

Next CTPC Meeting

Tuesday, March 26, 2013 - 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.

Digital Technology in Dentistry

The Leading Edge of Dental Care

All stages of healthcare have experienced major changes in recent years as they implement new technologies to enhance patient care as well as to improve scheduling.

Dr Robert Emilio, a graduate of Columbia University School of Dental Medicine, has a practice at 111 East Ave. in Norwalk where he utilizes advanced technology to enhance patient care. This technology includes digital radiography, laser dentistry, fiber-optic intra-oral

videography tours of the mouth and before and after photo "makeovers". He shares information with patients on flat panel displays such as appointment calendar and a list of work that needs to be performed. He also offers a music app that allows patients to pick the music they want to hear while the work is performed. This technology and methods provides leading edge treatment that can be performed in a more efficient, effective and comfortable manner. Dr Emilio will discuss the new technology and its uses at our meeting on

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March 26th, Tuesday, 6:30p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

April 23rd, Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

GENERAL MEETINGS

Meetings are held on the 4th (not last) Tuesday of each month except August and December. There is no charge to attend general meetings. See back page for location and directions.

www.ctpc.org

Ira Wilsker

How Good is Your Home Internet Service?

Websites:

- https://www.fcc.gov/measuring-broadband-america/2013/February#Test_Results
- <https://www.fcc.gov/encyclopedia/broadband-speed>
- <http://www.broadband.gov>
- <http://www.broadband.gov/qualitytest/about/>
- <http://wwwb.comcast.com/products/xfinity-internet.html>

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently released "A Report on Consumer Wireline Broadband Performance in the U.S.", dated February, 2013. This report is an annual update on the speed and utilization of consumer internet services, under the FCC's Measuring Broadband America program. Tens of thousands of consumers have reported on their upload and download speeds at various times of day utilizing a free Java based utility provided by the FCC.

Anyone who would like to see his download and upload speeds utilizing a

standardized web based utility can conduct one of the official FCC provided internet speed tests by going to <http://www.broadband.gov>, and then clicking on the "Test My Broadband Speed Now" link in the center of the page. A Java based window will open in the browser page, where the consumer must first enter the address from which they are connecting to the internet, and then clicking on the "Go To Test" button. Two different speed test utilities are available, one from M-Labs, and the other from Ookla; the Ookla test will work with almost all browsers, but the M-Lab application does not work with Safari, Chrome, and Opera web browsers. The window will then change to show the tests which will be conducted, including download speed, upload speed, latency, and jitter. According to broadband.gov, these terms are defined as, "Download Speed: The speed at which data is sent from the testing server to your computer. Upload Speed: The speed at which data is sent from your computer to the testing server. Latency: The time it takes for

data to be sent from your computer to the testing server and back (the "round trip time"). Jitter: The variability in the delay between your computer and the testing server." The actual test itself only takes a few seconds, with the results displayed in an easy to understand format. I have run this official FCC speed test several times over the past few years, with my results anonymously being incorporated into the national data. My download speed has been consistently about 15% below the "maximum" speed advertised by my internet service provider (ISP), with my upload speed about a third below the advertised speed. While my ISP has replaced my outside lines, and run line checks to test the quality of my internet service, my current

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CTPC Dues Past Due

Annual dues were \$25.00 payable as of January 1st. If you've already paid, we thank you greatly for your continued support and you can expect your newsletters to keep coming.

If you have not yet paid, this will be your last newsletter until we receive your check.

You can mail your check to the CTPC, PO Box 291, New Canaan, CT 06840. You can also bring your check to the March meeting. ♠

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Using the Social Security Death Records

The Social Security Administration's Death Index (SSDI) can be a boon to beginning genealogists. The Social Security number is the most valuable piece of information when seeking a number of other documents. It is essential for ordering paper copies of original death records, obituaries, and more. The SSDI is the first step in obtaining this information. If you can only trace your U.S. ancestry back to your grandparents or possibly great-grandparents, the Social Security Administration can help you find where they were born, the names of their parents, and more. The SSDI can be especially helpful for those researching immigrants as the data often shows where the individual was born in "the old country."

The Social Security Administration was created by an act of law in 1935 as part of President Roosevelt's New Deal program. The act laid out a retirement system for many Americans, although not all. The act also created a new governmental agency to manage the program. In the following 69 years, the Social Security Administration has become one of the largest agencies in the federal government.

The Social Security Administration started computerizing records in 1962. This made it possible to produce an index of people who had Social Security numbers and are deceased. The information in the Social Security Death Index for people who died prior to 1962 is sketchy since SSA's death information was not automated before that date. Persons who died before 1962 are rarely listed in the SSDI. Some of the online Web sites advertise that the data they possess will contain information about deaths "as early as 1937," but that claim is a bit misleading; 99.9% of the information is for 1962 and later.

Initially, the Social Security Administration only recorded the deaths of individuals who were receiving retirement benefits from the Administration. Those who died before reaching retirement age were not listed. Neither were those who had different retirement systems, such as railroad workers, school teachers, and other municipal, state, and federal employees. In the 1970s the railroad and many other retirement systems were merged into the Social Security system. Deaths of those retirees then started appearing in the SSDI.

In the late 1980s and after, all deaths in

the U.S. were reported to the Social Security Administration and recorded in the SSDI. You can find deaths of children and non-retired adults listed for the 1990s, but not for earlier years.

Because legal aliens in the U.S. can obtain a Social Security card, their names may appear in the SSDI if their deaths were reported, even if the death occurred overseas.

