Useful Bits & Pieces
August 2014
Lorrin R. Garson

Thank you very much to Lorrin for his many interesting and informative articles. This is his last "Bits & Pieces" contribution, but from time to time in future months, we can look forward to the articles he will submit. Later this year Lorrin and his wife will be replacing their Windows based machines with Apple Macs - so we can all expect to be informed about their new "adventures."

Most and Least Secure Web Sites:

We all frequently access numerous online (Web) sites many of which are places where we buy goods and services. Which have good and poor security? Do you care? Dashlane, a company that provides password security software (see https://www.dashlane.com/), did a study early this year of the top 100 e-commerce sites in the U.S. They examined 24 different password criteria and awarded scores from -100 to 100 for each site. Of the 100 companies, which are the best and worst? See the 10 top and 10 bottom scores below.

Top 10			Bottom 10	
E-retailer	**Score**		**E-retailer**	**Score**
Apple	100		MLB	-75
Newegg	65		Karmaloop	-70
Microsoft	65		Dick's Sporting Goods	-65
Chegg	65		Toys R Us	-60
Target	60		Aeropostale	-60
Williams-Sonoma	55		J. Crew	-55
CDW	50		Vitacost	-50
Amway	45		Nutrisystem	-50
Musician's Friend	45		American Girl	-50
Nike	45		1-800-Flowers.com	-46

Here are a few key findings from this study

>   55% still accept notoriously weak pass-
>   words such as "123456" or "password"

>   51% make no attempt to block entry after
>   10 incorrect password entries (including
>   Amazon, Dell, Best Buy, Macy's and
>   Williams-Sonoma)

>   64% have highly questionable password
>   practices (receiving a negative total
>   score in the roundup)

>   61% do not provide any advice on how to
>   create a strong password during signup

>   93% do not provide an on-screen password
>   strength assessment

>   Only 10% scored above the threshold for
>   good password policies (i.e. 45 points or
>   more in the roundup)

>   8 sites, including Toys "R" Us, J.Crew and
>   1-800-Flowers.com, send passwords in
>   plain text via email

Apple received the highest rating and was the only retailer to receive a perfect score, followed by Newegg, Microsoft, Chegg (tied for 3ed), and Target rounded out the top 4. MLB.com, Karmaloop and Dick's Sporting Goods received the three lowest scores. Amazon, Walmart, Victoria's Secret and Toys "R" Us were also among the lowest ranked sites as they all received scores of -35 or below. It's ironic that Target, who experienced a notorious security breach of millions of customers' data ranked the 5th highest (see http://goo.gl/CDICwO)! This does bring the validity of this study into question—even high rated sites can be hacked. See http://goo.gl/FFuAhV for the full report.

China Bans Government Purchase of Windows 8:
In May, China's Central Government Procurement Center demanded that Windows 8 be excluded from the bidding process on computer purchases. It's unclear why the ban was put in place. According to *PC World* (see http://goo.gl/hjeMRh), "We [Microsoft] have been and will con-

tinue to provide Windows 7 to government customers," the company said in an email. "At the same time we are working on the Window 8 evaluation with relevant government agencies." Also see http://goo.gl/10ddFN, http://goo.gl/2HdgXr and http://goo.gl/MBMkpk

Debug Diagnostic Tool:
Is your Windows computer behaving weird? Does it have performance issues? Microsoft has a tool called "Debug Diagnostic Tool v2.0" that may help sort out the problem; see http://goo.gl/fdawMs. To quote from this Web site, "The Debug Diagnostic Tool (DebugDiag) is designed to assist in troubleshooting issues such as hangs, slow performance, memory leaks or fragmentation, and crashes in any user-mode process. The tool includes built-in analysis rules focused on Internet Information Services (IIS) applications, Web data access components, COM+, SharePoint and related Microsoft technologies."

Secure Erase:
When you "delete" a file or folder to the Recycle Bin you are only moving the object to the Recycle Bin. Even when you remove items from the Recycle Bin they are not truly deleted.   Only the record of the file and its location in the disk catalog are erased. The items persist and can frequently be recovered. Eventually deleted files and folders are over-written when new items are saved, but this may take a long time. Also bear in mind forensic grade tools can recover data from deleted and over-written files and such tools are not only in the hands of legitimate authorities. How can you be sure things you erase are truly erased? There are many tools available and here are four examples:

Eraser from http://eraser.heidi.ie/. Eraser deletes files by overwriting the data several times in carefully selected patterns. Eraser is free, open source, and runs on Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8.

O&O SafeErase 7 from http://goo.gl/ay5IoQ. This application offers six methods of deletion including the Gutmann method which overwrites objects 35 times using defined rules with fixed and random values. The software is priced at $29.95 for one PC and $49.95 for three PCs. It runs on Windows XP, Vista, 7, 8 and 8.1.

