Our Club

RCSI is a nonprofit 501(c)(3) group open for membership to anyone interested in computers and new technology. Established in 1981, our aim is to provide an exchange of information between users of digital devices. We are not in any way affiliated with any computer manufacturer or software company, and *we do not sell your data or email address*.

Program Meetings

No admission fee for non-members. Everyone is welcome! Second Tuesday of every month, except July and August, from 6:30pm – 8:30pm.

Help's Half Hour (Q & A) 6:30pm – 7:00pm. *Members and Guests are welcome to attend and bring their computer related questions with them to get answered*.

7:00 – 7:15, Club Business

7:15 – 8:30+, Main Presentation

Come and join in the fun and enjoy a snack! **You are welcome to bring a guest**.

Become a Member

The club would like to have you as a member, and your subscription will help to keep us going. Go to our website, www.rcsi.org, and download a printed form for use by the Post Office mail, **or** enter your info online and pay with a credit card or PayPal, **or** attend a meeting.

The Rochester Computer Society, Inc.

a computer/tech club open to everyone

M NIT R

March 14, '(The) Browser – Your Most Important App' by Hewie Poplock, via Zoom

April 11, 'Newest Nanobots', Tony Dellelo

In This Issue

Fixing a Nasty Computer Hack

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

I recently completed a repair on a club member's computer after he allowed a "helpful" technical representative, probably from the other side of the world, to remotely access his computer. Unfortunately, the victim in this case apparently failed to read or heed my article in the November 2021 *Gigabyte Gazette* (https://www.scscc.club/Gigabyte/gg_2021-11Nov.pdf) warning that these types of scams were becoming increasingly prevalent.

The "bait" in this instance was an official-looking email, supposedly from Cox, stating that the victim had been substantially overcharged on his Cox bill and he was due a refund of $400. The victim telephoned the scammer using the phone number in the email. Next, he went online and downloaded and installed remote access software at her instruction. He then allowed the purported technical representative to initiate a remote access session and log into his system. The victim began to feel uneasy when he saw that things were being done on his computer that had nothing to do with Cox. He finally became alarmed and hung up on the scammer when she asked for his bank account information "to process his refund."
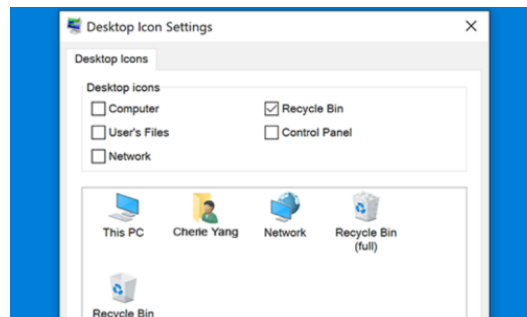
Unfortunately, this victim did not immediately shut off his computer, so the scammer could continue to mess with his system remotely, I suppose as a departing coup de grace for a failed scam. The victim could no longer access his computer, which displayed the Windows 11 "Gray screen of death" right after he entered his PIN during login. Microsoft has finally replaced its famous "Blue screen of death," which provided a bit of mostly useless information, with a "Gray screen of death," which provides no information.

The victim, who runs an online business, called me in a panic. This was especially interesting to me since I have had minimal experience working with unusable Windows 11 machines. I was curious to see if there was a substantial difference in addressing issues in Windows 11 versus Windows 10 (there was not, at least for this user's issue).

I researched the gray screen issue online and did not find much helpful information. Many writers suggested the problem was bad video drivers or a bad hardware connection. I knew there was no physical issue since the miscreant obviously never had physically assessed the victim's computer. And I doubted the graphics card drivers were the problem since messing with them would cause an immediate catastrophic system failure, even if it could be done remotely on the fly. After providing answers that did not solve the issue, many sites did offer to sell me their software, which they said would fix the problem. No thanks.

I finally decided to approach the Windows 11 system the way I would Windows 10. Getting past the gray screen of death was straightforward; I booted into Safe mode and repaired the Windows startup. When I finally got into the victim's computer, I removed the remote access software. Then I did a system refresh, keeping all of his original data files and programs but replacing all of the system files. I wanted to assure the club member that there were no nasty surprises on his system due to his encounter with the scammer.

Yet when I could finally boot to the victim's desktop, I saw something very strange. The victim's desktop icons, files, and folders had disappeared. I considered that the scammer could have put the victim's computer in tablet mode, which messes up the desktop. I learned that Windows 11 does not have a dedicated tablet mode.

