



An International
Association of Technology
& Computer User Groups

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. **Yes, you may bring the problem computer with you.***

7:00 – 7:10, Club Business

7:10 – 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



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Dec 10, 'Potluck Video Night', members bring a 5 to 10 minute video to show

Jan 14, 2025, 'Impact of AI on jobs', 'Free Windows Software'

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Do You Use Two-Factor Authentication?

By Phil Sorrentino, Secretary & Newsletter Contributor
Sun City Center Computer Club

If not, you might want to consider it for specific accounts if it is offered. Two-factor authentication is a way of adding an additional level of privacy to a computer account. When you set up an account, typically on a computer server, you assign a "User Name," which is not private, and a Password, which you are advised to keep private. This provides a certain level of privacy because to access your account, you must provide the User Name, which is not private, and the password, which is, hopefully, known only to you. This is probably all you need to do for most of your accounts. However, adding



“Your Computer User Group of the Air”, Saturdays from 12:00 pm to 2:00 pm, with Nick Francesco, Dave Enright, and Steve Rae. Broadcasting on JAZZ 90.1 FM (WGMC) from Rochester, NY. Call 966-JAZZ (585-966-5299) or 800-790-0415,

www.jazz901.org

Sound Bytes is the longest running computer call-in show in the known universe.

We have stopped printing the Monitor newsletter.

Digital copies can be emailed or obtained from www.rcsi.org or my Pcloud storage at <https://tinyurl.com/tonydel-rcsi> (**this link works in PDF version only**). Also includes presentation slides, **past newsletters dating back to 1996** and articles too large for this newsletter.

Some Past Presentations:

- Autonomous Cars and Robots
- Open Source and Free Software
- Protecting Your Identity
- Tablets, the Programs and Uses
- Personal Finance Software
- Amazing Browser Tips
- Linux is Like Cars
- Drones and Their Many Uses
- Gifts and Gadgets for the Holidays
- Cut the Cord, Streaming Services
- 3D Printing, ENABLE project
- Features, Mac OS X & Windows
- The New Space Race, 2021
- Tech of South America
- Internet Security and Privacy
- AI and Digital Assistants
- Emerging Technologies
- My Favorite Android Apps

another level of privacy would be prudent to guarantee that you can access the account only for specific accounts. These accounts would be those that you would be very unhappy if someone else, or some other computer, could access and download or manipulate its contents. An account that contains very personal information or an account at a financial institution might be just this type of account.

Keep in mind the Internet employs a Client-Server Architecture. Using this architecture, your account is on a server computer, not your home computer, tablet, or phone. These (client) devices only provide the ability to connect to the server and manipulate the account contents. So if someone else knew your User Name, which is not protected, and knew or stole or guessed your Password, which is hopefully protected, they could access the account and manipulate the contents. If it's a financial account, they could probably manipulate its value. Unfortunately, no matter how diligent you are in protecting your password, sometimes passwords become known to the bad guys, such as "hackers." If hackers get into your financial account, they can possibly use it for fraudulent financial transfers or payments, or worse, a password alone may not be enough. Even many services that don't offer two-factor authentication have instituted various checks on the computer attempting to use a particular server account, like sending an email to the email of record indicating a new computer is trying to access the account and asking, "Is this you?". If you are concerned about this, google "What happens if someone accesses my account" and see the possibilities. Nowadays, many services employ two-factor authentication to help guarantee that only the account owner can access a particular account.

Two-factor authentication is not a new concept. Banks have used a second form of identification for years, using ATMs to secure access to safe deposit boxes. When a bank customer visits a local automated teller machine (ATM), one authentication factor is the physical ATM card that the customer slides into the machine ("what you have"). A second factor is the PIN the customer enters through the keypad ("what you know"). When you want to get into your safe deposit box, you have to provide the account number ("what you know") and a key ("what you have") before they will let you into the box.