ProtectStar Data Shredder from http://goo.gl/KmUfZx.   ProtectStar offers 16 methods of secure erasure. Priced at $19.90, $29.90 and $59.00. This utility runs on Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8 (32 and 64-bit).

Secure-Eraser from http://www.secure-eraser.com/. Secure-Eraser offers file and folder deletion, free space deletion, registry cleaning and other functions. The software is free for personal use and runs on Windows XP, Vista, 7 and 8 (32 and 64-bit versions).

Be aware that secure deletion can take considerable time, especially for large files or a large number of files. Methods involving multiple write-overs can be very slow.

Which is the Best Antivirus Software?

Generally every year many computer magazines rank antivirus software. One of the more complete evaluations is done by *MaximumPC*. This year, their results were published in the July issue (pp. 42-55). The evaluation includes consideration of (a) performance impact and scan times, (b) level of annoyance in use, (c) features and implementation, (d) price and value, and (e) malware detection. The table below summarizes their findings.

None of these offerings are dogs. The three companies offering free products also offer paid versions with more features. If you are currently satisfied with your antivirus software you may not feel compelled to replace it with a higher ranked product. Is $70-$80/year for three PCs worth the expense over a free product that is rated quite high? That is a personal decision dependent on your comfort level and pocket book. Antivirus software,

[1] Rank of 9+ is the highest ranked and 6 the lowest.

Product	Rank[1]	Reference	Price
Bitdefender Internet Security	9+	http://goo.gl/R041Zb	$70/year; 3 PCs
Norton Internet Security	9+	http://us.norton.com/internet-security/	$80/year; 3 PCs
eset Smart Security	9	http://www.eset.com/us/home/products/smart-security/	$80/year; 3 PCs
Webroot Security Anywhere Internet Security Plus	9	http://www.webroot.com/us/en/home/products/isp	$60/year; 3 PCs
Kaspersky Internet Security 2014	8	http://goo.gl/pZcx7Y	$80/year; 3 PCs
McAfee Internet Security 2014	8	http://home.mcafee.com/store/internet-security	$80/year; 3 PCs
Avira Free Antivirus	8	http://www.avira.com/en/index	Free
Avast Free Antivirus	8	http://www.avast.com/en-us/index	Free
Panda Internet Security 2014	7	http://www.pandasecurity.com/newhome/	$70/year; 3 PCs
AVG Antivirus Free 2014	6	http://free.avg.com/us-en/free-antivirus-download	Free

Linux and Open Source News

by Geof Goodrum
Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
linux(at)patacs.org

Featured Open Source Software of the Month: August 2014

The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the PATACS Fairfax meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

