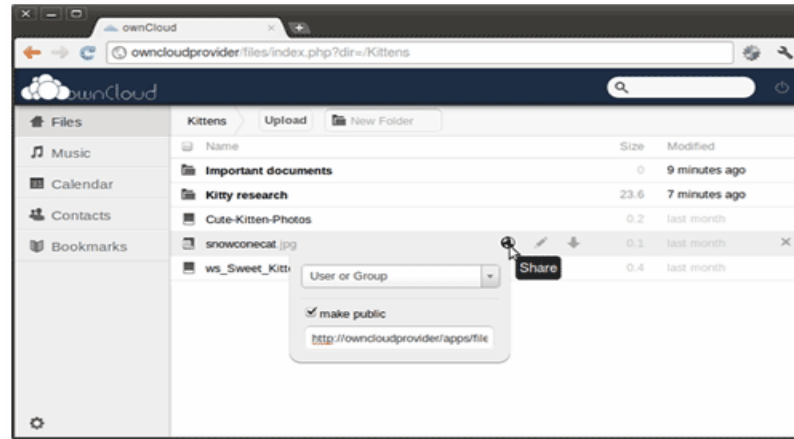
It is a free, open source project that runs on a Linux web server whether the server is local behind a fire-wall or hosted somewhere accessible such as on Amazon's Web Services which, by the way, is where Dropbox stores those files you upload.

The requirements on top of Linux for ownCloud are fairly basic; Apache, PHP 5 and either MySQL or SQLite for database. Some Linux distributions even include a pre-built package that installs everything you need for you.

There are steps to install and run ownCloud on a Windows system, using IIS here outlined in the ownCloud mailing list2. Apple Mac OS X, being UNIX, is almost as easy to host ownCloud in Apache as Linux.

While ownCloud has sharing, music streaming, calendar, contacts, users & groups, OpenID, LDAP, Web-Finger, and remoteStorage compatibility the most important feature is WebDAV file storage where you can add, remove and move files through the web browser or from your local computer!

With WebDAV client computers can access the ownCloud files almost as easily as they can open and save files to their local systems! This works in Linux, MacOS X and Windows.



And that's not all! The developers of ownCloud are working to include an image gallery for your photos, an online text editor, encryption for your security, storage of bookmarks, server and client synchronization and Android or WebOS apps. Being open source, the possibilities are actually practically endless!

So if you like the idea of the cloud, but not the idea of giving control over your files and information to some 3rd party, and if you have some spare machines lying around the house you can easily create your own cloud, where you Own the Cloud!

<http://owncloud.org/>

<http://mail.kde.org/pipermail/owncloud/2011-December/001798.html>

<http://owncloudtest.blogspot.com/2011/06/what-you-can-do-with-owncloud-today.html>



CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Change of Allegiance -

Does the Antivirus Software You Use Really Matter?

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA

March 2012 issue, Drive Light

www.uchug.org

president (at) uchug.org

I just switched to a new antivirus program. I'd been a loyal user of my previous program for over five years, which seems like an eternity in the ever-changing computer software business. I've wondered for some time if it mattered which brand I used. Although there are probably dozens of antivirus programs available, some of which are even free, I have only ever used four. Am I using the best one? Is there a best one? Would I be wasting my time trying to determine the best one? And is what is best relative to my needs anyway?

I was surprised at the results of an informal survey taken at one of our recent general meetings. Our membership appears to use a wide variety of the available antivirus offerings. Around a dozen different vendors were being used by our members, with no one source having more than 10% of the market in our group. With the market apparently so fragmented, can one brand really be that much better than the others?

I don't deny the importance of computer security. It is a common tenant of cyber security that every computer should run an antivirus program to protect against those threats. Microsoft believes this so much that every version of Windows since XP performs checks to see that an antivirus program is installed and that the virus signatures are not out of date. I'd just like to see proof that the antivirus software is doing its job.

