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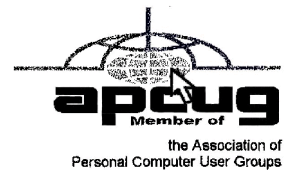
June 2015

Next Meeting
Tuesday, June 9

Amazing Browser Tips
with Mark Zinzow

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Things That You May Not Have Known About Google Maps Mobile

by Ira Wilsker

Almost every Android device came with a version of Google Maps installed. One of the most popular apps in the world, Google Maps has between 1 and 5 billion copies downloaded from the Google Play Store, with millions of other copies downloaded from the Apple iTunes Store.

Most people know that the mobile version of Google Maps can recommend driving routes between points, but it can really do a great deal more, now becoming so powerful and feature rich that it could conceivably threaten the market for the dedicated dashboard GPS devices.

The latest version available for free download from the Google Play Store (as I type this) is dated May 4, 2015, and continues the tradition for adding new features and improving previous features with each major build.

For the past few years, the mobile version of Google maps has had basic, real-time traffic information which labeled most major roads and highways with an easy to understand color

code: green roads indicated the traffic was flowing smoothly near the speed limits; yellow indicated that traffic was heavy and congested, but still moving, albeit often moving at speeds significantly below the posted speed limits; and red indicates that traffic is very heavy, and moving very slowly or traffic is at a standstill. In the recent updates and upgrades to Google Maps, Google has started to incorporate the live traffic reporting provided by another Google app, the very popular Waze road routing app (waze.com), which Google purchased a few years ago from the Israeli developers of Waze.

Users who have the Waze app loaded and running are transparently transmitting location and speed data to the Waze servers, which are now located at Google and interacting with it, providing current data to Google Maps as well as to other Waze users. Waze users can also manually report accidents, road construction, road hazards, speed traps, and other real-time road information which has always been instantly posted on the Waze app when reported, but much of this information is now also instantly incorporated and displayed on Google Maps as well. Many of the road hazards, traffic accidents, and other road conditions now posted on Google Maps shows as “Reported via Waze App.” While Waze is generally more “social” in context, displaying other “Wazers” in the field of view of the displayed map, and offering messaging between “Wazers” and other social services, it would not surprise me if in the future, Google actually merges the best features of Waze into Google Maps, combining them into a single outstanding app.

I have seen several others using their Google Maps app, but not utilizing all of its power and capabilities. The other users that I have observed generally only have the most basic street view displayed, without any of the other valuable information displayed. Users may wish to experiment with the mobile version of Google apps by tapping on the menu icon, which is the three parallel lines on the top left corner of the display. The menu offers the user the ability to control what is displayed. The “Your Places” choice on the menu allows the user to easily create and maintain an address book of locations, display previously saved Google Maps which may have also been created on the web based version of Google Maps, and the ability to save portions of Google Maps for offline display which can be utilized if the network is slow or unavailable.

One of the menu choices that I use, sometimes several times a day, is the “Traffic” selection. Activating “Traffic” almost instantly shows the color coded (green, yellow, red) speed and traffic congestion conditions, as well as other information including road construction, road hazards, and traffic accidents. I have become somewhat addicted to this feature, in that I check it every morning just moments before I leave home, checking the traffic conditions on my preferred and alternate routes to get to work; several times in recent weeks, based on the real-time traffic report, I decided to take an alternative route to work bypassing the “red” Eastex Freeway and I-10. Likewise, before leaving my office for the drive home, I also check the Google Maps traffic display, helping me again to decide on the best route home. This information is not just helpful in dealing with and avoiding routine traffic congestion and accidents, but is also invaluable when trying to negotiate the roads and highways during major storms, flooding, and other weather related conditions.

While it takes slightly more data and processing power to display, I almost always select the “Satellite” display from the menu. The high resolution satellite maps, the same as utilized by Google Earth, are especially useful when travelling in unfamiliar territory, as individual buildings and geographic features are clearly displayed, along with the identification of popular landmarks, such as major retail stores, banks, office buildings, hotels, and other points of interest. As with most other graphical displays on smart devices, the display on Google Maps can be zoomed in and out with the common “pinch,” and can be “moved” with a swipe of a finger. If Google Maps has been used to determine a road route, this satellite display, especially when zoomed in (“pinch-open”), clearly shows individual homes, businesses, parking lots, churches, factories, lakes, schools, and other landmarks making it that much easier to get to the correct destination. While not as visually feature rich as the satellite view, the “Terrain”

selection from the menu shows the coloration of the earth along with geographical and topographic characteristics, along with roads and other information.

