PATACS Posts

Newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

If You Missed It

November 15 Fairfax Meeting

by Geof Goodrum
Director, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
Director1(at)patacs.org

Our main presenter didn't make it to the November meeting, but Lorrin Garson gave an informative Learn 30 session about his initial impressions migrating from Microsoft® Windows® to Apple® OS X® operating systems. Lorrin commented that Windows-based PCs and Apple Macs have about 80% in common, that is, how you accomplish tasks on the computer. Lorrin proceeded with a demonstration on his Mac laptop (MacBook®) with the current "Yosemite" release of OS X (OS X is based on the Unix operating system). Lorrin noted that his MacBook can run 10-12 hours on battery.

OS X applications include web browsers (Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, and Apple Safari), Mail e-mail client, Calendar (comment: simple, works very well), Reminders, Contacts, and others. Lorrin warned against using the Terminal command line utility unless you know what you are doing (though the same is true for the CMD command line terminal in Windows). Lorrin bought and prefers to use Microsoft Word on his Mac because he is used to it, but there are other options (a word processor is included in OS X, free/Open Source LibreOffice and OpenOffice application suites also support OS X). The Preview application displays PDF files, among other functions. Lorrin demonstrated Time Machine, a simple-to-use application that can be set to backup changed files automatically every hour to an external drive and can restore a complete system or selected drag-and-drop files from backup. Lorrin also showed how the menu at the top of the screen changes context to whatever application is active. More information about the applications included in OS X is at http://www.apple.com/osx/better-apps/.

Lorrin made a cheat sheet of keyboard sequences to generate symbols, stating that this is one of things that can throw new users. There is an

onscreen keyboard utility to insert special characters, as well.

Lorrin also commented on file management utilities. If you use Google Drive to store files in the "cloud," it appears on the system menu. There is an AirDrop folder that shares files with any Macs within wireless network range. OS X has a very good search capability called Spotlight (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Spotlight_(softw are)) that searches the entire computer for search terms, including within documents. The search can be customized.

Lorrin used a built-in OS X feature to create a password-protected virtual disk drive with Advanced Encryption Standard (AES) 256 bit encryption to store sensitive files. You may recall that Lorrin previously used TrueCrypt software on his Windows-based PC for the same purpose (TrueCrypt is no longer maintained nor recommended).

When asked about maintenance issues, Lorrin said he would have more to say in February when he will give a full presentation at Fairfax on "Switching from PC to Mac." However, there have not been many patches and he only had to reboot once. His experience so far is that OS X requires a small fraction (10-20%) of maintenance compared to a Windows-based PC. If a program fails, it does not bring down the PC at all. Another member who used a Mac for 5-6 years said he never had a system crash.

When asked about the difference between the iMac and MacBook, Lorrin explained that Apple laptops are MacBooks, desktop PCs are iMacs. There is also the high-end Mac Pro line meant for graphic artists and professionals.

When asked about transferring files between Windows-based PCs and Macs, Lorrin confirmed there was no problem doing this; files can be transferred via flash drives and the file formats are compatible.

Lorrin also commented that Calendar, Mail, and Reminders sync between Apple computers and Apple iPads/iPhones. The integration of Apple products is very good, but Lorrin experienced problems syncing applications between Mac and Windows-based PCs.

After the general meeting question and answer session, which included discussion of wireless printer issues, power company liability for equipment damage, and spam e-mail, we watched the recorded YouTube™ video Backing Up Strategies by "PC Maestro" Elliott Stern from the Fall APCUG Video Technology Conference (VTC), which included discussion of local and cloud-based system backup. Mr. Stern prefers iDrive.com if using a cloud-based backup. He also recommends the MozBackup utility (http://mozbackup.jasnapaka.com/, Windows only) to backup specific files for Mozilla Thunderbird (e-mail client and Firefox web browser. This and other videos (with briefing handouts) from the APCUG Fall VTC are now online at http://apcug2.org/content/vtc13.

Also keep an eye on the PATACS Recent Meetings web page (http://patacs.org/recmtgspat.html) for briefing slides and handouts.

Future Meeting Topics

Refer to the PATACS Event Calendar on the back cover or http://patacs.org/mtgdetpat.html for meeting time and location.

January 17, 2015 (Fairfax)
Everything you really didn't remember about traveling
Presented by Dan & Jean Feighery

As we start a New Year we sometimes think of planning a trip to somewhere in the U.S., to Europe or other great spot; taking some photographs along the way. For this January presentation Dan Feighery and his wife Jean will talk about everything they consider when taking a trip and preparing one of OLLI's Trip Tales Presentations. Included are: Types of limitations on that Passport you thought was good for 10 years, Passport renewal, how to expedite U.S. Security and Customs lines, available free

government publications about your destination country, planning your itinerary, selecting a tour company, preparing a presentation on your trip and other great travel tips. Included will be photos and insight from a trip to Seattle.

Dan and Jean are long time members of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI). Jean retired from the Fairfax County Library and Dan from the Air Force. Jean's love of opera has greatly influenced where they travel and take their cameras to build the travel presentation they provide for OLLI and other venues.

February 21, 2015 (Fairfax)
Switching from PC to Mac
Presented by Lorrin Garson

March 21, 2015 (Fairfax)
Is Your Toaster an Insider Threat?
Presented by Bob Flores

April 18, 2015 (Fairfax)
What is Computer Forensics?
Presented by Bob Osgood

Editor's Note: At press time, there are no topics for Arlington meetings nor Fairfax Learn 30 sessions from January onward. Look for the latest meeting information on the PATACS web site and in announcement e-mails.