Again, an online search for the problem was mostly useless. Most writers suggested going to Personalize themes, Icons and checking the icons I wanted to appear on the desktop. This did not address the issue of nothing showing on the desktop, files, folders, and icons. Naturally, many of those offering useless advice online had a software package to sell, which they assured would fix any problems. Again, no thanks.

I found an article that suggested I right-click on the desktop, left-click on View (#1), then make sure "Show desktop icons" was checked (#2). Yes, that sneaky scammer had hidden everything on the victim's desktop with three clicks of her mouse. However, when I left mouse clicked on "Show desktop icons," the victim's desktop appeared normally. This was the first time I had seen a scammer throw two problems onto a victim's computer.

When contacted, a scammer will often state that to help you, they
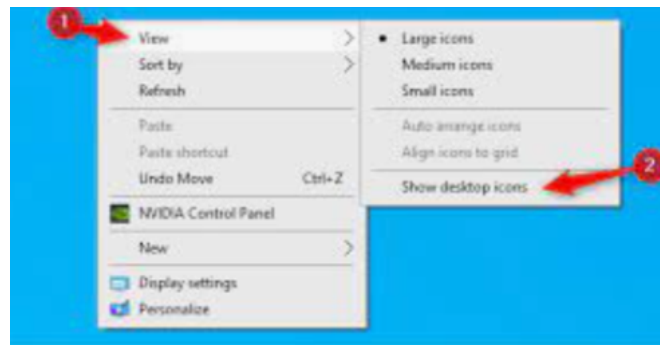
must remotely access your system. They will try to get you to download remote access software that will give the scammer access to your computer. Just say NO! There are few legitimate reasons someone needs to access your computer to provide assistance.

I mentally divide computer hacks/scams into two categories: tarantulas and scorpions. Tarantulas are big and scary looking, yet their bite is virtually harmless to humans. The most dangerous scorpions are the tiny ones you are likely not to see until they have stung you, and they can send you to the emergency room or at least to bed for a day or two. The unfortunate victim in this story ran into a scorpion that stung him twice. The sting would have been even worse had he allowed them access to his bank account.

Reprinted from the newsletter of https://www.scscc.club, dkretch@gmail.com.

Streaming Surpasses Cable TV as the Way Most People Watch Television

by Kurt Jefferson, Editor
Central Kentucky Computer Society

Streaming Is Now King

More people are streaming TV shows and movies for the first time rather than watching cable TV programs. In fact, the total time spent viewing streaming services in July soared nearly 23% over one year ago.

This is a major change in the way most of us watch TV. Nielsen has even confirmed it: Streaming is in. Cable is out. Streaming surpassed broadcast TV viewing in the past, but this is the first time the

Planning Meeting

Held on 1ˢᵗ Tuesday of each month at 7 pm, * * ONLINE * *. We will be using Jitsi Meet. ANY CLUB MEMBER MAY ATTEND.

Got Questions?:

Windows: . . . . . Arpad Kovacs
       podcomputer@gmail.com
Linux & some Mac: . . . .
       Carl Schmidtmann
    unixgeek@faultline.com

Monitor Newsletter

The Monitor is published monthly by members of RCSI. Articles by our members may be reprinted by other user groups or nonprofits, without special permission. A courtesy copy may be emailed to the author or Monitor editor. Limited copies (probably in black and white) will be printed and available at our meetings.

Club Mailing Address

Rochester Computer Society, Inc
PO Box 18516
Rochester, NY 14618

number of Americans streaming has topped those watching cable TV programming.

Streaming's share of TV viewing hit 34.8% this past July, while cable fell to 34.4%. Broadcast TV stood at 21.6%.

Nielsen monitors monthly TV consumption and says more than one-third of all TV viewing is via streaming. These figures are for people two years of age and over and tracks monthly viewership between September 2021 and July 2022. Note that these figures only include streaming programming viewed on a television set.

Folks who stream using a web browser on a PC or Mac computer or an app on an iPad, iPhone, or Android phone or tablet are not included in the Nielsen count. Experts say that's a sizable number of individuals not counted by Nielsen.

Cable TV, combined with traditional over-the-air TV with a UHF or VHF antenna, still has the most viewers overall.

 But both are dropping, and experts predict streaming will replace that type of viewing over the next few years. Sports viewing on cable TV slid 15.4% from June and 34% from one year earlier when the 2020 Summer Olympics started.

