

NOTICE COLLEGEAMERICA TUE MEETING CHANGED
FROM MAR 19 TO 26 SEE DAVID'S COLUMN



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Steering Committee:

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

NEWSLETTER

*The Best Accessory
for your PC!*

MAIN MEETINGS

West Side.....Tue, 26

CollegeAmerica, 9801 North Metro Pkwy E, Phoenix

East Side.....Wed, 20

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

Fountain Hills.....Thu, 21

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

Presentation this month:

**NOTICE THE COLLEGEAMERICA TUE
MEETING HAS BEEN CHANGED
FROM MAR 19 TO TUE MAR 26**

**David will present a discussion of the many items
he lists in his column
He also will recount his experiences at the Computer
Technology Conference last year which will be held this
year April 4, 5 and 6**

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

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THOUGHTS FOR THE MONTH

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

Hi members!

I apologize for a schedule conflict for Tuesday, College America meeting. It will be held March 26 instead of March 19. Or please come to our UAT meeting on Wed, March 20. Map: <http://tinyurl.com/a4hd3ea> (on our website too).

March timely topics

1. [CompTechConf.com](http://www.comptechconf.com) - Computer Tech Conference, 1 day special \$50 !!

Don't miss this exciting conference! \$125 full conference. Don't miss:

Dr. Ken Bobis, PhD, Chief Technology Officer of Mayo Clinic, very informative!

Another exciting topic:

Computer Forensics: Finding Evidence One Byte at a Time

Full list as of March 14, 2013:

<http://www.comptechconf.com/Presentations/>

Schedule:

<http://www.comptechconf.com/Schedule/schedule.htm>

2. Windows 7 & Internet Explorer 10 available now!

(Upgrade will be automatic if you wait)

<http://tinyurl.com/a35xtm2>

3. Are you current on computer & tech? A great resource:

<http://www.datadoctors.com/media/radio/>

Samsung news: (sample article from Data Doctors)

Imagine taking a picture or video with your smartphone and still being in the picture.

How about adding a voice memo to a photo? Having your video pause, when you look away from your device.

What about having a conversation with someone who speaks a foreign language by using the S translator in realtime? The phone can do voice to speech and text to speech.

FROM YOUR EDITOR

Advances in Technology are typically welcomed, heralded, and bragged upon often because of their spectacularity. But sometimes there are notable failures that cost lives, money, embarrassment, or loss of national pride because of the violation of natural laws that, in retrospect, should have been noted. Events like the sinking of the Titanic (steel may sink), the disaster of the Hindenburg (hydrogen is flammable), or the loss of Apollo 1 and Apollo 13, (oxygen accelerates combustion), tend to remain in the public memory. But it is not just when the rules of hard sciences are violated; the soft sciences, like economics, public relations, and consumer satisfaction can provide outcomes that can be considered to be equally catastrophic

Take for instance, a pair of decisions made recently by the two biggest names in the computer-usage businesses may, in the long run, cause them to regret their actions. The prime progenitor of well know iToys announced at a recent technical exposition that the next iDevice may be priced in the \$800 range, about twice the cost of the current model). Now, one has to ask if there is an upper limit to the price that the everyday, non-rabid device fanatic is going to pay for a new model –“time-killer”, “boredom-antidote”, “keep-the-kids-busy” panacea tool. It was widely noted that the proposed price increase was the first one in the industry in 8 years for a product that provided essentially more of the same thing that was available already.

This decision by the other Techno giant may have an even greater effect with regard to the general everyday computer user. (That’s the person that uses a computer for e-mail to stay in touch with friends and families, or as a fancy typewriter and/or an adding machine.) The company has decided to replace their industry dominant e-mail system with a radically annoying, cumbersome, and decidedly not “user friendly” (?*) tool. The ultimate demonstration of *hubris*, however, is that this replacement has been forced upon current e-mail account users without comment and **without offering a choice to retain the old system**. Many, if not most, disgruntled e-mail users will be searching the Internet and finding that there are numerous other providers of this service. If the resulting loss of business causes considerable discontent within the board room of the company, so be it. They deserve it.

Michael

Continued on Page 3)

MEETINGS

CALENDAR

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

GENERAL MEETINGS

WEST SIDE: CollegeAmerica (see map page 16)

- Tuesday Mar 26, 2013
- 6:00 PM - Steering Committee
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

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

- Wednesday Mar 20, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

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

- Thursday Mar 21, 2013
- 6:30 PM - Q and A
-

FROM YOUR PRESIDENT

(Continued from page 2)

Those are just some of the features of the new Galaxy S4.

Samsung announced the new Galaxy S4. Any of you going to line up for this new device?

4. Don't forget Kim Komando's news:

[Komando Tech News - The Kim Komando Show](#)

news.komando.com

Get breaking tech-related news update constantly ... (sample article)

[SAY GOODBYE TO CAR KEYS AND FOBS
Smartphones will replace them all](#)

David

EXTENDING THE LIFE OF YOUR XP PC

Extending the Life of Your XP PC

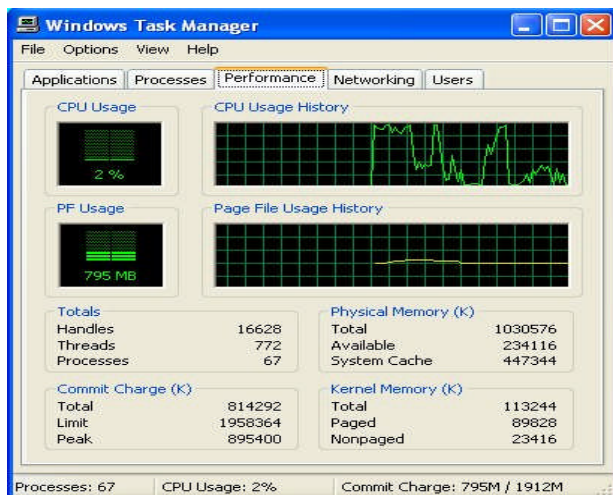
By Dick Maybach

September 2012 issue, *BUG Bytes*, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
www.bcug.com
n2nd (at) charter.net

When you first got your PC with Windows XP it was blazingly fast and its hard disk was huge. But now, maybe 10 years later, it has slowed, perhaps drastically so, and its disk is nearly full. The cause of the disk-space shortage is probably obvious; you've stored thousands of photos, songs, and documents, and installed many programs. But what about the speed? Unlike you and I, electronic hardware doesn't slow down as it ages.

Hopefully, you've kept your software, especially your anti-virus program, up to date and have avoided downloading files from questionable sources. If not (or if someone who uses your PC is less careful), run a full virus and malware check and update Windows and all your applications before you try anything else.