What a lot of people are apparently unaware of, is that the recent versions of Google Maps may be an effective, even superior, replacement for a dash top dedicated GPS unit. With an abundance of reasonably priced dashboard and other mounts that can hold almost any size smart phone, the smart phone can easily replace the existing GPS device, while offering substantially more functionality than most of the newer dedicated GPS devices currently on the market. Most contemporary smart phones have a larger, brighter, and higher resolution display (screen), and with more control over the display than offered by most GPS units.

Google Maps (and its sister app Waze) now offers Bluetooth connectivity directly from the phone to the Bluetooth speaker or other Bluetooth receivers already available in most newer vehicles; all the user needs to do is turn on the phone's Bluetooth, which may likely already be configured to connect to the car's Bluetooth system. Just like the traditional GPS, Google Maps (and Waze) give clearly spoken driving instructions in a user selectable choice of voices and languages, but heard through the better auto sound system (or other Bluetooth speaker). Bluetooth volume is adjustable using the existing volume buttons on the smart phone. Being connected via the "cloud" to Google servers, and having native intelligence, Google Maps (similar to some GPS devices with traffic reporting) will recommend alternative routes to the selected destination in the event of significant traffic delays. In my experience, the traffic congestion display on Google Maps (and Waze) is among the best available, and is often more up to date and comprehensive than that shown on a typical GPS.

Another beneficial feature of Google Maps is the integrated capability to utilize the Google search function to locate points of interest, including hotels, restaurants, and other destinations. In many cases, reservations can be made directly from the Google Maps app; obviously, for safety reasons, the driver of the vehicle should never search, type, or engage in any other distraction while operating the vehicle, and should delegate that task to a passenger or wait until the vehicle is stopped and off the road. In terms of points of interest, many of the GPS makers brag on the number of "POI" that their respective devices offer; these numbers pale in comparison to the number of "POI" and related information (such as restaurant and

hotel reviews) that can be gathered by implementing a traditional Google search from within Google Maps. As with the GPS devices, Google Maps can route directly to any selected POI. Google Maps and routes can also be created on a desktop or tablet web based device, and saved to the user's Google account, which will automatically make the saved routes available to the mobile device.

About the only weakness that I have encountered while using Google Maps (and Waze) concurrently with a recently purchased and updated dedicated GPS



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device, is the greatly reduced functionality when there is no data service available to feed the smart device with current data including highly detailed maps. Since the dedicated GPS device predominately uses its internal data storage, maps, and the satellite GPS signal to maintain its display, they are only minimally impacted when there is a lack of data signal available. About the only functionality lost by a GPS when there is no data signal may be a loss of current traffic information, just as would happen with a smart phone, but the GPC will continue to display its maps and related route information. While not a problem for smart phones when in urban areas and on most major highways, I have frequently lost a useable cellular data signal in rural areas and other lesser travelled areas with a dearth of cell phone service. The competitive free app from Here, and a few others, store detailed maps in the storage of the smart phone, minimizing the need for a data connection, making them very similar to a dedicated GPS, but with the added advantages of a smart phone based app.

Google Maps, its sister app Waze, and strong competitors such as Here, Navigator, and Maps.Me can all effectively replace or supplement that conventional automotive GPS device. I suggest that users experiment with the functionality of the phone based road routing apps, and decide for themselves. I also recommend Google Maps, with the “Traffic” selection turned on, to check current traffic conditions before leaving home or work.

Courtesy

of Mr. Wilsker.

WEBSITES:

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.google.android.apps.maps>

<http://itunes.apple.com/en/app/google-maps/id585027354>

<http://www.google.com/maps/about/>

<https://support.google.com/gmm/answer/6145865>

<https://support.google.com/gmm/answer/2839911>

<https://support.google.com/gmm/android/#topic=3495970>

<https://www.waze.com>

Nibblers

by Jeannine Sloan

Twin Cities PC Club, MN

Polifiller

A new computer tool lets you plug in the text of any politician’s speech and, with one click, it draws red lines through jargon. It is called Polifiller, as in “political filler,” and searches for phrases in what it calls the Hall of Shame.