Fortunately, many, if not all, financial institution servers provide the ability to use two-factor authentication. Two-factor authentication requires a second form of identification, which you typically have. Two-factor authentication increases the probability that the requester is who he says he is. The more factors used, the higher the likelihood that the requester is the account owner. Two-factor authentication is sometimes

APCUG, An International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups

<https://apcug2.org/>

Saturday Safaris

Exploring Technology in Depth
Saturdays:
12 pm – 2 pm EST

<https://apcug2.org/saturday-safaris/>

Tech for Seniors

<https://www.techforsenior.com>

hosted by Ron Brown and Hewie Poplock

Every Monday from 9-10 AM PT, (12-1 PM ET)

Broadcast with Zoom

The meeting ID is **526-610-331** (there is no password) and you'll be placed in a waiting room and then admitted.

#

APCUG Website Help

Windows & Android Tips:

By Judy Taylour

<https://apcug2.org/jerestips/>

Apple Tech Tips:

<https://apcug2.org/50-best-mac-tips-tricks-timesavers/>

Penguin Platform (Linux):

<https://apcug2.org/penguin-platform/>

Chromebook Tips And Tricks:

<https://apcug2.org/chromebook-tips-and-tricks/>

confused with "strong authentication," but these are different strategies. Soliciting multiple answers to challenge questions may be considered strong authentication. However, unless the process also requires "what the user has" or "what the user is," it would not be regarded as two-factor authentication.



What you know + What you have = Positive Authentication
In general, authentication can be done by "what you know," like a password or pin, or "what you have," like a badge or a smartphone, or "what you are," like a fingerprint or iris eye-print. (Some highly classified systems may require all three for authentication, which would involve possessing a password and a physical token used in conjunction with biometric data, such as a fingerprint, a voiceprint, or a retina scan.)

For most typical internet servers, the second form of identification is "what you have." The "what you have" can be a code sent to you by text, email, or phone; the account owner usually makes the choice. The code is typically a one-time-use series of six or so digits. Once the code is sent, you will have enough time to enter it into the screen that starts the authentication process. If email is selected, the server will send an email with the code to your email address of record on that server. Once you provide the correct code, you will be granted access to the account. If a voice phone call is selected, the call is made to the phone number on the record on that server. Once the phone call is answered, the digits are announced, and you can enter them on the screen that starts the process. If a text is selected, the text will be sent to the phone number of record on that server (ensure the phone number can receive texts). The code in the text can then be entered into the screen that starts the process.

Two-factor authentication adds an extra step to your login process, and depending on how the service has implemented it, it can be a minor inconvenience or a major annoyance. (And it also depends on your patience and willingness to spend the extra time to ensure higher security.) However, in the long run, using two-factor authentication improves the security of your private information, which is undoubtedly something we all want. So, take the time to set up two-factor authentication on at least all of your financial and very private accounts.

Reprinted from the newsletter of <https://sccccomputerclub.org/>, philsorr@yahoo.com.

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Planning Meeting

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

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.

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Technology and Gadgets

Author Nkazimulo Mdluli, June/2024

In today's dynamic world, technology stands as both a beacon of innovation and a driver of transformation. From the advent of the internet to the rise of artificial intelligence, technology has reshaped the way we live, work, and interact with one another. As we journey further into the digital age, it's crucial to explore the multifaceted landscape of technology, understanding its implications and harnessing its potential for the betterment of society.

The Accelerating Pace of Innovation

The pace of technological innovation is nothing short of remarkable. Breakthroughs that once seemed like science fiction are now part of our everyday reality. Whether it's the rapid advancement of machine learning algorithms, the proliferation of smart devices in our homes, or the exploration of blockchain technology, innovation knows no bounds.

One of the driving forces behind this relentless march forward is the concept of exponential growth. Technologies such as Moore's Law, which predicts that the number of transistors on a microchip will double approximately every two years, underscore the exponential nature of technological progress. This exponential growth fuels a cycle of innovation, where each breakthrough paves the way for the next, leading to increasingly rapid advancements.