Cable subscriptions have dropped for many years – with increasing prices cited as the number one reason. **Zippia writes that adults between 18 and 29 are the largest group with no cable in their homes. More than one-third of them have no cable TV or satellite TV subscriptions. Many don't watch TV at all.**

According to Zippia, 69% of those surveyed say "cable and satellite subscriptions simply cost too much, and 45% say they don't watch TV very often in general."

A Streaming Snapshot

The Most Popular Streamers
(in order of subscriber numbers)

1. Netflix
2. Amazon Prime Video
3. Disney+
4. Apple TV+
5. hulu
6. Peacock
7. YouTube Premium
8. HBO Max
9. ESPN+
10. CBS All Access

Source: Zippia

Other Streaming Tidbits:

Most of us now subscribe to a streaming service (69%), while the number of people worldwide subscribing to cable TV has fallen below 50%, and the number of cable subscribers continues to fall.

CordCutters News reports the biggest cable TV providers lost about 825,000 video subscribers in the first three months of 2022. That compares to a loss of about 780,000 subscribers in the first quarter of 2021. These figures are from the Leichtman Research Group, which tracks video subscription trends.

While many Americans grew up with TV, 44% of all adults alive today have never had a cable or satellite TV subscription. Furthermore, 61% of those are between 18 and 29. Zippia writes, "Not only is cable TV actively losing subscribers, but it also isn't gaining young new subscribers who are moving out on their own and separating from their parents' subscriptions."
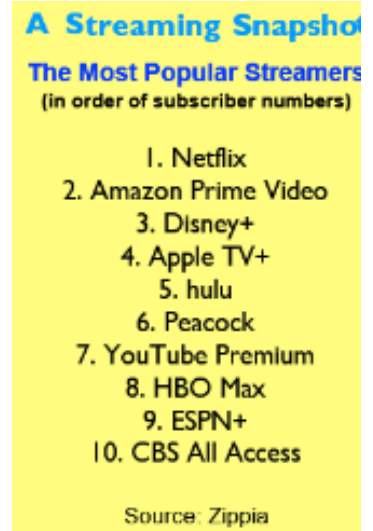
Tidbits of probably useless information

The preferred shortest sentences include 'I', 'no', and 'go'. There are so many great options here, but these are some of the shortest that you are likely to see.

Officially, '**I**' is the shortest complete sentence. You can use it as a subjective response when someone asks a question.

Who is there?   **I**.
Who did it?   **I**.

If you want to reject the previous statement or question, '**No**' is a great two-letter sentence.

Do you want to go with me? **No**.
Will you be there?   **No**.

'**Go**' is the first verb form you can use to create a simple sentence.

What should I do now?
     Go! Don't wait around.
Are you ready to race?   **Go**!

The highest point in Pennsylvania is lower than the lowest point in Colorado. **Mount Davis** (3,213 ft) is the highest peak in Pennsylvania. The point where the **Arikaree River** flows out of Yuma County, Colorado and into Cheyenne County, Kansas, is the lowest point in Colorado (3,317 ft). This low point is higher than the highest points in 18 states.

The nursery rhyme 'Ring Around the Rosey' is a British folk rhyme about the bubonic plague. Infected people with the plague would get red circular sores ("Ring around the rosey..."), these sores would smell very bad so common folks would put flowers on their bodies to cover the smell of the sores. People who died from the plague would be burned so as to reduce the possible spread of the disease ("...ashes, ashes, we all fall down!").

Well, then, who is watching cable TV?

Not younger people. Adults in the U.S. who are 65 and older make up the largest percentage of cable and satellite TV subscribers.

While streaming services are growing in popularity among all age groups, Zippia reports that Disney+ is the fastest-growing streamer, luring more than 100 million subscribers since it launched in November 2019.

Sources: Zippia Cord Cutting Statistics, Pew Research: Cable and Satellite TV Use Has Dropped Dramatically in the U.S. Since 2015

From https://ckcs.org/, lextown2@gmail.com.

The **APCUG Wednesday Workshops** (WW) presentations have received high praise from attendees and presenters. Both have enjoyed the Zoom meeting format instead of the VTC Webinar presentations. With the WWs, cameras are an option for everyone. The presenters like seeing the many people attending the workshop and having more time to answer Chatbox questions since more questions can be answered live without a time limit. WWs have either an in-depth two-hour presentation by a single presenter, a panel of presenters, or two presentations with open mic Q&A following the presentations. Everyone likes the biggest feature where the mics are open for general questions, comments, and sometimes socializing. We have people that attend just about every workshop, even from Australia. We've become a Wednesday family. **9 am PT, 10 am MT, 11 am CT, 12 noon ET** Typically, the 2nd and 4th Wednesdays are for Windows or ??? workshops and the Linux workshop is the 3rd Wednesday of the month.