<http://polifiller.com/>

FactCheck

We are a nonpartisan, nonprofit “consumer advocate” for voters that aims to reduce the level of deception and confusion in U.S. politics. We monitor the factual accuracy of what is said by major U.S. political players in the form of TV ads, debates, speeches, interviews and news releases. Our goal is to apply the best practices of both journalism and scholarship, and to increase public knowledge and understanding.

<http://www.factcheck.org/>

Politics and Psychology

APA’s Psychology Help Center is an online consumer resource featuring articles and information related to psychological issues affecting your daily physical and emotional well-being. This site had an article about the Science of Political Advertising that is interesting.

<http://www.apa.org/monitor/2012/04/advertising.aspx#>

Microsoft Does Some Things Right

The Windows team invests a mind-boggling amount of time, hardware, and people into maintaining compatibility. There are bugs in Windows that could have been fixed years ago, but can’t be, because that would break applications that (deliberately or accidentally) depend on those bugs.

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/stop-bashing-microsoft-5-ways-theyre-awesome/>

Mosaically

Photo Mosaic Maker: If you are thinking of creating a photo mosaic without downloading any additional software, then you can look for free and reliable mosaic generators online.

<http://mosaically.com/>

Ancient Incans Earthquake Proof Walls

The brilliant ancient civilization figured out how to make seismically stable structures using stones that fit together like Legos. Now it's time to learn from the past. Over 500 years ago, when Incan workers built Machu Picchu, they devised an ingenious building technique to prevent building collapse during Peru's frequent earthquakes. It worked a little like an ancient form of Legos: Every stone fit together perfectly without any mortar. Now California-based architects are using 3-D printers to create a similar design.

<http://www.fastcoexist.com/3037227/>

Find Large Files

Big files clog up your hard drive and many of them are just garbage that you can delete. Instead of downloading a utility to find them, you can use Windows Explorer. Simply type 'size:gigantic' into the Search box and Windows will show you all the files that are larger than 128MB in the folder (and subfolders) you're currently browsing. Delete any you're sure you don't need.

Make text pin-sharp

Windows provides a utility to fine tune text to match your display. This is called the ClearType Text Tuner and unless you've made use of it, your text won't necessarily be as sharp as it could be. You'll find this utility at Control Panel > Appearance and Personalization > Fonts > Adjust ClearType text.

Household Repair

DIY guides for many household repairs, ranging from furniture to plumbing solutions.

<https://www.ifixit.com/Device/Household>

Export Favorites/Bookmarks from Your Browser

To export your bookmarks from Chrome: Click the Chrome menu icon at the top - right corner of your browser window, select Bookmarks, then Bookmark Manager or Ctrl+Shift+o. Click the down arrow beside the Organize menu and select Export bookmarks to HTML file.

To export bookmarks from IE. Click the Favorites icon in upper right corner of browser window, select Add Favorites, click the down arrow next to Add to Favorites, select Import/Export, then Export to a file.

To export bookmarks from Firefox. Click the Show your bookmarks icon (Ctrl-Shift-B) in upper right of browser window. This opens the Library window. Select Import and Backup, then Export bookmarks to HTML.

What Everyone Gets Wrong in the Debate Over Net Neutrality

Interesting article points out that the giants like Google, Netflix, and Facebook already have fast lane servers within the ISPs. Suggests we should be more concerned about competition (or lack of it) between ISPs.

http://www.wired.com/2014/06/net_neutrality_missing

The Ultimate Manuals Library

A handy library of PDF user manuals for almost anything.

<http://www.manualslib.com/>

Fax Zero

Fax Zero allows you to send faxes to US and Canada for free. Additionally, it enables you to send faxes to countries outside North America at a fixed pay per use cost.

<http://faxzero.com/>

Screen Capture

Enter the address (URL) of any web page and the screen capture tool will generate a high-resolution screenshot of the full web page as a PNG image that you can download.