Impact on Society and Culture

Technology has permeated every aspect of our lives, fundamentally reshaping the way we communicate, work, and engage with the world around us. Social media platforms have revolutionized how we connect with one another, enabling instant communication and global collaboration. However, they have also raised concerns about privacy, misinformation, and the impact of digital echo chambers on societal discourse.

Moreover, the rise of automation and artificial intelligence has ushered in a new era of work, characterized by increased efficiency and productivity but also by fears of job displacement and economic inequality. As machines take on tasks once performed by humans, the nature of work is evolving, prompting a reevaluation of education, training, and workforce development initiatives.

Ethical Considerations and Responsible Innovation

With great technological power comes great responsibility. As we harness the potential of emerging technologies, we must remain vigilant about the ethical implications of our creations. Issues such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and the ethical use of artificial intelligence demand careful consideration and proactive measures to mitigate potential harms.

Furthermore, the pursuit of innovation should be guided by principles of inclusivity and equity, ensuring that the benefits of technology are accessible to all members of society. Bridging the

Tidbits of probably useless information

David Bowie was a legendary songwriter and an iconic performer. And in the late 1990s, he was also an internet provider. He launched [BowieNet](#) in 1998 and the service remained available until the early 2000s. For \$19.95 a month, users would receive an email address (yourname@davidbowie.com), 5MB of online storage meant for a personal web page, exclusive audio and video of Bowie, access to chat rooms (where Bowie would supposedly [pop up on occasion](#)), and even multiplayer games. Sounds far cooler than AOL!

A **monosyllabic word** has just one syllable. And while plenty of monosyllabic words exist, the [longest ones all happen to start with the letter "s,"](#) according to Guinness World Records. At 10 letters, "scaunched" and "strengthened" are the longest monosyllabic words in the English language.

If you're not sure **what the temperature is** on hot summer day, just listen to the crickets. According to the [Library of Congress](#), the musical creatures adjust their signature sounds according to the temperature, which means that if you count how many times a cricket chirps in 15 seconds and then add 37, you'll get a number that is a pretty close approximation of the current temperature in degrees Fahrenheit.

digital divide, promoting digital literacy, and fostering diversity in the tech industry are essential steps toward creating a more equitable future.

Embracing the Opportunities Ahead

Despite the challenges and complexities inherent in the technological landscape, there are boundless opportunities for progress and positive change. From leveraging big data to address pressing social issues to harnessing the power of renewable energy to combat climate change, technology offers myriad solutions to some of humanity's most pressing challenges.

Moreover, as we continue to push the boundaries of what is possible, we must remain steadfast in our commitment to innovation with a purpose. By aligning technological advancement with the values of sustainability, inclusivity, and social responsibility, we can create a future where technology serves as a force for good, empowering individuals and communities to thrive in an increasingly interconnected world.

Conclusion

Technology has the power to shape the course of human history, transforming the way we live, work, and interact with one another. As we navigate the ever-evolving landscape of technology, it's essential to approach innovation with a critical eye and a commitment to ethical, responsible stewardship. By embracing the opportunities ahead and addressing the challenges that arise, we can harness the full potential of technology to create a brighter, more inclusive future for all.

Reprinted from <https://articlebiz.com/article/1052292066-technology-and-gadgets>.

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

Just Add Onions for Online Privacy?

By Bob Rankin
a Translator for the Technology Impaired
offering Free Tech Support

What do onions have to do with Internet privacy? I don't spend much time in dark corners of the Web, but every once in a while I fire up the privacy-focused Tor browser. I just installed the latest version and spent some time exploring the Tor network. It was an interesting and surprisingly non-geeky sojourn! Here's what you need to know about the Tor browser, and how onions can improve your online safety and privacy...work security.