Help Wanted: Meeting Speakers

Finding presenters for our meeting programs is difficult—your help in the effort to enhance the value we all receive from PATACS membership would be greatly appreciated!

Please consider speaking to your friends at an Arlington or Fairfax meeting. We'd love to feature your take on a smart phone or tablet app. A presentation on these or other topics of interest to you would undoubtedly be welcomed by your PATACS colleagues. We have space in our schedule for 15, 30, 60 and 75 minute discussions—what are you waiting for?

We also have ready-made paragraphs you could use in e-mail communications to help us find speakers. Contact: director2(at)patacs.org

Shopping on Amazon.com? Don't Forget PATACS!

If you shop online at Amazon.com, don't forget to start each session by clicking the Amazon link on the PATACS home page, then continue shopping on Amazon as usual. Doing so earns PATACS a 4 to 6.5% commission on your purchase at no additional cost to you.

Thank you for supporting your user group!

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

Working with PDF Files
by Cal Esneault
Former President and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs, Cajun Clickers Computer Club, LA
December 2013 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News
www.clickers.org
ccnewsletter (at) cox.net

The Portable Document Format (PDF) file format is used extensively to pass documents between people and organizations that use different computer hardware and operating systems. Introduced as a proprietary format in 1993 by Adobe Systems, it was released as an open standard in 2008. With rare exception, if you have a PC you can read a PDF file (for example, Adobe Acrobat Reader for Windows OS). If you produce a document with almost any word processor, you can export a PDF version so that a recipient doesn't need to have your specific software to access it. As you browse the Internet, you will find many supporting documents are in PDF format for you to print them or for you to read them on an electronic display.

Although PDF files are easy to create and read, editing PDF files is more complex since the default is to produce a read-only file. You can usually copy text or images and paste them as components into other document software. However, many times we want to extract whole PDF pages without having to reformat the results after pasting smaller parts. PDF Shuffler, a small

python-gtk open-source program for Linux, is a great method to easily rearrange, split, or merge pages from PDF files.

As an example, I downloaded a 14-page PDF file from Federal Government resources titled "Glossary of Computer and Internet Terms for Older Adults" and a 1 page PDF File titled "Basic Computer Technology" from the New York State Library. After starting PDF Shuffler, added and joined both files by hitting the "+" icon.

The following image is a screenshot of PDF Shuffler displaying the first 6 pages of the combined file. You can then select any page and delete it. Pages can be rearranged by a "drag-and-drop" mouse action.
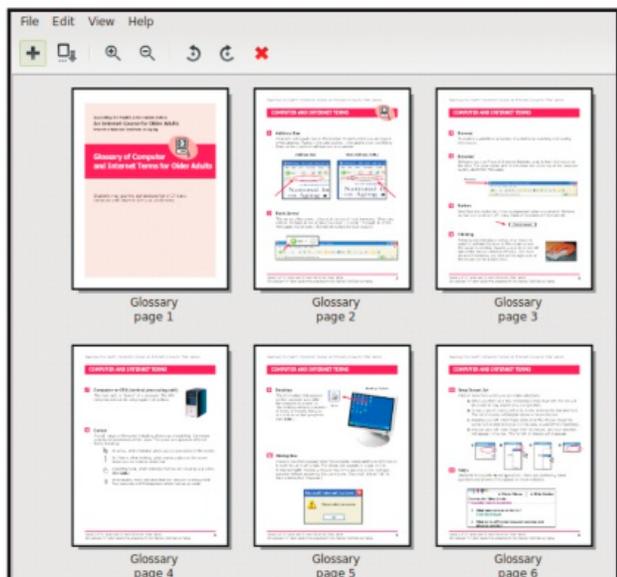
I removed all but pages 1 and 10 from the "Glossary" file and left the single page from the "Technology" file. I next saved the 3-page result as a single PDF file with a new unique name. This shorter customized version can now be sent to a recipient with just the specific information I desired. The simplicity of PDF Shuffler is its greatest attribute.

Although you may not want to change the content on a PDF page, you may want to draw attention to specific points. Xournal is a Linux application for taking notes or sketching with a stylus. It also has an "Annotate PDF" feature.

Within Xournal, select a PDF file to annotate. You are then able to add a layer of lines or text above the original page. Below is a view of the saved version of the customized PDF file described previously. Yellow highlighting, arrows, and text were added to accentuate points about a computer mouse.

For filling out PDF forms, flpsed is an even simpler program for Linux systems that only inserts text.

The programs mentioned here are available in the repositories for many Debian-based distributions, such as Ubuntu or Linux Mint. Give them a try next time you are working with a PDF on your Linux box.