---

* * * * * SOFTWARE and HARDWARE * * * * *

Cryptomator: Encryption for Your Cloud Storage

You can store sensitive data in the cloud safely.

by Leo Notenboom, https://askleo.com/
Making Technology Work For Everyone

Cryptomator is a powerful tool to protect the data you store in the cloud.

I regularly hear concerns about using cloud storage, the biggest being that online files are at higher risk of compromise should your account or the storage provider get hacked. There are also concerns that your storage provider could be required to hand over your files to law enforcement agencies under certain circumstances.

Those are all valid concerns.

Cryptomator is a free encryption solution that addresses them.

Cryptomator
You can store files safely in the cloud if you encrypt them before uploading. Cryptomator makes the encryption transparent by allowing you to designate a folder within your cloud service that is automatically and transparently encrypted before uploading and decrypted when used on your device.

Windows & Android Tips

Judy Taylour

7 WAYS TO GET A SECOND OPINION AFTER A CLEAN ANTIVIRUS SCAN – Do you always get a warm, fuzzy feeling after your latest malware scan responds with "Scan complete. No malware found!"? Most folks do, and I must admit that I feel pretty good about those kinds of reports myself. But I'm going to share a little secret with you…
[7 ways to get a second opinion after a clean antivirus scan (ricksdailytips.com)](#)

HOW TO CREATE BOOTABLE WINDOWS 11 USB INSTALL MEDIA – Here's the process to create a bootable USB drive to perform a clean install of Windows 11.
[How to create bootable Windows 11 USB install media – Pureinfotech](#)

MICROSOFT EXPERIMENTS WITH ADS IN THE WINDOWS 11 START MENU – Microsoft is experimenting with injecting ads into the Windows 11 start menu experience in an attempt to get us to use more of its products and services. Read more… [Microsoft Experiments With Ads in the Windows 11 Start Menu | PCMag](#)

WHAT TO DO AFTER A DATA BREACH AND HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF – If you find your data has somehow been compromised, you need to act fast. Here's what to do. [What to Do After a Data Breach and How to Protect Yourself (makeuseof.com)](#)

Don't the providers encrypt?
Many online cloud storage providers encrypt your data. The problem is that since they encrypted it, they can decrypt it.

And while the folks at major online storage providers are professionals with no interest in snooping around in your data, there have been rare instances of the so-called "rogue employee" poking around. The service providers can also turn your unencrypted data over to the authorities should that ever be required.

In addition, should someone [hack](#) your account, the data would be available to them unencrypted, just as it's available to you.

Provider-supplied encryption is nice, but it doesn't protect us as well as we'd like.

The solution is simple: encrypt the data yourself. If *you* encrypt your data *before* it's uploaded to an online storage provider, you, and only you, control access to it.

The Cryptomator model
Cryptomator encrypts file-by-file, which is perfect for cloud storage providers like Dropbox, OneDrive, and others that upload and download individual files as they change.

You select a folder to be encrypted by Cryptomator and assign it a [passphrase](#) to encrypt the contents.

When you "[mount](#)" this folder using Cryptomator — providing the passphrase to do so — another drive letter appears, which I'll call L:. Anything written to drive L: is encrypted and written to the folder you specified. Anything read from that drive causes the corresponding encrypted file in the source folder to be read and decrypted on the fly. There's little noticeable impact on performance, since accessing the disk, not performing the encryption, is the slowest part of the operation.

The files in the original folder on disk are always encrypted. It's only when the folder is mounted using Cryptomator that the files are visible in their decrypted form in the virtual drive.

An example of Cryptomator in use
Let's say I use OneDrive. (As I do, along with Dropbox and Google Drive.) On my machine, there's a folder:

C:\Users\leon\OneDrive

It contains all the files and folders that are part of my OneDrive cloud storage. I have many files and folders that automatically synchronize with the OneDrive servers, as well as on all other machines on which I have OneDrive installed.

One sub-folder within my OneDrive folder is:

C:\Users\leon\OneDrive\EncryptedFiles

I don't place any files in this folder directly. It starts out empty.