Tor Browser Offers Enhanced Privacy and Safety

For the uninitiated: Tor (short for The Onion Router) is a decentralized, global network of anonymous proxy servers. Each node in Tor acts much like a VPN (virtual private network) server. It

WHY YOU SHOULD NEVER MAKE A MAJOR PURCHASE ON YOUR PHONE – Depending on your age, you probably have a gut reaction to this—the idea of buying a plane ticket on my phone makes me break out into a sweat, for example. But there are actually some very solid reasons why you should make larger purchases using your computer, and not your phone. [Why You Should Never Make a Major Purchase on Your Phone | Lifehacker](#)

THE NSA IS WARNING YOU TO RESTART YOUR PHONE EVERY WEEK: HERE'S WHY – the NSA is asking you to reboot your mobile devices once a week. iPhone and Android phones (and iPads/tablets) should be regularly rebooted to wipe any malicious code that may have made its way onto the system. This announcement shouldn't be a cause for concern: no new specific threat has been identified, but fully rebooting your devices by turning them off and back on is part of good digital hygiene, and one of the 13 mobile device best practices being promoted by the NSA to help protect you from phishing, malicious apps, and other attacks. [The NSA is Warning You to Restart your Phone Every Week: Here's Why \(howtogeek.com\)](#)

accepts your browser's requests for Web content, connects to the server(s) on which the objects reside, downloads copies and transmits them to your browser. The Tor node acts as your proxy; hence the term "proxy server." The benefit of Tor is that the remote server does not get any data about you, since you never connect to the remote server; a Tor node does that on your behalf.

Tor promises to protect against tracking, surveillance, and censorship while you browse the Web. The Tor Browser blocks cookies and deletes your browser history when you close it. For each web page you visit, your request is sent through several Tor relays scattered around the world. At each relay, your traffic is re-encrypted and assigned a new IP address. The website you visit can't tell where you are connecting from. And your Internet Service Provider (ISP) can't see what sites you visit. They'll only see that you're connecting to the Tor network, but not where you go from there.

So what about the onions? The onion metaphor is used because on each hop along the Tor network, your request is wrapped in another layer of encryption, calling to mind the layers of an onion. The onion routing protocol was invented in 1995, at the U.S. Naval Research Lab. Mathematicians David Goldschlag, Mike Reed, and Paul Syverson were looking for a way to create internet connections that don't reveal who is talking to whom. Their work was picked up in the early 2000s by MIT, received funding from the Electronic Frontier Foundation, and in 2006, the nonprofit Tor Project was founded to maintain Tor's development.

As you can imagine, a software tool conceived by math nerds and MIT grads was a bit geeky and difficult for the less-technically savvy people to use, so the Tor Browser was created to put a user-friendly interface on it. The Tor browser is based upon Firefox, and the Tor Project team is a coalition of part-time developers. You can [download the Tor browser here](#).



It is theoretically possible to backtrack a Tor network request to see where it actually originated. However, it would take a determined attacker with lots of time and computing resources to do so. To frustrate such espionage, the Tor developers are constantly improving the product to make it more secure. Tor, they say, is the strongest tool for privacy and freedom online. But on the [Tor Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#), the first question is "Am I totally anonymous if I use Tor?" And the answer is: "Generally it is impossible to have perfect anonymity, even with Tor." That is followed by a list of things

Virtual Tours

Put on your hiking boots:

Check Out The Sandy Terrain Dotted With Looming Pyramids As You Virtually Walk To The **Pyramids Of Giza**, Egypt.

<https://youtu.be/EaQr917lRgI>

Get A Hearty Dose Of Green In **The Tunnel of Love**, Ukraine.

<https://youtu.be/oWy9QtzKeIY>

Pass The Brilliant Sapphire Lakes Through The Scandinavian Peninsula With **The Totthummeln Hike** In Sweden.

<https://youtu.be/aFbt7yifyos>

Observe The Natural Beauty Of Vancouver Island With A Hike To **Juan de Fuca** In Canada.

