MONITOR

Next Meeting
Tuesday, November 11

Arpad Kovacs

What's New and What You Can Expect on Black Friday

Contents

Many Ways to Get Help
by Jim Cerny
Sarasota Technology User Group, FL

As with any tool with so many options, computers offer us so many applications that it is easy to become confused and need help. Fortunately, many of these "options" that computers have available are those that are supposed to help us. Here are some ideas for getting help when you are stuck.

Google it – yes, believe it or not, Google is one of the best places to get help. Go to the Google web page at google.com and enter in the search box your SPECIFIC problem for which you need help. You may phrase it as a question if you like, such as: "How do I change the default font size in Word 2010?" Notice that you should be as specific as you can with the product or program name and the edition of that program that you are using. Google will provide you a list of things to click on to get the answer you need.

YouTube – another amazing way to get help. On the Google web page look for a "YouTube" option or look for a very small array of little black squares. Clicking on that array will bring up many Google options, one of which is YouTube. Or you can just go to the YouTube web page at youtube.com. Again enter in the search bar your specific question or problem and you may be able to actually watch a tutorial on how to solve your problem. YouTube is a great resource for many things.

Classes – The big plus for classes is that you will go through a learning program instead of trying to learn "just one thing." If you are having more than one or two isolated problems with a specific program, you probably need a good class to bring you up to speed with that whole application. In a class you will become much more aware of what you do not know and get the bigger picture. And if you are stuck in class you can always ask the instructor or cheat by looking at what your classmate is doing.

Books – There is no lack of computer publications to help you. I like the books that have lots of pictures in them to show you what the computer screens look like as you learn. Although most people enjoy books, not many people can read a book and learn from it as they read. You need to actually do the exercises to learn.

Tutoring – This is really the best learning option because it should target your specific needs. If you do decide to have a paid tutor help you, why not negotiate and invite one or two friends to be there with you and share the cost?

Friends and Relatives – especially teens. They already know more than we ever will and would really have the knowledge to help you. But would they be able to teach well and be patient with you? That could be a problem. Or maybe you wouldn't understand the tech-talk they might use. The blue circle with the white question mark in it – this symbol represents, in most Windows applications, the way to get help. Otherwise, look for anything on the screen that says "help." Click on it and search for what you want for that particular application.

Calling in a professional or taking your computer in to a repair shop – there is nothing wrong with doing this, especially if you are having a hardware problem. But they may not take the time to teach you anything.

I know I have not covered all the possibilities there are many more ways to learn; you have to decide which way is best for you. Learning one new thing is day is good for you and your brain. If all else fails, put your computer under your pillow at night and maybe some of the knowledge will be absorbed by your brain while you sleep. (This may only work with a laptop.)

From the May 2014 issue of PC Monitor, newsletter of the Sarasota Technology User Group, FL. Courtesy of APCUG.

Music and Video Files: Modify Them to Your Needs

by Phil Sorrentino
The Computer Club, Inc., Sun City Center, FL

Music and Video files that you produce with your video camera, or voice recorder, are not always exactly what you want. Now, I'm not suggesting that you can change the artistic quality of the file, but that you can change the file length or size to accommodate your

particular needs. With either an audio or a video file, the particular file may be too long, or it may contain sections that are not needed. So, it would be nice to be able to cut off the beginning, the end, or remove a slice somewhere in between. I'm sure there are many other ways to accomplish these tasks, but I have found that Windows Movie Maker (to modify video files) and Audacity (to modify audio or music files) are good choices, and both of these software applications are free. Windows Movie Maker is provided by Microsoft and can be downloaded at www.windows .microsoft.com/en-us/windows/get-movie-maker-down-load, and Audacity is provided by Sourceforge and can be downloaded at www.sourceforge.net/download.

A multi-media presentation, or "movie" as Movie Maker (and many other commercial packages) calls it, is a collection of pictures, videos, and music, organized as a movie, used to tell a story. It may be the story of your latest vacation, your last birthday, the last big holiday, your youngest grandchild, or a pictorial history of someone, something, or some organization. If you have appropriate pictures, videos, and music, Movie Maker can easily put them together to create a movie to express your particular point of view. So, obtaining the pictures, videos and music is usually the first step in producing your movie. Pictures are probably the easiest; you just review the pictures, improve their quality if needed, and then put them is an appropriate sequence. Videos are a little more difficult because they usually need to be shortened, and possibly have inappropriate sections removed. Music, or audio, is easy if you have good recordings, but sometimes you may want to remove certain portions, like bad scratches or pops, or a long lead-in or long lead-out. Or you might only want a few words out of a lengthy oration.