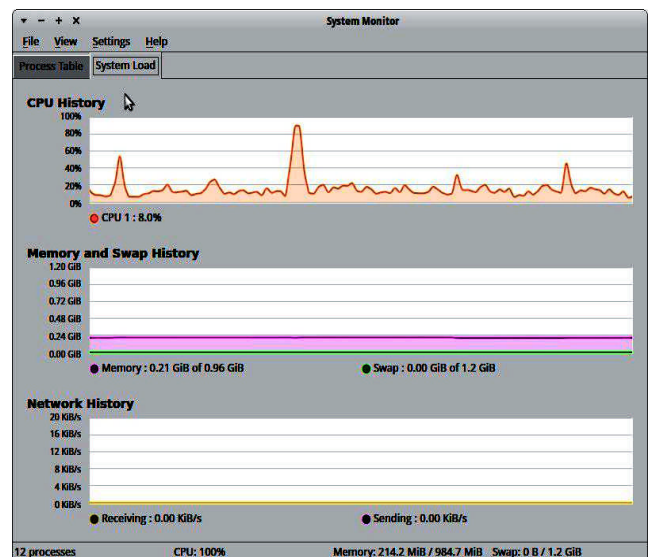
At the time you bought your XP PC, 500 Mbytes of RAM was plenty, but the patches and enhancements you've added over the ensuing years means that the XP you now use is much different than the XP you originally bought. In particular, 500 Mbytes of RAM is now woefully inadequate. To check your RAM use, simultaneously press the *Control*, *Alt*, and *Delete* keys, select the *Task Manager* button on the Window that pops up, and then select the *Performance* tab.



except for my virus checker, it was using about 814 Mbytes of RAM (see the *Commit Charge* box). Fortunately, this PC has 1 Gbyte of RAM (as shown in the *Physical Memory* box). Note also that the Commit Charge limit is nearly 2 Gbyte. The second Gbyte is provided by the swap file; when Windows needs more memory than you have physical RAM, it moves some data from RAM to a swap file on your hard disk to make room. If this happens more than occasionally, the situation is called *thrashing*, which results in Windows slowing to a crawl as it continually moves data from RAM to disk and back again. If your XP PC has only 500 Mbytes of RAM, it will begin thrashing as it boots, and will be frustratingly slow. The only fix for this is to increase RAM to at least 1 Gbyte. Removing programs, defragging, and other such measures will not improve the situation at all, despite what fraudulent TV ads say.

Instead of adding RAM, you could switch to Linux, although for an old PC you will have to use a light-weight distribution, such as Xubuntu. (Mainstream

Linux distributions, such as Ubuntu, require modern display controllers.) The only difference between these and the mainstream cousins, such as Ubuntu, is that the displays are simpler; that is, you lose some of the visual bling that the software vendors think you want; both types support all the same applications. The screen-shot below shows Xubuntu's resource on the same laptop as above.



I did this on my laptop and, as the screen-shot shows, found that with no applications running

(Continued on page 5)

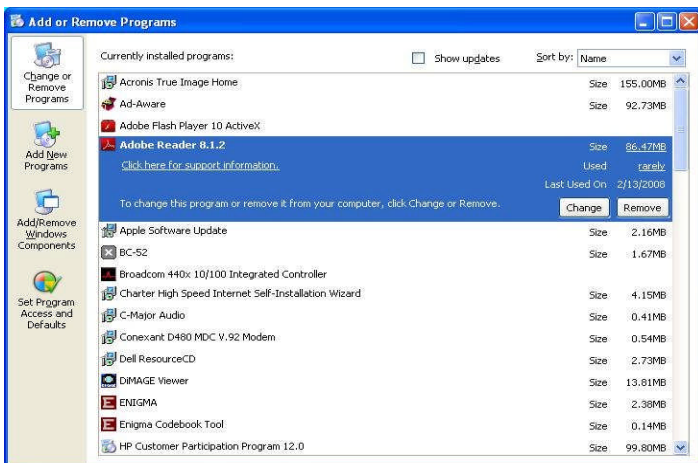
EXTENDING THE LIFE OF YOUR XP PC

(Continued from page 4)

Note that only 210 Mbytes of RAM are in use, compared to XP's 814 Mbytes. Linux thus provides a way to extend the useful life of old PCs by many years. This approach is especially attractive for laptops, whose hardware is difficult to upgrade.

If you want to keep using XP, you have little choice but to increase the amount of its RAM. Beyond this there are other steps you can take, although their effects on performance will be much smaller. Before you do any of the following, back up your entire PC.

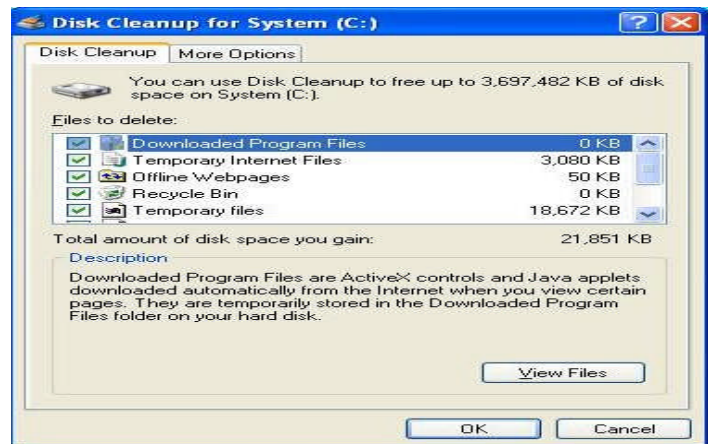
If you haven't already, use your favorite anti-virus software to get rid of any malware, use Microsoft Update to bring the system up to date, and update the drivers. Then look at the installed programs with the sequence *Start* ® *Control Panel* ® *Add or Remove Programs*. Highlight each in turn to see how much disk space it occupies, how often you use it, and the date you used it last. Ask yourself if you really need it, and if not click the *Remove* button to remove it. This will free disk space and may speed up your PC if the program has a module that resides in RAM. As the screen-shot shows, I haven't used Adobe Reader for over five years and I could recover 86 Mbytes of disk space by removing it.



You can clean up a drive with the following sequence: Double-click on *Computer* ® right-click on the desired drive ® select *Properties* ® click on the *Disk Cleanup* button.

The screen-shot below shows the result on my laptop.

As you can see, I can recover almost 22 Mbytes of disk space by performing the checked operations. (Although it doesn't appear in this shot, I could re-



cover almost an additional 3.7 Gbytes by compressing old files, which I prefer not to do.)

You may gain some speed by disabling some of the visual display effects. Navigate *Start* ® *Control Panel* ® *System* ® *Advanced* tab ® in the *Performance* box click on *Settings* and uncheck everything except

- Show shadows under menus,
- Show shadows under mouse pointer,
- Show translucent selection rectangle,
- Smooth edges of screen fonts,
- Use drop shadows for icons labels on the desktop, and
- Use visual styles on windows and buttons.

