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What's New with Arpad Kovacs

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Secure Your Online Accounts with Two Factor Authentication

by Ira Wilsker

What do iTunes, Yahoo, Gmail, Outlook, Twitter, Facebook, Bank of America, Chase, Discover, eTrade, Vanguard, PayPal, eBay, and Etsy have in common with thousands of other secured online services? They all offer their users a secure supplementary method to prevent illicit access to their online accounts, with a level of protection much greater than the traditional password.

Known as "two factor authentication," it may increase the time necessary to log on to websites by a few seconds, but it also greatly reduces the risk of an unauthorized person gaining access to those sites, even if the users' passwords have been compromised.

The two factor authentication process itself is very simple, takes a few seconds to set up once on each participating website visited, and then a few more seconds when actually

implemented. The website turnon2fa.com/tutorials offers simple but site specific instructions on how to implement Two Factor Authentication on hundreds of participating websites; generally it is as easy as checking a “Two Factor Authentication” or similar box on the target website’s user configuration or profile page, and then entering a preferred method of contact, preferably a mobile phone number. That website will now display a third line for a key code, following the traditional username and password boxes.

I have two factor authentication implemented on several of my most sensitive and personal Web accounts; if I access those websites from a computer, smart phone, or other device not previously recognized and confirmed as mine, the website will send a verification code as a text message to my phone. Even if I entered a valid username and password (which could have been stolen by a hacker or cracker, a hacker that breaks into computers for personal gain), the site will also require that the validation code sent to my phone also be entered in a finite number of seconds in order to access the account. Unless the cyber crook also has my smart phone, they will be unable to access my account even if they have my valid username and password.

Many people are unaware that each device on the Internet has a unique code number attached to it, which is also sent to websites to help verify the source of an inquiry; if the website does not recognize the unique hardware code previously verified for my computer, smart phone, or tablet, it will demand that I also promptly enter the unique access code that the website sends to my phone. No code, no access. It is that simple.

While there are many sites that explain how to implement two factor authentication on their sites, and the process is inheritably simple, as well as similar on most participating sites, my personal favorite is still the directory at turnon2fa.com/tutorials. All of the information that anyone might need, including a 90-second video explaining the process, is available from the “Turn It On” site. If you are worried about someone accessing your accounts or hacking into your e-mail (and you should be!), you need to enable the two factor authentication offered for free by many of the websites that we access.

If offered by online services, such as your e-mail provider, and you do not implement two factor authentication (or some similar technology such as the uncommon digital dongles), please do not come running to me if your e-mail or other account is accessed by disreputable individuals. I would hate to say it, but I told you so.

Practice Makes Perfect

by Sandy Berger

www.compukiss.com

Learning to use a new device can take time because it always takes practice. Sometimes that practice requires trial and error. So here are some tips to get you through.

Trial and error can be frustrating. For instance when working with Siri, Google Now, or Cortana, you might have to try several different ways of saying things to find the one that is understood the best. For instance, if Siri is giving me directions and I want her to stop, I have to say “end navigation.” She simply doesn’t understand other similar command like “stop navigating.” Not only do you have to try different things, but you also have to remember which one worked.

This is a great exercise for your mind, but if you don’t want to give your brain too much of a workout, you can always jot down the commands to help you remember. Whatever you do, don’t get frustrated, everyone has to do this with new devices.

Onenote Serves as a Computerized Memory

Review of OneNote meeting presentation

by John Weigle

Channel Islands PCUG, CA

OneNote is the perfect place to keep all that information you want to remember and find easily when you need it, Toby Scott said at the May meeting. “It still is the greatest piece of software ever written,” Scott said, even though at first it doesn’t seem like much.

Because it’s “ideal for storing random data,” and because we all have a lot of that, “the longer you use it, the more valuable they (the OneNote entries) are.”

“It’s a hugely useful program, but it’s only useful if you use it,” Scott added.

OneNote started as a paid part of Microsoft Office, but it is now a free tool available for Windows, Macs, iOS (iPhone and iPad) and Android. It can be downloaded at <https://www.onenote.com>. The link is at the top right corner of the page.

OneNote is designed to resemble school notebooks on your computer and in the cloud. It’s set up in three organizational trees, documents, sections and pages, and that layout makes it easy to store material by topics. But its search engine is so good that users can put material anywhere in the program, and it will be easy to find, he said.

Scott recommends keeping the notebooks in Microsoft’s OneDrive so they’ll be available on any device wherever you are. Among other things, he keeps articles and websites that he finds on how to fix unusual computer problems.

But that’s just one possibility, he said. When he was planning a trip to Utah, he stored Web pages and other information about the state, including places he might want to visit. When you copy text or pictures from a website and paste it into OneNote, it automatically adds a link back to the source. The link is clickable, so it’s easy to return to original information sources.

Users can add material to OneNote with copy and paste, drag and drop and “send to.” Tools for Firefox and Chrome browsers let users save full Web pages to OneNote.

Users can insert Excel spreadsheets and PowerPoint presentations or links to them in the program.

OneNote has optical character recognition abilities so its search function can find text in pictures and graphics. Scott demonstrated that by taking a screen shot of a DOS screen, putting it in OneNote and searching for a word that was in the graphic. The word was highlighted each time it appeared.

Skype calls can also be recorded and saved in OneNote, as can emails. Templates for other Office programs work in OneNote. Notebooks, sections and pages can be password-protected and shared with other people.

Asked how OneNote and Evernote compare, Scott said that Evernote was developed as a free alternative to OneNote, which cost about \$150 when it was first released. Scott said it’s best to use one or the other, but not both, because they can’t open each other’s files.