<https://youtu.be/lPpb2y15GYI>

Experience The Turquoise Blue Waters Of Moraine Lake In **Banff National Park**, Banff, Canada. <https://youtu.be/--owKzMyfRA>

View The Intricately Carved Towers And Arches Of Stone At The **Bryce Canyon National Park**, Utah.

<https://youtu.be/yWbR6N5tYaQ>

Witness USA's Complete Wilderness With Views Of The Dense Forests, Mountains, And The Ocean All Together On **Kodiak Island** In Alaska.

<https://youtu.be/e6YJs3T82RU>

Explore France's Countryside With A Hike From **Loire Valley To The Alps**.

https://youtu.be/20Y_5h9D_ZY?list=PL9Sixu5K6avvyIrSgAFzbTN9GC6BF44t

you should do (or NOT do) to improve your anonymity while using Tor. **I strongly recommend you read through that list before merrily wandering off into Tor land.**

Why Use Tor?

There are many good reasons to use Tor, but some of them are bad. Tor provides cover for activists, journalists, authors, and others whom a repressive government might want to track down or merely associate with certain "forbidden" content on the Web. On the other hand, Tor also covers the tracks of illegal arms and drug dealers, child traffickers, copyright violators, mobsters, miscreants, and malefactors.

But that's not us, right? We are going about lawful business using a network that runs through parts of the world where privacy is banned, or where additional layers of privacy are desired.

I found installation of the Tor Browser to be quite straightforward. If you've ever downloaded software via the Web, you'll find it familiar. In less than 5 clicks, I was up and running with Tor. On the downside, websites I visited loaded noticeably slower than usual, especially those with many images. One other glitch was that some pages loaded in languages other than English, because the proxy that was used to connect me was located outside the USA.

Pirates, Rabbit Holes, and Latency

Thinking of "sketchy sites to check out with Tor" led me first to The Pirate Bay. (In case you're not familiar, TPB is described by [Wikipedia](#) as "an online index of digital entertainment media and software." That's a polite way of saying that it's a search engine for pirated movies and music.) I got an "unable to connect" error. Solution: I tried again later, and it worked. If you have trouble connecting to a website, or need help with Tor, see the [Tor Project's FAQ page](#).

Elsewhere on the Internet, Tor mostly behaves well, but slowly. On my gigabit connection, Fast.com reported Tor's download speed as between 12 and 27 Mbps with a 360 ms latency. The same test a moment later but **using Chrome without Tor** yielded 820 Mbps with 9 ms latency. (Latency is the time delay between a request and the response on a network.) In my testing, some sites that work just fine in Chrome, Edge or Firefox failed to load, or loaded partially with the Tor browser. In most cases, reloading solved the problem.

Pages will load significantly more slowly via Tor than they do over the regular Internet. I did get a bit impatient waiting for the last bits of a page to load, perhaps as long as 45 seconds after the first bit arrived. But YouTube audio and video files play just fine on Tor; there is no choppiness, at least with 480p resolution. Download speed is not the problem; that 360 ms latency is. Once a video file starts streaming it does so continuously at an adequate speed. But a web page that fetches content from 15 different sources takes $0.3 \times 15 = 5$ seconds

Linux Lite 7.0

Jack Wallen, ZDNET

If you want to breathe life back into a slow or aging computer, Linux Lite 7.0 is a lightweight, efficient distribution with solid performance.

Out of the box, Linux Lite ships with Chrome, LibreOffice (including Base, to create databases), GIMP, Photo Manager, Deja Dup Backups, VLC media player, a USB image writer, an onscreen keyboard, Timeshift (for restore points), and more. In other words, Linux Lite isn't light on applications. You could install this distribution and go about your work without the need to install much more. Should you need to install anything else, there's the Synaptic Package Manager.

The one thing I did find missing from Linux Lite was a universal package manager, such as Snap or Flatpak. No problem. From within Synaptic, I was able to quickly search for, and install, both.

[Linux Lite 7.0](#) is available to download and install for free from the official site. This lightweight Linux distribution comes with everything you need and performs like an absolute champ. The default desktop is a bit bland, but it's fairly easy to customize.