The online SSDI databases contain the following information fields:

Social Security number
Surname
Given Name
Date of Death
Date of Birth
Last Known Residence
Location of Last Benefit
Date and Place of Issuance

You can access the Social Security Death Index at no charge on a number of Web sites, including:

- New England Historic Genealogical Society (this database was updated just a few weeks ago with the latest data through June, 2004): <http://www.americanancestors.org/Search.aspx?Ca=344&Da=269>
- Family Tree Legends (this version has several search capabilities not found on other sites): <http://www.familytreelegends.com/records/ssdi>
- Ancestry.com: <http://search.ancestry.com/search/db.aspx?dbid=3693>
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons) offer the Social Security Death Index on their popular Family Search site: <https://new.familysearch.org/>

Keep in mind, however, that the online SSDI database is only an index — an abbreviated listing. The Social Security Administration holds additional information that can be a genealogical jackpot. The index listing of an ancestor is merely your ticket to this jackpot.

From 1936 on, anyone who has applied for a Social Security Card filled out an application form (SS-5) that the U.S. Government keeps on file. This application form (SS-5) contains the following information:

Full name
*Full name at birth (including maiden

name)
*Present mailing address
Age at last birthday
Date of birth
*Place of birth (city, county, state)
*Father's full name "regardless of whether living or dead"
*Mother's full name, including maiden name, "regardless of whether living or dead"
*Sex and race
*Ever applied for SS number/Railroad Retirement before? Yes/No
*Current employer's name and address
*Date signed
*Applicant's signature

The items marked with an asterisk are not available in the online SSDI database.

The SS-5 form is obviously much more valuable to the genealogist than the limited information shown in the online death index. The Social Security Administration makes copies of the original Social Security application form (the SS-5) available to anyone who requests information on a deceased individual. You can obtain a photocopy of the SS-5 form by writing to the Social Security Administration.

The SSA charges \$27.00 for each individual SS-5 copy (\$16 for an abbreviated NUMIDENT form, but most genealogists will prefer the SS-5 itself). The SSA is not in the business of doing genealogical research and cannot, by law, expend Social Security Trust Fund money for purposes not related to the operation of the Social Security program. The \$27 fee is intended to offset the cost to the government whenever SSA provides information from its files for non-program purposes.

There is no standard form to fill out when requesting a copy of the deceased's SS-5. Instead, you must write a letter. You can "copy-and-paste" the following sample letter into your favorite word processor, then change all the information shown inside the curly braces { }:

Social Security Administration
Office of Earnings Operations
FOIA Workgroup
300 N. Greene Street
P.O. Box 33022
Baltimore, Maryland 21290

Re: Freedom of Information Act Request

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Webpage Font Size Too Small? – Think about Screen Resolution

Anyone who has taken our basic computer classes knows that the font size can be changed just by selecting the appropriate text and then selecting the desired text size, usually from about 8 points to 72 points. And if you were in one of my classes you know that a point is $1/72^{\text{nd}}$ of an inch. That's right; a 72 point selection will print text, on a printer, one inch high.

But everything you see on the screen is not as easy to control as the font of the text of a word processing document. There are, typically, no font size selections on a webpage when you're surfing the web; although you can make some font selections if you are using Internet Explorer. This selection is made by double clicking Tools, then selecting Internet Options. The "fonts" selection is toward the bottom of the window. Here you can select "default" fonts to be used if the webpage does not determine a font. But, practically speaking, you probably will never use these fonts, so don't rush to change these selections. (Other browsers probably have similar selections.) The size of the font that you see on your monitor is determined by settings that are determined by the webpage, and settings on your display graphics adapter. The webpage settings are determined by the webpage designer; the browser just follows the webpage's direction. The display graphics adapter settings are adjustable and are located in the "Display" Control Panel.

In Windows 7, a quick way to get to the Display control panel is to right-click on any empty space on the desktop, select "Personalize", and finally select "Display" (lower left). At this point you can select "Smaller" (the default type size), "Medium", or "Larger". Because these settings depend on the Screen Resolution that is set, if you choose Medium or Larger you may be alerted that "*Some items may not fit on your screen if you choose this setting while your display is set to this resolution.*" So screen resolution is involved in determining the font size and is an important parameter to understand, so that you can make the best choice.

Screen Resolution is generally defined in terms of pixels. A pixel is a picture element. (There is a technical difference between pixels and dots depending on different displays, but for simplicity, for

this discussion I am going to use the term dot in the place of pixel.) So Screen Resolution, then, is the number of dots that can be displayed on the screen. It is usually indicated by two numbers, first the horizontal number of dots, followed by the vertical number of dots, for example, 640x480, 800x600, 1024x768, or 1920x1080. (Yes, if you multiply the horizontal and vertical numbers, you get the total number of dots displayed on the screen.) These four resolution settings are also called VGA, SVGA, XGA, and HD-1080. (There are a whole host of screen resolutions that can potentially be used, and are summarized at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Display_resolution. The chart shows the most common display screen resolutions.) The HD-1080 resolution is also the standard used in High Definition Televisions, which is typically referred to as 1080p. So, if you are looking for a display that will show High Definition movies the way they were intended to be shown, make sure your Display Adapter is capable of showing at least 1920x1080.

The Screen Resolution control can be reached easily by right-clicking in any empty space on the desktop, and then selecting "Screen Resolution". (Or by clicking the start button, followed by selecting "Control Panel", followed by selecting "Display", followed by selecting "Adjust resolution" {upper left}.) The current screen resolution is shown as "Screen Resolution:", in the middle of the Screen Resolution window. The Screen Resolution slider control can be accessed by clicking the downward facing triangle next to the resolution that is currently selected. The Screen Resolution slider controls the resolution of the display and hence the size of text on the screen. The number of selections on this control is determined by your display adapter and your particular monitor. You may have from 2 to many selections. The selections on the slider range from "Low" to "High". (Click on a different resolution on the bar to see a preview of the changed setting in the "Change the appearance of the display" box, (notice how the box representing the screen changes size and shape), then if you like it, click "Apply", if you don't like it try another, or click "Cancel".) Moving towards "High" puts more "dots" on the screen; however, this typically makes the

size of objects smaller. Decreasing this setting (moving towards Low) usually makes things larger, but you might start to lose the right side of some web pages. (If you can't easily read the right side of a webpage, you might increase this setting, but things will probably get a little smaller. Try a setting with a few of your favorite web pages and see what setting is the best compromise.)