GNU Parallel – v20140622. http://www.gnu.org/software/parallel/. Free GNU General Public License Perl script by Ole Tange and installation packages for Mac OSX and GNU/Linux distributions. GNU parallel is a shell tool for executing jobs in parallel locally or using remote computers. A job is typically a single command or a small script that has to be run for each of the lines in the input. The typical input is a list of files, a list of hosts, a list of users, a list of URLs, or a list of tables. If you use xargs today you will find GNU parallel very easy to use, as GNU parallel is written to have the same options as xargs. If you write loops in shell, you will find GNU parallel may be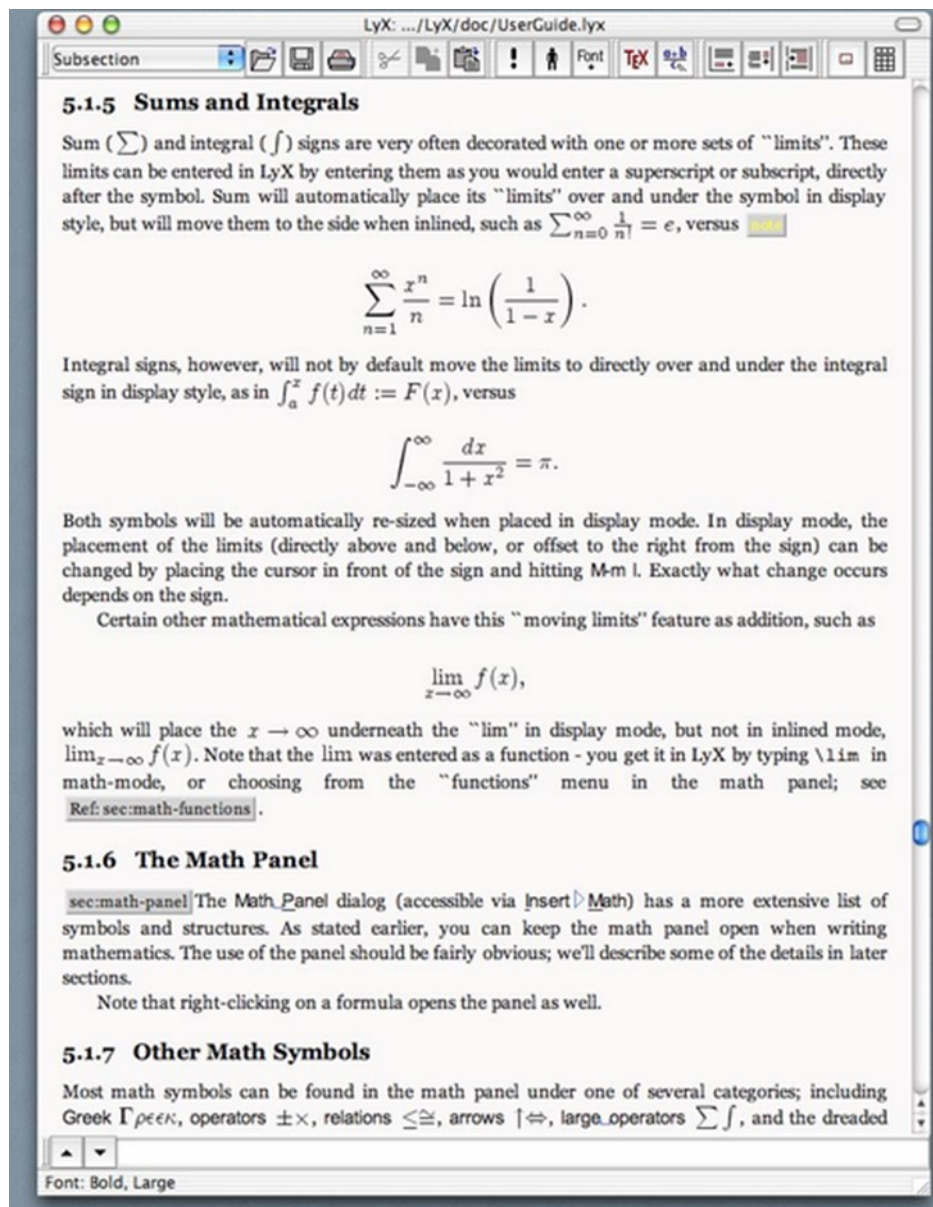 able to replace most of the loops and make them run faster by running several jobs in parallel. GNU parallel makes sure output from the commands is the same output as you would get had you run the commands sequentially. This makes it possible to use output from GNU parallel as input for other programs.

OpenRA – v20140608. http://openra.res0l.net/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft Windows, Mac OSX, and GNU/Linux distributions (Debian/Ubuntu, Fedora/OpenSuSE, ArchOS) by The OpenRA Developers. OpenRA is a Libre/Free Real Time Strategy war game project that recreates the classic Command & Conquer titles by Electronic Arts, including recreations of C&C (Tiberian Dawn), C&C: Red Alert, and Dune 2000. These are not intended to be perfect copies, but instead combine the classic gameplay of the originals with modern improvements such as unit veterancy and the fog of war. The original game is not required to play OpenRA. OpenRA's primary focus is cross-platform multiplayer between Windows, OS X, and Linux; however, it includes a number of single-player missions, and also supports skirmish games against AI bots.

Kernel Source – v3.15.1. http://www.kernel.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

LyX – v2.0.8.1. http://www.lyx.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft Windows, Mac OSX, and GNU/Linux distributions (ArchOS, Fedora, OpenSuSE) by LyX contributors. LyX is a document processor that encourages an approach to writing based on the *structure* of your documents and not simply their appearance. LyX combines the power and flexibility of the TeX/LaTeX document layout language with the ease of use of a graphical interface. This results in world-class support for creation of mathematical content (via a fully integrated equation editor) and structured documents like academic articles, theses, and books. In addition, staples of scientific authoring such as reference list and index creation come standard. But you can also use LyX to create a letter or a novel or a theater play or film script. A broad array of ready, well-designed document layouts are built in. LyX is for people who want their writing to look great, right out of the box. No more endless tinkering with formatting details, "finger painting" font attributes or futzing around with page boundaries. LyX can import and export to many formats (LaTeX, PDF, Postscript, DVI, ASCII, HTML, OpenDocument, RTF, MS Word, and others) thanks to configurable converters.

Linux Magazines

By Cal Esneault, Former President and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGS, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA

November 2013 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News

www.clickers.org

ccnewsletter (at)cox.net

Since Linux is not as commonly used as some other computer operating systems, users frequently resort to online sources for instructional information. Although easy to find, typical research often ends with information having a question and answer format focusing on isolated issues. A magazine format can give a broader view without being long or technically complicated. Two suggestions for free, online magazines for users are PCLinuxOS Magazine (http://pclosmag.com/index.html) and Full Circle Magazine (http://fullcirclemagazine.org/).