Read the review at <https://www.zdnet.com/article/his-lightweight-linux-distro-is-the-best-and-easiest-way-to-revive-your-old-computer-heres-how/>.

longer to load due to the high latency of each fetching. The delay might be reduced if Tor downloaded pages via multiple parallel connections, but that does not seem to be the case in my experience.

Extra Onions, Hold the Liver

Along those lines, there are multiple levels of security available. With the default "Standard" level, all Tor browser features are enabled. The "Safer" level disables "certain features that are often dangerous", such as Javascript on non-HTTPS sites, certain fonts, and math symbols. Audio and video that would normally autostart will be forced into click-to-play mode. The "Safest" mode is recommended only for static sites and basic Web services; Javascript is completely disabled. When I tried to test my speed on Fast.com in Safest mode, it failed and said I was not connected to the Internet, or returned a speed of zero.

It's also worth noting that the Tor developers recommend against installing Firefox add-ons with Tor Browser, because some add-ons can bypass proxy settings and break anonymity. Torrent (file-sharing) applications are also a possible source of privacy leaks on the Tor network. And of course, Tor cannot protect your privacy on a website that requires a sign-in, or if you explicitly provide personally identifying information on a Web form. By signing in, you have identified yourself to that website. And as I mentioned above, there are some other important do's and don'ts on the [Tor Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\) page](#).

So for browsing the mainstream Internet, the Firefox-based Tor browser is easy to use and provides considerable anonymity, meaning it would be extraordinarily expensive to figure out who is behind Tor's proxies. I don't live in or visit China, Russia, or North Korea, have no plans to join a covert organization, and a life of crime does not appeal to me. But if anything should change it's great to know that Tor is available to cover my tracks, and that it works so well.

END OF ARTICLE

Getting Ready for Winter Photography!

By Lynda Buske

Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada

While winter photography might take a bit more prep time regarding what to wear, it is well worth the effort to take advantage of a completely different environment from summer. I thoroughly enjoy taking photos during (if safe) and after a snow/ice storm and rivers, just as they are freezing or breaking apart.

There are some advantages to winter shooting, especially in the Ottawa area. We get many crisp sunny days with pristine snow and little slush. The sun is low throughout the day, so you don't have to avoid noon-hour photography. If you do want to catch the sunrise, it is

Scam Alert

The New Face of Cyber Threats —AI, Deepfakes, and Scams

by Nyrmah J. Reina

AI has taken the world by storm. It's hard to browse on the internet without stumbling on AI-generated content—or content discussing the uses and misuses of AI. No matter where you stand on this debate, the fact is cybercriminals have taken to the technology, exploiting it to improve their scams.

Scams and [malvertising](#) are leading the charge, making up over 87% of threats on desktops and an eye-popping 93% on mobile devices. Most of these threats come from web activity, which means that just by browsing the internet, you could be at risk.

What's especially worrying is the rise of AI-generated scams. Cybercriminals are now using AI to create incredibly convincing fake videos and voice calls, making it harder than ever to tell what's real and what's not. These new tactics are making the online world a riskier place overall.

One of the most shocking developments this quarter is the CryptoCore scam, which has taken cybercrime to a whole new level. This scam uses AI to create [fake videos](#) that look and sound like real celebrities, tricking people into thinking they're part of a legitimate cryptocurrency giveaway.

Whew, read more at <https://us.norton.com/blog/emerging-threats/threat-report-q2-2024>.

later than in the summer months (no mosquitos!), and the sunset might well be before dinner!

You may want to consider additional items for your kit to make winter photography easier. For instance, I use gloves that have fabric only halfway up my fingers for easy button pushing, but they also have a Velcro flap to go over all the fingers to keep them warm when I don't need the dexterity.