Movie Maker can be used as a tool for modifying video clips. (Once the video clips are the way you want, you can then add them to your movie.) After opening Movie Maker, click "add videos and photos," and navigate to the video clip that you want to modify. Select the video clip and it will be added as the only item in your movie. The video clip will be imported and shown as a series of Video blocks. Now you can play your video clip using the Play and Pause buttons, and identify the pieces to be removed. Select "Edit," under Video Tools, and you will see the "Split" tool. Move the Movie Cursor (the dark vertical bar) to the first point where you would like to split the video. If you are going to remove the beginning, move to the point where you would like the video to begin. Click the Split tool. This will create two videos, one before the split and one after the split. Right click the video piece to be removed and select "Remove." This will delete that piece of the video. Now you can move through the video and identify pieces to remove and pieces to keep. Just move the Cursor to the locations to split the video and use the Split tool. Then Remove the unwanted pieces and save the good piece as a new video with a new name. Usually you will find pieces to keep and pieces to remove interspersed. If you want to save many pieces, you will probably have to find a piece to save and delete everything else, and then start over with the original video and isolate the next piece and delete everything else. So it may be very tedious if you want to save a lot of small pieces from one larger video, but it will surely be worth the time and effort. Once you have video

pieces, you can join them by starting with a "File-New" movie and adding the video pieces using "add videos and photos." Put them in the proper sequence and add a "transition" in between so they will flow smoothly, then save it as a new video.

Audacity is an Audio Editor and Recorder. Audacity is very comprehensive and can do many things. One of those things is that it can be used as a tool for modifying audio (sound or music) files. After opening Audacity, click File-Open and navigate to the audio clip that you want to modify. The audio clip will be imported and shown as a graph of the amplitude of the audio. (Both Left and Right channels will be displayed if the audio is in stereo). Now you can Play your clip using the Play and Pause buttons and identify the pieces to be removed. No, or very low, volume periods will be indicated by just a horizontal line with no amplitude. The Audio Cursor can be placed on the recording by Right-clicking on a point in the recording. A section of the recording can be selected by pressing the Right Mouse button while on the recording, and dragging the Mouse to the end of the area to be selected. Then using the File-Export Selection, the selected section can be saved as a new audio file with a new name. I found this tool very helpful in separating multiple cuts from an audio recording of a complete side of a vinyl recording (a record album for those of us over 40). I had converted my old vinyl recordings to .mp3 files, just before giving them away. To save time I converted the recordings a side at a time. So for each vinyl album I ended up with two .mp3 files, each about 20 to 25 minutes, and each having 12 to 16 cuts (songs) in each .mp3 file. So, the individual songs were separated by about 2 seconds of silence (no amplitude), making them easy to identify, once you have listened to the cut using Audacity.

As you can see from these basic directions for modifying a video file with Movie Maker and an audio file with Audacity, the process is very similar, even though the displays look very different and the displayed file representations look very different. The results are very similar too; it's a modified file that will be useful in your next Movie Making project.

From the June 2014 issue of The Journal, *newsletter of The Computer Club, Inc., Sun City Center, FL. Courtesy of APCUG.*

Sign Out of Online Accounts

Q. When I go to my online bank accounts and other sites that I have to sign into, does it make any difference whether I sign out or just click the X to leave? I'm thinking it doesn't make any difference, but what is your opinion, Mr. M?

A. Yes, it makes a huge difference. Make that HUGE difference! Never ever, ever, EVER leave an account that you logged into without logging out. Failing to log out is tantamount to departing your home and leaving the door open. 99.99 percent of the time everything will be fine when you return. On the other hand, it is only going to take one time when you return to find your home ransacked or a colony of raccoons having taken up residence that will change your life forever. And then it's too late.

Always log off – it doesn't matter whether it's an online bank account or your Gmail account or anything else. You log in for security purposes, and you must log out to close and lock the door behind you, otherwise you are leaving that account door open and making yourself and your data needlessly vulnerable.

Most log-in venues have an automatic log-out feature so if your account has no activity for a period of time, you will automatically be logged out in an effort to protect you from yourself. Unfortunately, there are also evil doers out there who know that many users are lazy or simply don't know any better and will walk away from accounts without logging off. That creates a golden opportunity for someone to wreak havoc on your account(s) and adversely affect your life in the process, as well. It only takes a split second to log out so it is well worth the effort for the peace of mind alone.

Q. My question concerns the conversion of Word documents to PDF documents. Why would I want to do that?

A. It might be that you don't want to do that. It really depends on your document needs or any requirements imposed upon you. It's been years since I converted a .DOC file to a .PDF because I just haven't had any need to do that.

Many times people are required or requested to submit documents in PDF (Portable Document Format), so in that situation they are simply honoring the request or requirement. There are many reasons that the PDF format may be selected. For example, documents always look exactly the same for all recipients, regardless of the hardware or software used; documents can also be navigated by keyword search and hyperlinks can be included within a table of contents, which increases usability.

In addition, it is an excellent format for presentations, since PDF documents look exactly the same on all platforms; the file format is compact, so files can be easily emailed to recipients; the file format is excellent for archiving, since the look and feel of documents is preserved and the document size is compacted; the format is also an industry standard for business documents such as contracts and forms that must retain their exact appearance for legal reasons, such as tax returns, license agreements, ransom notes, tender documents, quotations and logos.

Q. Where do I find Contacts or my Address Book with the new Gmail interface?

A. After logging into Gmail.com, click the arrow next to Gmail in the upper left-hand corner of your Inbox, then select Contacts from the drop-down menu.