<http://ctrlq.org/screenshots/>

Use Hidden Characters

A site for copying the ‘hidden’ characters that come with the computer’s typefaces, to be pasted into emails, tweets, text documents, forums, and whatever else you might need. Left click on character to copy, Ctrl+v to paste.

<http://copypastecharacter.com/all-characters>

Ask a Kid

Ask a 10-year-old how to solve the problem of cleaning up trash, and you might end up with a concept like the “De-Waster 5000,” a helicopter that scoops plastic out of landfills and the ocean — and then uses a solar-powered flamethrower to melt the trash into beds for homeless people. In other words, you’ll get something that probably wouldn’t occur to an adult designer.

<http://www.fastcoexist.com/3038720/>

Two Factor Authentication

List of websites and whether or not they support two factor authentication.

<https://twofactorauth.org>

Most Productive Ways to Waste Time

“Every time you decide to work, the payoff gets evaluated twice: once by the limbic system and a second time by the prefrontal cortex,” according to Steel. In other words, it’s a battle of impulse against rationality.

<http://www.fastcompany.com/3038695/>

How to Use the Windows Speech Recognition Feature

Microsoft Windows Vista, Windows 7, and Windows 8 include a speech recognition feature

<http://www.computerhope.com/issues/ch001561.htm>

Unbreakable Gorilla Glass

Corning, the makers of Gorilla Glass, which probably protects the screen on the smartphone you’re using now, has decided it needs to tell us exactly how cool its product really is. To do so, it has hired the Mythbusters team and come up with the videos you can watch here:

<http://goo.gl/PwYg5U>

This to That

Find out which adhesive to use to attach one material to another.

<http://www.this-to-that.com/>

Crooks Don’t Want Anything I Have on My Computer

Oh, yes they do. They want to infect your computer with a Trojan and make your computer a zombie for their botnet. Criminals use botnets to send out spam email messages, spread viruses, attack computers and servers, and commit other kinds of crime and fraud. If your computer becomes part of a botnet, your computer might slow down and you might inadvertently be helping criminals.

<http://tinyurl.com/llrfoy7>

Windows Task Manager

The Windows Task Manager is one of the core programs that ships with every version of the Windows operating system. Designed to provide users with an overview of what is running and happening on the system, it is considered an advanced tool by many. The Task Manager is more or less identical on Windows 7 and earlier versions of Windows while it has changed in Windows 8 and newer versions.

<http://tinyurl.com/kgldd8b>

From the December 2014 issue of The Digital VIKING, newsletter of Twin Cities PC Club, MN. Courtesy of APCUG.

Does Your Smartphone Have an FM Radio?

by Bob Rankin
askbobrankin.com

Remember the good old days when cell phones included FM radio receivers? Well, most modern mobile phones still do, but you can't use them. Why is this handy feature, which can provide free music even when you can't get cellular signal, disabled and hidden? Read on to learn the reason...

Blame it on the carriers, not the hardware makers who still include the FM circuitry in their phones. The carriers (AT&T, Verizon, and others) are the manufacturers' customers, and the carriers want the phones they sell to consumers to have those FM radios disabled.

Why? It's pretty simple ... carriers prefer streaming (online) "radio" services because they make money on data traffic, but none on over-the-air FM.

Apple, Samsung, and LG are among the OEMs who have disabled the FM radio chips in their phones. But not all phone makers are playing along. HTC, Motorola, and Blackberry have not.

Among U.S. carriers, only Sprint has enabled FM radio on phones connected to its network. So FM will work on FM-enabled phones sold by mobile virtual network operators (MVNOs) that are effectively Sprint resellers, e. g., Republic Wireless, Helio, and others. Virgin Mobile USA is a wholly owned subsidiary of Sprint and uses Sprint's network, so FM radio will work on Virgin Mobile if the phone's FM chip is enabled.



AskBobRankin.com

The National Association of Broadcasters wants FM chips enabled, of course. The NAB even developed an app for iOS and Android, called NextRadio, that provides real-time stations and program listings; one-tap feedback to stations; the ability to buy selected songs; bookmarking and history lists for finding favorite or recently played stations; and other interactive features.