The following will recover an impressive amount of disk space, but do it only if you have a recent back-up that you know to be good. Move to the directory *C:\Windows* and make the hidden items visible by clicking on *Tools* (in the menu bar), selecting *Folder Options*, selecting the *View* tab, and the selecting the *Show hidden files and folders* item. You will find a large number of directories whose names begin and end with \$ and include "Uninstall" somewhere in between. These allow you to back out of patches, but it is most unlikely you will ever have to do this, especially if your system is running well. (My laptop had 339 such folders, occupying over 250 Mbytes.) You can delete them and recover the space, but be very careful not to delete anything else, in particular, directories whose names begin and end with \$ but don't include "Uninstall". It would be prudent not to empty the Recycle Bin for a few days, until you're sure you haven't broken anything.

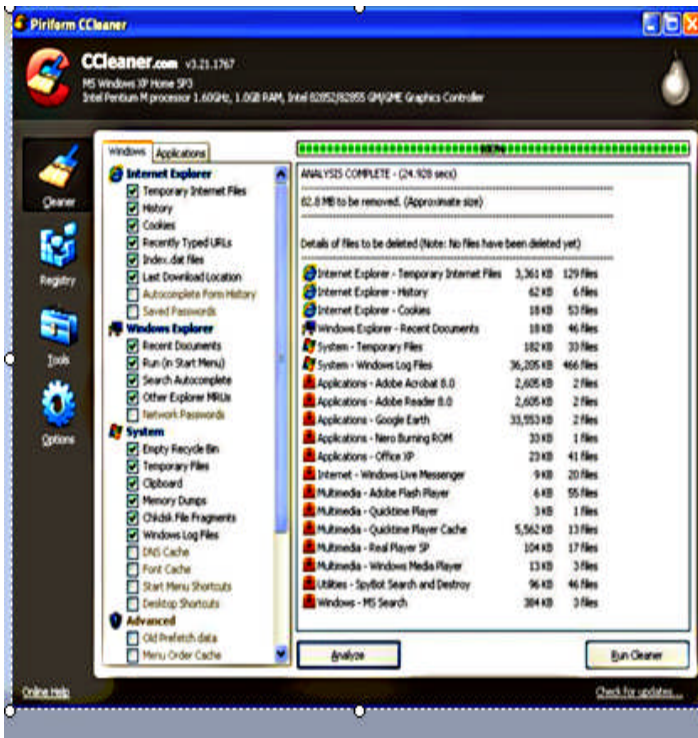
CCleaner (<http://www.piriform.com/CLEANER>) is a clean-up tool with a good reputation. It takes a more aggressive approach than does the disk cleanup procedure discussed above. There is a free version, but read the installer screens carefully as it will install a

(Continued on page 6)

EXTENDING LIFE OF YOUR XP —WHEN YOUR CELL GETS WET

(Continued from page 5)

Google toolbar unless you uncheck the appropriate box. The first time you run the program, click on the Analyze button to see what it will do; the screen-shot below shows the effect on my laptop. (I had earlier performed the Windows Disk Cleanup described above.)



It claimed to find almost an additional 83 Mbytes of disk space that could be freed, although it removed only about 80 Mbytes. The program also includes tools to clean up the registry, uninstall programs, manage system restore points, and wipe disk drives, and will also show what programs run at startup. For more information see <http://www.howtogeek.com/113382/how-to-use-ccleaner-like-a-pro-9-tips-tricks/>. Finally, a different company has developed an add-on, CCEnhancer (<http://singularlabs.com/software/ccenhancer/>). On my laptop, this add-on allowed CCleaner to find 10.7 Mbytes of additional files. However, CCEnhancer requires .NET 3.5, which uses several hundred Mbytes; if you don't already have this installed, forget about CCEnhancer as what it can recover is only a small fraction of the space .NET will occupy.

I haven't mentioned defragging because I've never found that it improves performance by any detectable amount. I'm not saying it's a bad idea, just that you shouldn't expect any performance change.

What you can do if your mobile phone gets wet
By Tom Allen, Publisher / Editor,
Mountain Computer User Group, Georgia
May 2012 issue, Mountain Bits & Bites
www.mcug.org
[bunkerhilltom \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:bunkerhilltom@yahoo.com)

Many of you get your mobile phone wet by one way or another. You worry as you mistakenly drop your mobile phone in water. It can also get wet if you are out in a heavy rain. However, there is no need to panic. It is possible to save your wet mobile phone by quickly repairing it. In order to save your mobile phone from water damage, you can consider doing this:

The most important thing you have to do is to act rapidly. Quickly remove all the detachable parts, as well as covers possible, such as the back cover, battery, the SIM card, memory card etc.

Next, take a piece of cloth or a tissue paper to wipe the excess water you are able to notice within the mobile phone. Make sure that you dry it completely. If you don't do this, the water inside the mobile phone will begin to evaporate and gather in places which will be difficult to reach.

Take a hairdryer and begin drying the mobile phone while giving more consideration to the place where the battery is located. The battery housing usually consists of tiny holes to let in air (so giving more space for water) inside the mobile phone. It will take several minutes. You may also set your oven to 180 degrees and let it preheat (if you are brave!). Turn it off, open the door and set the phone in it for about half an hour. I have done this but watched it very carefully and the phone survived.

**WE WANT TO INCREASE
OUR MEMBERSHIP
IF EACH MEMBER
BROUGHT JUST ONE
INTERESTED GUEST
TO A MEETING
WE WOULD ACCOMPLISH OUR GOAL**

USING THE SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH RECORDS

Using the Social Security Death Records
By Bill Ellis, Member, Computer Users of Erie, PA
www.cuerie.com
willardellis8 (at) gmail.com

The Social Security Administration's Death Index (SSDI) can be a boon to beginning genealogists. The Social Security number is the most valuable piece of information when seeking a number of other documents. It is essential for ordering paper copies of original death records, obituaries, and more. The SSDI is the first step in obtaining this information. If you can only trace your U.S. ancestry back to your grandparents or possibly great-grandparents, the Social Security Administration can help you find where they were born, the names of their parents, and more. The SSDI can be especially helpful for those researching immigrants as the data often shows where the individual was born in "the old country."

The Social Security Administration was created by an act of law in 1935 as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal program. The act laid out a retirement system for many Americans, although not all. The act also created a new governmental agency to manage the program. In the following 69 years, the Social Security Administration has become one of the largest agencies in the federal government.

The Social Security Administration started computerizing records in 1962. This made it possible to produce an index of people who had Social Security numbers and are deceased. The information in the Social Security Death Index for people who died prior to 1962 is sketchy since SSA's death information was not automated before that date. Persons who died before 1962 are rarely listed in the SSDI. Some of the online Web sites advertise that the data they possess will contain information about deaths "as early as 1937," but that claim is a bit misleading; 99.9% of the information is for 1962 and later.