If you are still wondering what setting to use, click on "What display setting shall I choose?" and you will be treated to a help screen that further discusses screen size and screen resolution with some recommendations for appropriate settings for different display sizes. Note also, that you can easily get to the "Display Font Size" screen (discussed above) by clicking on "Make text and other items smaller or larger".

If you were wondering why the shape of the screen changes with resolution, it is because the resolutions that are supported by the display adapter cover the older 4x3 aspect ratio and the more current 16x9 (wide angle) aspect ratio. The 4x3 aspect ratio is what we inherited from seventy years of analog TV screens. All TV screens, before HD, were built with this aspect ratio. Aspect ratio is typically described by horizontal x vertical. So a 4x3 TV screen has 3 vertical increments for every 4 horizontal increments. (Academic observation for math majors: this always formed a 3x4x5 triangle. A 25 inch TV had a 25 inch diagonal with a 20 inch horizontal and a 15 inch vertical.) The more current 16x9 wide angle aspect ratio screens provide more viewing in the horizontal. For every 3 vertical increments there are 16/3 or 5 1/3 horizontal increments showing a wider angle view.

Screen Resolution is the key to getting a comfortable view of your favorite web pages. If you need to, try some different settings. If you still aren't happy, maybe try another Graphics Adapter, if we're talking about a desktop. If we're talking about a laptop, you're probably going to live with those currently provided. It is just about impossible to change the graphics adapter on a laptop. ♣

Social Media Basics

I'm a little distraught at the number of my friends who still do not understand social media (i.e., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, & Pinterest) — and I don't blame them. The media leaders have done a poor job of differentiating themselves, so let me see if I can help.

Social media are important to you because they provide the *thought-leadership* today. If it's important, it's on one of those media. And when it's no longer relevant, all reference to it is gone — like it never existed. Think back to that volunteer organization you belonged to in the last century.

Facebook is like the newsletter with articles posted and 'letters to the editor' gauging responses. Its games can be loosely equated to the crossword puzzles and quizzes such newsletters featured. (Of course, the games on Facebook are much more complicated than the puzzles ever were.) But be aware that Facebook can be a trap because once you get 'into it', you're hooked. Started in 2004, by May 2012, Facebook

had , more than half of them using Facebook on a mobile device. The average user spends 405 minutes per month.

Twitter is like the bulletin board where you posted questions, comments, and for sale items. Due to the space limitations, such memos were short. Twitter limits messages to 140 characters (that's *not* words) or less. says it has 500+ million active users as of 2012, generating over 340 million tweets daily & handling over 1.6 billion search queries per day. The average users spends 89 minutes per month.

YouTube is like the old home movies. Someone was forever trying to get club members to see his vacation film from the visit to Coosa County, Alabama, or points south.

800+ million unique users visit YouTube each month, watching 3 billion hours of video are watched each month. 72 hours of video are uploaded every minute. 70% of its traffic comes from outside the US. Also, 500 years of YouTube videos are watched every day on Facebook,

& over 700 YouTube videos are shared on Twitter each minute.

Pinterest is like the scrapbook some clubs put together where members would include things that they wanted to remember about that club or its environment. "Pinterest users can upload, save, sort and manage images, known as pins, and other media content (i.e. videos) through collections known as pinboards. They are generally themed so that pins can easily be organized, categorized and discovered by other users." In January 2012, 11.7 million unique U.S. visitors — but those are not necessarily users. 82% of its users are females with an average visit lasting 16+ minutes. The average user spends 405 minutes per month.

And there must be money in social media sites because Facebook and Google are buying them at an alarming rate.

Still Google+, the latest challenger to Facebook has got a ways to go. It has only 250+ million users, but it was launched in June 2011 so it's not had time to percolate. ♠

Linda Gonse, Editor/Webmaster, Orange County PCUG, California April 2012 issue, Nibbles and Bits www.orcopug.org editor(at) orcopug.org

Twitter Abbreviations that You Should Know

Even non-users of Twitter know by now that the message limit on this social networking miniblog is 140 characters. Users are often surprised at how much information they can convey in such a limited number of words. But, it does cause writer's to choose their words carefully and to use them frugally. One of the methods that is often used to fit more into less is abbreviation. Not the unorthodox abbreviations that desperate writers, short on space, sometimes employ. But, standard abbreviations/acronymns that are commonly found in tweets. A few of the abbreviations are specific to the Twitter application. Most of the others have been used for some time in other types of social communication, such as forums, email, text, spoken slang, common short forms, and commercial buzzwords.

A partial list of these abbreviations/acronymns are given here, but you can find more of them (including more complete explanations of them) on Twitter at <https://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary>.

Typical Abbreviations

AFAIK — As far as I know

B4 — Before
BFN — Bye for now
BGD — Background
BTW — By the way
CUL8R — Call you later
DAM — Don't annoy me
DD — Dear daughter
DS — Dear son
DYK — Do/Did you know
EMA — Email address
F2F /FTF — Face to face
FB — Facebook
FOTD — Find of the day
FTW — For the win
FWIW — For what it's worth.
GMAFB — Give me a f---ing break
GTFOOH — Get the f--- out of here
HAGN — Have a good night
HAND — Have a nice day
HOTD — Headline of the day
HTH — Hope that helps
IC — I see
ICYMI — In case you missed it
IDK — I don't know
IIRC — If I remember correctly
IMHO — In my humble opinion.
IRL — In real life