The NextRadio App site has a list of supported devices (currently 26) and carriers who support FM radio (Sprint, Virgin Mobile, Boost Mobile, and more). No Apple devices are supported, but several Samsung products are, apparently at Sprint's insistence; you have to buy one from Sprint, Virgin Mobile USA, or Boost Mobile USA, another wholly-owned Sprint subsidiary.

Why FM Is Better Than Streaming Music

Consumers can benefit from FM radio in several ways. First, "Listening to streaming (music) drains your battery three to five times faster than listening to the exact same content on the FM chip," according to Jeff Smulyan is CEO of Emmis Communications, which owns radio stations across the USA. Emmis now owns the NextRadio app, too.

FM radio in mobile phones is not limited to fancy smartphones, nor is it something new. I can remember listening to FM radio broadcasts on lowly "feature phones" as far back as 2001.

They didn't have apps or Web access, but they did have music! So clearly, this is not a technology problem.

Second, streaming music eats up one's data allowance. I see many people plugged into earbuds constantly, and wonder what their data bill looks like at month's end. FM radio could conserve data just as VoiP calling over WiFi conserves cellular network minutes.

Third, FM radio might be your only source of information during an emergency. Of course, both the cellular and fixed-base Internet networks would have to be disrupted or overloaded, but you never know. Superstorm Sandy and the North American [derecho storm](#), both in 2012, overloaded cellular networks and shut down power to many routers.

The carriers are being completely disingenuous about FM radio. Responding to the NAB's call for the FM chips to be activated in all phones, Jot Carpenter, VP of government affairs for CTIA-The Wireless Association, arrogantly told the Las Vegas Review-Journal:

"What Americans really want is the ability to stream, download and customize music playlists to meet their personal preferences," Carpenter said, "and that's NOT what the traditional FM radio offers."

So umm, why not both?

Carpenter also said that "Activating a smartphone's FM chip isn't free," as if deactivating it after building it into a phone is. What he really means is that the carriers will accommodate radio stations in exchange for a piece of the latter's revenues. In fact, the NAB is negotiating just such a deal with the CTIA-Wireless Association right now.

Of course, any radio station could simply invest in streaming tech to reach its Internet-obsessed audience. But if it's cheaper to pay the carriers to enable their FM chips, that's good business.

If you would like to lobby your carrier or phone maker to enable the FM chip for which you paid, but cannot use, the Free Radio on My Phone website has a page that makes it quick and easy to contact AT&T, Verizon, Sprint, Apple, your member of Congress and the FCC. There's even sample text included.

Courtesy of Bob Rankin.



Who Regulates the Internet?

Q. Is there a governing body that regulates the Internet in the United States?

A. No one person, company, organization, or governmental agency oversees the Internet at this time, though that is certainly subject to change. There are some individuals who feel the Internet should be overseen by the Government, much like a public utility. At present, however, it is a globally distributed network comprised of many voluntarily interconnected autonomous networks. It operates without a central governing body with each constituent network setting and enforcing its own policies. However, to help ensure its operation, several key technical and policy aspects of the underlying structure and the principal "name spaces" are administered by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), which is headquartered in Los Angeles. ICANN is a very influential agency whose employees adhere to the philosophy, "ICANN if I think ICANN."

Q. Where does Microsoft Word save a document if all you ask it to do is to save it? I forgot to use "Save As," and now I can't find the saved document.

A. It depends. If no destination location is selected – in other words, if the "Save In" field is blank, the default is usually Documents or My Documents, but that can vary, depending how Word was configured originally. You can check the default location by going to Tools > Options > File Locations and see what it shows as far as the default location for Documents. (You can also use Word's Help to search for "File Locations.")

Without a specific location designated in the Save In field, often the destination selected for a previous document will appear, in which case the document will be saved to that same location. If you are saving an existing document with the same name (as opposed to using Save As and providing a different name), you will overwrite the existing document with your newly saved document, so it should reside in the same location as the "original" document. specific word or phrase within the document itself. If you truly can't locate a saved document, run a

Windows Search via Start > Search > For Files and Folders and you will be able to find it, as long as you can remember either the name of the file or a

Q. I just switched to Windows 7 from XP and I want to create an icon on my Desktop that would allow me to go straight to a Web site. Can you help me with that, Mr. M?

A. Start by going to the Web site to which you would like to create a shortcut. Make sure that the window in which it appears is small enough so you can see part of your Desktop.