Featured Open Source Software of the Month: January 2015

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.
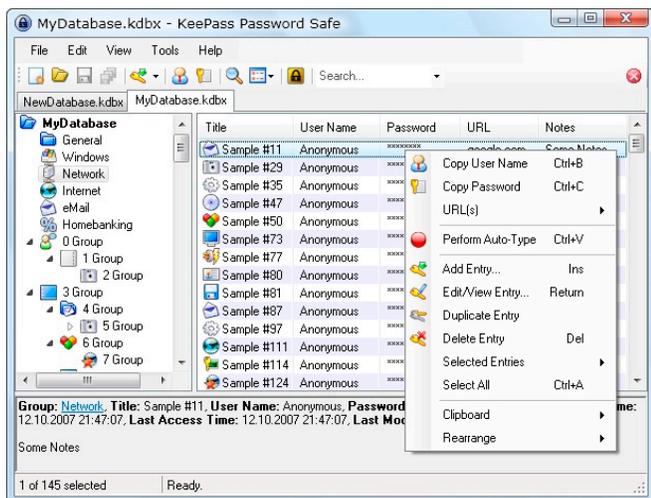
KeePass – v2.28. http://sourceforge.net/projects/keepass/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, Google® Android™, and GNU/Linux® by Dominik Reichl. KeePass is a lightweight and easy-to-use password manager. With so many passwords to remember and the need to vary passwords to protect your valuable data, it's nice to have KeePass to manage your passwords in a secure way. KeePass puts all your passwords in a highly encrypted database and locks them with one master key or a key file. As a result, you only have to remember one single

master password or select the key file to unlock the whole database. And the databases are encrypted using the best and most secure encryption algorithms currently known, AES and Twofish. Features include:

- Strong security (AES encryption, SHA-256 hash, protection against dictionary and guessing attacks, in-memory protection, ...).

- Portable (no installation required), available for many platforms (Windows, Linux, Mac OS X, smart devices/phones, ...).

- Efficient and flexible organization (entry groups, tags, time fields, file attachments, ...).

- Various data transfer methods (clipboard, drag and drop, auto-type, plugins can provide integration with other applications, ...).

- Powerful password generator (generation based on character sets and patterns, with many options).

- Extensible (plugin architecture) and multi-language (more than 40 languages are available).

Money Manager EX – v1.1.2. http://www.moneymanagerex.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, Google® Android™, and GNU/Linux®. Money Manager Ex is easy-to-use personal finance software. It primarily helps organize one's finances and keeps track of where, when and how the money goes. It is also a great tool to get a bird's eye view of your financial worth. Money Manager includes all the basic features that 90% of users would want to see in a personal finance application. The design goals are to concentrate on simplicity and user-friendliness - something one can use everyday. Features include:

- Intuitive, simple, fast, clean

- Checking, credit card, savings, stock investment, assets accounts

- Reminders for recurring bills and deposits

- Budgeting and cash flow forecasting

- Simple one click reporting with graphs and piecharts

- Import data from any CSV format, QIF (i.e., Quicken Quickbooks format)

- Does not require an install: can run from a USB key

- Non-Proprietary SQLite Database with AES Encryption

- International language support (available in 24 languages)

Scrabble3D – v3.1.2. http://scrabble.sourceforge.net/wiki/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, Google® Android™, and GNU/Linux® by Heiko Tietze. Scrabble3D is a highly customizable Scrabble game that not only supports Classic Scrabble (15x15) and Superscrabble (21x21) but also 3D games and own boards. You can play local against the computer or connect to a game server to find other players. Features include:

- Configurable board, letterset and design

- Board in OpenGL graphics with user-definable wavefront model

- Game against computer with support of multithreading

- Post-hoc game analysis with calculation of best move by computer

- Match with other players connected on a game server

- NSA rating and highscore at game server

- Time limit of game, moves; additional time etc.

- Localization; use of non-standard digraphs like CH, RR, LL and option for right-to-left reading

- Multilanguage help / wiki

- Network games are buffered and asynchronous games are possible

- Running games can be kibitzed

- Optional malus fields for board setup

- Challenge mode, What-if variant, etc.

Similar Image Search – v0.2. http://sourceforge.net/projects/similarimagesearch/. Free Creative Commons Attribution Non-Commercial License Java executable for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, and GNU/Linux® by Expenosa Freeman. Similar Image Search is a desktop reverse image search app. Think Google's "search by image" but with your own photos on your computer. SiS can search for similar images in the library and return a list of matches. It's designed for photographers to sift through a memory card dump, searching for photos in batches for ease of sorting. Features include:

- Find similar photos or exact duplicates in your photo libraries.

- Compare photos from outside your libraries with ones within.

- Save processed libraries and results so you don't have to reprocess them next time.

- Optimized for Multi-Core processors, Windows and Mac OS X.

Kernel Source – v3.17.4. http://www.kernel.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

Now We Have a High Tech Way to Get to Know Your Neighbors
by Sandy Berger
CompuKISS
www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) compukiss.com
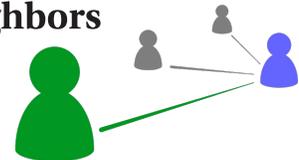
Do you remember when neighbors knew each other and a neighborhood was a tight-woven community? Well, I do and I miss that. So today I'll tell you about a new, high-tech way to get to know your neighbors.

We don't know our neighbors like we did when I was a kid. We stay inside our air conditioned homes and keep to ourselves. But it doesn't have to be that way.

We can use technology to bring us back to those by-gone days when neighbors joined to form a close-knit community. This can be easily done with a new web service called Nextdoor (www.nextdoor.com). Nextdoor lets neighbors get in touch with each other again. It is a free and private social network for neighborhoods.

The first member from the neighborhood is called the Founding Member. To use this website, he or she defines the neighborhood boundaries and gives the neighborhood a name, both of which can be edited in the future, if necessary. The Founding Member can then start inviting neighbors to join. Each member must verify their address. A neighbor who is a verified member of

that specific Nextdoor neighborhood can vouch for, and invite another neighbor to join. Accepting such an invitation will allow them to join Nextdoor as a verified member. Each neighbor uses their real name and must verify their address in order to join. Not only is your private information never shared, but it is not accessible by search engines.

