Newsletter

Connecticut PC User's Group

September 2013
Vol. 32 No. 1

Next CTPC Meeting   **Tuesday, September 24, 2013 - 6:30 p.m.**

Wireless Tele-Health Monitoring

Jim Lisher, Chairman of New Canaan's Health & Human Services Commission, will present a program about Wireless Tele-Health Monitoring – cutting edge technology that allows health care providers to monitor a patient's condition from a remote location, including the patient's own home.

According to Lisher, "Wireless Tele-Health monitoring technology plus ubiquitous information processing are rapidly converging to support a Smarter Health Care Consumer … and a better informed Medical Services Community.

This convergence is driving a major catalyst of positive change for both health care cost containment and improving quality of life…particularly for the coming tsunami of senior population."

Jim has led a series of four studies on Senior Care Health Care & Housing needs for the town of New Canaan for the next 15-20 years. This body of work, known as "New Canaan's Optimal Livable Community Plan for Seniors," includes an innovative Senior Wellness Video Tele-Health pilot program that is

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Sept 24th Tuesday, 6:30p.m.
  CTPC Meeting
  Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

Oct 22nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
  CTPC Meeeting
  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

Greg Skalka, President, UCHUG (Under the Computer Hood UG), CA, April 2013 issue DriveLight, www.uchug.org, president (at) uchug.org

Are We All Turning Into Magnetic Ink?

I've miles
And miles
Of files
Pretty files of your forefather's fruit and
now to suit our great computer,
You're magnetic ink.

(From "In the Beginning" by Graeme Edge, from the album "On The Threshold of a Dream" by The Moody Blues, 1969)

Are we all turning into magnetic ink? That poem was written over 40 years ago, before the Internet, server farms, Amazon.com, big data, social media and digital image recognition, yet it predicts a road we are traveling down now. In the liner notes, it is the "Establishment" that speaks these words, with the goal of turning man into a quantifiable set of data. Are we all on our way to being defined by our data?

Companies compile more and more

data about our habits and preferences, reducing our privacy and our ability to remain anonymous. From Google's targeted advertisements to Amazon's purchase suggestions, we are being reduced to a database of our likes and dislikes, ready for commercial exploitation. Our web searches are tracked so we can be presented with "more relevant" advertising, but the goal is more effective advertising, meaning more sales for less cost. It may be nice to be presented only with things we really would be interested in, but when algorithms are implemented incorrectly, it can lead to limiting and even inaccurate suggestions. I once bought my daughter a lamp she wanted as a gift from eBay; now I regularly receive suggestions for other lamp purchases, something I care nothing about. The history of one oddball purchase may haunt my account forever.

A bigger problem is privacy in this era of commercial digital surveillance. From all this seemingly innocent and inconsequential data being collected about us, we could become defined by our purchases (like the lamp) or our searches. It has probably gotten to the point that one must be careful about what one searches for on Google, or any other search engine.

While the Internet represents an almost unlimited data resource, asking for the

wrong things could get you in trouble, or at least earn you an undesirable label. This goes way beyond the obvious illegal activities like child pornography or online involvement with hate groups. Simply searching for information about embarrassing topics like incontinence or a gambling problem can put those topics into your "profile", so later ads reflect those issues. When you let someone else use your computer, those embarrassing issues may be revealed. And since that data is out of your control, who is to say that someday a record of your searches on cancer won't be sold to life insurance companies that could use it to deny you additional coverage.

Though the commercial world probably collects more data, governmental categorization of all of us is even more troubling. Repressive governments all over the world use data collected on their citizens in bad ways. Searching on the wrong topics in some countries can lead to imprisonment. Here we would hope to have more freedom and privacy, but some day, following another incident like 9/11, could we find a misinterpreted web search leading to a visit by the FBI or inclusion on a no-fly list?

There are also real criminals out there trying to collect data on us. Whether it is

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GET SMART!

Would you believe that you could become a smart phone junkie?

A couple of weeks ago we had a phone call from my son seeking help with setting up his first Android Smart Phone. My wife and I have been using one for about six months so have already gone through much of the learning curve. We are using the non-contract provider Straight Talk and a ZTE Merit 990 phone. The Straight Talk service is half the cost per month as compared to a contract service and there is unlimited data, texting and phone calls. The only down side is the phone cost is not subsidized through a contract so you will be paying whatever the going cost is for the model you choose. But, you will quickly recoup that cost in relation to the much higher cost of a contract service.