PCLinuxOS is a PC operating system with a KDE 4 desktop environment that was started by Bill Reynolds ("Texstar") in Houston, TX. It has an open-source "community" operation that publishes its own magazine. There is a lot of emphasis for new users transitioning from other operating systems. Many technical articles stick to a moderate length, and there is a lot of "fun" content (such as food recipes, screen shots of customized desktops, reader feedback, etc.).

Below are a few of the article topics covered in the last three issues of the PCLinuxOS maga-

- Xfce User Tips and Tweaks (Parts 1, 2, & 3)
- Password Security Revisited
- OpenVPN: Other VPN Services
- LibreOffice Tips & Tricks (Parts 1, 2, & 3)
- Inkscape: Holiday Tree; Torn Paper Effect
- Undo Gmail's Latest "Enhancements"

- Backup Your Gmail Account With getmail
- GIMP Tutorial: Masks Explained
- Game Zone: Sacred Citadel
- Linux vs. Windows
- Testimonials from veteran PCLinuxOS users
- Gramps genealogy program
- Screenshot Showcase

Full Circle Magazine covers Ubuntu and its derivatives (Xubuntu, Lubuntu, Edubuntu, etc.), but it is not associated with Canonical Ltd, the commercial sponsors of Ubuntu. It has many recurring feature topics (news, ask the new guy, software reviews, command line skills, etc.) and usually has more than 50 pages of content. For the most part, it relies on volunteer writers. There is also an associated podcast available. Note: the title Full Circle is in reference to the Ubuntu logo.

This magazine also carries well detailed multi-part articles about a few of the more popular software titles. Examples include LibreOffice, Inkscape, Blender, Python, and GIMP. There are sometimes special editions of concentrated compilations of these articles.

Examples of special issues are three special issues for LibreOffice, two special issues for Inkscape, and six special issues for Python (see the September 2013 main magazine issue for details). Since most of the software with multi-article coverage is cross-platform and can run on most operating systems (Linux, Mac OS, Windows OS), these articles should be of interest to almost any computer user.

Both magazines are published monthly. PCLinux-OS Magazine started in September of 2006 and is now at issue 80. Full Circle Magazine started in May of 2007 and is now at issue 77. Both can keep you up to date on news, software, and

hardware related to Linux. In addition, you can get any of the past issues in PDF format from their archives without cost. These archives provide a huge resource of detailed information written in a style friendly to the average user.

These magazines are excellent examples of the way the open-source community works to share the knowledge about free computer software. Even if you do not currently use a Linux OS, browsing these magazines will give you a quick view of what open source software is all about.

A Good Password Manager May Enhance Your Computing Security

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:
http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-web-form-filler-password-manager.htm
http://www.infoworld.com/d/security/review-the-best-password-managers-pcs-macs-and-mobile-devices-244519
https://lastpass.com
http://keepass.com
https://www.passwordbox.com

With the spread of password stealing malware, password stealing interceptors on jeopardized websites, key logging trojans, and hackers using brute force to determine our online passwords, we all need to practice good password security. Over the years, I have been promoting password security in this column, yet I still find that many local people are still using simple passwords that are easy to guess. What may be even worse is that many of those same people who use simple passwords also use the same simple passwords on multiple websites, or use the same simple password on all websites! This violation of common sense has resulted in countless victims who have had bank accounts emptied, credit cards abused, spam emails apparently sent from our email accounts, problems with eBay and other online sellers, and a variety of other distressing events all because the one password used for all has been compromised when the

user of a single password for everything has that sole password compromised, then all of their online transactions become vulnerable, often resulting in a massive and expensive case of complex identity theft.

I have been preaching in this column for many years that we all need to utilize a complex and unique password for each website or other online account that we utilize; in this way if one password is compromised (a more likely occurrence now than in the past), that compromise will only impact that single web service, and not all of the other websites that we visit. For those skeptics reading this column, multiple evaluations of the passwords stolen in many of the major online data thefts and later published on hacker websites, still indicate that much of the public still have not learned this painful lesson. Earlier this year, the security and password management company Splashdata (splashdata.com/press/worstpasswords2013.htm) published the results of an analysis of millions of compromised passwords, including the 48 million passwords stolen during the October, 2013 data breach at Adobe, which were subsequently posted online by the cyber crooks. A disproportionally large number of users are still using simple, easy to guess passwords that make their online activities very vulnerable to identity theft. According to Splashdata, the top 10 of the most widely used passwords were (in order of most common and widely used): 123456, password, 12345678, qwerty, abc123, 123456789, 111111, 1234567, iloveyou, and adobe123. The list of most commonly used passwords published by Splashdata was actually much longer, a fact not lost on hackers and identity thieves. Since usernames and email addresses are very easy to find or deduce, someone wanting illicit access to an online bank account or email account only has to use a purloined username or email address and then sequentially try the most common passwords, which will then possibly give the hacker full access to those valuable accounts. If you are victimized in this manner, your bank balance is now theirs, not yours.

with specific tools.