Scams

The devastation in Turkey and Syria following massive earthquakes is inspiring people to help and donate. And it's prompting scammers — like they do after every disaster — to take advantage of your generosity. Find out how to make sure your money helps people in need.

Scammers use familiar-sounding names to create fake charities, or ask you to donate in cash, by gift card, or cryptocurrency. Here's how to spot and avoid the scams:

- **Slow down**. You don't have to give immediately. Search online for the name of the charity you are interested in supporting, plus words like "review", "scam", or "complaint". See if others have had good or bad experiences with the charity.
- **Check what charity watchdog groups say about the organization.** Don't assume that familiar-sounding names or messages posted on social media are legitimate. Donate to charities you know and trust and with a proven record of dealing with disasters.
- **Ask how your money will be spent**. If someone calls to ask to donate, they should be able to answer how much of your donation will go to the program you want to help, and other critical questions.
- **Visit ftc.gov/charity** before you open up your wallet.

Next, I install Cryptomator and configure it to mount "C:\Users\leon\OneDrive\EncryptedFiles" as drive L:. I set up the passphrase required to mount it again in the future.

Drive L: appears on my machine. I create a Word document on drive L:

L:\MyPrivateInformation.dosx. As soon as I save that document to drive L:, new files and folders appear within the EncryptedFiles folder:, C:\Users\leon\OneDrive\EncryptedFiles\d\2G\BQCY3SUZEVRU3M RAGLO6C62JGGGYZJ\5Y5RR6LM5SKSFZ6FIKULKNNBVQ3Y6DDT NGAKKX3VI2N72ZWM6KUOIGWL2AWCGB2TMY======

The file that was saved to L: is automatically encrypted and placed in the folder I named EncryptedFiles. This extremely obscure filename (along with others) is Cryptomator's encrypted version of my document. This is the only representation of the file that is physically written to disk.

Next, OneDrive notices a new file has appeared on disk within the OneDrive folder. It uploads this *encrypted* file and distributes it to all my machines running OneDrive. Note that only the *encrypted* version of the file has been uploaded.

I can continue to work on the file on L: to my heart's content. It's just a file, and I can manipulate it like any other. As changes are saved to disk, the corresponding encrypted version of the file is updated appropriately.

Once I *dis*mount the EncryptedFiles folder, its corresponding drive, drive L:, disappears. The unencrypted versions of the files are no longer accessible. All that remains are the encrypted versions stored in the EncryptedFiles folder within the OneDrive folder, both online and on my hard drive.

It's for more than Windows

Cryptomator is available for:
- Windows
- Mac
- Linux

And there are also apps available for:
- Android
- iOS

That means you can continue to share your documents across all the platforms and devices supported by your online storage provider, but now you can easily encrypt the data you share.

The hidden cost of doing your own encryption

I have to mention one caveat: there's one good reason *not* to encrypt your data yourself, and that's web access.

Unencrypted files are accessible via your service provider's web interface. Dropbox, as one example, allows you to log in to your account from any machine and access the files stored in your account via the web.

Virtual Tours

The Faroe Islands,
www.remote-tourism.com. The Faroese tourism board have taken a very unique approach to their free virtual tour. A member of their team straps a live streaming camera to their head and guests are encouraged to 'control' them using a virtual game controller. You can even make them run and jump. It's a daft idea, but it works!

London, England (UK)
Starting atop the London Eye, this free virtual tour gives users a simple interface for browsing 360° photos of London's most famous attractions. It's not a particularly immersive experience, but it's a fun way of seeing some of the views you can't currently enjoy in person.
https://360.visitlondon.com/#.

Petra, Jordan
This highly polished free virtual tour of the rose-red city of Petra, Jordan is provided by Google. What we really like about this experience is that there's a commentary, giving explorers the chance to feel like they're on an actual walking tour.
https://www.google.com/maps/about/behind-the-scenes/streetview/treks/petra/#streetview.

Artemis
RS-25 Rocket Engine Testing - NASA's Stennis Space Center in Mississippi conducted a **series of RS-25 rocket engine hot fire tests for NASA's Space Launch System,** which is being built for missions beyond low-Earth orbit that will carry crew and cargo to the Moon and destinations beyond.

If you encrypt the data yourself, only encrypted data is available to you via a web interface. If you ever want to access your unencrypted data on a device that doesn't have the encryption software installed and configured, you can't.

What about Boxcryptor?
In the past, I used Boxcryptor to perform the same task as Cryptomator.