Anyway, it got me thinking about how much we had learned about setting up and using the Smart Phone. Remember, the phones are small computers. They have a CPU, memory (RAM, ROM and an SD Card slot for external memory); displays that are touch screens, operating systems and applications. Learning to use and manage them takes a bit of time and effort as the manuals that come with them do not give you much insight as to how this is done. So here is some of what the first time user will be faced with on an Android based Smart Phone. Note - I am not going to recommend a particular phone as there are many choices available with plenty of reviews to back them up. Basically the choices have to do mainly with individual preferences and what you're willing to spend.

For a fully interactive tutorial of Android go to: http://bit.ly/Z6hRWC

The tutorial uses the phone I have (ZTE Merit 990G), but should be pretty close to what you will encounter on most Android phones.

No matter which version of Android is installed on the phone you choose the interface was designed for the touch screen. It responds to a tap to select an item or double tap to launch an app. Swiping a finger across the screen left to right, right to left, up and down will scroll in the direction of the swipe. Touch and drag will move an item or, in the case of text, select all between starting and stopping points. Touch and hold will usually bring up a popup menu of actions to take.

Most phones have accelerometers to see the orientation of the phone. When using the on screen keyboard it is really nice to turn the phone sideways to get a wider screen and more spread out keyboard. Also, if the screen does not respond to the turn or goes dark a light shake of the phone it will wake it up to the action. You will quickly get used to using the screen.

After you turn on the phone and unlock it the first screen you will see is the home page.

The home page is the Android equivalent of the Windows desktop. Most phones have home pages that are a few screens wide. To move between them you swipe your finger across the screen to the right or left. You will find some icons or small control panels on most screens. At the top right of the home screen you will see status icons showing time, battery level, signal strength for Wi-Fi and provider signals (2G/3G/4G), Bluetooth (if turned on) and GPS (if turned on). On the left top will be notify icons for when you get a text message, email, or voicemail message or other items such as application updates. If a notify icon shows up you can touch the notify area and drag down to open a drop down menu. At this point you can touch the item to open it or clear the box by touching the clear button. At the bottom center of the screen there should be an icon that will take you to the main screen showing all of your installed applications (apps). On my phone it looks like a square of tiny dots. When your phone is new, all of the apps you see come hardwired to the Android OS and cannot be uninstalled. I highly recommend that you do not update any of the apps that you do not use. When an app is updated it takes more internal phone memory than the previous version. The built in apps must reside in the phones internal memory. You will find that not using up all of your phones free internal memory will be a constant challenge (more on that later). To put the icon of often used apps on the desktop just touch and hold the icon. A copy of the icon will be put on your home page. As the home page fills with icons or you want to group icons on different pages just touch and hold the icon until it changes size and then drag it to the bottom corner to the right to move it to a

screen to the right, left for left. You can also delete an icon by dragging it to the trashcan in the middle. It will not delete the app, just delete the icon from the home pages. I found that if you have large fingers you will get the best result moving icons with your little finger.

Many phones will have on screen buttons at the bottom or actual buttons at the bottom of the phone below the screen. The button with the house symbol will take you from an app directly to the home screen. The one with a ¾ round circle with an arrow at one end will take you back one screen. The button with a symbol that looks like lines of text or bars will open a menu box with functions appropriate to the active screen.

On one of the home screens you will have an icon that looks like a gear. That is the settings icon. It is the Android equivalent of the Windows Control Panel. It takes you to a menu of utilities and control panels for the various phone functions. You will want to take a few minutes looking around in here to familiarize yourself with this area.

The Contacts icon is what you touch when setting up your contacts. You enter names, phone numbers, email addresses, street addresses and any other info you want to add. Caution, when you put in phone numbers for your contacts, always include the "1" and area code. Make sure you do this even if the phone number is in your own area code. When you make a phone call or send a text message to someone in your area code the "1" and area code portion will be ignored. However, when you respond to a text message that has been sent to you the messaging system needs the "1" and area code for your response. Without them you will get an illegal error code from the messaging system and the reply will not be sent. While in Contacts touch the extra menu items button (at the bottom of the screen phone and looks like lines of text). Select the Import/Export and export your contacts to the SD card. Then if you lose your contacts you can import them back in. There is also an app that will assist you in storing your contacts in your Google account.
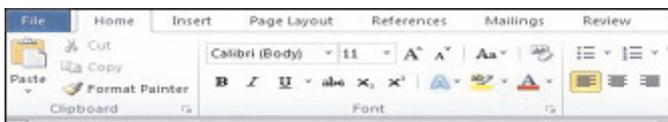
When you are ready to add apps to your phone you will want to use the Google Playstore. There will be a Google
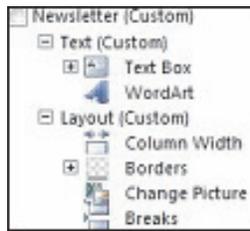
Customizing the Ribbon in Office 2010