So, let's review at a high level how you can get a little bit of confidence that what you have will be there when you need it.

Fun and Knowledge with YouTube

By Jim Cerny, 2nd Vice President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

February 2014 issue, PC Monitor

www.spcug.org

jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

Whether you have a tablet, smart phone, or any kind of computer, YouTube is one application that can, all by itself, really justify the purchase of your device. YouTube can be found on the internet at youtube.com (that's easy to remember, right?) or you can download the free YouTube application for any device. Since Google has acquired YouTube, it can also be found on the Google web site (it used to be Google videos).

YouTube is your access to millions of videos made by almost anyone who wants to make them available to you for free. Many of the videos are fantastic and some are just a waste of time. But YOU decide. You search for the videos you want to see simply by entering your search criteria (regular English words) in the search box. Do you have a favorite entertainer? Just enter their name and you will have access to hundreds of their videos. How about a home improvement project? Just enter what it is you want to do and see a video of how to do it. Almost anything you can think of, there is probably a video on that subject on YouTube.

Here are just a few examples of fun things to see and explore on YouTube: Famous people, science experiments, college lectures, cartoons, news, products, companies, cooking, travel, painting, and, well just about everything.

The only thing it seems that YouTube does not give you is fairly recent free movies and TV shows. If you searched for a movie or TV show by its title, YouTube will probably only show you the "trailers" for free. However, YouTube does offer some movies and TV shows for a price. But the real fun for me is seeing all that is available to you at no cost whatsoever – and you do not have to join anything.

You could think of YouTube as the ultimate "window to the world" and all that is in it by just using your computer or device. Why read a printed article or view pictures? YouTube can SHOW you what other sources only TELL you. Click on the right-pointing arrow to play the video. You can click on any point on the progress bar to go to that point in the video. And you can click on pause (usually the double vertical line symbol), just like you used to do with the old video VHS tape players. After clicking on "pause" you can go back to the list of videos just like you do with Google. Some videos may have a short advertisement the plays before the real video starts.

There is really no limit to what YouTube has to offer. I have yet to search for something that did not have some kind of video to watch on that subject. So do not limit your imagination either. Here are just a few things I have found – each of which can provide hours and hours of videos:

- Enter your favorite game and learn how to play the game or sport better.

- Enter "How to…" and learn a new skill or improve the skills you have.

- Tour your favorite city, park, or attraction.

- Ride all the roller coasters you want, at any park, and never have to wait in line or get dizzy.

- Attend a class lecture at a famous university.

- View long-forgotten videos of famous people and entertainers.

- View videos of how to use your digital camera or tablet or any device or contraption.

- See dangerous stunts, magic tricks, and stupid jokes.

- Discover new things about your favorite hobby.

So don't hold back – be adventurous and explore the world! Your brain will thank you for it.

3 Better Ways to Store Your Files than On the Desktop

By Joel Lee, MakeUseOfCom.com,

http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-better-ways-store-files-desktop/

http://bit.ly/1iiLU2u

Did you know that storing files directly on your desktop can harm your productivity? I used to be one of "those" people who downloaded files straight to the desktop. If you can identify with that, then I have good news for you: you can do better. Desktop storage is simple, sure, but it comes with hidden drawbacks you may not know about.

Kick the bad habit with these alternative file storage methods. They may not be as convenient but I promise that you'll learn to love them in the long run. The urge to save files to the desktop is understandable. It provides immediate access with a single click, which means that it's tempting to turn the desktop into a de facto headquarters for storage. But unless you are strict with maintenance, you'll eventually succumb to these issues:

- **No file protection.** As noted by PC World, certain directories are not affected by System Restore, the most recognizable location being My Documents. Files on the desktop are affected by System Restore, which can result in unexpected file disappearances.

- **No file backups.** Many file backup programs ignore desktop files by default. Most programs worth their salt will allow you to change the settings and include the desktop if necessary,

Clutter, clutter, clutter. The story is always the same. You begin your desktop collection with a few documents. Over time, the collection grows to include images, music, programs, zip files, and more documents. Suddenly, finding the right document takes more time than actually opening it.