Nextdoor launched in 2011 and now has over 12,000 neighborhood groups represented. They have communities in all 50 states. According to its co-founder and CEO, Nirav Tolia, they add about 40 or so neighborhoods each day.

Nextdoor lets you share useful stuff with the folks in your immediate vicinity. You can use it for stopping burglars and for spreading crime warnings for the area. You can use it to learn about illnesses, deaths, and other times when a neighbor might need a meal, a ride, or just some moral support.

You can also use Nextdoor for advice about contractors and baby-sitters. You can use it as a mini-Craigs list where you can sell or buy things without dealing with strangers. You can use it to plan a block party or to invite neighbors to an impromptu get together. If your area were to ever encounter a weather-related disaster like a tornado, Nextdoor could be an invaluable asset.

Why don't you try it in your neighborhood?

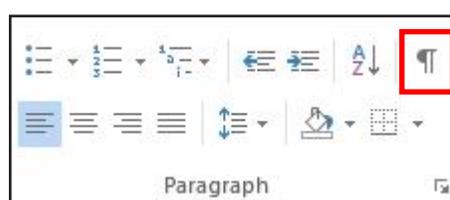## 3 Word Tools That Provide Quick Help

by Nancy DeMarte
1st VP, Sarasota Technology Users Group, Florida
May 2014 Issue, PC Monitor
www.thestug.org
ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

It doesn't matter how much experience you have with Microsoft Word, at times you run into little problems that need solving immediately. Here are three tools in Word that have helped me get out of some frustrating situations.

1. Show/Hide

Located in the Paragraph group on the Home tab in Word, the Show/Hide tool looks like a

paragraph symbol. Its primary purpose is to assist you in proofreading a document, but it has other uses, too. When turned on by clicking, it displays a variety of otherwise hidden formatting marks which are only visible on the screen, not in the printed document. These marks give you basic formatting information, such as a dot for each space, a paragraph sign to show a new paragraph, and a right-pointing arrow where words are aligned to tabs on the ruler. Reading through a document with the tool enabled will help you find spots where you accidentally double-spaced between words or pressed Enter unnecessarily, adding extra space between lines. In longer documents, being able to see the dotted section break line can make it easier to position both a full page heading and a two column article on the same page.

With all these marks visible on the screen, the document looks cluttered. For this reason, the Show/Hide tool has a bad reputation with some Word users. On the other hand, some users want certain marks to be visible all the time, not just when the Show/Hide tool is enabled. This can be set up in Word Options (File – Word Options or Options – Display – "Always show these formatting marks on the screen") by checking the marks you want to see all the time. I choose not to do this, but the list is a good place to view what the formatting marks mean.

The Show/Hide tool can be handy in several ways besides proofing. Let's say you have completed a one page document, but find when you print it, a blank page comes out of the printer along with the document. If you turn on the Show/Hide tool, scroll down to the blank page, and delete any formatting marks that appear there, the blank page will disappear. Another special use of Show/Hide is controlling the spaces between paragraphs by changing the
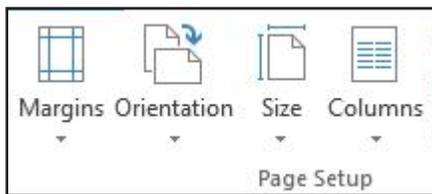
size of the paragraph marks between them. If you want to decrease the space, select the Paragraph mark between the paragraphs and click a smaller font size.

2. Margins

All documents have margins around the outside of the page. Each new version of Word seems to have different default margin sizes. In Word 2003, top and bottom margins are 1"; th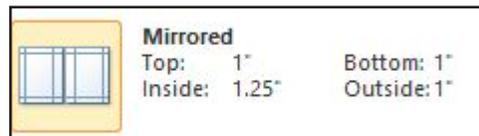e two sides are 1.25". In Word 2010/13, the default margins are 1" on all four sides. Recent Word versions also have a Margins gallery. On the Page Layout tab in the Page Setup group, click Margins to see the choices. If none of these dimensions fits your needs, you can create your own custom margins using the command at the bottom of the gallery.

One kind of problem this tool solves is similar to one addressed by Show/Hide. Assume you've typed a document that is a bit longer than one page. Your choices are to revise the text, use a smaller font size, or reduce the size of the page margins. I often click the Narrow margins choice (0.5" on all sides) to eliminate spillover text. That's about the smallest margin setting possible to ensure all the text will print.

Another problem which margin changes can solve is the need to put a document into a ring notebook or bind it in book form. In this case you want the inside margin wider than the outside. Here's where the Mirrored option comes in handy, as shown.

3. Format Painter

I wrote about this tool a couple of years ago, but it's so useful, it needs another mention. For those who are new to it, Format Painter copies text formats, like fonts, font effects (bold, italics), and font colors; and paragraph formats, like indents, line spacing, and bulleting from one place to another within a document.

Here's how it works. You are in the middle of a document and find you want to copy a paragraph into this one from another document saved on your computer. You open the second document, highlight the paragraph, and click Copy or press `Ctrl+C`. Click in the first document where the copied selection will go, and click Paste or press `Ctrl+V`. Now you notice that the new paragraph is in a different font and font size from the rest of the text. Instead of manually making these format changes, click anywhere in the original section of the document, and then click the Format Painter icon (Home tab – Clipboard group). Select the new paragraph (You can select a whole paragraph with a triple click.) and it will change to match the rest of the document. This works especially well to match the indenting pattern when using bullets or automatic numbering.