JK — Just kidding, joke
JSYK — Just so you know
JV — Joint venture
KYSO — Knock your socks off
LMAO — Laughing my ass off
LMK — Let me know
LO — Little One (child)
LOL — Laugh out loud
MIRL — Meet in real life
NBD — No big deal
NCT — Nobody cares, though
NFW — No f---ing way
NJoy — Enjoy
NSFW — Not safe for work
NTS — Note to self
OH — Overheard
OMG — Oh my God
OOMF — One of my friends/followers
ORLY — Oh, really?
PLMK — Please let me know
QOTD — Quote of the day
RTQ — Read the question
SFW — Safe for work
SMDH — Shaking my damn head (vigorously)
SMH — Shaking my head
SO — Significant Other

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The Amazing PIXEL

Years ago my daughter had a toy called “Lite-Brite” where you made your own “digital” image by putting colored plastic pegs into a black board that had a light bulb behind it. We had to view it in a dark room to see the colorful image. It was crude, but each peg really was a “pixel.” You probably have heard the term “pixel” before, especially if you have purchased a digital camera. But what exactly is a “pixel” anyway? And what do you really need to know about it?

As technology furiously changes everything we are comfortable with (and leaves us in the dust with the dinosaurs) it introduces many new words into our vocabulary. There is no better example of this than how digital photography and computers have changed the way pictures are taken, stored, viewed, shared, edited, and printed. Goodbye film, goodbye Brownie camera (remember them?) and hello digital and hello pixel. A brief definition of a “pixel” would be: the smallest element of a digital photograph or image which has only one specific color.

So a digital photograph is composed of pixels. Millions of them. Each pixel (usually a tiny square in shape) can be only one color. Digital photos are usually measured by the number of pixels, either the total number of pixels in the photo (such as an 8 mega-pixel photo) or by the number of pixels horizontally and vertically (a 1,000 by 1,000 pixel photo is the same as a 1,000,000 or 1 mega-pixel photo). The greater number of pixels the higher the resolution of your photo. Usually more expensive cameras give you more pixels in the photo, and this is a good thing. The number of pixels per photo that your camera is capable of is shown on the front of the camera. When you take a photo, each pixel is saved in computer memory with its exact location in the photo and its specific color out of about 16 million colors possible. (By the way, I believe the human eye can distinguish around 10 million colors, so our technology used here is already beyond our sense of sight). No wonder a single photo can take up many times the space of a document in computer memory! It is at this point that I want you to imagine a “Lite-Brite” toy the size of a football field and a choice of about 16 million colors for the pegs. Work as fast as you can to create an image. And, so you don’t forget, write down the exact location of each peg and the color you selected. You will need

this information to copy or do anything with your image. This is basically what a digital camera does in a fraction of a second when you press the button.

To see a single pixel, try opening a photo on your computer (go to “My pictures”, find a photo and double-click on it with your left mouse button to open it – it will probably open in the “Windows Photo Viewer” program if you are using Windows 7). When you are viewing a picture in a program look for a magnifying glass icon or click on “view” to get to a zoom option for your photo. If you zoom in far enough you will see the small squares that make up your photo – each square is a pixel. So, if your photo has a curve or an arch in it and you zoom in far enough you will see that the curve is really made up of tiny squares. So in this sense, computers really are “squaring the circle”!

How you view or look at a photo is dependent upon the hardware device (monitor or printer) or the software program (Windows Photo Viewer, Adobe Photoshop, Picasa, etc.) you use. Fortunately today both monitors and printers are very capable of dealing with high-resolution photos.

I guess the bottom line is that we will let the computers and the printers do their magic and we won’t worry about pixels at all. But here are a few tips that may help anyway:

1. Always save the original photo before you start messing with it. Only play with a copy.

2. If you crop a photo you are deleting the pixels you do not want. The cropped photo will have fewer pixels and take up less computer memory space.

3. Reducing the size of a photo may be helpful if you want it to take up less computer memory. Suppose you reduce the photo to 25% of its original size. That would mean that you are replacing four pixels with one pixel. You will have lost resolution but your photo will now take up only 25% of the computer memory space as the original. Why would you want to do this? Well, it is easier and faster to send them in emails and also many more photos can fit into those “digital picture frames”, on CDs, and on those little “thumb” drives.

4. You can print an image almost any size you want but you cannot “add pixels” to the image and get more resolution. (But I bet there are some programs out there that can do a good job of trying this trick.)

If you want to find out more information, go to Google, of course, and enter “pixel”. If you have lots of time on your hands, you can pretend that you are a digital camera — just find one of those old “Lite-Brite” toys and make your own picture. It gives you a whole new appreciation for technology, doesn’t it? ♠

The Mac Corner - Danny Uff

iPhone and iPad Covers

Call me crazy, but I have never bought a protective case for any of my iPhones or iPads. The closest I came is when Apple was giving away iPhone 4 bumpers when the company was dealing with that situation called “antennagate.”

That idea changed when I dropped my iPhone on a hard floor and got a chip in it. Yes, I was peeved at myself for not getting a case for the 4, and that situation changed my mind. So, when I got my iPhone 4S and my new iPad, I knew it was time to swallow my pride, and get a protective case for both devices.

About a year ago, my girlfriend got an Otterbox case for her iPhone. I didn’t really pay attention to it at first (it didn’t help that it was hot bright pink.) But over the following months, I started noticing

how well the case was holding up to her daily routine.

So, I went on to Otterbox’s web site and looked around. I came across their “Defender Series” (which is what my girlfriend has) and was hooked from the get go.

The series provides ultimate protection against accidental drops. Some covers also include a protective front plastic cover so those fingerprints aren’t so noticeable on the front of the device. The covers fit like a glove and come in cool colors and can be a pain in the butt to put on.

But the company’s web site does have helpful how-to videos on installing the covers.

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To 'Cloud' or Not To "Cloud," That Is the Question

I'd heard of saving computer files to the "cloud," but I really didn't know very much about it until our April CIACUG meeting when David Williams provided members with a great deal of helpful information about how it works.