Mr. Modem's DME (Don' t Miss 'Em) Sites of the Month

FlightRadar24.com

This is a very cool flight tracker that shows current air traffic worldwide. FlightRadar24 uses in-air flight data from several sources combined with schedule and flight status information from airlines and airports to create an informative presentation. How it all works is fascinating, in a geeky kind of way: An aircraft gets its location from a GPS satellite. The ADS-B transponder on the aircraft transmits a signal containing the location (and much more) to a receiver connected to Flightradar24. The receiver feeds the data to Flightradar24 which then displays it on Flightradar24.com. Click any of the little airplane icons to view detailed information about the flight. Be sure to read the site's FAQ located in the About section.

www.flightradar24.com

ScienceDaily

This is one of the Internet's leading online magazines and Web portals devoted to science, technology and medicine. The free, adver-tising-supported service presents breaking news about the latest discoveries and biggest research projects in everything from astro-physics to zoology.

www.sciencedaily.com

Television Without Pity

Imagine this nightmarish scenario: Your TiVo or DVR fails and you miss last night's episode of "The Kardashians." I'd be despondent, too, but before you stick your head in the microwave, all is not lost. At Television Without Pity you can read a recap of your show – with color commentary. (Be sure to take a look at Hulu.com, too.)

www.televisionwithoutpity.com

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Looking for an MP3 Player with Wi-Fi?

by Carol Picard
Midland Computer Club, MI

I'd been using a Samsung Galaxy Player 4 for music player and also for a few apps, e.g., calendar, contacts, shopping list. It had wifi capability and access to Google Play Store. Recently the battery started discharging completely every couple of days. Fortunately, it didn't lose data but did lose all settings. Replacing the battery didn't help.

A basic mp3 player wouldn't give me the capabilities I wanted. I could have used my cell phone, but not ready to put all of my information and music on one device.

Samsung no longer markets the Galaxy Player (at least not in the U.S.) and I didn't want to pay hundreds of dollars for a replacement device. My criteria were: 4" screen, 8Gb storage, microSD card slot, 1Gb memory, wifi, and Google Play Store. My search led me to no-contract phones. Unfortunately, the specs are not generally listed on the packaging so I needed to do research before going to the store. Since I had a pretty well-defined list of apps, and didn't anticipate adding a lot of new apps, I decided a device with 4Gb storage would probably be okay.

I purchased a no-contract phone for about $80. Make/model of phone I chose isn't important as any device that meets your criteria and has decent reviews should work. Since I was not going to activate the phone capability I wasn't concerned about which service provider the phone worked with.

The phone I chose has Bluetooth which I had not included in my search criteria but allows me to connect to a Bluetooth speaker. It also has a rear facing camera with flash. A front facing camera would have been nice for Skype, but I forgot to check for that.

I was able to back up data from the apps on the Samsung Galaxy Player to a computer and was quickly able to get the new device set up with my favorite apps and data.

I turned the Airplane Mode on to disable the 3G service but can still turn wifi on/off as needed.

Galaxy 4

The device only has about 2Gb user accessible storage so I decided to add a microSD card for music, pictures, etc. I had a small microSD card in the Samsung Player and could have used that but decided to purchase a 32Gb microSD card (which was the highest capacity for the device).

I probably could have copied music from the smaller to the larger card but decided this was a good opportunity to re-select music. The phone was connected to a computer via USB cable to synch music from Windows Media Player. While all the selected music was synched to the microSD card, the Google Play Music app only displayed songs that were in mp3 format and most of my music is in wma format. Windows Media Player used to convert from wma to mp3 when synching but apparently that isn't available in Windows Media Player 12 and I didn't want to run all the music through a 3rd party converter.

I researched some of the music apps available in the Google Play Store and settled on Rocket Player. The free version doesn't play wma files but after testing Rocket Player functionality with some mp3 files, decided it would work and paid $3.99 for the Pro version which does play wma.

Rocket Player admits it doesn't have a good solution for managing album art. I tried a couple of 3rd party apps but they didn't work well either. If having album art is important, and depending on how you ripped the music to your computer, the music folders on your computer may contain three different album art .jpg files (have to view hidden files and protected operating system files to see them).

I copied the AlbumArtSmall.jpg file from the computer to the corresponding album folder on the SD card and renamed it to AlbumArt.jpg (which appears to be the Rocket Player default). After disconnecting the device and viewing in Rocket Player, the album art was displayed. If you have hundreds of albums, that may not be a workable solution.

The only other app I've added is a flashlight app.

I've been using the no-contract phone with my select set of apps and for playing music for a couple months and it has proven to be a good option at a reasonable price.

What Exactly Is Linux?

by Stuart Jones, MD
Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA

Everybody who has used a personal computer (PC)—desktop, laptop, notebook, and tablet, whatever—knows about Windows. Microsoft Windows, to be exact. Most of the PC's in the world use Windows as their "operating system." As many know, a computer system is made of hardware (the actual machinery — the physical computer) and software (the instructions installed into the hardware to make it work). The "operating system" is the most basic part of software—the software that manages the physical computer so that other programs (so-called "applications software") can make the computer do things that are useful to human beings. For most people, these useful things involve looking up information on the Internet, sending and receiving electronic mail, writing and printing documents, and playing computer games. Most computer users can be happily unaware of what is going on inside their computer, and this is as it should be. A computer, like a toaster, should "just work." Though we hear the most about computers when they don't work as they should, for the most part, they do. Microsoft Windows can take some credit for this reliability, though this has depended in part of which version of Windows is being used (the best, by far, has been Windows 7).