Sometimes you need to copy a format to more than one place in a document. Format Painter makes it easy. Pretend you have created a document with six sub-heads scattered throughout. After you finish, you decide to emphasize the sub-heads by changing the font, adding boldface, and making the text blue. You select the first sub-head and manually make these changes to it. Then you click inside this newly-formatted heading, and double click the Format Painter icon. Double clicking keeps Format Painter active until you click its icon to close it. Drag over each of the other sub-heads one by one, and each will take on the format of the first one. Then click Format Painter again to turn it off. You'll be surprised how often Format Painter can help you fix mismatched formats in an instant. That's why I put it on my Quick Access toolbar. Little tools can cure big headaches.

A New Android Tablet—Now What?

by Phil Sorrentino
Staff Writer, The Computer Club, Inc., Sun City Center, FL
May 2014 issue, The Journal
www.scccomputerclub.org/
philsorr (at) yahoo.com

You just got a new Android tablet. (Isn't the look of a brand new tablet wonderful, it is so shiny and lacking finger prints.) But fingerprints are a good thing, since they are a byproduct of using the touch enabled screen; so the more finger prints, the more use. If the fingerprints eventually become annoying, you can always clean them with a soft micro-fiber cloth.) Now, if the tablet is brand new, when you turn it on it will probably take you through a few set up steps. These steps are usually also explained in a brief Quick Start Guide that is included in the package. For more detailed information and instruction go to the manufacturer's website and look for a "Support" or "Documents" page for your specific tablet model and download the User Manual, if there is one. If the tablet is not brand new, maybe a hand-me-up from one of your kids or grandchildren, you may also want to get a User Manual and change some of these general settings.

Typically the first things to set up are very basic, such as Language and Time Zone. After these, the most important thing to do is to get the tablet onto the internet. All tablets have Wi-Fi circuitry, so if you have Wi-Fi at home, you are set. (If you don't have Wi-Fi at home, the tablet will still be useful for watching videos, showing pictures, playing games, and listening to music. And you can always use one of the many free public Wi-Fi hot spots at locations like a Library or Starbucks.) Once you are in a Wi-Fi area, all you need to do is key in the password or passphrase for the network if it is protected. (Hopefully, that makes sense to you because you have protected your home network with WEP, WPA2 or WPA2 security.) Once you have connected to Wi-Fi, you will be able to go to the "Google Play Store", where you can download all those useful Apps and games. If your tablet is new, it will probably instruct you to either setup a Google account, or it will ask you to log-in to your Google account. Having a Google account allows you to synchronize files and certain Apps so that you have the same information available to your tablet and your home computer.

After your Google account is set up, there are a few operational things that you might like to modify. None of these are absolutely necessary, but I find setting them to my preferences is helpful. Most of these things will be found in "Settings", so the first thing is to find the "Settings" icon and place it on a Home Screen (if it is not there already). The Settings icon may be found in the "All Apps" collection. The "All Apps" collection is accessed by an icon, typically at the top of the screen that looks like a small rectangular collection of smaller squares, possibly four, or six, or nine.

All Apps Icon

Tap this icon and an alphabetical listing of all the Apps on your tablet will be shown. The "Settings" icon typically looks like a square with three lines and dots within the square, or a gear. There are probably multiple screens of Apps so you may have to flick the screen to the left to uncover all the Apps. When you find the "Settings" icon, "tap and hold" the icon and it will be selected. When you release it, it will then be placed on a screen. Now you can access the Settings by tapping the Settings icon whenever you want to review or change a setting.

Settings Icons

By the way, tablets have multiple screens (usually an odd number), with the middle screen being the home screen. If you have 5 screens then screen number 3 is the home screen. There may be an indicator

on each of the screens (typically on the bottom) that indicates which screen is currently being shown. Now that the Settings icon is available, tap it and it will allow you to make changes to the tablet's settings. The settings are organized in groups such as Wireless & Networks, Device, Personal, Accounts, and System. Under Wireless & Networks, tap "Wi-Fi" and you will see the network you are currently using (and others, if you have used them in the past). Under Device, among others, there is "Sound" and "Display". Tap "Sound" and you can change the "Sound Profiles" and/or the Sound levels (depending on your version of Android). Tap "Display" and you can change the Brightness of the display. Just tap Brightness and then set the slider to the brightness level of your choice. This is also the place to change the Font size if it is too small. (Font size=Large, seems to be a good choice.) The "Sleep" setting sets the time of inactivity allowed before the screen goes off. A short time like 1 minute is good if you are actively using the tablet, but a longer time (maybe 5 minutes) is nice to have when you are learning and it takes some time to determine your next step. The longer time keeps the display from turning off, just when you are about to take your next step. Under "System", tap "About tablet", which shows a lot of technical information, but the one important item here is the version of the Android Operating System. "Android version" gives you the currently loaded Android version, such as 4.2.2. (Don't worry about the third digit.) Versions 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 are commonly called "Jelly Bean". Version 4.4 is the latest and goes by the name "Kit Kat." Under "System" you can also set the Date and Time, or let the tablet "Use network provided time."