If you have never had your computer "crash," be destroyed in a fire or flood, be struck by lightning, or stolen, you have been exceptionally fortunate, or, perhaps, you haven't been computing very long. After spending many painstaking hours of inputting data, contact lists, medical histories, financial information, etc. on our first

computer, we experienced a crash that lost all of that data forever. Many times you toss or shred the paper trail thinking your information is safe forever. How naive can one be? It can be an "oops moment," or it can be devastating. We had to consider ours an "oh phoo moment" and move on with life and start over, and that is disconcerting, to say the least. If you have business information and customer lists on your computer, it can put you out of business temporarily, at the very least.

If you've been backing up your files to an external hard drive, what if that is destroyed in a fire? If you've been religiously backing up your data to disc times two, putting one in the fire safe (not very safe) and taking one to an off-site location, that gets time-consuming and cumbersome. The easy solution...back it up to the "cloud."

If you are a non-business user, there are several cloud servers that give you a certain amount of free storage, and it was pointed out that it is a good plan to review the sites to see what they have to offer

and then choose a couple that you feel fit your needs and you are comfortable with probably being around for the long-term. There have been servers that have "disappeared" in the past without ample warning for users to recall their data. Thus, it's a good plan to save the same data on more than one cloud server. If you are a business user or require more space than the free allotment, there will be a charge. With some servers you can increase your allotment by "recommending" their service to others, and if they should decide to sign on with that service, you may then be allowed additional storage space.

The next step is to set up your accounts, organize your files, save your files to the clouds and then synchronize your pc, your laptop, your iPad, etc. so that any changes you make to any of your saved files will automatically be updated on all your devices. That's a time-saving plus. Also, you are able to access those files in the cloud from any web-based hardware that has access to the internet. You can also share data files, photos, etc. with friends and family. Be sure to remember, or write down, your user names and passwords.

Following are some links to websites for comparison purposes:

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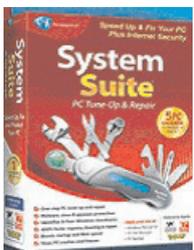
Cloud Computing

Having secure access to all your applications and data from any network device

Reviewed by Bart Koslow, Member, Thousand Oaks PC Club, CA, www.topcc.org, [spatter \(at\) roadrunner.com](mailto:spatter (at) roadrunner.com)

System Suite Professional 2012

System Suite Professional (SS) is a comprehensive utility program that will tune up and repair your PC and provide malware, virus, spyware, and firewall protection. Unlike most programs today, it comes with a printed manual of 174 pages that guides you through the many aspects of the software.



I already had SS version 2011 installed on my computer. SS removes prior versions before installing the latest one. When I first installed SS, Net Defense, which is the firewall, did not install. After three back and forth emails with Avanquest support and three differing attempts to re-install it, I finally got everything up and running properly. This is the first time I encountered an installation problem with SS. The installation CD comes with two bonus programs,

AutoSave Essentials, and Power Desk 8 Standard. Avanquest sells AutoSave Essentials and Power Desk Pro for \$39.95 each. I installed Power Desk 8 Standard, but not AutoSave as I have plenty of backup software already. Power Desk is an augmented Windows File Manager. I have used it for years and highly recommend it. I also noticed that the SS now comes with a license for 5 PCs that will work with all versions of Windows XP and Windows 7.

Opening SS, I saw a new program interface page that was improved over that of version 11. One of my favorite parts of SS is System Recovery where you may create a System Restore Point and a Checkpoint in the event you have a problem and have to go back. I was pleasantly surprised to find that the restore point creation was much faster than in the prior version. I cannot tell you how many times I have used this feature to recover from a major problem. I have used the included anti-

virus, anti-malware-spyware and firewall in the past, and have found them to work very well. A part of SS that I especially like is the Registry Cleaner which has been excellent in the past, and has never created a problem for me. Another feature I like is to view "Problems" that SS has found, and selectively determine which one to fix.

If you are a person who does not wish to fiddle with the individual parts of the program, there is an easier way. Just select One-Click Fix All and SS will do the rest. Another way is to select One Fix Wizards of which there are three, one for each segment of the program - Optimize, Security and Fix & Maintain - and run them selectively. There is a lot of flexibility in how you may use this program. Working in the background you have Active Intelligence Technology which continuously, silently and automatically monitors and fixes all

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The Tip Corner

Virus Stole Your Computer

Some viruses leave behind nasty side effects, even when your antivirus program has cleaned the actual virus from your computer. Some virus programs, such as the Windows 7 Recovery virus will hide your files in an attempt to coerce you into paying for the virus's removal. When you view your desktop or click on your C: drive, it may appear that all of your files have been deleted, but they haven't — the virus has simply hidden them. You can restore them easily using a simple command prompt trick that works in Windows XP, Vista and 7.

Click the Start button in the lower left corner of your task bar. Type cmd in the search box at the bottom of the menu and press Enter. If you're using Windows XP, click Run and type cmd into the Run box. Then type `attrib -s -h -r c:/*.* /s /d` and press Enter to execute the command.

Allow the command to finish executing (it may take a few minutes). When it's done, close the command prompt window and check your desktop — your files, hidden by the virus, have been restored. You can use the same trick to restore files the virus may have hidden on other drives, including removable storage such as flash drives and external hard drives; just change the drive letter in the command above to the drive letter of the storage device with the hidden files.

Rename multiple files at once

I used to search for photo programs that would allow batch renaming of all those pictures you get in from your camera, such as DSC_5671 to something more descriptive. Image my surprise when I discovered batch filing is a click away. Just highlight all the files/folders you want to rename, Right-click, choose Rename and call it something that best describes them such as "John's graduation". It will rename all the highlighted pictures as John's Graduation, and number them sequentially. For a way to more precisely number pictures a good photo editor will really help out.