Boxcryptor was sold to Dropbox, and its future is now unclear. You can no longer create new accounts.

Do this
Cryptomator is free and open source, with no limitations on use. Technically, it's "pay what you want", where $0 is accepted. My bottom line is that Cryptomator is a convenient solution for making sure the data you place in cloud storage services remains secure and accessible only by you.

I recommend it.

I also recommend you subscribe to Confident Computing! Less frustration and more confidence, solutions, answers, and tips in your inbox every week.

End of Article # #

WELCOME TO THE 2023 FINGER LAKES REGIONAL *FIRST* ROBOTICS COMPETITION at RIT
Thursday, March 16 – Saturday, March 18, 2023
The robots are built and operated by high school students.
55 teams are signed up, including 16 from our area.
There are also teams from Pennsylvania, Ohio, Quebec, and Taiwan.
FREE event, public welcome, www.rit.edu/gcr/firstrobotics/

Junk Yard for your old PC – Think Linux

By James McGrath
Rochester Computer Society

If you have a fairly modern Windows PC, no problem, you can run nearly everything – well maybe not Windows 11 & later. Modern to Ancient, there may be a Linux distribution that runs on even 32-bit oldies!

Linux is actually just a Kernal, the core part of the operating system. The graphical desktop, command-line utilities, and other parts of the system are separate projects. "Linux distributions" (Distros) take open-source software from different projects and combines them into a complete operating system you can install and use. On newer computers, you may need to disable Secure Boot. Some, but not all Linux distributions can boot normally on Secure Boot-enabled PCs. Always try

Unusual Product

Withings U-Scan, the first hands-free connected home urine lab.

There's a lot that can be found within our urine, which is why our doctors often ask us for samples to rule out certain conditions or infections. But this can be a frustratingly lengthy process, and can often incur costs. So, what's the other option? Enter the U-Scan.

At CES 2023 in Las Vegas, Withings, a French smart tech company, revealed its U-Scan. With more than 3000 metabolites, urine is an extraordinary witness to our health. It gives an immediate snapshot of the body's balance and can help detect and monitor a large variety of health information. While urinalysis is typically performed only once a year, U-Scan opens the door to regular access to these metrics from the comfort and privacy of one's own bathroom.

Within the device is 12 test pods that can scan for various biomarkers. This product is entirely non-invasive and comes with replaceable cartridges for repeated analysis. But you don't need to change the cartridge every time. In fact, just one cartridge can be used for up to three months.

And if you're concerned about having to hold the U-Scan during use, worry not. You can attach the device to your toilet for a hands-free experience.

www.withings.com/us/en/u-scan

to get the newest LTS version of your choice of Linux (long term service = updated & workable for 5 years).

Examples:

Ubuntu is based on Debian linux, and offers a variety of different "flavors", which come with different desktop environments and applications over the same underlying Ubuntu operating system. It has good technical support and software availability.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Ubuntu

Xubuntu uses the Xfce desktop on top of the Ubuntu base and uses limited resources (the minimums are just 512MB of memory and a 7.5GB hard drive). Despite this, it can run the same apps as Ubuntu (LibreOffice, Firefox, VLC, and the rest).
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=xUbuntu

Lubuntu was designed to run on older, slower, and lower-spec hardware, and uses LXQt desktop, the Calamares installer like Fedora, and the KDE Muon software center, it remains a work in progress and recently dropped the 32-bit version.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=xUbuntu

Linux Mint is extremely popular, and many users prefer it over Ubuntu. Mint is based partially on Ubuntu but uses Cinnamon, MATE, or Xfce desktops instead.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Linux+Mint

Fedora appeals to beginners, provides access to many popular apps like Slack, Steam, Firefox, etc., is more secure than Windows, and uses fewer resources.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Fedora+linux

Zorin looks similar to the commercial Mac OS X or Microsoft Windows OSes. It is stable, easy to use, reliable, and available for download as a single and hybrid Live DVD ISO image, designed to be used on both 32-bit and 64-bit machines. To boot from it, you can write the ISO image to a blank DVD or a USB flash drive.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Zorin+OS

Elementary OS 6 offers a simple desktop due to its own custom Pantheon desktop environment. It looks good and is quite different from many other Linux desktops but may not be as rock-solid and supported as tried-and-tested distros.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Elementary+OS+6

Debian is very secure, very stable, and a more up-to-date and desktop-focused distro.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Debian