Initially, the Social Security Administration only recorded the deaths of individuals who were receiving retirement benefits from the Administration. Those who died before reaching retirement age were not listed. Neither were those who had different retirement systems, such as railroad workers, school teachers, and other municipal, state, and federal employees. In the 1970s the railroad and many other retirement systems were merged into the Social Se-

curity system. Deaths of those retirees then started appearing in the SSDI.

In the late 1980s and after, all deaths in the U.S. were reported to the Social Security Administration and recorded in the SSDI. You can find deaths of children and non-retired adults listed for the 1990s, but not for earlier years.

Because legal aliens in the U.S. can obtain a Social Security card, their names may appear in the SSDI if their deaths were reported, even if the death occurred overseas.

The online SSDI databases contain the following information fields:

- Social Security number
- Surname
- Given Name
- Date of Death
- Date of Birth
- Last Known Residence
- Location of Last Benefit
- Date and Place of Issuance

You can access the Social Security Death Index at no charge on a number of Web sites, including:

New England Historic Genealogical Society
(this database was updated just a few weeks ago with the latest data through June, 2004)
<http://www.newenglandancestors.org/research/database/ss/default.asp>

Family Tree Legends (this version has several search capabilities not found on other sites):
<http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/ssdi>

Ancestry.com: <http://www.ancestry.com/search/rectype/vital/ssdi/main.htm>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) offer the Social Security Death Index on their popular Family Search site.

Keep in mind, however, that the online SSDI database is only an index -- an abbreviated listing. The Social Security Administration holds additional information that can be a genealogical jackpot. The index listing of an ancestor is merely your ticket to this jackpot.

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USING THE SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH RECORDS

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From 1936 on, anyone who has applied for a Social Security Card filled out an application form (SS-5) that the U.S. Government keeps on file. This application form (SS-5) contains the following information:

Full name

*Full name at birth (including maiden name)

*Present mailing address

Age at last birthday

Date of birth

*Place of birth (city, county, state)

*Father's full name "regardless of whether living or dead"

*Mother's full name, including maiden name, "regardless of whether living or dead"

*Sex and race

*Ever applied for SS number/Railroad Retirement before? Yes/No

*Current employer's name and address

*Date signed

*Applicant's signature

The items marked with an asterisk are not available in the online SSDI database.

The SS-5 form is obviously much more valuable to the genealogist than the limited information shown in the online death index. The Social Security Administration makes copies of the original Social Security application form (the SS-5) available to anyone who requests information on a deceased individual. You can obtain a photocopy of the SS-5 form by writing to the Social Security Administration.

The SSA charges \$27.00 for each individual SS-5 copy (\$16 for an abbreviated NUMIDENT form, but most genealogists will prefer the SS-5 itself). The SSA is not in the business of doing genealogical research and cannot, by law, expend Social Security Trust Fund money for purposes not related to the operation of the Social Security program. The \$27 fee is intended to offset the cost to the government whenever SSA provides information from its files for non-program purposes.

There is no standard form to fill out when requesting a copy of the deceased's SS-5. Instead, you must write a letter. You can "copy-and-paste" the following sample letter into your favorite word processor, then change all the information shown inside the curly braces { }:

Social Security Administration
Office of Earnings Operations

FOIA Workgroup
300 N. Greene Street
P.O. Box 33022
Baltimore, Maryland 21290

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

Dear Freedom of Information Officer,
I am writing this request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 552. I hereby request a copy of the SS-5, Application for Social Security Card for the following individual:

{first name} {last name}

{Social Security Number as obtained from the online SSDI}

Birth: {Date of birth}

Death: {Date of death}

This individual is deceased, having been listed in the Social Security Administration's Death Master File. I am requesting a copy of this person's original SS-5 form. I understand the fee for this service is \$27.00. Included is a check for \$27.00 made out to the Social Security Administration to cover any administrative costs required by this request.

Registration is Now Open!

What:

A technology conference for computer users of all capabilities. If you're an early adopter, interested in current and technology, enthusiastic supporter of consumer technology, computer club leader, member, or someone who wants to learn more about what's available in the marketplace, then you should be at this conference.

When:

April 4, 5, and 6, 2013

Why:

Learn about the latest technology by attending informative seminars

Attend the Vendor Expo and purchase the latest and greatest the industry has to offer

Get up close and personal with vendors who can't wait to tell you about their latest product

Raffles, door prizes, special pricing and goodie bags

Where:

Radisson Fort McDowell Resort & Casino
10424 North Fort McDowell Road,
Fort McDowell, AZ 85264

(Continued on page 9)

USING THE SOCIAL SECURITY DEATH RECORDS

(Continued from page 8)

Please respond to my request upon receipt of this initial correspondence. Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,
 {Your name}
 {Your full address}
 Daytime Phone Number: {Your telephone number}

If you want to obtain the SS-5 forms for more than one person, it is suggested that you write separate letters and separate checks, and mail them in separate envelopes. Be patient. You may have to wait several months for the response to your letter(s).

If you cannot find a person in the SSDI, the Social Security Administration may still be able to help. You may request an "SSN search." The SS will try to find the person's Social Security Number, even for those deaths before 1962. To request this service, you must send \$29 and provide the person's full name, state of birth, and date of birth to:

Social Security Administration
 OEO FOIA Workgroup
 300 N. Green Street
 P.O. Box 33022
 Baltimore, Maryland 21290-3022

Providing names of parents is also helpful, especially with common surnames. Be sure also to provide proof of death as the records of living individuals are not publicly available.

Social Security Numbers

It is interesting to note that you can tell where a Social Security Number was issued simply by looking at the first few digits of the number. This does not tell where the person was born, only where he or she was living when the number was issued. Nonetheless, it can be a valuable clue as to where to look for additional information.

The Social Security Account Number (SSAN) is divided into three sets of digits. For example, let's take 123-45-6789. The 3 digits in the first group indicate the state or territory in which the number was originally issued. The second group of 2 numbers is used to define the people within the state. The third group of 4 digits is simply issued in numerical sequence.

The following list shows the area indicated by first 3 digits:

001-003 New Hampshire
 004-007 Maine

008-009 Vermont
 010-034 Massachusetts
 035-039 Rhode Island
 040-049 Connecticut
 050-134 New York
 135-158 New Jersey
 159-211 Pennsylvania
 212-220 Maryland
 221-222 Delaware
 223-231 Virginia
 232-236 West Virginia
 237-246 North Carolina
 247-251 South Carolina
 252-260 Georgia
 261-267 Florida
 268-302 Ohio
 303-317 Indiana
 318-361 Illinois
 362-386 Michigan
 387-399 Wisconsin
 400-407 Kentucky
 408-415 Tennessee
 416-424 Alabama
 425-428 Mississippi
 429-432 Arkansas
 433-439 Louisiana
 440-448 Oklahoma
 449-467 Texas
 468-477 Minnesota
 478-485 Iowa
 486-500 Missouri
 501-502 North Dakota
 503-504 South Dakota
 505-508 Nebraska
 509-515 Kansas
 516-519 Idaho
 520 Wyoming
 521-524 Colorado
 525 New Mexico (also 585 below)
 526-527 Arizona
 528-529 Utah
 530 Nevada
 531-539 Washington
 540-544 Oregon
 545-573 California
 574 Alaska
 575-576 Hawaii
 577-579 District of Columbia
 580 U.S. Virgin Islands
 581-585 Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa
 585 New Mexico (some 585 numbers)
 586-699 Unassigned
 700-729 Railroad Retirement Board
 730-899 Unassigned

A few Social Security Numbers beginning with a 9 have been issued, but these are very rare.