Look for a little icon next to the address of the Web site as it appears in your browser's Address bar. Click and drag that icon to your Desktop and voila! A shortcut is born! To rename the shortcut, click to select it and press F2.

Q. Do flash drives have a limited lifespan? Do they deteriorate after a couple of years?

A. The general consensus is that flash drives are good for a maximum of ten years. That estimate depends on the manner in which the device is stored, as temperature, humidity, proximity to electro-magnetic devices, small animals that chew things, and small children that flush things, can also adversely affect the useful life of a flash drive.

I've seen flash drives fail in less than a year, though that can also happen to CDs and DVDs. Some CDs claim a shelf life of 100 years, which is silly, since CDs weren't mass produced until 1980, so it's pure speculation if they will last 100 years.

I would avoid relying on flash drives for long-term data storage. 10 years is an industry "best guess," but failure can occur in far less time. I wouldn't place all my digital eggs in one basket. I replace storage media approximately every five years, just to keep it current.

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

Pack

This is a fun social media site with a focus on dogs. You can become the leader of your pack today and create a page for the pooch in your life. When you arrive at the site it begins by asking you if you have a dog. Just answer the questions as they appear and have fun!

<http://packdog.com/>

Veteran Owned Businesses

A comprehensive directory of more than 21,000 veteran-owned businesses. If you're a veteran and would like to add your business, click the red "Sign Up Now" button and select the Basic Listing, which is free. Fill out the online forms and click "Submit Your Listing." Be sure to visit this site often and support our veterans!

www.veteranownedbusiness.com/

Virtual Tours of Historic Britain

Quicktime videos of many historic sights, including The Beatles' Abbey Road, Leeds Castle, Gloucester Cathedral, Stonehenge, the Master Modemshire Pub, the Tower of London, Oxford, and more. Once the images load, drag your mouse cursor across them to view the entire panorama. Images require the free Quicktime Player at www.apple.com/quicktime/.

<http://britishtours.com/360/>

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Traveling with Technology

by Jim Cerny
Sarasota TUG, FL

So, you have a trip coming up, maybe you will be doing planes, trains, and automobiles. Or maybe you are going on a cruise (lucky you!) and you are wondering if you should take your computer, iPad, or iPhone with you. Well, the answer is yes, and don't forget the power charging cords, adapters, and earphones too. So what can you expect about using these devices when you travel? Let's start with the iPhone or "smart phone."

SMART PHONES use the cellular phone network to make phone calls AND they use a wireless connection to the internet too. (The wireless internet connection is called Wi-Fi). In order for you to make and receive cellular phone calls you have to be in an area where there is a strong enough signal to use it. Turn on your phone and you should be able to see a certain number of "bars" or "dots" at the top of the window which indicates your signal strength. My iPhone uses the AT&T cellular network and at the top left of my phone screen I see a row of five "dots" next to "AT&T." Naturally a strong signal is four or five dots and a weak signal is one or two. The dreaded "no service available" message means you are out of luck. Sometimes your phone will not work in an area of weak service (i.e. one or two bars or dots) but it seems that using your phone for texting in those weak areas may work.

Your smart phone also uses a wireless (Wi-Fi) connection for the internet. On my phone, also at the top of the screen, is a series of "arches" (a small dot with one or two arches over it, sort of like tiny eyebrows). This shows the signal strength of the Wi-Fi network. If both arches are there above the dot you have a strong signal, if just the dot with no arches, your signal is weak and may not work for the internet.

Remember, wireless Wi-Fi connections to the internet are almost all FREE (but may require you to enter a password to use), but using the cellular phone network is NOT free, and you pay monthly charges to use it.

iPADs and TABLET COMPUTERS are smaller than laptops and much easier to take with you on a trip. iPads come in two different types – one type can use EITHER the cellular network OR a Wi-Fi network to connect to the internet. The other iPad (usually lower-priced) can ONLY use a Wi-Fi network. You do not usually use an iPad to make cellular phone calls, although you CAN use it to run Skype or other "apps" that use the internet to communicate.