Although Scott knew about OneNote, he didn’t start using it until a speaker at an Intel conference used it to find an answer to an attendee’s question. The speaker didn’t recall the answer but had it stored in OneNote and found it easily. When most of those attending asked about the program he used to find the answer, the speaker quickly wrapped up his Intel presentation and demonstrated OneNote, calling it “the only way to keep track of all this stuff.”

Asked how OneNote compares to Dropbox, Scott said they’re entirely different.

OneNote is a program, while Dropbox is a cloud storage system like Microsoft’s

OneDrive and Google's Google drive. Don't confuse the storage media with the program that stores the data, he advised.

Another person asked about calendars in One Note. OneNote has a weak calendar function, Scott said, but you can't store a calendar in it that provides repeating events and similar tools. There are third-party templates that work quite well. Many are for special situations, so you need to figure out what you need. Calendars are persnickety, he added.

For things like calendars, mail and contacts, "you pretty much have to settle on one platform," he said, and he prefers Outlook, also part of Microsoft Office.

People can use the cloud to synchronize or back up various devices, but they don't need to store everything in several cloud storage sites. Because of size limits, however, some people might find it easier to store photos in one location, music and video in another and other data in a third. That all depends on how much data is involved, he explained.

If a device that has OneDrive access — such as a laptop — is lost or stolen, Scott said, he can go to OneDrive and block its access to the device. At the OneDrive website login screen, highlight the device, and click on Remove PC. Users should also enable two-factor identification so that any new device that logs into your OneDrive has to be authenticated by entering a code that Microsoft sends to your primary device, he added.

In this way, a hacker who discovers your username and password still cannot get to your data.

An audience member asked if it's possible to stop Android devices from backing up photos before she gets a chance to delete ones she doesn't want. The answer is to go to the Photo App in settings and change the auto backup settings.

An audience member noted that a spreadsheet that was cut and pasted into OneNote loses its functionality. Another member of the audience asked if there's a good tutorial for OneNote. Scott said there are many videos on YouTube and written material on other sites, but they're not needed. The best way to learn OneNote is to start using it.

From the June 2015 issue of The Outer Edge, newsletter of the Channel Islands PCUG, CA. Courtesy of APCUG.

Cloud Computing - An Ephemeral Concept

by Phil Sorrentino
The Computer Club, Florida

Cloud computing has been around for quite some time. It just wasn't called Cloud computing until recently. Although, the term "Cloud Computing" is relatively new, references to "Cloud Computing" can be found as early as the mid-90s. But the term seems to have become popularized sometime in the mid-2000s. In 2008, Steve Jobs of Apple fame, developed his vision of the cloud as a "digital hub for all your digital content". His idea was that a person's digital content (pictures, documents, videos, music) would be stored on a remote server, managed by a trusted company, making that content available for that person to use on any device, anywhere, anytime.

The "cloud" is really just a metaphor for the Internet. It goes back to the days when engineers made presentations that referred to the internet, they pictured the large amorphous infrastructure of the Internet as a puffy, white cloud. This cloud would accept requests for data and provide information and answers. If you are wondering if you ever use Cloud Computing, think about this. If you have ever searched for a gift on-line, ordered it from Amazon, and tracked its progress using the supplied tracking information, you were doing Cloud Computing. You were using applications hosted on someone else's server to accomplish your task.

In the simplest terms, cloud computing just means storing and accessing data and programs over the Internet instead of using only your computer's hard drive or local storage.

When you run programs from your local hard drive and store the data on your local hard drive you are doing local computing. Everything you need is physically close by. Local computing is how we have functioned for many years and it has some obvious benefits, like speed, but cloud computing expands your computing reach beyond your local resources.

So, if the cloud is really the internet, let's look at a brief history of the internet. The internet had its beginnings in the development the ARPAnet network that was funded, in the late 1960s, by an agency of the Department of Defense, Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. DARPA is responsible for the development of new technologies for use by the military, but in this case non-military commerce has greatly benefitted. Some brief technical considerations shows that the internet has no real structure, there are no plans or schematics that define the internet, only the implementation of packet switching and an agreed-upon set of communications protocols, called TCP/IP. Packet switching is a digital networking communications method that groups all data messages, regardless of content, type, or structure, into uniformly sized packages or packets. TCP/IP provides the protocols that specify how data should be formatted, addressed, transmitted, routed and received at the destination. Packet switching and the use of TCP/IP is what makes the internet so amorphous and yet extremely resilient.

Amorphous in that you do not know what path a packet will take to get to its destination, and resilient in that if part of the network is unusable, the packets will go via alternate routes. A complete message will consist of from one to many packets. A complete message can be reconstructed when all the packets are received because the packets include the address of the intended receiver, the address of the sender, the body of information, and a set of check characters used to prove the correctness of the received data.

So because the cloud is really the internet, we all have been doing cloud computing for quite some time and we didn't even know it. Google searches, email, Netflix movie streaming, Carbonite backup, Pandora music, YouTube videos, Facebook sharing, Twitter tweeting, and Google Earth mapping, are all examples of cloud computing.

Once the internet was established as a communications pathway to anyone who could operate a personal computer, commerce began to take advantage of its reach. Think about the reach of the highway system in the 60s and 70s. The highway system brought people and commerce together. Shopping malls were easy to get to and they became the place to purchase goods. Now with the internet, people can visit (cyber) stores without even having to use the transportation highways (though the products do have to be delivered and that must be done over the highways). Commercial establishments have built large websites to accommodate the large number of people attempting to use the internet for these commercial activities. Some websites were set up just to search out information that was available from other websites. Does Google come to mind? Other websites were developed to provide the communications capability that has become email. What would we do without email? Still others like Facebook and Twitter provide a forum for social interactions. Many websites were developed to provide the news that would normally be sent to people by the newspapers, and so news websites and news readers became available. Financial institutions realized that they could interact with their customers via the internet and so they created financial websites. Financial websites give the user instant access to their financial information and allow them to buy and sell financial instruments from their home computer. I'm sure you could come up with many more types of internet websites. The last time I looked, there were over 800 million websites connected to the internet. That's a pretty big cloud.