Since Windows works so well for so many people, why would anyone wish to use a different operating system? Up to now, most people haven't bothered. A few know that a copy of Windows on your computer costs up to $100, but they are used to paying $400 and up for a computer, and that cost is built into the overall price. Having learned since 1995 how to use any version of Windows, folks are not eager to learn a new way of doing things. A very few people who know a bit more about computers are not happy with the way Microsoft has run their part of the computer business, but for the most part, these folks are ignored by the rest of us.

However, a VERY small group of VERY well educated computer people had complained very loudly for decades about how Microsoft had dominated the operating system business, and how poorly various versions of Windows have worked…rom their expert perspective. Another small group of computer experts years ago decided to develop their own computer operating system. This group was led by Richard Stallman, who is best known for his assertion that ALL software should be distributed including its source code (the original computer language text that defines what the software is and does). His group developed a set of outstanding programming tools (programs used to develop other programs, but had difficulty developing their own operating system (GNU). In 1991, this crowd was joined by a computer science major from the University of Helsinki, Finland, named Linux Torvalds. He had written a personal version of an operating system, modeled on an operating system called "UNIX," which had been built for the very large computers of the 1970s and 1980s.

Linus spread his new program over the Internet to a worldwide group of similarly inclined programmers, who dubbed the results "LINUX," in his honor. (Since Linus and others used the GNU tools, their operating system is sometimes called "GNU-LINUX, to give well-deserved credit to Stallman's group.)

At first, LINUX was very limited compared to Windows. However, since LINUX cost nothing, and could be downloaded and modified freely, it became popular among computer experts, who formed an inter-national community around improving LINUX. Similar programmer communities developed other free and open software projects, which came to include many types of programs usually (in the Windows world) sold for profit. In addition, software was added to the LINUX project that created the same sort of "user interface" (the method people use to make the computer do things) that was provided by Windows (as well as the Apple Macintosh operating system, OS/X)—that is, using icons, a mouse, and keyboard, as well as video graphics (the so-called "GUI"—Graphical User Interface). The number of computer programmers working on free software projects rapidly increased to number over 100 million people, located everywhere reached by the Internet (which, as we know, now covers nearly all of our planet).

Until recently, this meant little or nothing to most computer owners. However, Microsoft, in perhaps the most stupid business decision ever seen in the software business, first published a new version of Windows (Windows 8) which drastically changed the user interface, to the dismay (and LOUD complaints) of everyone buying a new computer with this installed. They then compounded this idiocy by announcing and enforcing (by frankly unethical actions) "end of life" for the Windows XP version that was still being used by the majority of computer owners, to force all of them to buy a newer version. They then made the situation far worse by insisting that all these folks change to Windows 8, even though nearly all preferred Windows 7 (which kept the old user interface), and keeping the price of a Windows 7 license higher than one for Windows 8 ($90 minimum, PER COMPUTER). As of April, 2014, Windows XP was no longer updated and supported by Microsoft. This means that anyone still using XP will be in danger of having their computer afflicted with viruses and other malware, and of having their personal data stolen by the criminals who create this garbage.

Add to all this the ongoing economic crisis of 2008 to the present, there are a lot of computer owners who can ill afford the expense of a Windows upgrade, particularly if (as many do) they have 2 or more computers in their household. Fortunately for them, and for all other disgruntled current Microsoft Windows owners (dare we call them victims?), LINUX presents a really excellent alternative. Relatively few, unfortunately, have heard about LINUX, and those who have mostly think that it is strictly for computer experts (the so-called "nerdocracy"). Due to the efforts of those millions of free software programmers, this is no longer true. There are versions of LINUX that install more easily than Windows, run faster on the same computer hardware, and are EASIER to use than Windows 7, let alone 8. The author's current favorite version is Zorin LINUX, which can even be set up to LOOK like Windows XP or Windows 7.

Even those who know more about LINUX may be confused by the enormous (several hundred at last count) versions of LINUX plus additional programs that are available as "distributions." Each of these "distros" combines the LINUX operating system proper with many additional programs that manage the user interface, and also take care of tasks for which Windows users habitually pay $30-$50 (apiece!!) for a program package dedicated to each function (such as listening to music, burning CDs and DVDs, and performing office tasks). Each distribution is put together by a team of programmers (and user interface designers, artists, and documentation writers) who choose what will be included and how it will all work together. The result of their efforts is a package of software that can be run (without being copied to hard disk storage) "live" on any recent PC, or installed on that PC either replacing Windows, or alongside Windows. (In this last case, the user chooses which

operating system to use when the computer starts up or restarts.) There are special distros designed to be run old older equipment (as old as Intel 486 class!), netbook computers, and even exotic computers that aren't, strictly speaking, PCs. In fact, the Android operating system run by most cellular phones and tablet computers is a distro of LINUX, and there is even a distro designed for the XBOX gaming system, that turns this into a full-fledged computer usable for most PC tasks. The server computers that run the Internet (about 95% of them) run LINUX, as do some of the very large IBM computers used by banks and stock exchanges. As this is written, if you include all the tablets and cell phones, there are many MORE computers in the world running LINUX than run Windows!