Tails is a live CD environment that delivers as much privacy and security as it possibly can. Tails are used by Edward Snowden, as well as political dissidents and journalists that need maximum identity protection. It automatically routes your web activity through Tor and provides other security utilities. Being run in a live environment, it ensures all your traces are wiped away when you reboot. It isn't a general-purpose Linux distribution, but, if you're looking at Linux

"True terror is to wake up one morning and discover that your high school class is running the country." —Kurt Vonnegut (March 2015)

"Always forgive your enemies; nothing annoys them so much."— Oscar Wilde (June 1954)

"The statistics on sanity are that one out of every four Americans is suffering from some form of mental illness. Think of your three best friends. If they're okay, then it's you." —Rita Mae Brown (December 2002)

"Never go to bed mad. Stay up and fight." —Phyllis Diller (November 2016)

"Doing nothing is very hard to do. You never know when you're finished."—Leslie Nielsen (April 2007)

"A perfect parent is a person with excellent child-rearing theories and no actual children." —Dave Barry (Reader's Digest Quotable Quotes, 2013)

"Just be good and kind to your children. Not only are they the future of the world, they're the ones who can sign you into a home." —Dennis Miller (Reader's Digest Quotable Quotes, 2013)

"Behind every great man is a woman rolling her eyes." —Jim Carrey (Reader's Digest Quotable Quotes, 2013)

"If you can give your child only one gift, let it be enthusiasm." — Bruce Barton (December 1934)

because you need something rock-solid when it comes to privacy, Tails is the one to choose.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Tails

Arch a good Linux distribution to try if you really want to learn how everything works, because you must configure everything yourself. It's not for beginners, just make sure you have the installation guide handy if you install it.
Link: https://linux.softpedia.com/dyn-search.php?search_term=Arch

If you are afraid to even try Linux, you may find **Chrome OS Flex** is easier to learn. It too was designed to run on older computers having fewer resources. It's like what many Kids now use in Schools.
Link: https://chromeenterprise.google/os/chromeosflex/

Reprinted with permission, www.rcsi.com, jmcgrat5@gmail.com

* * * * * BITS and PIECES in the NEWS * * * * *

> **Editor's Note**: To continue reading the following articles, you may copy the long URL at the end of the article and enter it into a web browser **or** click on the URL in the PDF or web versions of this newsletter.

Meet Bard, Google's Answer to ChatGPT
Bard is built on a lightweight version of Google's Language Model for Dialogue Applications (LaMDA) with intentions to scale up after testing.

By Kevin Hurler

Nothing has made the tech industry cower quite the way ChatGPT has. While some have tried to hop on board asap, others—like Google— are attempting to compete. The tech giant has just announced its answer to the wildly popular chatbot, and it's called Bard.

Bard is Google's own experimental chatbot that is built with the company's Language Model for Dialogue Applications, or LaMDA. LaMDA is the same AI engine that an ex-Google engineer warned us was sentient, but the company hopes that LaMDA is powerful enough that it will make Bard Google's rival to ChatGPT. Bard is currently only available to testers, but Google says that Bard is using a lightweight version of LaMDA, so it can scale easily after the trial period and reach more users.

"Bard seeks to combine the breadth of the world's knowledge with the power, intelligence and creativity of our large language models. It draws on information from the web to provide fresh, high-quality responses," Google CEO Sundar Pichai said in a company blog post. "Bard can be an outlet for creativity, and a launchpad for curiosity, helping you to explain new discoveries from NASA's James Webb Space Telescope to a 9-year-old, or learn more about the best strikers in football right now, and then get drills to build your skills."

Read more at https://gizmodo.com/bard-google-chatgpt-ai-microsoft-bing-1850079014.

Odds and Ends

First to Fusion

Helion is building the world's first fusion generators, enabling a future with unlimited clean electricity. Fusion produces clean, reliable, and abundant energy from deuterium, (found in water), and helium-3, a product of fusing deuterium atoms. The Earth's oceans contain enough deuterium to generate billions of years worth of zero-carbon fusion energy.

Scientists have been working to harness fusion power for decades. As the first private company to reach 100 M°C plasma temperatures, we are making electricity from fusion a reality. Helion's plasma accelerator raises fusion fuel to 100 million degrees Celsius and directly extracts electricity with a high-efficiency pulsed approach.