The point of all this is that websites are hosted on computers.

Website computers provide the Server portion of the Client – Server operation. (Your

browser provides the “Client” side.) Large websites are not hosted by a single computer. Large websites may employ a network of hundreds of computers. So the bigger the website, the more computers are needed to host that website. The need for these networks of computer servers has evolved into website companies building large “Server Farms.” These server farms may have hundreds, if not thousands, of computers networked to act as website servers. Many of the companies with large server farms have set aside a portion, of their cloud, for use by the public. Typically, the first small amount of storage (3 – 7 GB) is free, with larger amounts at a cost. Think, iCloud, OneDrive, Google Drive, and Dropbox.

Edge - Microsoft's New Web Browser

by Sandy Berger

COMPU-Kiss

Yes, Microsoft has finally replaced their old bloated Internet Explorer web browser. The new browser which comes with Windows 10, is called “Edge.” This is aptly named because it is much sharper than Internet Explorer. As a matter of fact, it is better in almost every way.

Edge is more secure, faster, and has new rendering engine. One of the best things about Edge is that it’s newly designed interface is easy-to-use. Similar to the current Chrome browser, Edge has a cleaner look that makes it easier to use. The Edge address bar is front and center under a “Where to Next?” label. Although this is a bit simplistic, it works.

The Edge has a New Tab page that is quite customizable. It also has a well-designed reading mode that strips away all of the extraneous ads and navigation creating an easy-to-read version of an article. You can also easily save an article for reading in the future.

A Hub icon on the upper toolbar gives you easy access to your favorites, a reading list, your browsing history, and your current downloads. This download area is especially useful making it easier for the average user to find them.

And WOW, you can even write on the screen of a web page to add your own comments. Draw or type on any web page using a mouse or drawing with your finger on a touch-screen. You can draw in several different colors with three different sized pens. You can also highlight in several colors and add a text note. You can even draw a square on the screen to highlight and copy part of the web page. Once you have marked up the web page you can save it and/or share it with friends.

When using Edge you can also use Cortana, Microsoft’s voice assistant to issue voice commands. Cortana will answer or will find the correct folder or program for you. It is extremely useful. You can even ask Cortana for more information on any text that you highlight.

In the future, Edge will support browser extensions from Chrome and Firefox and it will
Courtesy of APCUG.

Has Microsoft Security Essentials Improved?

by Bob Rankin

askbob.com

Since MSE debuted in 2006, Microsoft had hyped it to the heavens as the first free antivirus protection built into Windows. Many users of Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7 (and now Windows 10) were persuaded to rely upon MSE as their only real-time antivirus protection. But in 2013, I called MSE an "EPIC FAIL." So has it gotten any better since then?

MSE: Still the Worst?

In October, 2013, I wrote an article titled *Microsoft Security Essentials: EPIC FAIL*. At the time, my advice was this: "I can't say that MSE is worthless, but it's certainly not essential... with so many other excellent free alternatives, my advice is to avoid it or replace it."

Even though Microsoft touted MSE as a "free comprehensive security solution," they came out with a shocking and confusing admission that MSE was never intended to be a "category leader." MSE, according to Microsoft, provides just a "baseline" that better products should aim to beat. And they do, by wide margins.

Independent tests comparing over two dozen antivirus products in 2013 consistently ranked MSE dead last in protection against zero-day exploits, the kind of attacks that can only be detected by analyzing the behavior of suspect software. MSE also ranked near the bottom in detecting well-known viruses, a comparatively easy task. Only in "usability" did MSE fair well; but "user-friendly software that doesn't work well" seems like an oxymoron.

Is MSE the WORST antivirus?

It's been two years since those reports. Has Microsoft Security Essentials (also known as Windows Defender in Windows 8 and higher) gotten any better?

MSE was replaced by an updated Windows Defender module in Windows 8, which carries on into Windows 10. Originally an anti-spyware program that did not address viruses, the Windows Defender name pre-dates MSE. The Windows 8/10 version of Defender tackles viruses and real-time protection against zero-day threats. Is it better than Microsoft Security Essentials? Alas, no. In fact, Defender is more or less MSE under a different name. The two programs even use the same virus signature databases.

What Do Independent Test Labs Say?

The June 2015 test results from AV-TEST show that MSE/Defender still ranks dead last among the 21 products compared. The difference in overall ratings is enormous, too.

Defender scored 90% in AV-TEST's "protection against zero-day threats" category in May, 2015, and actually fell to 85% in June. The average for all tested products is 98%. For detection of known viruses – the simplest job for any antivirus program – Defender scored 89% in May and 95% in June. The average score for all products is 99%.

Another independent test lab, AV-Comparatives, gave MSE an overall rating of just 4.7 out of 18 points, the lowest score of 21 products tested. Multiple competitors scored over 14.0, including Avira Antivirus Pro, Bullguard Internet Security, eScan Internet Security, Panda Free Antivirus, and Quick Heal Total Security.

Microsoft's Defender and MSE are not "baselines" of minimal adequacy in antimalware protection. They are, in my opinion, totally inadequate! Anyone relying upon either of these programs as their sole means of defense is making a mistake that could lead to big trouble.

And yet... Microsoft is STILL promoting Windows Defender as "all you need," even in the new Windows 10. Here's an example from a Windows 10 Technical Preview FAQ:

Q: What Anti-Virus should I install for Windows 10 Technical Preview?