LOOK BACK TECH

Look Back Tech

Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
October 2012 issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org
president (at) uchug.org

No matter how modern your technology may be, you usually can't escape your past. The introduction of the personal computer 30 years ago started a revolution in how we deal with correspondence, communications, photography and music. This revolution resulted in an evolution of capabilities over three decades, culminating in the Ultrabooks, tablet computers, personal music players and digital and video cameras we have today. In the fast-paced and ever-changing world of computers and consumer electronics, the past, as defined by different features and capabilities, can be as recent as yesterday. And unfortunately, something new and improved usually means something else just became obsolete, sometimes before its time.

Unless you just came out of a 30-year coma, you probably have computer files, media and devices that are not fully compatible with the latest in computers and electronics. For those of us that have been using computers and technology for even a short time, moving to the next, newest, latest and greatest will involve change. How do we bring along the content we have created and used in the past? How can we continue to use our favorite old devices?

Fortunately, there are a number of devices available to address these issues. They are often called translators, converters or copiers, but I like to think of them as "look back" devices. They can help us look back to an earlier time, bridge the divide between technologies and bring our content, be it music, photos, video, documents or information, along with us as technology evolves. And boy, does it ever evolve.

Imagine archaeologists stumbling upon an undiscovered ancient library. Despite alphabet and language translation issues, they could probably eventually learn quite a lot about the time period in question, as ancient civilizations typically used information recording technologies we can still easily use today. Assuming they are in good condition, carved stone tablets are still as readable now as they were when

carved thousands of years ago. Even the information in paper books preserved from a hundred years ago is still easily accessible. That may not be the case, however, with information stored from only ten or twenty years ago.

Imagine instead opening an unclaimed storage locker that has been closed for 10 to 20 years, and finding it contains lots of important and interesting information. Unfortunately, it is stored on Betamax, VHS and cassette tapes, LP records, 8 inch, 5.25 inch and 3.5 inch floppy disks, SmartMedia flash memory cards and bare Parallel ATA (PATA) hard drives. You might feel the archaeologists have an easier task in obtaining their information. Even if you could come up with functional hardware to read all these old media types, how could you provide the data to someone that wants to access it on an iPad?

Fortunately, there is look back technology available to access and translate a lot of that old media. Although current computers no longer have drives to read removable magnetic disks, and the latest Ultrabooks, Chromebooks and iPads don't even have optical disc drives, there are a lot of USB external drives available for these older media types. I have not seen (at least recently) any USB external drives for reading 8" or 5.25"

floppy disks, so for those you might have to rely on an old working computer. USB external drives are readily available for 3.5" disks, however, and are great when you have older equipment (like electronic test equipment) that can only store to its built-in floppy drive. There are also plenty of USB external optical drives available to read and write CD, DVD and even Blu-ray discs.



LOOK BACK TECH

(Continued from page 10)

There are a number of options when it comes to getting information off older computer hard drives. If you don't have a computer that supports the older drive, there are plenty of hard drive external enclosure kits available to interface all sizes of PATA and SATA hard drives to USB. The Apricorn DriveWire Universal Hard Drive Adapter is one of several similar products that can easily connect any size or type of bare hard drive to USB for data transfer. It is great for transferring files you forgot you needed from those old computers that won't boot anymore, or have no removable media in common with your new computer. For bare SATA drives, there are also quick-change docks available to easily access them through USB or eSATA.



A lot of laptops and tablets have slots for reading the removable flash memory cards commonly used in digital cameras, but most can only accommodate SD (Secure Digital) cards. Many of the older or less popular media formats, like CompactFlash or SmartMedia, are not supported in new devices. There are a lot of USB adapters available for almost any memory card format that has ever existed, allowing these cards to be read again. I have one USB media adapter that claims to accommodate 56 different types of memory cards.



Though almost everyone now captures and enjoys audio-visual entertainment through digital means and devices, including digital still and video cameras, personal digital music players and streaming audio and video, the all-digital era is at most only two decades old. Many of us still have music, pictures and video in an analog format, which makes them more difficult to enjoy in our digitally-oriented world and makes the originals more vulnerable to loss or degradation over time. Fortunately, there are many look back devices available to help bring these analog items into the digital world.

For printed materials like photographic prints, a good flatbed scanner can make excellent digital scans. For less critical material, a hand-held scanner can digitize much quicker with good results. Where the original is a film negative or slide, there are a lot of reasonably priced film and slide scanners available to allow those old memories to be more easily accessed and permanently preserved in digital form. At one end of the spectrum are precision film scanners that make high-resolution scans but require more time to scan. There are also lower-cost film scanners based on digital camera sensor technology that make very fast scans of reasonable quality. These scanners, such as ones made by Wolverine Data, make it possible to convert large collections of slides or negatives to digital files in a reasonable time. There are services available to perform these conversions for you for a fee as well.

For those that have large collections of vinyl audio records, cassette tapes or even 8-tracks, there are devices that can be connected to your computer

(Continued on page 12)

LOOK BACK TECH

(Continued from page 11)

through USB to digitize from almost any audio source. These devices take in right and left channel

audio inputs, and so require that you still have an appropriate and working player available. There are also USB players for vinyl records and for cassette tapes, which allow those media to be played and digitized through your current PC or laptop. These are great when your record or tape collection was preserved, but you no longer have a turntable or cassette player that works. There are also many devices available for digitizing analog video, such as from camcorders or VCRs, but these all rely on you having a working player to provide the analog electrical signals.

The look back devices so far described allow legacy data storage to be accessed by current computers and analog media sources to be digitized. But what do you do when you have legacy hardware, like a parallel port printer or a hand-held GPS receiver with serial port interface, that you still want to use? There are USB to parallel converters, so that you can electrically connect that parallel port printer to your Chromebook. There are also USB to serial converters, which provide me a way to connect my old Magellan hand-held hiking GPS to my laptop (which has no serial port) and download tracks. Computer technology seems to advance much faster than some other electronics, and it seems a waste to have to buy a new GPS simply because your new PC doesn't support the interface it uses.