One of my problems with antivirus software is that, at least in my experience, it seldom finds any viruses. I've tried to be diligent in my regular computer maintenance, running antivirus and anti-malware software once each week and keeping the signatures updated. My anti-malware software will

often find some kind of spyware or malware on one of my computers to quarantine or delete, but from all the probably hundreds of hours I've spent running antivirus scans, I've yet to find a virus. I do know viruses still exist out there in the cyber world, as I have seen others have them. My daughter had a virus on her laptop last year, and this month we found the Conficker worm on some network servers at the company I work for. Since I've not found any, could I be running just a placebo antivirus program?

I guess the effectiveness of antivirus software is something we may have to take on faith. I've never seen comparisons or reviews of antivirus software that evaluated the ability to detect or remove particular threats.

Usually the software's rating is based on less essential but more measurable parameters like ease of use, cost or manufacturer's reputation. With new virus threats appearing constantly (or so we are led to believe), how can a program's ability to quickly recognize something new be evaluated in advance? Selecting an antivirus program might be similar to choosing a religion, in that all you have initially is your faith in your choice, and you won't likely find out until much later whether you chose correctly.

I originally started out (over a decade ago) using Norton Antivirus, as it was one of the first and few of

(Continued on page 14)

CHANGE OF ALLEGIANCE

(Continued from page 13)

this type of program on the market. They also offered a lot of rebates on their products, so I could usually get my antivirus every year for free. I really liked the Norton Utilities, and so it was not long before I was using Symantec's Norton SystemWorks suite. I also really liked the ZoneAlarm firewall, and so used their free version for many years alongside the Norton suite. Eventually, however, Symantec came out with their own firewall program, and they made a decision that has me soured on their products to this day. Symantec made their Antivirus product incompatible with the ZoneAlarm firewall, probably to promote their own Norton firewall. This made me have to choose between them, and ZoneAlarm won. I don't think I've purchased a Symantec product since.

Around this time, ZoneAlarm came out with their own security suite, ZoneAlarm Internet Security Suite. It combined my favorite firewall with antivirus and anti-spyware. It was also usually available periodically for free after rebate (my favorite kind of software), so I used their suite on all my computers for at least five years. The ZoneAlarm antivirus never really impressed me, but at least it worked well with their firewall, and so I had faith that it was protecting me.

In the last year, however, the ZoneAlarm antivirus turned into a real nuisance. It became a drag on my computer's resources, slowing it down considerably while updating and while scanning. Every time my computer was started, the suite tried to check for updated antivirus signatures. This process took minutes to complete, and occupied the computer to such an extent that it was not possible to use it until the update was completed. This became very annoying, as it slowed my computer just as I was most interested in using it. If I wanted to boot my computer quickly to look up something on the Internet, it

added additional minutes to my search time. It also suddenly went from a few hours to overnight and more to run an antivirus scan. I even tried (unsuccessfully) to disable the antivirus updates. Finally I had enough and decided to look for a new antivirus program. This also coincided with the end of my ZoneAlarm ISS subscription and the apparent end of their rebate deals.

During this time I had also used McAfee's antivirus briefly on a new computer that came with a free trial, and used it on the computers provided by my employer. I didn't think it was anything special.

A trusted reference was the deciding factor in my selection of a new antivirus program. Our group's webmaster has been using ESET's NOD32 antivirus software for many years, and had nothing but good to say about it. He claimed it used little hard drive space and ran quickly with little impact on computer performance. I considered using it in conjunction with the free version of the ZoneAlarm firewall, but a rebate deal on ESET Smart Security persuaded me to try another firewall program as well. I bought two of the three-user packs, and figured I was set for all my computers for the next year.