A: You don't need to install any Anti-Virus program, because you already have one which is Windows Defender. It protects you against Virus, Worm, Trojan, Spyware, Adware, and other malicious programs same as what Microsoft Security Essentials is doing in Windows Vista and Windows 7.

There Are Better Alternatives

In response to the disgraceful test scores described above, Microsoft argues that the tests don't measure the overall security of Windows itself. Windows Defender should be tested

in conjunction with the SmartScreen anti-phishing filter built into Internet Explorer, as well as other security features baked into Windows 10.

But what if you want to use another browser? What if you don't want the weakest link in your Internet security to allow one out of seven zero-day threats into your machine?

Well, then I suggest you install one of the top-rated anti-malware suites and disable the superfluous and inadequate MSE (Win XP/Vista/7) or Defender (Win 8/10). I've written recently

Medical Identity Theft On The Rise

by Bob Rankin

Your credit and bank account balance are not the only valuables that identity thieves are after. As health care costs have soared, so have incidents of "medical identity theft" in which crooks steal the credentials that enable one to obtain health care and sell them to other crooks. Here's what you need to know...

What is Medical Identity Theft?

Medical identity theft is on the rise. And sadly, it is much more difficult to guard against this type of ID theft, and much harder to clean up the havoc it can create for a victim.

The Medical Identity Theft Alliance estimates that over 2.3 million Americans have been victims of medical ID theft, and 2014 saw 500,000 more cases than the previous year. That bad news is sure to get much worse. The MITA's latest survey was conducted in November, 2014, before the disastrous leak of 80 million patients' personal health information from Anthem. And just yesterday, I read that an "error" on Amazon's Web Services platform exposed 1.5 million people's private medical records.



Criminals can use victims' birth dates, Social Security Numbers, and the ID numbers found on insurance cards to obtain medical services and prescriptions at hospitals, clinics, and doctors' offices. While medical providers today routinely scan your driver's license, you may notice that they aren't very diligent about verifying its authenticity.

Medical Identity Theft

A fake license that wouldn't fool a liquor store clerk can be used to rack up thousands of dollars in health care costs very easily. Insurance cards, generally, don't bear photos or signatures. Using stolen medical credentials, a crook may visit multiple hospitals, pharmacies, and doctors to obtain services and drugs – often narcotics.

The records of these transactions are added to victims' health care records, and should be visible on your Explanation of Benefits letters, but bogus healthcare transactions often go undetected for months or even years.

The MITA's survey found that the average victim did not learn of medical ID theft until three months after it happened, and 30 percent victims could not determine when their health care credentials were improperly used. Health care privacy laws force victims to be intensely involved in investigations of medical fraud.

Can't Get No Satisfaction

If you've ever challenged a hospital bill, you know how hard it can be to prove that you did not authorize or receive the treatment claimed. Only 10 percent of victims in MITA's

survey indicated they were “completely satisfied” with the resolutions of their cases. About 65 percent of respondents said they ended up paying an average of over \$13,000 to resolve disputed claims.

Are you concerned about other forms of identity theft? Your best defense is knowledge and a proactive stance. See my articles [Free Credit Reports Online](#) and [10 TIPS: Identity Theft Protection](#) to learn what steps you can take, both online and offline, to protect yourself.

MITA estimates that medical ID theft crimes are a \$5.6 billion industry. Larry Ponemon, head of The Ponemon Institute that conducts MITA’s annual surveys, believes that “a medical record is considered more valuable than everything else” to cybercrooks. Credit cards expire and are replaced frequently, rendering them useless to fraudsters after a short time. But Social Security numbers and personal health information don’t change; a crook can use them practically forever.

There is no way to “freeze” health care credentials as one can freeze a credit card account. There are no centralized reporting agencies analogous to Experian, TransUnion, and Equifax that collect health care activity and can monitor it for suspicious patterns. Health care providers are trained to be helpful to patients, not skeptical of their identities.

In short, there are very few protections against medical ID theft and little help resolving its consequences. My [10 Tips to Avoid Identity Theft](#) will help you safeguard your personal and financial records.

Aside from that, the most important thing you can do to guard against medical ID theft is reactive: read all of those “explanation of benefits” letters that come from your health care providers and insurance company as soon as they arrive. If you see anything suspicious, do not delay in challenging it.

Gadgets for Geezers?

by Bob Rankin

askbobrankin.com

The bad news is, we’re all getting older. The good news is, we are not getting older alone. That makes older folks a market whose needs can’t be ignored. This has inspired a broad spectrum of “assistive technology” that make computing, Web surfing, and enjoying digital media easier. Here are some of the best options...

Assistive Tech for Savvy Seniors

In 2011, 40 million Americans were age 65 or older; today, that figure is 76.4 million, according to the U. S. Census Bureau. The ranks of the “oldest old” – aged 85 or older – will swell to 19 million by 2050.

But age has nothing to do with curiosity -- most of today’s senior citizens have had access to computers, the Internet and mobile gadgets for 20 years, and they’ve made technology a part of their daily lives. (My 86-year-old father has a desktop PC, an iPad, and an Android smartphone.)

Vision Aids

Visual acuity naturally declines with age. Diseases such as cataracts, glaucoma, and macular degeneration are common among seniors. Bigger computer monitors are one adaptation that can help. (Recently I’ve seen



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23-inch monitors on sale at Best Buy for as low as \$129.)

Large Print Keyboard

But there are a variety of other gadgets and computer peripherals that can be used to make things bigger or easier to see.

The AbleNet Large Print USB Computer Keyboard (\$39.95 at Amazon) fills each key with its character(s), making the characters about twice as large as those on a standard keyboard. Yet overall, the keyboard is the same size as a standard 104-key keyboard.