Separate Drive Partitions

One bit of computer wisdom that you should learn is this: "Never save data on the same partition as your operating system." In Windows, the location of the desktop on the file system does reside on the same partition as the operating system itself.
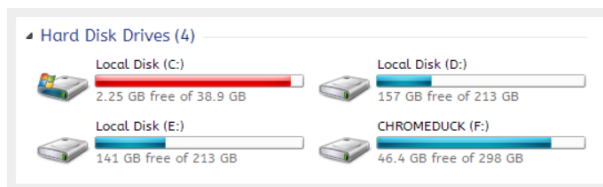
Why is this important advice? Because you want to avoid putting all of your eggs in the same basket. Let's say that you happen to contract a mild virus or malware that attacks your operating system. It might wipe all files related to the operating system itself OR it may affect the entire partition that holds the operating system. By losing the operating system, you lose all of your saved data as well.

But if you installed Windows to the C: partition and stored all of your files on the D: partition, your files on D: would be safe even if C: were wiped clean. The only way D: would be affected is if the physical hard drive itself was wiped or damaged.

One additional benefit of having separate partitions is that you can reinstall Windows without losing your saved data. Tina has written on the subject of resizing Windows partitions, so check it out if you want to take advantage of this feature. http://bit.ly/1lfBCDe
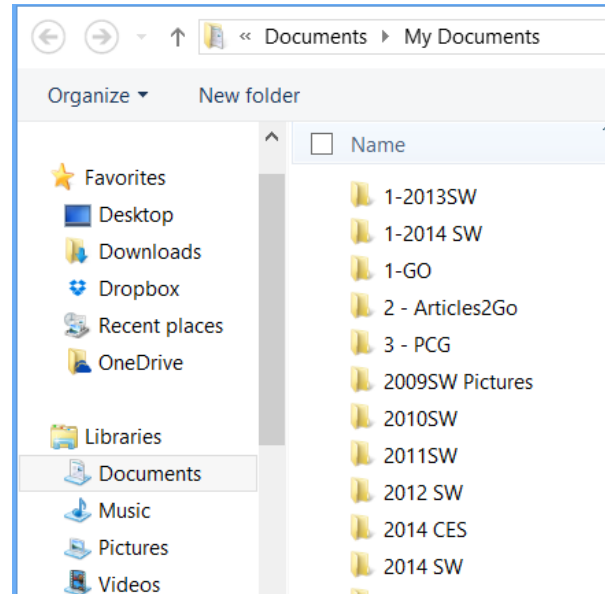
Use Windows Libraries

Every installation of Windows comes with a directory called My Documents. In Windows 7, it was renamed to Documents and came with a couple of buddies: Music, Pictures, and Videos. They're called libraries and you've probably seen them before, but never really used them, right? Well, you should reconsider.

In truth, these four libraries are special. They aren't just directories; they're collections of multiple directories. In each library, you can specify different directories to be included and that library will show the content from all included directories. It sounds more complicated than it is.

In truth, these four libraries are special. They aren't just directories; they're collections of multiple directories. In each library, you can specify different directories to be included and that library will show the content from all included directories. It sounds more complicated than it is.

Think of it like this: You can save your videos to many different locations and link those directories to the Videos library. Then, whenever you access the Videos library, you'll see all of those files in one place.

It's just as convenient as storing everything on the desktop, yet infinitely more flexible and organized. For more details on how to take advantage of this feature, check out Chris's writeup on how to use Windows Libraries. http://bit.ly/1iMkORF

Store Files in the Cloud

-Cloud storage has been a big buzz term over the past few years and for good reason. While cloud-related solutions like Dropbox, G+ Drive, or Microsoft OneDrive come with privacy concerns
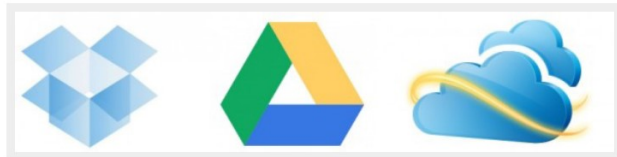
<http://bit.ly/1lzsQ4F>, they also offer many benefits and I think people are too quick to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Here's how it works: You set aside one or more directories that automatically sync with whatever service you're using (comparison of cloud storage services). These files can be accessed from anywhere and they can be set to private or public. Why is this better than storing straight on the desktop?

Immediate backups. Due to automatic synchronization, you rarely need to worry about lost files. If your computer gets wiped somehow, those files still reside on the cloud and you can always retrieve them again.

Revision history. Not every cloud service offers a revision history, but most do and it's an important feature. Basically, the service will track every change that's made to the file (it may be limited to the last X changes) and allow you to instantly revert to a past version if necessary.

One Drive (aka SkyDrive) comes integrated with Windows 8 and can help you keep your files synced.

Need Quick Access to Files?

Sometimes convenience wins out over practicality and reason. The desktop is great because it allows for immediate access, right?