Once you have found out the Android version and possibly made some changes to the Sound, Display, Date & Time, or Wi-Fi, you can go back to the home screen by tapping the Back button. That's the arrow at the bottom of the screen that starts off to the right and turns back on itself to go to the left. Now you can go to the "Google Play Store" and get all the Apps you think you will want to try out and/or use. The Play Store icon looks like a Shopping Bag with a triangle in the middle of blue and red.
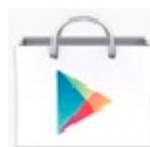
Google Play Store Icon

This icon is typically on the home screen, which is probably a good place for it. This way it will always be available when you want to shop the Play Store. To go to the Play Store, tap the icon and you will be transported to the Google Store. This is the place to get all those popular Apps like Facebook, Pandora, Netflix, Skype, Angry Birds, Candy Crush, Yahoo Mail, Solitaire, Kindle reader, Words with Friends, Google Earth, Tetris, Google Translate, Barcode Scanner, Hulu+, Flashlight, Chrome, YouTube, IMDB, Google Drive, ColorNote, Evernote, Firefox, Sound Hound, and many, many more. (Over 1 million, many of which may be the subject of future articles.) One last thing to do is change the way the tablet can be accessed. Out of the box, the tablet only needs a swipe to enable it. To make it more secure, go to "Settings" and then "Personal" and then change the "Screen lock" to Pattern or PIN or Password; your choice. Make sure you don't forget the Pattern or PIN or password after it is set. With these few changes to your "out of the box" tablet, I'm sure you will begin to enjoy your shiny new tablet.

Book Review: "Talking to Siri: Mastering the Language of Apple's Intelligent Assistant" (3rd Edition)

Reviewed by Gilbert Ialongo
Webmaster, Los Angeles Computer Society, CA
www.lacspc.org
gialongo (at) sbcglobal.net

Que Publishing has recently published the third edition of "Talking to Siri" written by Erica Sadun and Steve Sande. The book provides an advanced level of information even though is written for the widest audience.

Siri is an intelligent voice-controlled personal assistant that works on Apple iOS and OS X devices. The most current version runs on iPhones (4S or later), iPads (3rd generation or later), iPad minis, iPod touches (5th generation and later) and Macs running the latest OS X release.

Siri accepts spoken commands and provides answers and recommendations using a natural language or showing results from web searches. The range of commands understood by Siri is remarkable and its ability to provide relevant and, at times, humorous answers is surprisingly good.

There is a problem, though, for the non-initiated user. One must know how to ask questions using the right verbs and combination of words in order to get the most advantage out of Siri. So while it is easy to ask 'What time is it?' there is no documentation of the range of commands that can be given Siri and the best way to ask them. This is where "Talking to Siri" shines. The book is a must for all serious users of Siri. In a very clear language and with lots of relevant well illustrated examples this book guides the user through the discovery of the range of capabilities offered by this application.

The book consists of ten chapters. Each chapter focuses on a distinct class of commands and interactions supported by Siri. Responses by Siri are indicated for each question asked. The first chapter of the book explains how to launch and have basic interactions with Siri. Following chapters explain how to control your device, how to ask information about topics such as weather, sports, stocks, how to stay in touch with your contacts, how to schedule your day and provides help with various shopping activities.

Advanced interactions with some apps such as Phone calls, Calendar, Contacts, Mail and Messages are discussed in detail.
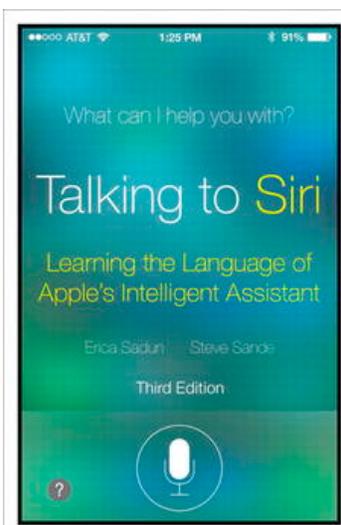
A chapter is devoted to Siri dictation, covering enunciation, punctuation, abbreviations and dictation practice.

On the lighter side, the last two chapters cover having fun with Siri and the authors top 10 Siri jokes. My favorite was: if you ask Siri "Do you have a family?" you may get an answer such as "I have you. That's enough family for me." Each chapter concludes with a summary that gives highlights of the chapter content. A reader may want to read that summary first.

At the end of the book the authors have provided a quick reference guide to Siri, organized around a large number of categories. Under 'Asking about contacts' are entries such us "What is Emily's address?" and "When is my wife's birthday?" Obviously to avoid funny answers Emily and one's wife's birthday must be included in the Contacts app. Under 'Checking email' we find entries such as "Check email' and "Any new email from Jim today?" These are just a few examples out of the more than 250 possible interactions listed in the reference guide.

Siri is a sophisticated app that can be funny at times, but is always relevant. This book shows the extensive range of the app's capabilities in a simple and very comprehensive fashion. Before reading the book I couldn't even imagine the power that is available to us to make the most of our iPhones and other Apple devices. With this power we can extend our productivity in a fun and natural way.

Is your group a member of the Que User Group Program? 35% discount on quepublishing.com purchases

Google Voice

by Dick Orenstein
Member, Sarasota PCUG, FL
June 2014 issue, PC Monitor
www.spcug.org
dicko (at) spcug.org

Google Voice is a free telephone number that you can direct to forward calls to any other telephone number. In addition, you can block calls, receive transcribed messages, and do numerous other activities. Google Voice will also dial and connect calls for you; however, the call will be connected to another telephone number, i.e., your cell phone or your land line, as you direct.