If you are standing around waiting for the sunrise or long exposures, your feet can get cold, so I recommend heavy socks with a high wool content. I save them for photography as wool does not wear as well as synthetic fibers, and at around \$20-\$30 a pair, I don't want to buy them often. Any winter photographer would welcome these as a Christmas gift!

In terms of camera gear, I recommend a lens hood to prevent flares and to keep falling snowflakes off your lens. You may wish to get special feet for your tripod to better grip on ice and snow. Also, a polarizing filter can help with the intense glare/reflection of the sun on white snow.

When shooting a mostly snowy scene, your camera will assume it is



an overly bright object and may try to underexpose it. If your camera has a *Snow scene* mode, use that setting by all means (don't forget to take it off afterward). I prefer to ensure the camera is not on *Auto* and then choose P, A, Tv/S, or M. I can slightly overexpose my image with the EV adjust in any of these shooting modes. It usually is a button with two triangles on the back of the camera. Set the scale to +1 over the baseline of zero.

If you are shooting a scene with many trees or other objects along with the snow, your camera may meter on those, and you will find your snow over-exposed. In this instance, set your EV adjustment to -1. If it appears a bit too dark when viewing on your computer, you can lighten it with photo editing software (<https://opcug.ca/Photography/UsingMasksInPhotoEditingSoftware.pdf>).

**** Jokes & Quotes Stolen
from Everywhere ****

I asked ChatGPT to make up 10 jokes about cows:

Sure! Here are 10 cow-themed jokes for you:

1. **Why did the cow go to space?**
To see the moooon!
2. **What do you call a sleeping cow?**
A bulldozer.
3. **Why don't cows make good secret agents?**
Because they always moo under pressure!
4. **What do you call a cow with no legs?**
Ground beef.
5. **Why did the cow become an astronaut?**
Because it wanted to visit the Milky Way!
6. **How does a cow stay in shape?**
By doing moo-tons of exercise!
7. **Why did the cow join a gym?**
To get a little more calf-toned.
8. **What's a cow's favorite party game?**
Moo-sical chairs!
9. **What do you get when you cross a cow with a trampoline?**
A milkshake!
10. **Why did the cow wear a bell?**
Because its horn didn't work!

I hope those made you chuckle!



When you are done for the day, you may have to modify your summertime routine to protect your camera. Let your camera come to room temperature in the bag before unloading images, recharging the battery, cleaning the lens, etc. This will prevent condensation from forming and entering the interior of your camera.

Reprinted from (<https://opcug.ca>), Editor: brigitte@opcug.ca

******* 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.

ChatGPT Told 2M People to Get Their Election News Elsewhere — and rejected 250K deepfakes

[Devin Coldewey](#), November 8, 2024

Now that the election is over, the dissection can begin. As this is the first election in which AI chatbots played a significant part of voters' information diets, even approximate numbers are interesting to think about. For instance, OpenAI has stated that it told around 2 million users of ChatGPT to go look somewhere else.

It didn't just give them a cold shoulder, but recommended some trusted news sources like Reuters and the Associated Press. ChatGPT gave this type of "I'm just an AI, go read the actual news" response over 2 million times on Election Day and the day after, OpenAI explained in [an update to a blog post](#) on its elections approach.

In the month leading up to election, ChatGPT sent around a million people to CanIVote.org when they asked questions specific to voting. And interestingly, it also rejected some 250,000 requests to generate images of the candidates over the same period.

Odds and Ends

With over 200 million weekly active users, [ChatGPT](#) is by far the biggest AI assistant in the world. Yet, ever since ChatGPT shocked the world in November 2022, there's been an explosion in apps and software similar to the [chatbot](#).

While ChatGPT can respond to user questions with relevant and verbose outputs, it doesn't "think" as a human being does. More specifically, it doesn't understand the outputs it generates. It just predicts the most likely natural language response to your input based on its training data.

As a result, it's important to be aware that ChatGPT and other substitute tools that use LLMs are prone to [hallucinating](#) (inventing facts) and generating [misinformation](#).