LINUX is, without a doubt, the largest little-known phenomenon in high technology, and really, ENORMOUSLY, deserves to be better known by ordinary people. Because of the enormous networks of volunteers and paid experts who contribute to the LINUX project, as well as the thousands of other free and open software projects around the world, there is an absolutely HUGE community of LINUX experts available to help other folks who would like to use this software on their PCs, alongside or instead of Windows. Help is available via the Internet from numerous websites, and also from many regional and national LINUX user groups. Paid assistance for LINUX users is also available, from consultants and also from large organizations (including IBM!). Entire countries (including, at present, mainland China (!) and the Russian Republic) have adopted LINUX as their official government operating system, and a number of medium sized cities across the world have also done so.

Though Microsoft Windows (especially after the company retreats from its current idiocy, which seems imminent) will still have a large presence on PCs, it appears that LINUX will conquer a large segment of the PC market, and therefore will soon assume a much larger role in personal computing at the desktop and laptop level. Regardless, LINUX will continue to be developed by its various programmer communities, and will continue to power the Internet, cellular telephones, and a host of other "smart devices" (such as automobiles), the owners of which will likely remain blissfully unaware that they are using LINUX.

From the June 2014 issue of The LVCG Journal*, newsletter of the Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA. Courtesy of APCUG.*

Strolling Down Memory (Core) Lane
Museums and online resources help preserve computing history

by Gabe Goldberg, APCUG Advisor, Region 2 /
Gabriel Goldberg Computers and Publishing, Inc.

I had very mixed feelings the first time I saw computer technology I'd used in my career exhibited as museum artifacts. And I had a similar reaction to seeing mainframe genealogy ("System/360 begat ...") in computer history books. While the good news is that today's mainframes are close relatives of that first generation on which many of us grew up, it's easy to forget how much things have changed, and how far we've come. (Remember 25MB 2314 disk packs, giant 100MB 3330s and timesharing mainframes with half-megabyte memory?) At the same time, newcomers often lack the perspective to understand how things originated and why the computing world looks the way it does.

So it's interesting and instructive touring real-world and virtual computing museums, lovingly created and maintained by generations of professionals—many of whom designed, built and used the equipment written about and shown.

But where to start? Searching yields about 407,000 website hits. https://www.google.com /search?q=%22 computer+museum%22

Of course, adding keywords such as "mainframe" and "IBM" winnows results to only 127,000 and 66,000, respectively.

Unsurprisingly, the first general search result is the Computer History Museum. http://www.computerhistory.org/ Organized in the 1960s to exhibit Gordon and Gwen Bell's personal technology collection in Digital Equipment Corp.'s Boston lobby, it"s now housed in a multi-million dollar showplace in Mountain View, Calif. Its website offers a wealth of overview and in-depth reading material. Exhibits include technology "prehistory;" "modern computer origins, development and history; game playing; system restoration; and seminal industry contributors recognized as Museum Fellows, including Konrad Zuse and IBMers Fran Allen, Erich Bloch, Gene Amdahl, and Bob Evans.

A major new exhibit, "Revolution: The First 2,000 Years of Computing," includes a mainframe gallery, based around an IBM System/360 Model 30 CPU and showing three 2411 magnetic tape drives and a 1311 disk drive. In short, it's a typical smallish System/360 installation. A small display also describes System/360 solid logic technology (SLT)—halfway between integrated circuits and transistors, chosen when integrated circuits weren't quite mature enough to use on a large scale and transistors were already "old tech." Searching the online Revolution exhibit for mainframes http://www.computerhistory.org /revolution /search?q =mainframe yields more than 60 hits. The main System/360 story is here.

http://www.computerhistory.org/revolution/mainframe-computers/7

Further north along the West Coast, another museum has a different orientation: presenting major historic computing technologies in action, showing how people used them. Founded by Microsoft's Paul Allen, The Living Computer Museum in Seattle includes such blinky-light wonders as Princeton University's huge System/360 Model 91 console panel. Real old-timers can try their hands and test their memories working on an IBM sorter and keypunch, and try to convince relatives that these were once mainstream computing technology. Non-IBM computers include DECs PDP-7/8/10KI/11, Sigma 9 and Unisys V380.
http://www.livingcomputermuseum.org/

Many museums cover the whole computing spectrum, exhibiting different amounts of mainframe history and technology. A bit off the beaten path is the American Computer and Robotics Museum in Bozeman, MT, describing itself as "The world's oldest continually operating museum of its kind" and "Inch for inch, the best museum in the world." http://www.compustory.com/

In Washington, D.C., the Smithsonian Institution—nicknamed "The Nation's Attic"—of course has computing resources. An online COBOL exhibition lets you "learn about COBOL, or Common Business Oriented Language, one of the first computer-programming languages to run successfully on different brands of computers." The Computer History Collection includes artifacts related to producing, collecting, modifying, manipulating and using information in modern American society, with two dozen mainframe computers or components. There's plenty more to be nostalgic about, including 100 peripherals, 1,000 electronic components and 450 electronic calculators. Plus 150 cubic feet of documentation—which sounds like less than what I had to move whenever I changed programming jobs!