I soon found out why the ESET Smart Security 4 suite was offered at a discount, as within a month Smart Security 5 was released. I was allowed a free upgrade to version 5, but found upgrading from 4 to 5 had issues. It was much better to install version 5 from the web (using my normal activation information), as it allowed the installation on a drive other than the boot drive. The firewall also seemed to work better this way. I'm still learning about ESET's firewall, but their antivirus seems to live up to its reputation as easy on resources. I guess I have something new to have faith in.

Short Circuits...zzzt!

ElectroTattle 1. A Washington state corrections officer has been charged with bigamy after Facebook discovered two women were connected to him and suggested they might want to be "friends." The man married a woman in 2001, moved out in 2009, changed his name and remarried without divorcing wife No. 1. Wife No. 1 recently found out about Wife No. 2 when Facebook detected their connection to O'Neill and suggested the friendship connection. Wife No. 1 then called the defendant's mother. "An hour later the defendant arrived at (Wife No. 1's) apartment, and she asked him several times if they were divorced", court records show. "The defendant said, 'No, we are still married.'" Neither the man nor his first wife had filed for divorce. The name change came later, and in that month he married his second wife. He allegedly told Wife No. 1 not to tell anybody about his dual marriages, that he would fix it, the charging documents state. Wife No. 1 alerted authorities. Mar. 9, 2012 *Associated Press*

ElectroTattle 2. Authorities in South Florida say a man is facing charges after he was seen in a photo on Facebook holding a judge's stolen nameplate. The twenty-one-year-old man was arrested Thursday on violation of probation charges. The Broward County Sheriff stated that the \$40 nameplate was pried the from the courtroom door of a Broward Circuit Judge. Authorities received a tip that the man had the nameplate and a picture could be found on his girlfriend's Facebook page. The perpetrator has multiple petty theft convictions and now faces felony charges. The nameplate will be returned to the judge. Mar. 9, 2012 *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*



"It's OK to send text messages while I'm driving. I have an app that steers the car."