For a visual introduction you can go to this YouTube link:

http://www.youtube.com/
watch?v=cOZU7BOeQ58

If this link does not work here are two things you can do: first, copy the link to the URL window of your browser, not the search window, the window with the web page address in it. And second, you can search Google (or any other search engine) for "Google Voice" and find a long list of assistance.

You may be able to get a Google Voice number that is within your area code, but in today's world the area code of the number is not necessarily an indication of the location—witness mobile phones. Most of us have a mobile number from our home base, but if we move, most don't change the number. And in my case, I have a mobile number from there, but have a Google Voice number from this 941 area code, and calls get routed to my cell phone!

To get a Google Voice number, sign into Google Voice (you do have a Google Account, don't you?) by going to the URL www.google.com/voice. If you don't have a Google Account (some-name-you-choose.gmail.com), you can do it right there.

Once there, you can answer the questions and select your phone number from a list that will be presented.

Once you have your number, you'll now have to set up certain parameters so that the number works for you as you desire.

The first thing you'll want to do is to establish your settings. Click on the gear on the right side of the screen, and then click "Settings." The first tab is "Phones."

Since you already chose a number, you will see that number and "Change/Port" and Delete and Transfer as available options. I do not recommend porting your mobile number as that will limit choices down the road. You will want a NEW GOOGLE VOICE NUMBER.

Then you will see a list of options for forwarding calls. I forward calls to my mobile number, but you can select other options which include forwarding calls to up to six (6) other numbers. You can "Add another phone" by clicking on that link.

The next tab, "Voicemail & Text" allows you to record a greeting, play your greeting, set up an email alert, forward texts, add a PIN and to turn on transcribing messages.

The "Calls" tab allows you to turn on Call Screening, and a number of other pretty self-explanatory options.

"Groups and Circles" tab allows you to establish actions by grouping. In order to use this feature, your address book has to be part of Google Contacts. That feature is beyond the scope of this article at this time, but I'll make a follow up. For now, all incoming calls will be treated the same.

"Call Widgets" can be put on any web page, and allow people to call from that web page. When somebody clicks on the widget, we call them and connect them to you. Your number is always kept private. You can create multiple call widgets and have different settings for each of them. This, too, is beyond the scope of this article.

"Billing" will allow you to set up Calling Credits. These can be used to make calls (outgoing) to other number, mostly in our case international

numbers, at low rates. You can look up the rates for international calls.

And, "Account" is some simple setups, language, time zone passwords, etc.

On the left of the Google Voice page are two red boxes, "CALL" and "TEXT" that allow you to call another number using Google Voice. US numbers can be called for free and are connected to the phone you specify. For example, I can call someone from my Google Voice number and speak to them from my cell phone. I might do that because I do not want that person to see my real cell phone number. So, I click "CALL," enter the number I wish to call and specify to connect the call to my cell phone. You may do the same for text messages by clicking the "TEXT" box and entering the mobile number and the message.

So, let's summarize the advantages that Google Voice provides:

1. A new phone number with lots of control. The ability to allow or block callers, screen calls, forward calls to numbers by who made the call, and to transcribe and received messages by email.

2. An ability to make calls from your Google Voice number and speak from any device that's handy to you at the time.

3. It's free.

4. Depending upon your use, you will find many more advantages as you use these features.

I also refer you to a great article by Kim Komando at http://www.komando.com/tips/248497/3-great-things-you-never-knew-you-could-do-with-a-free-internet-phone-number/all

Again, if the link does not work, copy it into your browser's URL window.

Editor's Note: In September 2014, Google integrated Voice with the Hangouts application. See https://support.google.com/voice/answer/3205713?hl=en&ref_topic=3563549

How Safe Are Wi-Fi Hotspots?

by Larry McJunkin
The Retired Geek Technical Tips for the Non-Technical
"Over 50" Crowd
http://retiredgeek.net/
http://retiredgeek.net/contact-me/

Many of us travel a lot, whether in business or just to visit our families and friends. We use our computers, smartphones and tablets in hotels, restaurants, and other places, but are these Wi-Fi "Hot Spots safe?

We all assume it's safe to connect to the Wi-Fi network at our local Starbucks, airport, waiting area where we have our cars serviced, hospital, or even at a relative's home. But it is a really bad idea...a very bad idea! There are many reasons you wouldn't want to do this. Let's look at the various types of Wi-Fi network.

Ad-hoc Networks & Access Point Networks

Basically, there are two types of Wi-Fi networks accessible by your computer: ad-hoc networks and traditional access point networks. Ad-hoc networks are getting a little outdated, but they still exist. They connect devices directly to each other, while access point networks connect devices to a central router. For example, you could connect two laptops or your laptop and your phone together without the need for a router or any other networking hardware. This would create an ad-hoc network. This is different from a traditional access point network where each device connects to a router, like you most likely have in your house.

Unsecured Network

A network is deemed unsecured just by virtue of the fact there is no password required to access it. If you're able to click on a network in your smartphone or tablet and connect to it without a password, you are connecting to an unsecured network, and that makes the device you're using susceptible to hacking...plain and simple.