http://americanhistory.si.edu/cobol/introduction
http://americanhistory.si.edu/comphist/

Overseas are several museums in Germany, where many computers and related technologies originated, and where IBM has for decades had major development and manufacturing facilities. Stuttgart has Computer museum der Fakultat Informatik, which includes a 4331 Model 2 complete with at least a few of its manuals.
http://computermuseum.informatik.uni-stuttgart.de/index.en.html
http://computermuseum.informatik.uni-stuttgart.de/dev_en /ibm4331/ibm4331.html
http://computermuseum.informatik.uni-stuttgart.de/cm003_en.html

Not far from Stuttgart, there's indeed history galore was exhibited at the IBM museum in Sindelfingen. Unfortunately, it's moved to IBM's Boeblingen Lab where they're building a new exhibit, but focus has changed and the primary audience is IBM customers. So it's not open to the public.

http://www.theage.com.au/news/Perspectives/History-galore-at-IBM-museum/2005/01/31/1107020294580.html

http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/documents/pdf /HistoryofIBMDataProcessing.pdf

The Heinz Nixdorf Museums Forum in Paderborn, Germany, is billed as the world's largest computer museum. In more than 6,000 square meters of floor space, it depicts the 5,000-year history, present and future of information technology, from origins of numbers and characters in 3000 B.C. to the 21st century computer age. The museum's depth is shown by having separate curators for areas such as "punched card technology, PCs and media history" and "typing machines, office technique, German computers and Nixdorf." "While it surprisingly has no IBM mainframes, it features original ENIAC components, two Zuse devices (Z11 and Z23) and a Cray 2.

http://www.hnf.de/en/ueber-uns.html

http://www-03.ibm.com/ibm/history/documents/pdf/Historyof IBMData Processing.pdf

IBM itself has a few historic information resources, found by searching IBM.com.

http://www.ibm.com/Search/?q=%22ibm+museum%22

Endicott, N.Y.—where IBM and many technologies/products originated—is represented by its Visitors Center. While not tech-centric, it includes the Thomas J. Watson-IBM room which examines his professional career and development of IBM.

http://www.endicottny.com/VCmuseum.html

The Rhode Island Computer Museum has a diverse collection (from Apollo Jabba to Wang Peripherals) but not many mainframe or IBM items.

http://www.ricomputermuseum.org/

Some museums specialize, such as the Computer Graphics Museum in Salt Lake City, though, its presence is still largely online. I'd love to see an IBM 2250 Graphics Display Unit, something I battled with supporting under VM/CMS.

http://computergraphicsmuseum.org/

A group called Mid-Atlantic Retro Computing Hobbyists runs a museum in Wall Township, N.J., with five exhibits: mainframes, minicomputers, homebrew-era computers, business microcomputers and consumer microcomputers.

http://www.midatlanticretro.org/

For more online resources, there's a list of physical and virtual computer museums.

http://ed-thelen.org/comp-hist/merged.html#PhysicalCompMus

http://ed-thelen.org/comp-hist/merged.html#OtherCompVMus

Yahoo's directory lists about a dozen computer exhibits.

http://dir.yahoo.com/computers_and_internet/history/museums/

Wikipedia describes and lists various museum categories: online, North American, European, Latin American, Middle East and Oceania, along with further reading.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_museum

Many online communities exist for reminiscing and chatting about bygone systems; two such lists are here.

http://www.classiccmp.org/lists.html

Researching this article tempted me to join multiple museums, but I'll content myself with mapping their locations and attempting to connect the dots by visiting as many of them as possible. Perhaps I'll log equipment and systems found on which I worked.

Much has been written on computing's origins and evolution. Two books essential for mainframers are "IBM's Early Computers" and especially "IBM's 360 and Early 370 Systems." http://www.amazon.com/IBMs-Early-Computers-History-Computing/dp/0262022257 /ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1377020591&sr=1-1&keywords=ibm%27s+early+computers http://www.amazon.com/IBMs-Early-Systems-History-Computing/dp /0262161230 /ref=sr_1_2?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1377020724&sr=1-2&keywords=ibm%27s+early+computers

Sometimes museums are found in surprising places. I describe a friend's home as being decorated in "early mainframe," since he's tastefully placed various mainframe components—large I/O devices and controllers and such, not mere circuit boards or control panels—in rooms and hallways. They made me feel nostalgic, since I'd used and worked on many of them. My wife was less impressed, calling the house a computer mausoleum, proving that one person's interesting museum is another's ... well, let's not call it that. So check out the worldwide assortment of tributes to computing technologies we've all used which shaped today's world. And explore the computing world's diversity; browse a bit beyond System/360 and its descendants to see how others have computed.

This article first appeared on http//www.destinationz.org and is used with the author's permission. Gabe Goldberg has developed, worked with and written about technology for decades. He can be contacted at destination.z @gabegold.com. Courtesy of APCUG.