If you are a Microsoft Office user, by now you have probably experienced the "ribbon." Introduced with Office 2007, the ribbon was a radical change in the way commands were displayed in the Office programs, such as Word, PowerPoint, and Excel. In previous versions, "drop down menus" were the norm. You clicked a term on the menu bar, and a list of clickable commands slid down the page. Beginning with Office 2007, commands were lined up across the top of the screen, organized by tabs in a ribbon-like structure. Each tab contained "groups" of similar commands. Needless to say, the new ribbon met with much resistance. There was no way to revert to the earlier look or to customize the ribbon. All a user could do was minimize the ribbon by double-clicking any tab or add and delete items from the Quick Access bar above the ribbon.

Microsoft got the message. When Office 2010 was released, one of the categories in the Options sections of each program was "Customize Ribbon." Users could create new tabs and fill them with groups of any commands they chose. They could hide any or all tabs, rename them, save their customized ribbon, and export it to other computers. Customization of the ribbon was easy; it was all done in a single window.

Opening Word 2010, because I use it often, I set out to customize the ribbon. I found that, although the default commands could not be renamed, reordered or deleted, I could add new custom tabs and groups. So I decided to create a tab called Newsletter, into which I would put some groups of commands that I use when composing newsletters. First I opened the Customize the Ribbon window (File / Options / Customize Ribbon.) I soon learned that the quicker way was to right click any default tab on the ribbon and then click, Customize the Ribbon. Then I added a new tab (New Tab button - OK), which also added a new unnamed group. Both my tab and group had the word "custom" after them, but I found this word is not visible on the actual ribbon. Then I renamed my tab (Select the tab - Rename button - typed *Newsletter* – OK). If I had

changed my mind and wanted to delete my new tab, I could have right clicked it and selected Remove at any time.

Then I created another new group on the tab, using the same steps as I had used for creating a new tab. I clicked each new group, selected Rename, and typed *Text* and *Layout*. Then it was time for the hardest part – choosing the commands I wanted to add to the groups. Office programs contain hundreds of commands, many of which do not appear on the default ribbon. First I spent time scrolling through the Popular and All Commands lists in the left pane, where I found a few that fit my needs. I clicked Text group in the right pane, then the command name in the left pane, and then the Add button between the panes. I repeated this process to add the rest of the commands I wanted, looking in other lists, including "Commands not in the ribbon." When I renamed the first command, I found I could attach an icon to it from a gallery which opened next to the renaming box. I repeated these steps for the remaining tab and commands. Now when I open Word 2010, my Newsletter tab appears along with the default tabs. When writing a newsletter, I can stay on that tab most of the time. If later I want to get rid of it, I can go to the Customize the Ribbon window, right click each item and click Remove or choose to Reset the ribbon to its original

state. Note: Resetting also removes all customizations of the Quick Access bar.

Some tips about customizing the ribbon

1. Since the ribbons on the Office 2010 programs each have different tabs, groups, and commands, customizations only apply to the program in which they are created.

2. You can't delete a default tab in Office 2010, but you can hide it by unchecking the box next to the tab name in the Customize the Ribbon window.

3. You can export your customized ribbon to another computer by saving it as a file and exporting it. In the Customize the Ribbon window, click Export/Import. Click "Export all customizations." Then go to the computer which is to receive the file, open the customization window and click "Import customization file." Caution: This will replace any customizations that have been done to that program on the receiving computer.

4. The ribbon is now being used by Microsoft in many venues, including Windows 8. In Office 2013, the ribbon can be customized in the same way as Office 2010.

5. It is easy to minimize the ribbon in Office 2010, leaving only the tabs. Click the tiny up arrow to the left of the Help icon near the right end of the ribbon. Minimizing the ribbon opens up more work space in the program window. Click it again to restore the full ribbon.

6. If you need help with the ribbon, click the Help icon (?) in the top right corner of any Office window and search for "Office ribbon customization." ♠

Internet Alerts Can Keep You Informed

How would you like to know every time your name is mentioned on the Web? Or when there is a breakthrough on a disease that you are following? Or when your favorite actor is starting in a new movie? This is all possible with automated Internet alerts. Read this to see how it works.