LAPTOP COMPUTERS connect to the internet on a Wi-Fi network, not using the cellular phone network. (However, you can use your laptop AND a smart phone to connect your laptop to the internet using the cellular phone network. But let's not talk about that kind of hookup here). Your laptop will show you the signal strength of the Wi-Fi network you are using in the lower right of the screen (on my Windows 7 computer) or, on some computers, on the top bar on the screen. Look for an icon that looks like a small bar chart. Click on it with your mouse and it will open a window with your network connection information. If you are not connected to the internet at all, it will tell you and show you the Wi-Fi networks available to you, the strongest signal network first. Click on the one you want to join (when you are at a restaurant, library, or hotel) and you may have to enter a password to connect.

So are you confused yet? Let's see if I can summarize things up and give you the big picture. Basically what you need to know is "Am I connected to the internet?" and "How am I connected to the internet?" As an easy example, let's say I am traveling with my I-Pad. There are many "apps" (applications or programs) I already have installed on my I-Pad many of which are games or books I want to enjoy on my vacation. These apps are available to me whether I am connected to the internet or not. So, if I want to play a game like checkers (against the computer) or read my book, these are already on my I-pad and I can play them anywhere anytime, even on an airplane. However, if I want to play checkers against a real opponent via the internet, or if I want to download a new book to my I-pad, I need an internet connection to do that. Any Wi-Fi connection will let me do it. If, however, I am in an area with NO Wi-Fi available, AND if I have an I-pad with cellular network capability, AND if I am paying for

cellular connection with my I-pad, then my I-pad will use the cellular network to connect to the internet. This will result in charges (could be significant) for using the cellular network.

So no matter what device you want to take with you on your travels, you should understand how to find out on your device IF you are connected to the internet and HOW. There is really no reason to use the cellular network to connect to the internet if you can find a Wi-Fi spot that is free.

Whatever device you use I know you will be glad that you brought it along. Just using a free Wi-Fi connection provides you with the whole internet of entertainment and fun for you whenever you want – and you won't feel "disconnected."

Courtesy of APCUG.

Thunderbird Saved My Bacon

by Bob Woods

Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA

We recently needed to execute a factory restore to prove one of our touch screen laptop computers had a hardware failure in the touch screen. We knew it had failed, but you've got to jump through all the hoops to convince first-tier warranty repair technicians (sigh). Once the laptop was back from repair, successful I may add, we needed to reinstall all the applications and redo settings. Along this week long process, we discovered my wife's favorite email client, Incredimail, was no longer a viable solution. Upon trying to download and install the client our antivirus program, ESET, threw a fit. ESET not only found possible malware, a scan with Malware Bytes found two variants of Conduit which we removed. Upon checking the internet we found that the company that produces Incredimail, Perion Network, merged with the company that produces Conduit. The Incredimail client will now install a number of poorly written tracking and hijacking programs. So, what to do?

My wife liked the ease of use that Incredimail afforded. Adding stationary, emoticons, and graphics was very simple. Our first attempt at a replacement was to try Microsoft Outlook. It is supposed to have emoticons and stationary. Upon installation and use we found a number of issues. Changing some of the menu font sizes was very challenging (we never did get the left side column right). We were able to set up a toolbar button for some default emoticons, but stationary required a multi-step through menus process. Since I had set up the accounts to use IMAP vice POP, deleting only did a strike through of the email titles. Instead of deleting it required a multi step select and purge to delete. There was also no way to easily work with spam and junk. After a few days my wife was cursing Outlook and I could see I was next in line for suggesting it. Back to the drawing board.

I use Thunderbird for my email client. When my wife looked at my plain vanilla Thunderbird setup she initially didn't like it. I do not bother with themes, stationary or emoticons so I didn't know if Thunderbird would allow them. A quick check on the internet uncovered the fact that Thunderbird does indeed work with them and there are add-on extensions and plugins to handle the extras. So, to ease her transition to Thunderbird, I initially set up all the additional features on my laptop. Along the way I found out a couple of bits of info that helped me.

Font size - To change font size and family globally as well as theme there is an add-on called Theme Font & Size Changer.