Now, in the golden era of [generative AI](#) development, a number of other [natural language processing-driven large language models](#) (LLMs) have come to the fore, with companies including [Anthropic](#), [Google](#), [Microsoft](#), [X](#), and [Meta](#) all releasing similar apps to ChatGPT.

Top competitors of ChatGPT include Anthropic's Claude, Meta's Llama, Microsoft Copilot, and Grok.

Others include, Jasper AI, Gemini, Midjourney, and Stable Diffusion.

Read more at <https://www.techopedia.com/who-are-the-competitors-of-chatgpt>.

For comparison, Perplexity, the AI search engine, made a major push to [promote its own election information](#) hub, resulting in some 4 million page views, the company claimed ([per Bloomberg](#)).

While OpenAI's play was the safe one, and [Perplexity may have pulled off a risky bet](#), the AI industry in general is probably ecstatic about the fact that there was no serious gaffe by any of the big brands ([except xAI, of course](#)) and that users considered these chatbots and AI-powered platforms valuable as Election Day resources.

Found on <https://techcrunch.com/2024/11/08/chatgpt-told-2m-people-to-get-their-election-news-elsewhere-and-rejected-250k-deepfakes/>.

Memories are not Only in the Brain, New Research Finds

New York University, Nov 7, 2024

It's common knowledge that our brains -- and, specifically, our brain cells -- store memories. But a team of scientists has discovered that cells from other parts of the body also perform a memory function, opening new pathways for understanding how memory works and creating the potential to enhance learning and to treat memory-related afflictions.

"Learning and memory are generally associated with brains and brain cells alone, but our study shows that other cells in the body can learn and form memories, too," explains New York University's Nikolay V. Kukushkin, the lead author of the study, which appears in the journal *Nature Communications*.

In the *Nature Communications* research, the scientists replicated learning over time by studying two types of non-brain human cells in a laboratory (one from nerve tissue and one from kidney tissue) and exposing them to different patterns of chemical signals -- just like brain cells are exposed to patterns of neurotransmitters when we learn new information. In response, the non-brain cells turned on a "memory gene" -- the same gene that brain cells turn on when they detect a pattern in the information and restructure their connections in order to form memories.

"This discovery opens new doors for understanding how memory works and could lead to better ways to enhance learning and treat memory problems," observes Kukushkin. "At the same time, it suggests that in the future, we will need to treat our body more like the brain -- for example, consider what our pancreas remembers about the pattern of our past meals to maintain healthy levels of blood glucose or consider what a cancer cell remembers about the pattern of chemotherapy."

Read the whole article on <https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2024/11/241107193111.htm>.

CLUB and REGIONAL NEWS

RIT Professor Proposes New Way to Make Artificial Intelligence Smarter and Greener

by [Scott Bureau](#), November 8, 2024

RIT Assistant Professor Alexander Ororbia is making artificial brains more like real brains. He published a research article on a more energy efficient and faster artificial intelligence network in Science Advances.

The research article, "[Contrastive signal-dependent plasticity: Self-supervised learning in spiking neural circuits](#)," introduces an AI network architecture that processes information through spikes, much like the electrical signals that brain cells use. This new learning method allows AI to do self-supervised learning, which is faster and more adaptable.

Ororbia's new method addresses inherent problems with back propagation. It lets the network learn without constant supervised feedback. The network improves its ability to classify and understand patterns by comparing fake data with real data.

The method also works in parallel, meaning different parts of the network can learn at the same time without waiting for each other. Studies have shown that spiking neural networks can be several orders of magnitude more power efficient than modern-day deep neural networks.

Delve deeper at <https://www.rit.edu/news/rit-professor-proposes-new-way-make-artificial-intelligence-smarter-and-greener>.

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Where passion for progress is all you can see.
Together they strive, and together they grow,
In the digital age, they continue to sow.

Composed by ChatGPT
11/6/24

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 Schmidtman, unixgeek@faultline.com

Our Meeting Place
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.

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