The last look back application is in telecommunications. Today all computers have either a wired Ethernet connection, a Wi-Fi capability, or both. It was not too long ago, however, that the only way to get on the Internet was through a dial-up connection with a modem. Unfortunately, there are still parts of the rural U.S. where dial-up may be the most reasonable option. Since modems disappeared from new computers many years ago, the best way to connect your Ultrabook to the Internet in these locations may be through an external USB modem.

The problem with advancing technology is that it makes everything obsolete eventually. This means

there will be a bright future for these "look back" devices to handle the things we expect in our current computers at some point. While USB is pretty universal, I don't expect to find a cloud with a USB port on it.



ATTEND OUR MEETINGS

Get help on your
PC problems
Learn what is new in
the computer world
Network with your
Computer Friends
Get free Written and
On-Disk material
**WE HAVE THREE
MEETINGS
EACH MONTH**

HOW TO STOP WEBSITES TRACKING YOU

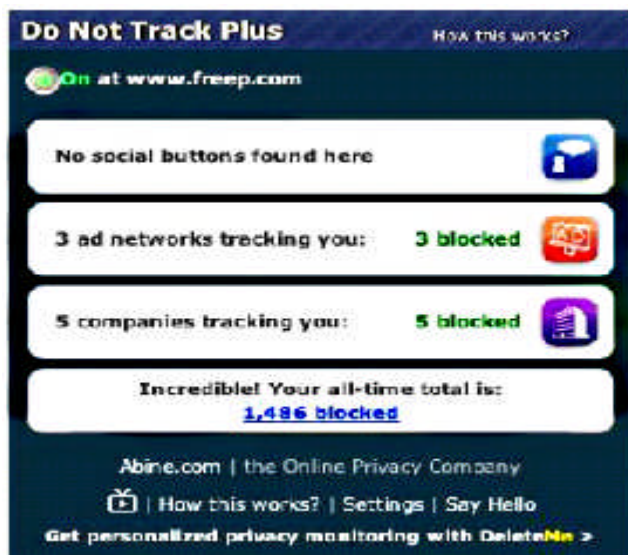
Do Not Track Plus by Abine.com
 Reviewed by Larry Mobbs, President, Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron, MI
 March 2012 issue, COMP Communicator
www.bwcomp.org
[Lmobbs \(at\) comcast.net](mailto:Lmobbs@comcast.net)

A new program offered free from Abine software allows you to block websites you visit from tracking where you browse. Many sites, and Facebook.com is one of the worst, want to track every site you visit so they can match up your preferences to the items they want to display on your wall for advertisers.

first few days of my use on one machine they blocked 1600 attempts.

Installation following the quick download is painless and there is virtually no setup. While writing this article I loaded Firefox, downloaded the software and ran it as a plugin.

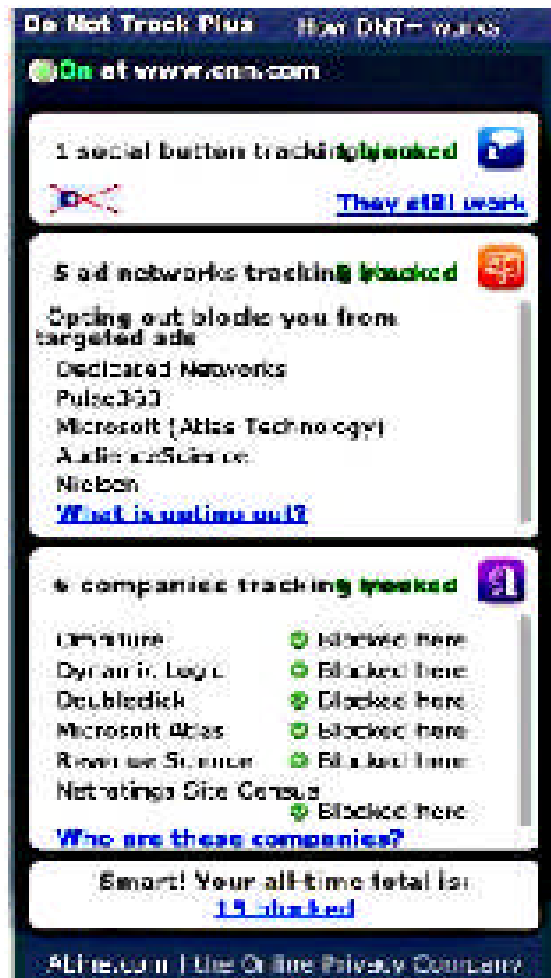
This is required for each browser you use. After restarting Firefox I visited cnn.com and Donottrack Plus reported blocking 13 attempts to track my browsing on their site.



In the software industry there is a movement to have the browsers include a plugin that prevents this action but as of yet it is not ordered and may never be. Browser publishers may take this on from their own volition but they will be pressured by advertisers not to.

One must remember that many sites depend on you or others visiting the links they place on their pages in order to pay for the website.

When you run Abine it puts a small icon in your browser and it displays a number with each site you visit, telling you how many attempts are made to track your visit and what type of tracking company is making the effort. They also keep a running grand total of how many blocks they have made. In the



It looked like this (see above).

The program came highly recommended by Cnet.com, which is where I read about it. It can be downloaded from Abine.com.

DIFFERENT PRICING TO DIFFERENT PEOPLE

Dynamic Pricing
Gives Different Pricing to Different People
By Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) compukiss.com

If you walked into Wal-Mart to purchase a camera and the sales person told you the camera you were interested in was \$300 and then he offered it to the next person in line for \$200, you would probably be aggravated. If the clerk explained that your higher price was based on the fact that he thought you were a very interested buyer who was ready to make a purchase, while the other person was not a serious buyer, you might be even more outraged.

Yet, that is exactly what is happening with online shopping. Online retailers are using cookies to track your moves. Although cookies are relatively harmless and unobtrusive, they show the retailer exactly which items you have looked at and how often you have a view them. Retailers can also use click loggers, ad sites, and computer-generated statistics to track your shopping. If you look at the same item several days in a row, the retailer might decide that you will soon be ready to buy and raise the price.

This happened to me recently, when looking for a bird feeder for my husband for father's day. After several days of looking at the item and mulling the purchase, the price of the bird feeder suddenly went from \$42 to \$51.

This is what is commonly referred to as dynamic pricing which is, in effect, changing the price of a good based on what the retailer thinks a buyer is willing to pay. If you think about it, you realize that dynamic pricing has been around for eons. In a street market hundreds of years ago, a person who was a better haggler may have paid less for the same item as someone who simply agreed to the first price given.

Today's online dynamic pricing is the practice of charging consumers different amounts based, not on their haggling ability, but on their characteristics as consumers. Evidently, as long as this does not include discriminatory criteria, like charging someone

with blue eyes more than someone with green eyes, this is perfectly legal.