So, that "free public Wi-Fi" network you encounter at the airport is nothing more than an ad-hoc network that was probably started long ago as a service to travelers, but still persists to this day. Basically, when you connect to this type of network, you are most likely connecting to another computer. And when you connect to that other computer, your computer "could" also be set up to broadcast the "free public Wi-Fi" network to other devices around you, essentially allowing access to all your private data to anyone within range. This is not good!

Why You Shouldn't Connect to Unsecured Networks

Let's say you're sitting in a coffee shop and decide you want to check your email to kill some time. You scan the available networks and find one that's open and doesn't require a password. You connect and start surfing. Coffee and free Wi-Fi, how good does it get...right? Wrong! A hacker who is also fond of coffee shops and could be located within range of the router you connected to. He's waiting for someone just like you to connect to the network so he can start a middleman attack. Within a few minutes, he could easily gain access to all your passwords, including bank accounts, email, and anything else he wants. You may not think this is possible...but with today's software and technology, it is!

How to Stop Wi-Fi Crime

So how can you help prevent all this from happening? For starters, you can use *only* a secured network that encrypts all of your data. This will ensure your data is safe and scrambled as it travels between you and its destination". Now, if a hacker were to intercept your message, they would see nothing but a bunch of scrambled garbage. Of course, no security measure is 100% safe, but at least good encryption will help a lot.

Tips for connecting to unfamiliar wireless networks...if you must do so:

1. Save the really important tasks, such as online banking and other finances, for home.

2. Try not to connect to any "public" or "unsecured" networks. If you absolutely need access to the Internet, pay a few bucks for the secure option.

3. When on a Wi-Fi network, look for websites that begin with "https" in the address bar, then try to use only these secure sites.

4. If you really want maximum security, use a Virtual Private Network (VPN).

Lastly, tell all your friends and family to follow these Wi-Fi safety tips. You just may save someone from a major financial or identity theft disaster.

Enabling Google Chrome's Built-in Password Generator
by Geof Goodrum

Director, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
Director1(at)patacs.org

The stable release of the Google Chrome™ web browser includes an experimental password generation feature that is a useful addition to the built-in password manager. Upon detecting a password entry field on a secured (https) web page, Chrome can generate a strong and pronounceable password following US Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) 181 that will be saved in the password manager.

Password generation is not enabled by default. To enable password generation, enter the following two commands (in sequence) in the address bar of the Chrome browser:

```
chrome://flags#enable-password-
generation
```

```
chrome://flags#enable-save-
password-bubble
```

These commands update and display the Chrome flag settings page. Please note the warning about experimental features at the top of the page. However, this feature, in particular, appears to work well.

PATACS Posts

Posts is an official publication of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS), a Virginia membership corporation. PATACS is a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are gratefully received and tax deductible.

Posts provides news, commentary and product information to PATACS members. Products or brand names mentioned may be trademarks or registered trademarks of their respective owners. The contents of articles herein are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily represent PATACS, the Board of Directors, nor its members.

This issue of **Posts** was prepared with Scribus v1.4 and LibreOffice Writer v4.3 software. The typefaces are Liberation Sans for the banner and headers, and Gentium for heading and body text. The authors provide photographs and screen images. Public domain clip art are from openclipart.org and www.wpclipart.com.

E-mail article submissions and reprint requests to editor(at)patacs.org

Membership Policy: Membership dues are $25.00 (U.S.Funds) per year, with a $15 surcharge for international mail. Membership in PATACS includes membership in all SIGs, access to the software libraries, and subscription to the Posts published 12 times per year in print by US Mail and PDF download by Internet. Applications may be obtained at any club meeting, by downloading from http://www.patacs.org/membershippat.html, by calling one of the Officers or Board members, or by writing to the club. A sample newsletter, membership application and related information may be obtained by enclosing $2 (for US addresses only) and mailing your request to the membership address. Please do not send cash by mail. Payment and applications may also be submitted at any meeting, or mail to: PATACS Membership, 4628 Valerie CT, Annandale VA 22003-3940.

Advertisement Policy: Ads are accepted from members for non-commercial purposes at no charge. Copy should be sent to the Editor in the same format as article submissions. Ads are accepted from commercial advertisers at the rate of $40 per full page, per appearance, with discounts for multiple insertions. Smaller ads are priced accordingly. Payment for ads must be made in advance of appearance. Advertisers must supply a permanent address and telephone number to the editor.

Reprint Policy: Permission to reprint articles from the PATACS Posts is given to school, personal computer club, and non-profit organization publications, provided that: (a) PATACS Inc. receives a copy of the publication; (b) credit is given to the PATACS Posts as the source; (c) the original author is given full credit; and (d) the article author has not expressly copyrighted the article. Recognition is one means of compensating our valued contributors.

January 2015 PATACS Event Calendar

www.patacs.org | 703-370-7649

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 New Year's Day	**2**	**3**
4	**5**	**6**	**7** 7-9pm Arlington General Meeting	**8**	**9**	**10**
11	**12**	**13**	**14** 7-9pm Online Zoom Meeting	**15**	**16**	**17** 12:30-3:30pm Fairfax General Meeting
18	**19** Martin Luther King Birthday 7-9pm Arlington Board Meeting	**20**	**21**	**22**	**23**	**24**
25	**26**	**27**	**28** 7-9pm Arlington Technology & PC Help Desk	**29**	**30**	**31** March Newsletter Articles Due

Arlington: Carlin Hall Community Center   Fairfax: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
5711 4th Street South   4210 Roberts Road
Arlington VA 22204   Fairfax VA 22032