Similarly, the EZ Eyes Large Print Keyboard (\$9.75 at Amazon) adds a high-contrast black-on-yellow color scheme to larger characters.

The Big Bright Keyboard (\$24.24 at Amazon) has extra-large, 1-inch keys that glow in the dark, and big black characters.

Big Bright Keyboard

Perhaps the most flexible option is the Ivation Seven Color Adjustable Letter Illuminated Large Print Keyboard (\$29.95). Its keys are backlit by gently glowing LED bulbs, and you can adjust them to any of seven colors.



On Windows, hold down the Ctrl button and spin the scroll wheel on your mouse to enlarge or reduce the font size on your screen. If you don't have a scroll wheel, try Ctrl with the Plus (+) or Minus (-) sign.

Windows Vista and later editions include an "Ease of Access Center" that offers both Magnifier and Narrator tools, which will magnify portions of the screen, and/or read the text aloud. Click the Start button, type "Ease of Access" and press Enter to find it.

On a Mac, click the Apple key, then System Preferences, then Universal Access to find similar features.

If you love your current keyboard and can't bear to part with it, you might try Glowing Fluorescent Large Lettering Keyboard Stickers (\$7.80 at Amazon) made of self-adhesive vinyl here in the U. S. A.

Reading newspapers, prescription drug patient information inserts, or just about anything printed on paper these days can be challenging even for 20/20 vision. The MagniPros® Book Light LED Magnifier (\$10.99 at Amazon) enlarges tiny text 300%, and its ultra-thin frame harbors three LED bulbs for dim lighting conditions (batteries included). It doubles as a bookmark.



The Fulcrum 20072-401 Magnifier 12 LED Floor Lamp (\$79.99 at Amazon) has a 5-inch diameter lens with 2x magnification for reading and a 6x inset for detailed work such as cross-stitch or jewelry making.

Fulcrum Mag Lamp

I was struck by the review from "Betts" who bought this lamp for her 86 year-old mother in 2009. Never before have I seen a consumer update her product review three times over the course of five years! Betts last update, in September, 2014: "This light is like the ever-ready bunny. It keeps ticking along. Mom, now 91, continues to use the light every day."

Motor Control

Some seniors suffer diminished fine motor control due to arthritis, Parkinson's disease, and other causes. Using a laptop's touchpad can be extremely frustrating or impossible. Even

conventional mice may be too finicky for trembling or stiff fingers. Many seniors find trackballs more to their liking.

The BIGtrack Trackball by Infogrip, Inc. (\$83.52 at Amazon) looks like it belongs in a toddler's playpen. But its 3-inch trackball requires less fine motor control than much-smaller conventional trackballs. The blue buttons are located on the far side of the trackball to avoid unwanted clicks. A Drag Lock feature means you don't have to hold a button down while dragging an item on-screen; instead, click the Lock and roll the ball, then unlock to release the item.

Hearing Impairment

Hearing loss, particularly in the higher frequencies range, can also be frustrating. A number of products make listening to music and video easier for seniors.

The Wireless TV Speaker System from FirstStreet (\$179.95) puts TV sound right next to your chair. Speaker volume controls are independent of the TV system's volume controls. This system also enhances the audio channel that carries dialogue/voices.

The Conversation Enhancer, also from FirstStreet (\$179.95) filters background noise while amplifying the voices of men and women alike. Plug in the earbuds and converse clearly with a driver from the back seat, even if the radio is on; or enjoy a dinner conversation even if your table is near the kitchen. It can also be helpful for individual TV watching without disturbing others in the room.



Is The Desktop Really Dying?

by Bob Rankin
askbobrankin.com

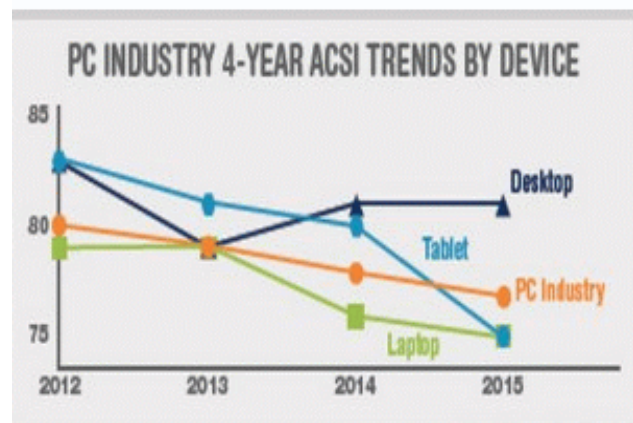
We've been hearing the death knell of the desktop for several years, as pundits pontificate about the rise of smartphones, tablets and laptops. But what do real people think, outside the ivory towers and echo chambers? Let's take a look at the numbers...

And the Survey Says...

Desktop PCs are still the best computing platform, according to the latest edition of the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI) Household Appliance and Electronics report. Tablets are rapidly losing their appeal, and laptops are slipping, too.

Overall satisfaction with the three main types of computing platforms declined for the third straight year, dipping 1.7% on ACSI's scale of 100. The ACSI surveyed 2,945 customers in the second quarter of 2015. The chart below shows the four-year trends of customer satisfaction with desktops, tablets, laptops, and their combined ratings.

Desktop PCs had the highest score in the 2015 survey (81). Tablets tumbled a whopping 6 percent, to 75. Laptops continued a steady long-term decline, tying tablets at 75. "As large-screen smartphones become



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more popular, they've made tablets somewhat redundant—caught in between the mobility of a smartphone and the power and functionality of a desktop,” explained Claes Fornell, ACSI chairman and founder, in a summary of the results.