With one small compromise, you can maintain that convenience. The answer is to use shortcuts.

Creating a shortcut is as simple as dragging a file using the right mouse button to where you want the shortcut to appear, then selecting Create shortcut here from the menu.

Even if a shortcut gets wiped, the actual file will still be safe.

But instead of putting the shortcuts on the desktop, why not take it one step further?

Right click on any file shortcut and select either *Pin to taskbar* or *Pin to start menu*.

It's a self-explanatory feature that works just as well as, if not better than, traditional desktop shortcuts.

I use it day in and day out and I wouldn't have it any other way.

Conclusion

Ultimately, personal preference will always win. For those of you who have been "desktopping" for years, you'll probably find it near impossible to break the habit.

I still do it from time to time, though I try my best to clean up after myself when I realize what I'm doing. It just doesn't make sense to store everything on the desktop anymore.

Do you clutter up your desktop with files and folders galore? If so, are you convinced enough to try a safer method of file storage?

Share your thoughts with us in the comments! http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/3-better-ways-store-files-desktop/

To Save Your Life Or Mine

CPR - A MUST WATCH!!!!!!!

I watched this and it is A MUST WATCH! One never knows when we'll see someone collapse suddenly. This is an easier and better method of CPR.

This is the best demonstration and explanation I have seen. It is done by the doctors who invented the procedure at the University of Arizona Sarver Heart Center.

THIS IS FOR EVERYBODY!!!

http://ahsc.arizona.edu/node/730

I want all my friends and family to watch this - in case I need you. I've watched it - in case you need me. Please watch - and then share.

This short video illustrates the best demonstration and gives the simplest explanation of exactly what to do if someone near you collapses and is presumably having a heart attack.

You could very well save the life of a friend or loved one. Someone you share this video with might save your life!

Do you know of

Photo age progression/regression software for use with family pictures?

An App for your phone that will return you to where you started - to your car at the grocery store or shopping center?
or back to your picnic site from a hike in the woods?

NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

Would you like to see a newsletter article on a specific topic?????

Please send your suggestions to editor@patacs.org.

Special Fall Edition

This fall we will have a special newsletter edition covering the history of PATACS and the many very special people responsible for making this the wonderful organization it has been and still is.

I would appreciate short writings from members and will also be happy to interview those who would prefer. Send your short article or interview request to editor@patacs.org

There seems to be quite excellent enthusiasm for this issue. It is amazing when you think of the many changes, the wonderful people who have contributed so much, and the gentle learning environment that has benefitted so many.

I look forward to hearing many wonderful "stories." - including some of yours!

When You Want to Learn How

Learning About Computers

By Richard Durand,
President, Wisconsin All-computer User
Club, WI

www.wauc.us

rgdurand (at) yahoo.com

One thing I have found out the hard way is that sometimes knowledge just has to be demanded. On a number of occasions, I have paid good money for educational classes, showed up and patiently waited to be filled up with the useful knowledge I was seeking, and when the class was over, I had more questions than when I started.

Or, don't you just love how this happens? Software companies provide pages and pages of printed safety and warranty information and then for instructions one gets something like, "When the Install screen appears, follow the prompts." What do the prompts mean? How does one decide which of the offered alternatives to select? Blank out. Or has anyone ever said to you as a new computer user, "Oh, just download such and such a program for that"? I have heard this myself and managed to download what was suggested and then found myself flummoxed. Why isn't anything happening? Oh, you're saying the downloaded program has tvbo be installed first.

Now, how do I find what I downloaded, which downloaded file is for installing, what drive and folder should the program be installed to, how is the installation carried out, how should it be set up, how does the program work, etc.? The questions can just cascade.

These are probably the most extreme examples that can be cited but the point is that one must be aware that this can happen and when it does, one must be prepared, however tedious and frustrating it may become, to obtain step-by-step detailed instructions.

The answers may be in manuals or computer books or in the "Help" file or from telephone tech support, and sometimes from another computer user or club member.

And if the answers are things you already know and/or are not helping, make sure you identify exactly what you are trying to find out and keep looking and asking questions. In the search for knowledge, be demanding both of your sources and of yourself.

And if you are the one helping someone else with a computer situation, try to find out how much he already knows and then give step-by-step instructions as detailed as seems necessary.

As I've written in these pages before, there is much technical background knowledge that is just not worth pursuing for the average computer user.