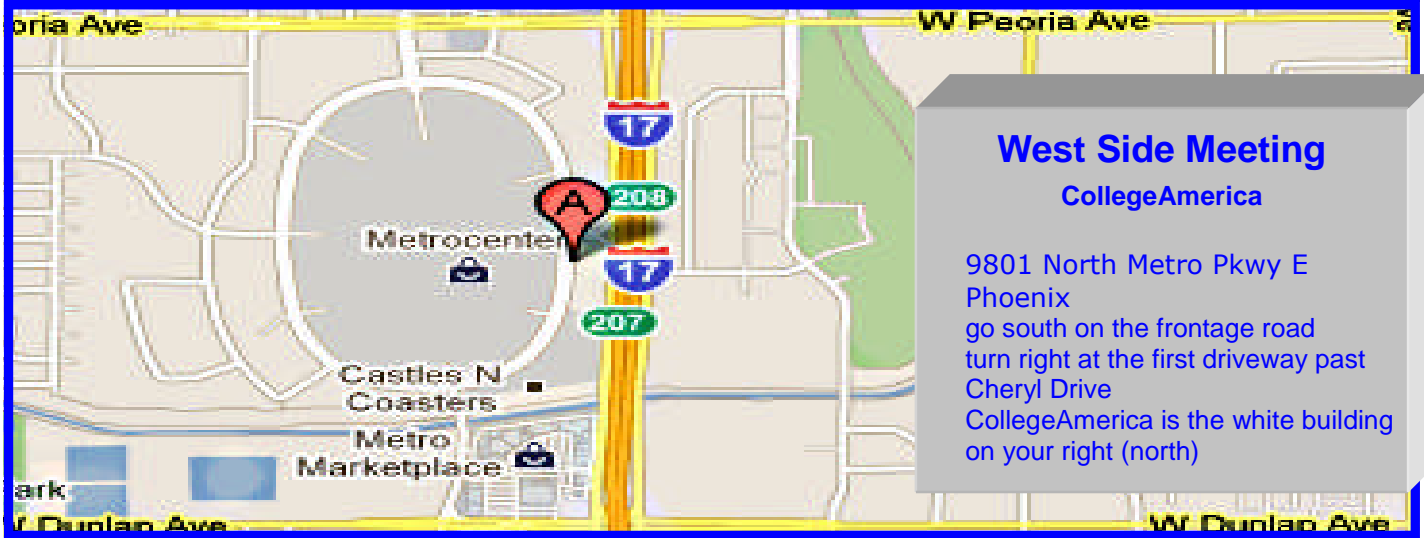


ElectroGoof A Massachusetts man accused of aiming a laser pointer into the eyes of the opposing goalie at his daughter's high school hockey game may face criminal charges. Authorities announced that the individual will be summoned to East Boston District Court to face a charge of disturbing the peace. Police say the man pointed the light at the opposing goalie during a tournament game. He was ordered out of the arena by a school official. Although he has not yet been arrested, he that said he feels "like a complete jerk" and admits that he humiliated his daughter. The parents of the losing game filed a protest asking that the game be replayed. The governing body of high school sports in Massachusetts denied the appeal. Mar. 7, 2012 *Associated Press*

ElectroSnitch. Police have charged a western Pennsylvania man with hiding a remote listening device under his estranged wife's bed so he could avoid overhearing her having sex. The man's wife contacted the authorities after finding the transmitter under her bed last month. The couple is separated but still share a home with separate bedrooms. He acknowledged using the device, telling officers he put it there so he'd know when his wife and her boyfriend were having sex. He states that he was tired of overhearing the lovemaking and tried to use the device, which he said didn't work, to determine whether "the coast was clear" before returning home. Mar. 8, 2012 *Associated Press*