ACSI 4-year satisfaction trend

That may be true, but when I look at that chart, I see buyer's remorse. I see people buying into the notion that a 10-inch tablet or an 11-inch laptop could do everything they did previously on a 24-inch desktop rig with a real keyboard.

Apple CEO Tim Cook, in other news reports, thinks that tablets will replace desktops “in some homes” (but not his, he adds). If all you do is surf the Web, check email, watch Netflix, and control your Internet-enabled coffeemaker, a tablet may serve just fine.

Let's Get Serious

But for serious work or gaming, there's nothing like a big screen, full-sized keyboard, high-performance processor, and the myriad of applications available for Windows. Can you connect multiple monitors, a printer, an external hard drive and a mouse to a tablet? Can you manipulate a large document or spreadsheet on a tiny screen?

I think there's zero chance that the tens of millions of desktop computers in corporate settings will be replaced by portable devices. Aside from the productivity and utility concerns mentioned in the previous paragraph, you'd be dealing with a new set of issues, with learning curve, theft and breakage at the top of the list.

Satisfaction with the computing industry overall has declined in every metric that the ACSI measures, a trend that seems more worrisome than competition between the three platform categories. One of the biggest declines – 3 points since 2014 – has been in “ability to keep system crashes to a minimum.” Satisfaction with “processor speed” also fell 3 points, from 82 to 79. An industry that can't keep these fundamental numbers up is definitely in trouble.

The lowest satisfaction rating by far – 70 out of 100 – went to the computer industry's call centers, a statistic that should surprise no one. The highest satisfaction rating (84) went to “design in terms of size and visual appeal.” So new toys look pretty even though they crash and tech support is abysmal. Wonderful.

The ACSI survey also rated vendors. Apple has ruled customer satisfaction for over 10 years now; its latest rating is 84. Dell is the only desktop maker that improved over 2014, rising 3 points to 78. Acer took last place with a satisfaction rating of 70. ASUS, Lenovo, Toshiba, and HP all scored in the mid-70s.

The full 2015 ACSI report also covers household appliances, TVs, and DVRs. It's free to download in exchange for your name and contact info.

Amazon Underground Offers Paid Apps for Free

by Ira Wilsker

Amazon, the online marketing powerhouse best known for its general merchandise, groceries, digital books and streaming media, has now entered a somewhat new market. While Amazon has had an online app store since 2008, with hundreds of thousands of paid and free Android apps, Amazon recently announced a new Android app and a feature on its website offering a wide selection of normally paid apps for free.



According to Amazon, eventually more than ten thousand normally paid apps will be available for totally free download, including free future updates. This new app with the moniker “Amazon Underground,” not-so-strangely

missing from the competing ubiquitous Google Play Store, is available directly from Amazon by connecting to amazon.com /underground from the Android device. This new Amazon app combines features from the traditional Amazon shopping app as well as the existing Amazon App Store, but also provides the user with access to the expanding catalog of otherwise “premium” (paid) apps labeled by Amazon as “Actually Free.”

Amazon is able to offer these otherwise paid apps for free because it has come up with a creative way to compensate the developers for the revenue lost by giving away otherwise revenue generating apps. Amazon pays the developers a fee based on the actual use of the apps by the users, and plans on offsetting the cost by attracting more customers to its other more traditional products. Another nice feature of these “Actually Free” apps is the fact that in exchange for direct compensation from Amazon, the developers also waive the typical in-app purchases, as well as the traditional upfront charges to use their products. Since there are generally no costs involved whatsoever to download and use these otherwise paid apps, the Android user now has the ability to download potentially thousands of premium utilities, games, and other apps that otherwise would have borne a significant cost. Amazon claims that each Android user can access over \$10,000 worth of “Actually Free” apps using its new Amazon Underground service. Google is apparently unhappy with this potentially strong competition from Amazon, and does not list the Amazon Underground app on its Google Play Store, thus requiring the download of the Amazon Underground app directly from Amazon.

In order to allow the Android phone or tablet to download the Amazon Underground app directly from Amazon, many users may have to modify a security setting on their device; this is accomplished by opening “Settings,” then “Security,” then “Unknown Sources – Allow installation from non-official apps.” While this is a legitimate security setting intended to prevent the user from installing possibly dangerous apps from illicit unofficial sources, it can also prevent the installation of apps from other legitimate sources such as Amazon. When “on,” this otherwise legitimate security setting only allows apps downloaded from the official Google Play Store to be installed, giving Google a potentially unfair competitive edge. It has been rumored in the blogs that this may also restrict competition, which has supposedly attracted the attention of federal regulators, but there has been nothing official published, and there is no confirmation, only unsubstantiated speculation that this may be happening. It is up to the user to decide to allow or prevent apps to be installed from other than the Google Play Store; in order to install the free apps downloaded from Amazon Underground, this setting needs to be on “allow.”

Users may find the selection of apps available from Amazon Underground that are “Actually Free” to be quite attractive. Popular games that normally generate revenue for the developers through the “in app purchases” of coins or other game tokens, carry the following statement when downloaded from Amazon Underground: “This app and its in-app purchases are actually free.” Productivity and utility apps such as the Microsoft Office compatible commercial office suites, including “Docs to Go” and “OfficeSuite Professional 8,” state in the product description that not just is the app totally free to download (many are in the \$10 range on the Google Play Store), but, in-app purchasing is free with Amazon Underground. For those of you (or your kids) who may have run up large bills while playing many of the popular games, you may find the same games that you have been playing and paying for are shown in the Amazon Underground app store as “Actually Free,” and what were “in-app purchases” are now free!