Finding Programs on Your Computer

by Jim Cerny
Sarasota PCUG, FL

When you turn your computer on, Windows (the master supervisor program, also called the "operating system") starts and, after a few moments, displays your start screen called the Desktop. This is where you begin using your computer and decide what you want to DO with your computer — that is, select what program you want to run. On the Desktop are:

ICONS — those little symbols with words underneath them. Most of these icons represent programs and you "double-click" your left mouse button on the icon of the program you want to run and use. Each program runs in a "window" (hence the term "Windows" for the operating system). The programs you use should have an icon on the desktop. However, most people new to using a Windows computer may not realize that your computer – all computers – come with many programs already installed on the computer. And, over time, you (or someone else using your computer) may have downloaded or installed more programs. Not all these programs have icons on your desktop.

To see ALL the programs on your computer, left click once on the "Start" button (or "Start orb") which is in the lower left corner of your desktop screen. This will open the start MENU which has all kinds of goodies. On this start menu, very near the bottom, is a rectangular box with the words "All programs" on it. Move your mouse arrow to that box and wait - it will open a list of ALL your programs on your computer. There are two important things about this list that you should know. First it is a long list and you will have to use the scrollbar on the right side to see the whole list. You can "scroll down" by putting your mouse arrow on the scrollbar gray slider, hold down the left mouse button, and then drag the mouse down. This will "drag" the scrollbar and show you the rest of the list. The second thing is that there are so many programs they are organized into FOLDERS. Scroll down this list until you see the list of folders — a "folder" has a small yellow icon that looks like folder to the left of the name.

The first FOLDER in the list should be the "Accessories" folder of programs. It is this particular folder that we will use for the rest of this article because all Windows computers have it (no matter what version of Windows you are running on your computer). Left click once on the Accessories folder to open it. This will give you a list of all the programs in that folder. All these programs come with Windows so they are on ALL Windows computers. To open or run any program from the "All programs" list, you just left-click once on the name of the program you want to start.

We are going to look at three of these programs, so left click on each of these to open them:

- Click on "Calculator" and a small calculator window will appear on your screen. You can move this window around by dragging the top part of the window with your mouse. It works just like any calculator — just click on the keys with your mouse. Notice that you can click on the "View" menu and change it to a "scientific" calculator and you can click on the "History" option (Windows 7 version or later) to see a list of your calculations. The nice thing about using this calculator is that you can "Copy" and "Paste" any result into your document or email.

- Click on the "Paint" program and you can draw and have fun creating your own work of art. You can learn how to use this enjoyable program by clicking on the small blue circle with a white "?" in the upper right of the window.

- Click on "WordPad." This is a free word-processing program that works just like the Microsoft Word program – except that WordPad has far less features. It works fine for writing letters and creating documents. The beauty of using WordPad is knowing that everyone who has Windows has it, whereas not everyone may have the Word program.

The "All Programs" list contains all the programs on your computer and you can run any program on this list by left-clicking on it once. But to REMOVE a program from your computer you need to use the "Uninstall or change a program" feature which we will not go into here.

If you want to create a shortcut on your desktop to one of these programs, here is one way to do it: Find the program you want on the all programs list. Move your mouse arrow on that program:

1. Hold down the "Ctrl" key (the Control key) on your keyboard
2. Hold down the left mouse button and DRAG to your Desktop area

The reason you must hold down the Ctrl key first and hold it down while you drag is so that you will make a COPY (also called a "shortcut") icon on your desktop and NOT MOVE the program from the all programs list. You should ALWAYS keep ALL programs on your All Programs list. If you DELETE a program icon from your desktop, you will not be deleting the program from your computer, only removing the "shortcut" icon from your desktop.

You can also find any program from the start menu by entering the name of the program you want in the "Search programs and files" box just below "All programs."

Personally, I find the Calculator, WordPad, and Paint programs fun and helpful, and I am sure you will too. I have made icons (shortcuts) for them on my desktop.

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7 Free Windows Troubleshooting Tools
by Bob Rankin

askbob.com

An operating system is an incredibly complex beast. If things go wrong with Windows, it can be difficult to track down the source of the glitch. But you can put away the chainsaw and sledge-hammer, because there are plenty of free troubleshooters you can use to fix most problems. Here's my recommended list of free Windows problem solvers...

Fixing Windows Problems and Annoyances

What's keeping you from opening or deleting a file or folder? Why do certain programs start automatically when you don't want them to? Why can't you install or uninstall a program? Why doesn't my sound work? Why does an app

just sit there, apparently doing nothing, while the activity light of your hard drive flashes busily? These are just a few of the annoyances that can drive you crazy.

Windows has some built-in tools, such as Task Manager, to assist in troubleshooting. There are also built-in troubleshooters you can use. On Windows XP, open the Control Panel, then select the category that best matches your problem, and a list of Troubleshooters will appear on the left side of the panel. On a Vista, Windows 7 or later system, just click the Start button then type "troubleshooting" to access all the troubleshooting tools in one place. On Windows 8, just type "troubleshooting" on the Start screen.

Windows Troubleshooting

But many advanced users turn to other free Windows troubleshooting tools that provide much more information about potential causes of problems and options for solving them.