Internet alerts are available by many different Internet services. The Weather channel at www.weather.com has free alerts that will give you daily weather alerts as well as alerts for allergens like pollen

and also alerts for severe weather. Other alerts will keep you informed of the weather on school days and give warnings for snow and rain. You can apply several customization options such as the time of the alert and the severity that triggers the alert. You can get alerts sent by e-mail and/or text to a cell phone.

Many news stations also have alerts regarding news, sports, and weather. One of my local North Carolina stations, WRAL

Danny Stieben, Writer, MakeUseOf.com, May 6, 2013, http://bit.ly/12bdyZ2

iCan't: 5 Things Android Users Take for Granted and iPhone Users Just Can't Do

Have you ever thought that there might be a reason Android users brag about their customizability? Sure, as an iPhone user, you can add and configure apps, change your wallpaper, and otherwise make yourself feel at home. But at the end of the day, you've only changed a few small details. If you happen to have jailbreaked your iPhone to run Cydia and are enjoying some of the best Cydia tweaks, you can do more. But users with stock iOS are able to do much less. Don't believe me? Check out these different things that Android users can do but iOS users cannot.

From changing your keyboard to using a live wallpaper to putting an entirely new face on your phone (in the form of a launcher), Android lets you customize your phones in remarkably flexible ways.

Keyboards

If you don't like the keyboard on your iPhone, tough luck. Without jailbreaking the device, there's no way to get a different keyboard app on your iPhone. On the contrary, Android is built to allow users to choose between different installed keyboards, from the very capable default keyboard to Swype to SwiftKey. This not only allows for different looking keyboards, but also different typing mechanisms (tapping versus swiping) and prediction algorithms for those fast typers with low accuracy. I'm not saying that the iPhone's keyboard is bad, but I highly doubt that every iPhone user likes it and those picky users will just have to endure.

Home Screen Mechanics

The iPhone's home screen is one of the most iconic features of the iOS platform — big icons in a 4×4 grid (or 4×5 grid with the iPhone 5) and four buttons along the bottom bar for commonly accessed apps. Besides changing the wallpaper and rearranging the order of the icons, there's nothing that the iPhone user can do to change how it looks. For example, a mechanic that annoys me would be the fact that I cannot move an icon from the very top of the screen to the very bottom — all icons fill in row by row. At least iPhone users can move their icons onto a new page.

Widgets

Android launchers also have another cool feature that is entirely lacking in iOS — widgets. These nifty tools can be placed anywhere in your home screens and offer quick access to the related app's functionality. For example, the Wunderlist widget will display your to-do list, the New York Times widget can be configured to show the latest news, and weather.

Launchers

I absolutely love the default Android launcher, but others may want to use other alternatives. With Android, you can install additional launchers and choose which one you'd like to use. Each launcher can offer different functionality, such as themes and the ability to add more pages to your home screen. With iOS, this is also completely impossible as Apple wants everyone using the same launcher.

Wallpapers

Android includes some creative features with wallpapers to give your phone a nice touch with small details. Whenever you set a new image as your wallpaper, you can choose how you'd like to resize it, as well as determine whether the image should be "scrollable" or not. When set to scrollable, the wallpaper moves left and right as you switch between different pages in your home screen. Otherwise, the wallpaper would remain completely still as you switch between pages in your home screen. Additionally, Android also offers the use of live, animated wallpapers. These cool wallpapers are similar to Windows Vista's DreamScene wallpapers; however, are more appropriate on a smartphone as they usually include smooth animations and other computer-generated objects, and not a real-life video. Some live wallpapers animate on their own, while others react to the user's touch. They can be pretty fun to mess around with, and with (usually) minimal battery impact.

Android vs iPhone – Conclusion

Believe me now? Android users can change some significant stuff to their phones, without having to resort to rooting or installing custom ROMs. I'm sure this list isn't entirely inclusive of all things Android users can do that iPhone users cannot, but it gives you a good idea of how you can do more with Android.

What's your favorite feature of your Android or iOS device? What do you wish it could have that the competitor has? Let us know in the comments!♠

[Due to space constraints, I omitted Danny's screenshots but posted them on the CTPC website. They are at the end of the HTML version of this article – see the September online newsletter. CTPC Editor]

Les Goldberg, APR, Contributing Writer, www.sunset-publishing.com, www.examiner.com, lgprman (at) gmail.com

OldSchool Phone with New-fangled Features

Is your house phone an inconvenience? Do your aging eyes have trouble with small numbers and hard-to-read screens? Are your grandkids asking you what that "thing" is in your kitchen? If you answered yes to these questions, then you should consider replacing your clunky old phone for the new CareLine home safety telephone system from VTech, Inc.