- 1: Open Thunderbird
- 2 Click on the three horizontal bars at the upper right to open the Thunderbird Menu
- 3 Click on Add-ons
- 4 In the Search all add-ons box type Fonts
- 5 Click the install button for Theme & Font Size Changer
- 6 There is now a Theme Font Size Changer button at the upper right and if you have the menu bar turned on another at the bottom of the drop down menu for Tools

Add Themes - Themes are the colorful banners at the top and bottom of the Thunderbird window and emails you create. This is the same setup as they use in the Firefox browser.

– Open Thunderbird

2 Click on the three horizontal bars at the upper right to open the Thunderbird Menu

3 Click on Add-ons

4 Scroll to the bottom of the Get Add-ons screen

5 On the Featured Themes title click on See All

6 Select a category

7 As you hover the mouse over a theme it will show at the top and bottom of the Thunderbird window.

8 Clicking the Add button will set the theme and add it to your Appearance menu.

9 To change between already installed themes just enable the one you want

Add Stationery - Thunderbird was not originally set up to use stationery, as such, like Outlook or Outlook Express does. However, it does have templates. A savvy programmer has been kind enough to have created an add-on extension that mimics Outlook Express Stationery. There are excellent step by step instructions for installation and setup at <http://thundercloud.net/help/tbird-new.htm>. The Thunderbird for stationery add-on at this site is the same one as on the Mozilla site at <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/thunderbird/addon/stationery/>. After the stationary add-on is installed and you have followed the instructions for using Cloudeight stationery you can download additional stationery through Cloudeight at <http://thundercloud.net/stationery/>. When you get to the download area, some of the stationery is listed for Thunderbird. Others will be listed for Windows Mail or Vista with no mention of Thunderbird. These are in the correct format for Thunderbird. Just do not download the Windows Live Mail version as it is not the correct format for Thunderbird.

Emoticons – Thunderbird comes configured with some basic emoticons built in. When you write an email the emoticon icon will be displayed on the formatting toolbar. The formatting toolbar looks like the following:

If you do not see the formatting toolbar (has the font size, type, etc.) you can turn it on by clicking on View, Toolbars and Formatting Toolbar. However, the default emoticons are pretty boring. I also found there is an alternate term for emoticons called Smileys. There are many add-ons and ways to add animated emoticons, but the one I settled on is from Smiley Central at <http://emoticons.smileycentral.com/outlook-smileys.html>. There are hundreds of Smileys built into the free version and they are ad free. The Smileys application is stand alone in that it has its own interface window rather than a button within Thunderbird. All you need to do to add a Smiley is:

1. Click to write a new email in Thunderbird.

2. Place the cursor in the new email where you want the Smiley.

3. If the Smiley window is not already open click the Smiley icon located down in the tool tray at the lower right located next to date and time (you will probably have to click the up arrow to see the icon). To insert the Smiley, browse to the one of your choice and click on it.

4. The Smiley will be inserted into the email at the location of the cursor.

Spam and Junk email – Thunderbird has a built in adaptive junk filter. Anything you tag as Junk ends up in the junk filter log. The next time an email arrives from the same source it will be automatically marked as junk. To set the junk filter follow the instructions at: https://support.mozilla.org/en-US/kb/thunderbird-and-junk-spam-messages#w_general-settings

The document also explains how to tag an email as “junk” or “not junk.” I unchecked the box to “mark messages determined to be junk as read.” That gives me a count of the number of junk messages that are in the junk folder. It is a good to reminder to review and empty it. Also, you can set the junk to automatically delete when tagged as junk. I recommend you initially do not do that. The filter needs to learn your email info so may make a few mistakes at first. If you find a valid email in the junk folder you can mark it as “not junk.” That will remove it from the filter list and put it back in your inbox.

There is probably a lot more you will want to know about Thunderbird from time to time. The program is so well documented you will easily find info on how to set up or fix a problem out on the internet. Oh, and, by the way, the Concierge service at Costco was excellent. Everyone we talked to was in country and English speaking. You do need to get past the first tier helpdesk personnel and to the actual repair depot but all were extremely helpful. At every step, from sending the packing box to receiving the laptop back, they phoned us. They told us when the packing box was sent, when received, when the laptop went onto repair, what they found, how long to get the new part, when the repair was complete and the laptop sent back to us and verified it arrived and we were satisfied the problem was resolved. This was done via second year Costco extended warranty at no cost to us.

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The Lighter Side

Our tech department is hard at work solving you computer problems.