After all, airlines have been doing it for years. They typically charge more for flights that are popular with business travelers and they also have complex pricing schemes to fill unused seats. This year the St. Louis Cardinals introduced dynamic pricing for tickets to their ball park. This allows the Cardinals to charge more for "hot" games on popular days. A recent look at ticket prices showed that an infield pavilion seat for a Saturday night game was selling for \$42. The same seat on a weeknight might be a little as \$13.50. It was said that a few years ago, Coca Cola did a test with their vending machines that charged more for soft drinks when the outside temperature rose.

Dynamic pricing doesn't always go against you. For instance, it might be advantageous if you are booking a last minute flight or looking for a cheap ticket to the Cardinal's game. When dealing with dynamic pricing online, however, the instances that I saw in my recent shopping have all been leading toward higher pricing. There is, however, something that you can do to counteract this when it goes against you.

When they raised the price on my bird feeder, I decided to check out the price of the feeder using another web browser that didn't have a cookie identifying me. Sure enough, the price was back to \$42. I was able to see the two different prices at the same website side by side when using two different web browsers.

You can do the same thing; just download a new web browser like Firefox (www.firefox.com), Chrome (www.google.com/chrome), or Opera (www.opera.com). These are all free. Then visit the website in question and look at their prices without logging in or giving any personal information. If you have been using one of these alternative browsers and want to use them for a price comparison, you should clear your cookies before you start your price search. A setting for doing that is usually found in the browser's Tools menu.

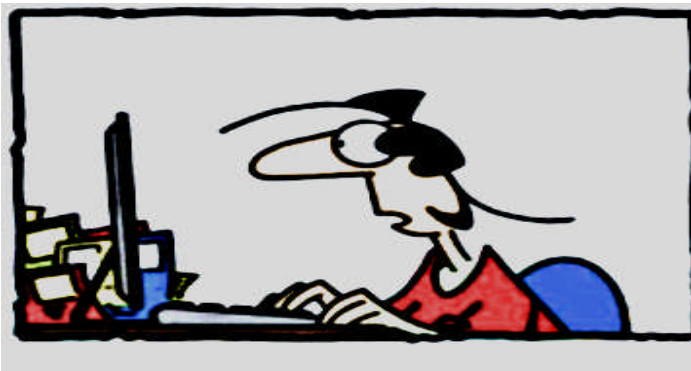
Short Circuits...zzzt!

911 Mania 1 Authorities in Ohio say a pocket-dialing prowler got himself arrested after his cellphone turned informant. Twice. Investigators say an emergency operator traced an accidental 911 call on Tuesday night to a home in a town northwest of Columbus. The County Sheriff's deputies dispatched to check on the house found a window forced open. They arrested a man inside. The Sheriff's office says the suspect was found in a bathroom after his phone's low-battery alert led deputies to his hiding place. He is charged with breaking and entering. A phone listing for him was disconnected.

Associated Press

911 Mania 2. A Wisconsin woman is accused of making false 911 calls to try to get out of traffic tickets. She is charged with seven counts of making false emergency calls. Investigators say each time the woman was pulled over she would call 911 while officers were checking her record or processing her information. Officers would leave the scene of the traffic stop to investigate the 911 activity, only to find there was no emergency. The local television station investigators say they eventually linked the calls to the suspect. WISN

911 Mania 3 Authorities say a 26-year-old man Florida man has been arrested after calling 911 ten times seeking a ride to Mexico or other places. The local paper reports that the man was arrested Sunday after the repeated calls to 911. He faces a misdemeanor charge of misusing the 911 system. The County Sheriff's Office says he began making calls at 8:16 p.m. one evening and continued until 12:45 a.m. Each time he asked for either a ride to Mexico or the homes of his boss and friends. Dispatchers told him that his calls were not an emergency and that he should not call 911 for such requests. The responding deputy says the caller smelled of alcohol when he was arrested. Associated Press



**"I used \$15 worth of ink to print
\$7 worth of coupons"**



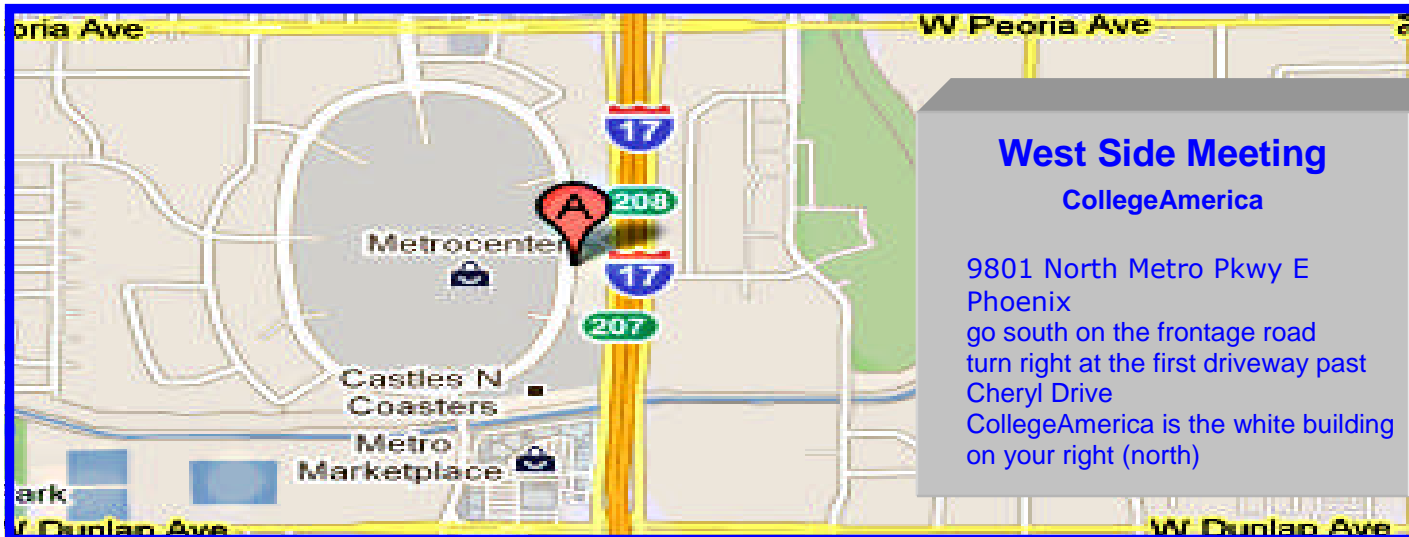
**"Are you just going to sit there
And not comment back?"**

911 Mania 4. Another Florida man is accused of making more than 1,200 non-emergency calls to 911 in less than two months, according to video from a Tampa television station. The man used an unregistered cell phone to make all the calls and the majority of them were silent, according to the county sheriff. "It taxes us," he said. "It's unnecessary. It's outrageous." The accused man did make up fake emergencies at least 19 times according to the Sheriff. In one recording, he told a dispatcher someone was chasing him with a knife. A department spokesman said, "We had to treat every one of those calls as if it was truly an emergency," The phone wasn't in service with a phone company. Even so, all cell phones must still be able to dial 911, by law. WFLA