Sysinternals Process Explorer has been described as "Task Manager on steroids." It displays a tree-view of running processes, organized by which process spawned which other(s). You can sort the display in other ways, too. Process Explorer shows a lot more details about processes than Task Manager and lets you do more than just kill a single process. Processes, or whole trees of them, can be killed, frozen, or resumed. You can also find the process controlling a given window by pointing at it, or search for any running process, handle, or DLL.

Microsoft's Resource Monitor is built into Windows 7 and Windows 8. It charts the way resources are used in your system, helping you pinpoint exactly what is gobbling up CPU cycles, RAM, or disk space. Click Start, then Run, then enter resmon.exe to start Resource Monitor. You may be prompted for an administrator password. A similar utility called Performance Monitor (perfmon.exe) is available for Windows XP and Vista.

Autoruns is another Sysinternals tool. It displays all of the programs that are loaded when Windows starts up, from apps in your Startup folder to scheduled tasks, services, device drivers, Sidebar gadgets, and codecs. Autoruns can show you startup items that you may not need to have running all the time, consuming system resources.

Unlocker is a handy solution to the "file in use by another program" annoyance. Just right-click on the stubborn file, choose Unlocker, and you can see what program has a lock on the file. Then you can end the offending process, make a copy or the file, or just release the lock that the process has on the file.

Speccy and Belarc Advisor are two additional tools you may find useful. These program will give you detailed information on all your computer's hardware components and installed software. You can read more about them in my article What's Going On Inside My PC?

System Information for Windows is not free, but since it packs so many troubleshooting tools into one software package, I have to mention it. It displays your system's software, hardware, and network resources in amazing detail, including things such as software license keys (in case you've lost your hard copy); device temperatures; installed multimedia codecs; and much more. A Tools tab includes handy tools that can reveal hidden passwords, a CPU stress test; and more. There's a PRO Edition ($9.95) and a portable Technician's Version ($29.95) that can be run from a USB drive.

NOTE: There is a free version of SIW, but it's dated October 2011, and according to the author's website, the SIW freeware Home Edition has been discontinued. It seems to work fine on XP/Vista/Win7, but would not run on my 64-bit Windows 8 laptop.

Most of these free Windows troubleshooting tools are created by and for programmers and other tech-savvy users. I recommend that you make a system restore point before making any changes, so you can use System Restore to undo any accidental damage. But if you go slowly and carefully, you can learn a lot about your system and solve some nagging problems. external).

Run a virus scan! You may not always be aware that malware has been installed on your

machine. Norton 360 will scan your computer for viruses, and warn you about potential social media scams using Safe Web for Facebook.

Create a post on your feed notifying friends of the scam, informing them not to click on anything strange or unusual coming from your page.

Report the scam to Facebook(link is external) or Twitter(link is external), depending on where the content is hosted.

From the Microworx October newsletter.

The Endless, Free, Online Newspaper

Pressreader is a web site that provides an endless stream of news stories from the world's top resources. Don't bother downloading the app unless you particularly want to. Just point your web browser to the Pressreader site and start reading. As you press the cursor keys, or move your mouse wheel, the screen scrolls to reveal an ever-increasing number of stories. So whether you've got 2 spare minutes or 20, if you want to catch up on news you'll find everything you need.

http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/endless-free-online-newspaper.htm

It's Time to eh … Relax

Hot Finds Editor Robert Schifreen says "I've just spent 57 of the last 72 hours working on a maintenance project for a group of critical servers which proved to be a lot more complex than I'd ever imagined it would be. So my apologies if you've been wondering about the lack of new hot finds over the past couple of days.

"Once the work had finished, a spot of relaxation was called for. Which gave me the perfect opportunity to check out a site that had been recommended to me last week, and which was sitting in my notebook ready to try.

"Calm is a web-based service that helps you to relax after a particularly busy or stressful time. Just sit back, plug in some headphones if you want, then head to the web site. You can choose a period of 2, 5, 10, 15 or 20 minutes for your session. And you can choose whether you just get to hear calming music, or whether there's also a soothing voice too. Combine those with the flowing, meditative graphics on the screen (or just close your eyes if you prefer) and you'll be back to a calm state in no time.

"Calm is free to use, and works with any modern web browser."

http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/and-relax.htm

Help's Half Hour Notes
October 14, 2014
by Jan Rothfus

Q: Why do you need more than one browser?
A: You do not have to install another one than IE. However, sometimes forms are specifically written for IE so you need it as a back-up. Most recommend Firefox.
Q: A member has loaded Linux but is unable to connect to the Internet. The wireless seems to time out.
A: You may be able to use a Windows driver.
Q: A member is trying to use email directly out of Firefox and would like to set up a 'button.'
A: The first way to do it is to open up the Gmail tab and then save it as a bookmark on the Toolbar so that it will appear as a button in Firefox. Another option is to again open the Gmail and then go

into Tools=> Options and set the Home Page as use Current Pages. That way Gmail will always open as Firefox starts up.

Be advised that next month's meeting location will be in the room next door to our usual room.

Mark Zinzow's October presentation on browsers can be found at slideshare.net/msz.

The Lighter Side