Google Reverse Image Search

Here is a great idea. If you are looking for an image similar to one you have just hike over to Google.com and click the Images button in the upper left-hand corner. The page should reload and you should see a little camera icon in the search box.

You can either browse to where your image is on your computer, paste the URL of an image from another site (right-click on the image and select Copy image URL) or even drag and drop an image from your desktop into the search bar.

Then just hit the Search button and Google will scour the internet for like-looking images to the one you uploaded. You can also click on the link at the bottom and watch a short video that offers more explanation.

Change the task bar

Vista and Windows 7 disable the "File, Edit, View, Tools, etc." on the top of the open folder. Want them back? Although Vista and Windows 7 have disabled the old menu bar by default, you can enable it temporarily, if you would like.

When you have a folder open, press the Alt key and the menu will appear. Press Alt again and it will disappear. This is temporary. But you can make it permanent if you want to.

First, open one of your Windows folders, left-click on Organize. On the drop-down menu, left-click on Layout. A new menu will pop up. Point your Cursor to Menu Bar (it's at the top of the menu) and left-click to put a check by it. That's it! Now every time you open a folder in Windows, the menu bar will be there. If you decide you want it disabled, just follow the above instructions, only when you get to Menu Bar, left-click on it to remove the

check mark.

Temp Directory Maintenance

The temp directory is the location on your computer to which all temporary files are saved. Temporary files are files saved by your web browser or another program in order to speed up that program's performance. One good example are the temporary files created when you browse the internet. When you go to a site a copy of the opening page will be saved to your computer so that the next time you go to that page, it will pop right up for you with little to no delay. Your web browser will do this for many of the pages you access on the internet. Often the files are deleted by the program that created them. However, if a program ends in error, has a component that is not working properly, or any other irregularity, these files are left in the temporary drive. Others are retained simply for efficiency or to speed access to pages you have already visited on the web.

After a while the more files that are in the temporary folder, the slower your computer begins to process. Eventually, their existence is enough to cause sluggishness in your computer. To get to the temp folder in Windows 7 and Vista, just press Start, and in the Search Box type %temp%, then hit enter. Since Windows usually cleans out the temp folder periodically, you might want to just delete those .TMP files that are over a couple of weeks old that got stuck. ♠

iPhone and iPad Covers – continued from Page 5

So, here are the pros and cons:

PROS:

- Protects the entire device (including the charging port).
- Can hold up to almost anything (drops, minor throws, etc.)
- Comes in various colors.
- Very helpful pre-sale and how-to videos.
- Some models come with a belt clip.

CONS:

- No included installation instructions (on the iPhone case box).
- Is a pain in the butt to put on.
- Cannot charge device in a dock.
- Port covers can be hard to open for

large or arthritic hands.

- Belt clip can be hard to use (especially in emergency situations).
- Cover up the home button – Home button can be harder to press.

All in all, I am very picky about the cases that I have on my devices. But after 48 hours, they are still on my devices and I don't plan on taking them off anytime soon. ♠

Danny is a member of the Help Line, Mac OS X and Windows XP, Tiger/Leopard/Networking, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA, May 2012, LVCG Journal, www.lvcm.org, www.connectingpeoplesoftware.com, danny.uff (at) gmail.com

quality of service is (according to my ISP) in compliance with their performance standards. According to the recently released FCC report, my experience is not unusual.

Among the speed and performance findings published in the February, 2013 FCC report was that while most ISPs generally provided faster speeds than advertised, several of the best known ISPs generally fell short of their advertised performance. Among those who, on average, performed below their advertised speeds were AT&T (the lowest average performer at about 15% below advertised speeds), CenturyLink, Qwest, and WindStream. Time Warner Cable download speeds tested very slightly below the advertised speeds, but the Time Warner Cable upload speeds were almost precisely as advertised (SOURCE: http://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/measuring-broadbandreport/2013/charts_February/chart3.jpg). Among the best performers, in terms of advertised speeds were ViaSat/Exede which typically provided speeds about 40% to 60% faster than advertised, with Verizon Fiber performing 15% to 20% better than advertised.

Consumers, on average, are migrating to faster speeds, either by choice or as their ISPs increase the speeds on current accounts, often without a significant increase in cost. According to the FCC survey, 41% of consumers who had minimal speed broadband service (below 1 Mbps) switched to a faster service between April and September 2012, while 21% of the next speed tier, 1 to 3 Mbps (a common mid-grade DSL service), switched to a higher speed during that same time period. While some domestic ISPs are testing internet services at speeds of 75 Mbps, many ISPs are commonly offering service at speeds above 30 Mbps. The average consumer internet speed at the end of the most recent testing period (September, 2012) was 15.6 Mbps, an average of 20% faster than the previous year (SOURCE: http://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/measuring-broadbandreport/2013/charts_February/chart21.jpg).

There is some commonality in performance and speed within internet connection types, such as DSL, cable, fiber, and satellite. On average, cable internet users averaged very close to 100% of the advertised internet speeds, with download speeds be-

ing very slightly below the advertised speeds, but the upload speeds slightly faster than advertised. DSL users had the greatest deficiency of performance, compared to advertised speeds; nationally, DSL download speeds were only 85.3% as fast as advertised, but upload speeds were almost exactly as advertised, at 98.9%. Fiber based internet connections typically outperformed their advertised speeds, with downloads averaging 15% faster than advertised, and uploads 8% faster. Compared to advertised performance speeds, satellite based internet performed the best; downloads averaged 37% faster than advertised, and uploads were an outstanding 61.5% faster than advertised (SOURCE: http://transition.fcc.gov/cgb/measuring-broadbandreport/2013/charts_February/chart4.jpg). According to the FCC, there was one clear winner who provided speeds in excess of what was advertised, "In our testing, we found that during peak periods 90 percent of ViaSat (Exede) consumers received 140 percent or better of the advertised speed of 12 Mbps. In addition, both peak and non-peak performance was significantly higher than advertised rates." It should be noted that these performance results (above) are not based on absolute speed, but how the actual speed received by consumers compared to the speed advertised by their ISPs.