911 Mania 5. A man has been accused of making as many as 17,000 harassing and lewd phone calls to more than 30 women in the central Pennsylvania area. Police say that the perpetrator made that many calls from August to December, and they're still determining how many of those were obscene. Investigators believe there could be hundreds of additional victims. The suspect was charged with 30 counts each of stalking and harassment by communications. He is being held in the county prison on \$25,000 bail. The victims said that the caller contacted them repeatedly and asked for them by name. The area police chief encouraged any additional victims to contact their local police department. Associated Press

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

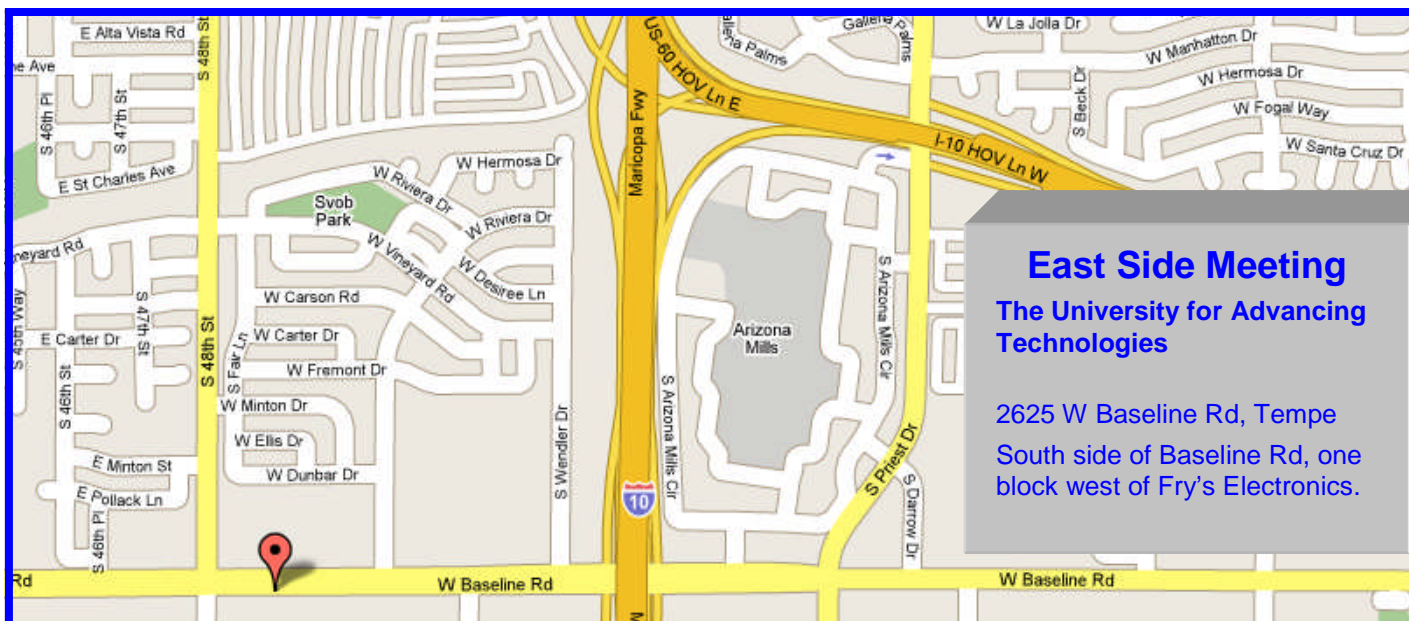
HOW TO GET THERE



West Side Meeting

CollegeAmerica

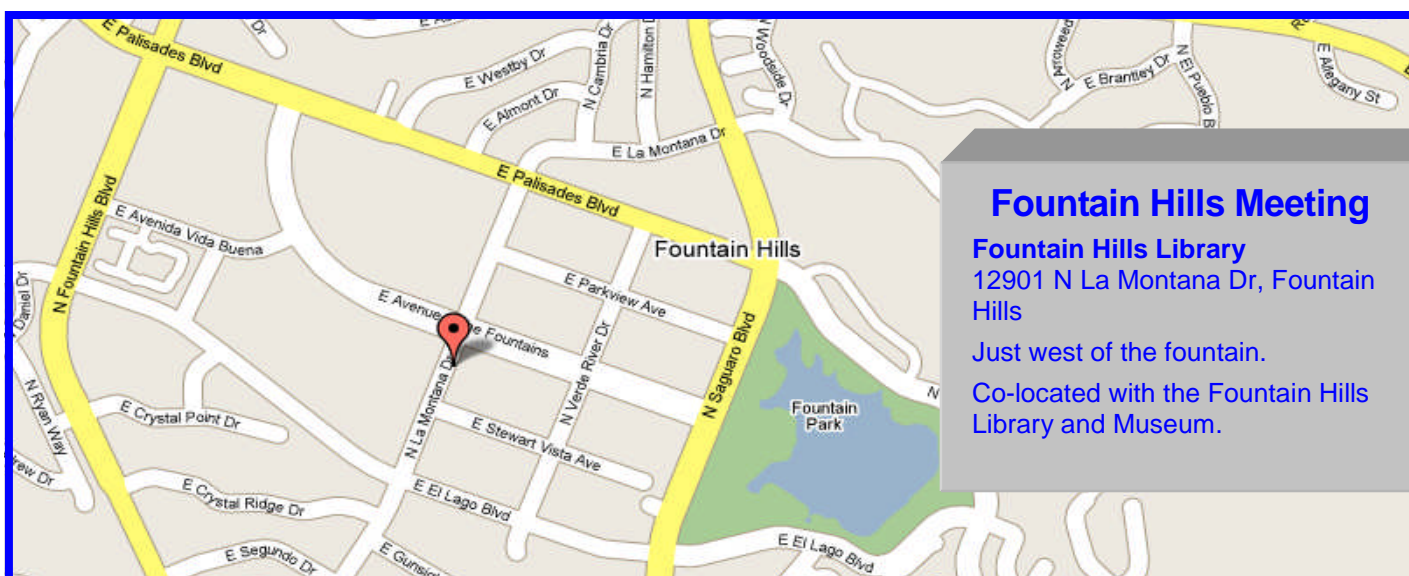
9801 North Metro Pkwy E
 Phoenix
 go south on the frontage road
 turn right at the first driveway past
 Cheryl Drive
 CollegeAmerica is the white building
 on your right (north)



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, 2013*

Phoenix PC Users Group Membership Application

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

Address: _____

City, State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phones — Home: _____ Cell: _____ Work: _____

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 website.

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 ? 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

Mar 2013

The Newsletter of the Phoenix Personal Computer Users Group

STAMP

PLEASE NOTE OUR NEW ADDRESS

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