But if you pick your battles and can narrow down what you really need to know, usually in the way of detailed instructions, you can concentrate your efforts and go all out to get what you need to know.
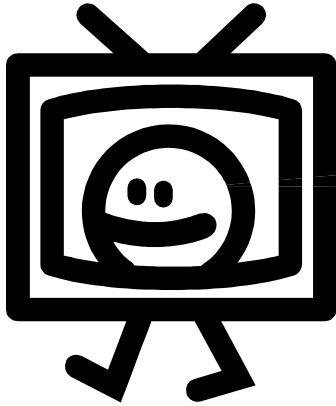
**Aug 16th presentation to
OPCUG / PATACS**

**Learn 30: Bill Walsh - Clip
Converter: Media Download Tool**

**RW (Scotty) Scott - Tips For
Buying a New TV: What
To Look For & Watch Out For**

An explanation of the features of digital TVs, including clarity of the pictures displayed and advantages of the newest digital sets. Learn about TV sizes and prices. Find out about "Smart TVs" with access to the Internet.

Info provided will steer consumers clear of digital TVs being sold with not-so-modern or less-desirable features.

Discussion will include antenna (free) and cable (subscription) options for receiving broadcast signals.

The presentation includes significant opportunities to ask questions. Information is up-to-date and will help attendees wade through the complicated maze of TV features and offerings.

(If you already have a large flat-screen TV that you bought within the last year or so, you probably already know everything you need to know!)

RW (Scotty) Scott is a lawyer whose previous career involved running a number of national non-profit organizations.

He retired in 2008, then took on a second stint with Fairfax County as a senior Communications Analyst. He serves with the Communications Policy & Regulation Division, Department of Cable and Consumer Services.

Scott was heavily involved in preparing materials for the DTV Transition (changeover from analog to digital signals in 2008 - 2009) and with award-winning services to County residents (2009-2010).

Favorite Web Sites

What are your favorite Web sites?

Why? - What aspects of a site are the most important to you?

Email the information to editor@patacs.org or bring it to the meeting by September 30.

This fall we will include the information in our newsletter and we can all add new favorite sites to our current favorites.

Thank you. :)

PATACS Information

PATACS, Inc. 201 S. Kensington St. Arlington VA 22204-1141
Club Information call: 703-370-7649   **Web Site: www.patacs.org**

President	Jim Rhodes	703-931-7854	president(at)patacs.org
1st VP	Ron Schmidt	301-577-7899	director11(at)patacs.org
2nd VP, Membership Chair	Mel Mikosinski	703-978-9158	director4(at)patacs.org
Treasurer, Registered Agent, Internet Services	Paul Howard	703-860-9246	director2(at)patacs.org
Secretary, Meeting Setup	Bill Walsh	703-241-8141	director14(at)patacs.org
Director, APCUG Liaison	Gabe Goldberg		director10(at)patacs.org
Director, Vendor Liaison	(vacant)	volunteer needed	director12(at)patacs.org
Director, Linux Support	Geof Goodrum	703-370-7649	director1(at)patacs.org
Directors: Jorn Dakin, Sy Fishbein, Walter Fraser, Roger Fujii, Gabe Goldberg, Mel Goldfarb, Geof Goodrum, Nick Wenri			
Windows Support	Jim Brueggeman	703-450-1384	windows(at)patacs.org
Newsletter Co-Editors	Geof Goodrum, Kathy Perrin		editor(at)patacs.org
Columnist	Lorrin Garson		newslettercolumnist(at)patacs.org

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If you are moving

Please send your change of address to the club address as soon as possible to avoid missing issues.

Thank You!

Upcoming Meetings

PATACS Arlington -
(7/23) 7 PM: Technology and PC Help Desk
(8/6) 7 PM: General Meeting

OPCUG / PATACS - **(8/16) 1 PM**, Fairfax - OLLI Tallwood

Learn 30: Bill Walsh -Clip Converter: Media Download Tool

Tips For Buying a New TV: What To Look For & Watch Out For - RW (Scotty) Scott

Microcenter Clinics

See http://microcenter.com/site/stores/instore-clinics.aspx
for the latest new9s on these free clinics.

First Class

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

PATACS Meeting Information
Call (703) 370-7649 for meeting announcements

Scan the QR code at left or enter

http://www.patacs.org

to visit our web site

Free Admission — Bring a Friend!

Arlington Meetings	Fairfax Meetings (with OLLI PC User Group)
Carlin Hall Community Center 5711 S. 4th Street, Arlington, VA 22204 http://www.patacs.org/arlingtonmeetings.html	Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) 4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax VA 22032 http://www.patacs.org/fairfaxmeetings.html
General Meeting 1st Wednesday, (8/6), 7 pm	**General Meeting** 3rd Saturday, (8/16), 1 pm
Technology and PC Help Desk (SIG) 4th Wednesday, (7/23), 7 pm	**Online-Only Webinar** 2nd Wednesday,(8/13), 7-9pm http://www.patacs.org/webinarpat.html
Board of Directors 3rd Monday, (8/18), 7 pm	