Locally here in Southeast Texas, we have two major ISPs who provide the bulk of the "hard wired" consumer internet service, but they are by no means the only broadband internet service providers. AT&T (formerly Southwestern Bell) is the primary provider of DSL service, while Time Warner Cable, through its RoadRunner service, provides broadband service to many cable subscribers. With the rapidly increasing availability of 4G speed wireless service, many users are now using a modem-type device to connect home computers to fast internet services provided by the cell phone companies. Many of the newer smart phones offer "tethering" where the smartphone can connect to a computer with a USB cable and serve as modem providing broadband service, again through the cell phone provider.

As popular as these services are, many local residents have other competitive and viable options for fast internet service. One of the largest cable companies in the country, Comcast, has quietly started to

offer fast broadband internet service, up to 105 Mbps, as well as cable television service, to selected neighborhoods in Beaumont with its "Xfinity" service. Details of the locally available Xfinity service, including service areas (very limited at present), is available at www.comcast.com/products/xfinity.

Several satellite providers are also offering broadband internet service, which for many people, especially those where more traditional hard wired services are not available, is a viable alternative. Most of the satellite providers now offer duplex broadband internet, rather than the older simplex service where fast internet downloads were available directly by satellite, but uploads were by regular telephone connections; the newer, more modern services are very speed competitive with many of the more traditional internet services. The top satellite performers are HughesNet and Exede, both of which offer very fast internet connections, often in the 12 to 15 Mbps range. Most other satellite internet providers offer much slower internet speeds; these satellite internet providers include WildBlue, MyBlueDish, Dish Network, and StarBand, typically offering internet connections in the 512 Kbps to 1.5 Mbps ranges. As an example, the Exede satellite internet service offers download speeds up to 12 Mbps download, and 3 Mbps upload speeds for as little as \$49.95 per month with 10 Mb metered service; higher amounts of metered service are available at extra cost, with unlimited unmetered service during the off-peak time of midnight to 5am local time. DirectTV users can get the fast Exede internet service bundled with their television satellite service at a discounted price. The HughesNet satellite internet service offers download speeds of 10 to 15 Mbps, and upload speeds of 1 - 2 Mbps at prices from \$59.99 to \$99.99 per month (depending on speed), with promotional discounts available. Many of the satellite internet providers offer to either sell or lease the equipment to the user at extra cost, but discounts are often available to cover the cost of the equipment; free installation is almost universally available for new satellite internet subscribers who contract for service.

With all of the choices that we have for broadband internet service, as well as the

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Using the Social Security Death Records – continued from Page 2

Dear Freedom of Information Officer,

I am writing this request under the Freedom of Information Act, 5 U.S.C. Section 552. I hereby request a copy of the SS-5, Application for Social Security Card for the following individual:

{first name} {last name}
{Social Security Number as obtained from the online SSDI}
Birth: {Date of birth}
Death: {Date of death}

This individual is deceased, having been listed in the Social Security Administration's Death Master File. I am requesting a copy of this person's original SS-5 form. I understand the fee for this service is \$27.00. Included is a check for \$27.00 made out to the Social Security Administration to cover any administrative costs required by this request.

Please respond to my request upon receipt of this initial correspondence. Thank you for your attention and assistance.

Sincerely,

{Your name}
{Your full address}

Daytime Phone Number: {Your telephone number}

If you want to obtain the SS-5 forms for more than one person, it is suggested that you write separate letters and separate checks, and mail them in separate envelopes. Be patient. You may have to wait several months for the response to your letter(s).

If you cannot find a person in the SSDI, the Social Security Administration may still be able to help. You may request an "SSN search." The SS will try to find the person's Social Security Number, even for those deaths before 1962. To request this service, you must send \$29 and provide the person's full name, state of birth, and date of birth to:

Social Security Administration
OEO FOIA Workgroup
300 N. Green Street
P.O. Box 33022
Baltimore, Maryland 21290-3022

Providing names of parents is also helpful, especially with common surnames. Be sure also to provide proof of death as the records of living individuals are not publicly available.

Social Security Numbers

It is interesting to note that you can tell where a Social Security Number was issued simply by looking at the first few digits of the number. This does not tell where the person was born, only where he or she was living when the number was issued. Nonetheless, it can be a valuable clue as to where to look for additional information.

The Social Security Account Number (SSAN) is divided into three sets of digits. For example, let's take 123-45-6789. The 3 digits in the first group indicate the state or territory in which the number was originally issued. The second group of 2 numbers is used to define the people within the state. The third group of 4 digits is simply issued in numerical sequence.

The following list shows the area indicated by first 3 digits (*CTPC Editor Note:*

The complete list is available in the online version of this article at www.ctpc.org.

001-003 New Hampshire
004-007 Maine
010-034 Massachusetts
035-039 Rhode Island
040-049 Connecticut
050-134 New York
135-158 New Jersey
586-699 Unassigned
700-729 Railroad Retirement Board
730-899 Unassigned

A few Social Security Numbers beginning with a 9 have been issued, but these are very rare.

For more information about obtaining information from the Social Security Administration, look at: http://www.socialsecurity.gov/foia/foia_guide.htm ♠

Twitter – continued from Page 4

SRS — Serious
STFU — Shut the f--- up!
STFW — Search the f---ing web!
TFTF — Thanks for the follow
TFTT — Thanks for this tweet
TL — Timeline
TLDR/TL;DR — Too long, didn't read
TMB — Tweet me back
TT — Trending topic
TTYL — Talk to you later
TYIA — Thank you in advance
TYT — Take your time
TYVW — Thank you very much
W/E or WE — Whatever or weekend
WTV — Whatever
YGTR — You got that right
YKWIM — You know what I mean
YMMV — Your mileage may vary
YOLO — You only live once
YOYO — You're on your own
YW — You're welcome

The beginner's guide to twitter Twitter is a free microblogging service founded in 2006. At its heart are 140-character bursts of information called tweets. Users can include links to other content in their tweets, and broadcasts can be public or private. Celebrities, journalists, politicians and other public figures have established significant followings on Twitter. Media outlets in particular use Twitter as a way to broadcast breaking news.