While the Amazon Underground apps can be automatically sent to the connected device from the browser based versions of the basic Amazon website, most Android users will probably use the integral Amazon Underground app to directly download and install the listed

apps. The new Amazon Underground app, which incorporates all of the other more traditional Amazon products and features plus apps into this single app, has a slightly different appearance than the better known Amazon shopping app, which still remains fully functional as a shopping app, but lacks the Underground connection. While the icon for the more traditional Amazon shopping app is the well known blue and white shopping cart, the new Amazon Underground icon is a black and orange shopping cart design that simply says “Amazon.” When downloaded and installed, the new Amazon Underground app and icon replaces the older Amazon shopping icon.

To quickly find the latest listings of the “actually free” apps, open the Amazon Underground app, tap on the three parallel line menu icon on the top left corner of the display to open the detailed menu, then tap the down arrow on the right of the “Apps & Games” line in the menu, and then tap on “Underground Apps & Games.” The screen will now show a series of featured apps and games, divided into self-explanatory categories. Among the categories displayed, each of which can be “slid” to the left to display more apps in that particular category, are “Featured actually Free Apps and Games,” “Actually Free Kids Apps & Games,” “Apps & Games Biggest Savings,” “Actually Free Productivity & Lifestyle,” “Top Amazon Underground Apps,” “Recommended for You,” and “All Underground.” On the top right corner of each category is a link that says “See All” which will open another page displaying a lengthy list of all of the “Actually Free” apps under that category.

The category titles are reasonably self-explanatory and do not require any articulation to disclose their contents. In the “Actually Free Kids Apps & Games” are dozens of popular kids games that have also appealed to many adults, including several of the Angry Birds series. I have one adult acquaintance who has been a regular player of one of these Angry Birds games, almost to the point of an expensive addiction. While still somewhat addictive, the exact same game downloaded and installed from Amazon Underground would not bear any of the substantial cost that she has been paying for the same game elsewhere.

I will admit that as attractive as many of the games are, I am not a gamer. The Underground apps that most appealed to me, which I downloaded and installed from Amazon Underground, were in the “Actually Free Productivity & Lifestyle” category. I had previously been using one of the office utilities I downloaded from the Google Play Store, but did not take advantage of its advanced features because of the cost of the “In-App Purchases,” which would enable the enhanced functionality of that app, with each additional function costing from \$2 to \$10. After seeing the identical app on Amazon Underground without all of the extra fees, I uninstalled the app from the Google Play Store, and then downloaded the same app from Amazon Underground; I now have the complete functionality of that utility without any additional expense! In this “Productivity & Lifestyle” group are several complete office suites that are fully compatible with Microsoft Office products, PDF utilities, comprehensive photo and video editing suites, map and road routing apps, financial and budgeting apps, weather apps, calendar and task managers, password managers, music synthesizers, workout helpers, and other useful apps.

This is not a short term promotion being offered by Amazon; Amazon has stated that this new “Underground” service will not just remain available, but will be greatly expanded to offer many more apps than just those currently listed. With hundreds of “Actually Free” apps now available, and potentially thousands more to be added in the foreseeable future, the Google Play Store may face some serious competition from Amazon Underground in the lucrative market for paid apps. The users of paid apps downloaded from Google may find the same Amazon Underground “Actually Free” apps that also waive the infamous “In-App Purchase” fees most attractive. Move over Google; there is a new sheriff in town.

Scams and Viruses

Last month I inadvertently typed in the wrong password for my AOL account, and could not get in. You would think I would go to “Keyword Password Reset,” but for some reason I googled aol help. A site that appeared to be AOL connected me to a tech with an Indian dialect. Although I explained that all I wanted to do was reset my password, he told me that I had a problem and wanted permission to take over my computer to “clean it up.” Brrr! That was close. It seems that more and more hackers are finding ways to get our information. So beware. I then did go to Password Reset and was back in in a matter of minutes.

If you ever discover that your C: drive appears blank and all your icons are missing, don't despair. Even though your antivirus program has cleaned a virus from your computer, it appears some viruses can leave behind some unwanted results. One such virus is the Windows 7 Recovery virus, which will hide your files in an attempt to make you pay to remove the virus. Try this tip which seems to work.

Click the Start button in the lower left corner of your task bar. Type cmd in the search box at the bottom of the menu and press Enter. If you're using Windows XP, click Run and type cmd into the Run box.

Then type `attrib -s -h -r c:/*.* /s /d` and press Enter to execute the command. After a few minutes it will finish executing the program. You can then close the command prompt window and check your desktop. The hidden files have been restored. By changing the c: drive to the name of a flash or other drive the tip should work.

Print part of an email or other text?

At a recent meeting the question came up. “How can I print a portion of an email?” Here are a couple of ways of achieving this.

One way is to highlight the section of the email you'd like to print. Select copy and paste to a word document. This method is good if you want to do some editing of the text.

Another method is to highlight what you want, right click, select PRINT. When the print dialog box comes up, in the “Print Range” box, place a check mark in the box that says “SELECTION.” Finally, highlight what you want, right click and select PRINT PREVIEW. Select the “As laid out” option click the drop-down button, and click “As selected on screen” and you will see only the selected portion of text, ready to print. That will print out just what was highlighted.

Use Google Now for Quick Calculations

Need to calculate a tip. On your Android phone tap the Google Now Widget and tap the microphone or say Okay Google. You can then ask Google to calculate by asking, “What is 18 percent of Forty two dollars?” Google now will then calculate your tip. You can also ask it many other questions such as what is the circumference of the earth?

Microsoft Update

In 2014 Microsoft issues an update for Windows Vista, 7, 8 and 8.1, and then issued a warning for Windows users to uninstall them. The updates with the problems are KB2982791, KB2970228, KB2975719 and KB2975331.

To see if you have them on your computer go to Programs and Features and choose View installed updates and search for the above numbers by typing them in the search box one at a time. If you find one choose Uninstall. After you have checked for all the above and

uninstalled any that you have found restart your computer.