Magnets accelerate two FRCs to 1 million mph from opposite ends of the 40-foot accelerator. They collide in the center. When the FRCs collide in the center of the system, they are further compressed by a powerful magnetic field until they reach fusion temperatures of 100 million degrees Celsius. At this temperature, the deuterium and helium-3 ions are moving fast enough to overcome the forces that would otherwise keep them apart and they fuse. This releases more energy than is consumed by the fusion process. As new fusion energy is created, the plasma expands.

As the plasma expands, it pushes back on the magnetic field. By Faraday's law, the change in field induces current, which is directly recaptured as electricity.

https://www.helionenergy.com/our-technology/.

Scientists Are Making Catfish Hybrids With Alligator DNA For Us to Eat

07 February 2023, By Hannah Getahun, Business Insider

Life finds a way: Geneticists have created disease-resistant catfish using alligator DNA – and they may one day become a part of our diet.

A group of scientists at Auburn University published a paper in January detailing their efforts to genetically modify catfish with the cathelicidin gene of an alligator.

Cathelicidin, found in the intestines, is an antimicrobial peptide responsible for helping organisms fight diseases.

The gene, which was added using CRISPR, heightened disease resistance among the catfish in comparison to wild catfish. Researchers noted that the survival rates of the catfish were "two- and five-fold higher" in an interview with *MIT Technology Review*.

Because researchers added the cathelicidin to a gene for a reproductive hormone, it also reduced the catfish's ability to reproduce, which they said was important to prevent genetic contamination of the hybrid fish with wild catfish.

In 2021, an estimated 307 million pounds of live catfish were produced in the US, primarily in the south. Catfish make up over 50 percent of US demand for farm-raised fish.

Continue this article at https://www.sciencealert.com/scientists-are-making-catfish-hybrids-with-alligator-dna-for-us-to-eat.

This Groundbreaking Biomaterial Heals Tissues From the Inside Out

The material can be injected intravenously and has potential application in heart attacks, traumatic brain injury and more

University of California - San Diego, January 30, 2023

A new biomaterial that can be injected intravenously, reduces inflammation in tissue and promotes cell and tissue repair. The biomaterial was tested and proven effective in treating tissue damage caused by heart attacks in both rodent and large animal models. Researchers also provided proof of concept in a rodent model that the biomaterial could be beneficial to patients with traumatic brain injury and pulmonary arterial hypertension.

"This biomaterial allows for treating damaged tissue from the inside out," said Karen Christman, a professor of bioengineering at the University of California San Diego, and the lead researcher on the team that developed the material. "It's a new approach to regenerative engineering."

A study on the safety and efficacy of the biomaterial in human subjects could start within one to two years, Christman added. The team, which brings together bioengineers and physicians, presented their findings in the Dec. 29 issue of *Nature Biomedical Engineering*.

There are an estimated 785,000 new heart attack cases in the United States each year, and there is no established treatment for repairing the resulting damage to cardiac tissue. After a heart attack, scar tissue develops, which diminishes muscle function and can lead to congestive heart failure.

Continue reading at https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2023/01/230130144805.htm.

RCSI

Imagine RIT: Creativity and Innovation Festival, Saturday, April 29, 10 – 5 pm, **FREE**

For more information on this spectacular public event, https://www.rit.edu/imagine/.

Help's Half Hour   Notes by Jan Rothfuss

Q: A member has Windows 10 on a flash drive and wonders if he will need a license code when he attempts to install?
A: Microsoft is not giving as much credence to license codes lately. Windows 11 is available for those with Windows 10.

Q: Amazon Fire tablet has a battery that is dying. Is it replaceable?
A: The customer cannot replace the battery.

Q: A member brought in his laptop, hoping that we would be able to bring up his gmail mailbox.
A: Bob helped him, with the help of Tony's charger. Luckily, the laptop had saved his gmail login information. As Bob brought up the gmail.com site, the login information worked and the inbox was displayed.

Our Usual Meeting Place is being renovated.
St John's Meadows at Johnsarbor Drive, is on the left, past Clinton Avenue, when going West on Elmwood Avenue. The opening in the white fence is Johnsarbor Drive. At the 'T', turn right. The meeting is in the SECOND building on the left – **Chestnut Court**.
Our meeting place can change. Please check our website before each meeting. **www.rcsi.org**

Got Questions?:

Send an email to either person below and they will get back to you. The questions can be related to the OS (Operating System) or hardware related issues. Please give them time for a response, as they do this service on a volunteer basis. Thank you.

Windows OS: . . . . . Arpad Kovacs, podcomputer@gmail.com

Linux & some Mac: Carl Schmidtmann, unixgeek@faultline.com