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

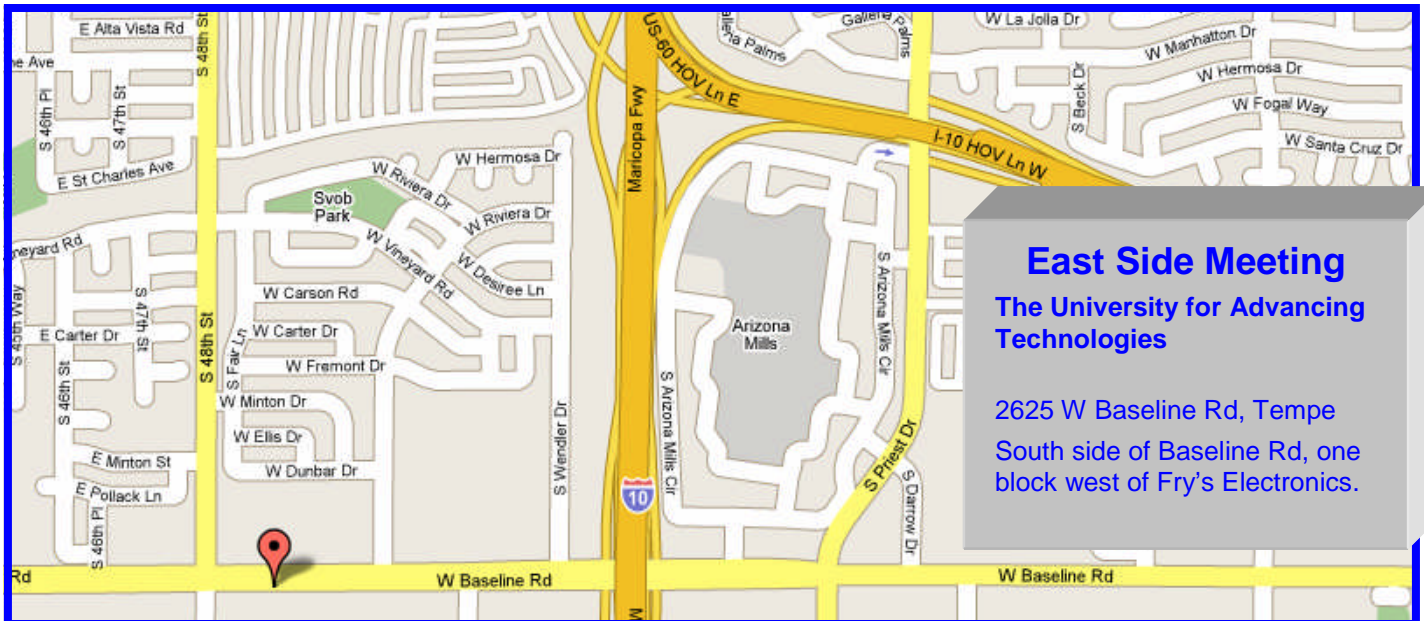
HOW TO GET THERE



West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

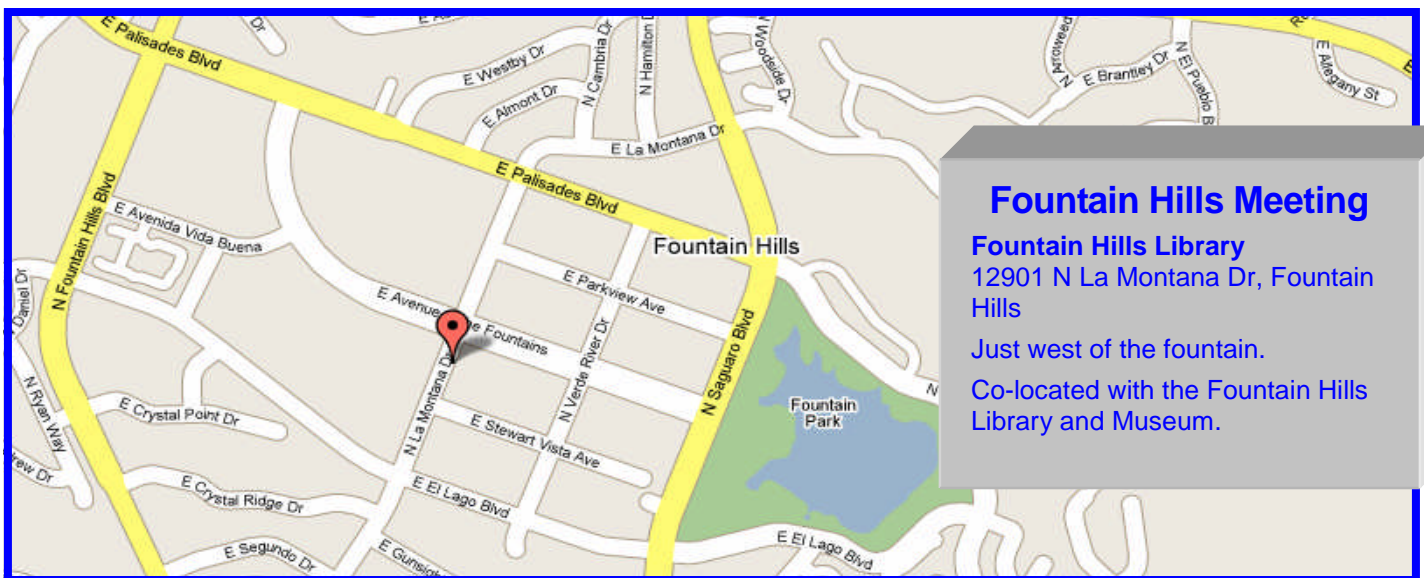
9801 North Metro Pkwy E
 Phoenix
 go south on the frontage road
 turn right at the first driveway past
 Cheryl Drive
 CollegeAmerica is the white building
 on your right (north)



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, 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 45451
Phoenix, AZ 85064—5451



*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

Web address:
phoenixpcug.org

April 2012

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

STAMP

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS

PHOENIX PC USERS GROUP
PO BOX 45451
PHOENIX, AZ 85064-5451