Some users have reported problems restarting or even seeing the BSOD (Blue Screen of Death). The link has been removed and a fix is probably out now.

Windows Recovery

Fortunately, when Windows 10 comes out (which is free to all Win7 and above operating systems) they will be installing a refresh and rest function which will do away with updates and also the need for recovery images. Not needing the recovery points could save between 4 and 12 Gbs of space. Another nice perk is that you will not have to reinstall updates if you do have to recover your system for some reason.

Batch Renaming of Files

For years I used to use Batch renaming when I downloaded my pictures from my camera. But I haven't used it for quite a while until last week when I was reviewing my picture folder and realized I had to get rid of the cryptic file names the camera uses to something a human can understand. It is really very simple. Just highlight all the files, Right click choose Rename. You can name it anything and the batch file will number the files for you. Before you start put the cursor on the first file in the list. This also works with folders.

Gizmo's Freeware:

Handy Firefox Extension Helps Your Online Privacy

It's always a good idea to safeguard your online privacy, and to occasionally delete the information that your web browser stores about you and the sites you visit. However, finding those cache-clearing options among the myriad menus can be difficult. Which is why a Firefox add-on called Click And Clean caught my eye.

Once installed, it appears in your browser as an icon shaped like a toilet roll, which made me chuckle. Click it, and a menu appears which instantly offers a whole load of options that help you maintain your online privacy. You can choose which set of browser data to delete, and a date range if you wish. Plus there are loads of other useful options too, all accessible from this single menu.

Definitely worth checking out if you use Firefox. Just head to <https://addons.mozilla.org/en-GB/firefox/addon/clickclean/> to download it. And of course it's completely free.

Society News

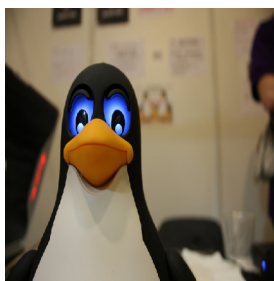
Help's Half Hour Notes

October 13, 2015

by Jan Rothfuss

Q: How can he get rid of the magnifying glass when using Windows 7?

A: If you click on the little window you should be able to remove it. By holding down the Windows key and hitting escape it will go away as well. To remove it permanently, go to the accessibility page and turn it off there.



Linux SIG

The next workshop is the third Saturday in November, the 21st, at Interlock Rochester, 1115 E Main St. Enter through Door #7 on the end of the building near Goodman. Go up stairs to suite #200.

Come to get your questions about Linux answered. We have experts on hand to fix problems and answer questions about Linux and FOSS.

Bring your system in so we can help you get the most out of it.

Enter through Door #7 near the Main Street end of building. Find Interlock on the intercom directory to get buzzed in.

Hope to see you there!

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9/16:

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Deadline for the November issue is
November 10, 2015.

Planning Meeting

The meeting will be held at TBA.
Everyone is welcome.

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Programs: Tony Dellelo

Membership: Steve Staub

Monitor: Sally Springett

Webmaster: Bob Avery
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Computer Recycling / Remanufacturing Center

420 Dewey Avenue Rochester, NY 14613,
2nd Floor Warehouse – behind the City
Recreation Dept, Administration Building.
Hours of Operation: between 9 am and 4
pm M-F (call Helpdesk first, before
visiting).

Helpdesk Phone Numbers:

585-232-9160 585-719-9992

<http://acdcareers.com/Community/PCRecycling.php>

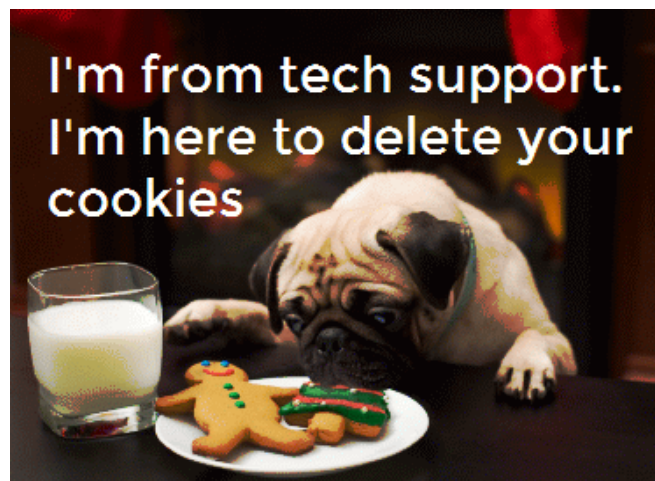
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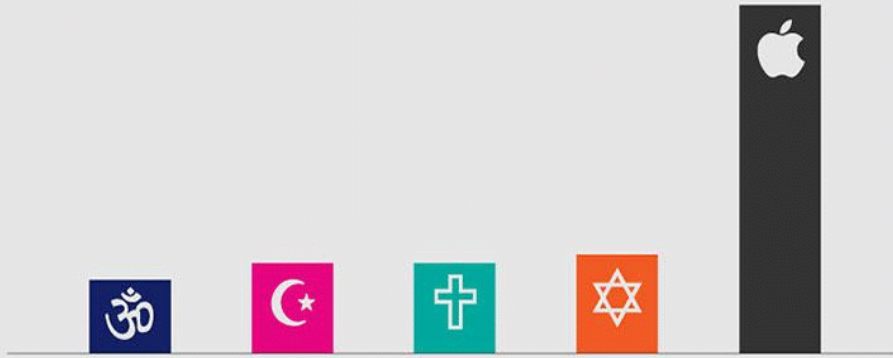
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The Lighter Side



RELIGIOUS EXTREMISM



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