Twitter has grown into a social media juggernaut, and popularity on the service is

often used as a benchmark of influence. Companies have also used the service as a way to engage with their customers — offering promotions and other specials.

For basics on how to use the social network, check out The Beginner's Guide to Twitter, <http://mashable.com/2012/06/05/twitterfor-beginners/>

Common Twitter Abbreviations

CX — Correction
DM — Direct message is a message only you can send or receive from a mutual follower
HT or h/t — Hat tip is courteous gesture when attributing a link to another Twitter user
MT — Modified tweet. When a tweet must be shortened or paraphrased that was originally written by someone else
PRT — Please retweet is used at the end of a special or important tweet you want passed around
RT — Retweet. Indicates a tweet was forwarded to you by another user
— a hashtag before word/abbreviation, a way of being categorized, grouped with similar tweets
#FF — Follow Friday, used in suggesting who others should follow. Only used Fridays. ♠

To Cloud

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20 Clever Apps and Services That Make Great Use of the Cloud - <http://bit.ly/JydzYV>
Comparison of online backup services <http://bit.ly/5P003Z>
Cloud Drive Comparison <http://rww.to/j2FUhI>
The "Top Best Cloud Storage Companies" Reviewed! www.the-top10bestonline-backup.com/cloud-storage
15 Best Free Online Data Storage & Backup Services <http://bit.ly/rQGb1p>

Listed below are some of the free cloud storage servers and the amount of free storage:

DropBox, 2 GB, www.dropbox.com
Windows Skydrive, 7 GB, skydrive.live.com
BOX, 5 GB, www.box.com
Google Drive, 5 GB, drive.google.com
SugarSync, 5 GB, www.sugarsync.com
ASUS Webstorage, 2 GB, www.asuswebstorage.com/
Wuala, 5 GB, www.wuala.com/
Apple iCloud, 5 GB, www.icloud.com
Amazon Cloud, 5 GB, www.amazon.com/clouddrive

You might also be interested in checking out the following:

Google Music - play.google.com/music
TonidoSync - www.tonido.com
LiveMesh - download.cnet.com/Live-Mesh-2011/
Social Folders - socialfolders.me
Insync, ww.insynchq.com/
Teradesk, www.teradesk.net

Now, get organized and SAVE, SAVE, SAVE (TO THE CLOUD). It can keep you safe and sane. ♣

MEETING LOCATION

Silver Star Diner
210 Connecticut Ave. (US-1/ Post Road)

From I-95 Stamford: Take Exit 13 for US-1/Post Road and turn right at US-1 N/ Connecticut Avenue. The diner will be on your left almost at Exit 14.

From I-95 New Haven: Take Exit 14 for US-1/Connecticut Ave and turn right at US-1 N/Connecticut Ave. The Diner will be just ahead on your right.

System Suite

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your PC problems. It tracks hard drive status, available disk space, hard drive fragmentation, registry errors, excess temp files, startup applications and more. Regular use of Active Intelligence reduces start up times, improves read-write performance and prevents data loss by identifying hard drive problems before they happen.

What's new in this version:

Patent-pending PC Analyzer Technology - Identifies why your PC is slow

400% Faster Registry Repair - Fixes registry problems and optimizes Windows

Program Optimizer - Speeds program launch and response by fixing slowdowns

System Suite will completely Optimize, Protect, and Fix & Maintain your computer effortlessly and silently in the background while you work. I have used it for many years and find it to be one of the essential programs that I use with my computers. I recommend this program for all users, from beginner to advanced.

Amazon sells System Suite 12 Professional for \$49.99 delivered. There is a \$20 upgrade or competitive upgrade coupon that comes with the program, so your net low cost will be \$29.99.

Avanquest provides unlimited support for registered products. You can also check the User's manual and online help (included within the program menu) for answers to many common issues. Email & Phone support is available if you cannot resolve your questions. ♣

REPRINTING OF ARTICLES

Unless otherwise noted, nonprofit user groups may reprint or quote from any articles appearing in the CTPC newsletter without prior permission as long as credit is given to the author.

Next CTPC Meeting

continued from Page 1

on March 26, 2013.

Our meeting will be held at the Silver Star diner 210 Connecticut Ave (Exit 14,) in Norwalk. 203-852-0023. The meeting begins at 6:30 p.m. and ends at 8:30 p.m.

We encourage you to remain after the meeting for some socializing and to have pizza, salad and the beverage of your choice. Cost is shared and is normally less than \$14/person. The Silver Star allows us to use their facility at "no charge" and we think they deserve some benefit for their generosity. ♣

Internet Service

continued from Page 8

new technologies starting to become available to us, we should not be married to the possibly inferior internet service that we may have used for years, but should at least look at and consider the faster, more competitive high speed internet services now available locally. Users often do not know what they are missing by not having a fast internet service, and how much more enjoyable and productive a fast internet service can be. As with most other consumer services, it pays to shop around, and make a wise decision. ♣

Ira Wilsker - Ira is a member of the Golden Triangle PC Club, an Assoc. Professor at Lamar Institute of Technology, and hosts a weekly radio talk show on computer topics on KLVN News Talk AM560. He also writes a weekly technology column for the Examiner newspaper. Ira is also a deputy sheriff who specializes in cybercrime, and has lectured internationally in computer crime and security.

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