Designed with experts in aging and technology, the affordable and easy-to-use CareLine system incorporates features to meet seniors' daily communication needs, including large displays, reminder capabilities, volume boost and a wearable pendant with one-button dialing that directly calls people that seniors communicate with most.

CareLine is designed to support the need to stay connected, linking you with the people you can trust to help you age in place independently.

The three-piece CareLine SN6197 system includes a full-featured corded phone as the base unit, a cordless handset and a wearable pendant, each designed for optimal usability if you happen to be struggling with hearing, dexterity or vision. The system's large displays and buttons, audio assistance and a reminder capability accommodate these challenges.

The pendant allows you to communicate with friends and family at your fingertips and conveniently make and receive

CHARGE!... DIY and Some Free Favorites

How would u like to have a 4 unit charging device right where u want it and install it in about 20 minutes?

Yes u can... this is a Power 2U wall outlet u can install yourself (DIY) and have the capability of charging any 4 devices at once... 2 plugged into the USB outlets and 2 plugged into the power outlets.

Think about how convenient it would be to have an outlet... where u want it... that will allow u to charge 4 things at once. After the 20 or so minutes installing the 15amp outlet, I plugged a camera, cell phone, ultrabook and Kindle in and let them charge... worked like a charm and again, the convenience is great... no more plugging and unplugging wall outlets and using all the USB ports on your PC. I picked the most convenient place where I could place 4 things conveniently on the counter and where all 4 cords reached without a problem. Here are the details from the The Newer Technology web page. BTW, mine is the 15Amp model, but they also have a 20Amp one available.

Newer Technology Power2U

• Black AC/USB Wall Outlet (Other colors available.)
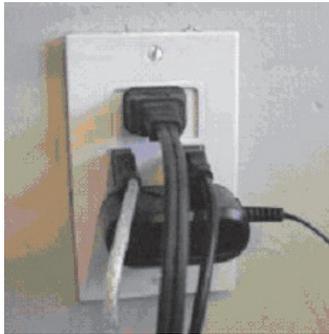• Designed for standard 15A circuits in homes and other living spaces
• Dual-socket wall outlet with two integrated USB ports for powering and charging USB devices

The Newer Technology Power2U AC/USB Wall Outlet is the convenient and energy-efficient in-wall solution for powering and charging USB devices. Now you can charge and/or power up to four devices at once when using the USB ports and the National Electrical Code (NEC) compliant tamper-resistant AC receptacles, while eliminating unsightly clutter created by multiple cables and bulky power adapters.

Charge Four Devices At Once!

Unlike other similar products, the port and outlet layout of the Power2U doesn't create "plug barriers". This accessible design enables you to charge up to four devices simultaneously! (Here is mine with 4 units charging at once!)

Ideal "DIY" Upgrade For Multiple Device Users.

Ideal for users of multiple USB chargeable devices, the Power2U AC/USB Wall Outlet is a basic "DIY" install on any 15Amp circuit with a 16 cubic inch electrical box to blend seamlessly into the wall as a standard power outlet. A "straightforward" rated "how to" video demonstrates how the Power2U can be installed in as little as 20 minutes.

Money Saving, Energy Efficient Design Offering a modern, centralized location for charging/powering USB devices, the Power2U offers two energy efficient features to complement its use convenience. The Smart Power design only outputs enough charging power required by the attached device, while spring-loaded Safety Shutters turn power off to the USB ports to eliminate "vampire" energy draw when a connecting cable is removed.

New Slimmer Design for Even Easier Install. The 2013 Power2U model offers a more compact design than previous models for an even easier install.

Install With Confidence. Fully UL-Listed and featuring NEC compliant tamper-resistant AC receptacles, Power2U offers peace of mind confidence. And with its more compact design and free how-to installation video, you can have Power2U installed in as little as 20 minutes!

Compatibility:

• Apple iPad (all models)
• Apple iPhone (all models)
• Apple iPod (all USB chargeable models)
• Android™ tablets and phones, tablet computers, cellphones, gaming systems (Nintendo, Sony PSP, etc.), Bluetooth headsets, digital cameras, or GPS devices which charge via standard USB plug.

As promised, here is a list of my 7 favorite free programs/utilities. If u would like more info on them or where to download them, send me an email and I'll send u back the info u need.

COMMUNICATION

Skype is a VoIP solution that allows you to make free Skype-to-Skype calls, calls to traditional phone lines, video conferencing, instant messaging and even more features that make it close to a full telephone replacement.

FILE MANAGEMENT

AxCrypt is the leading open source file encryption software for Windows. It integrates seamlessly with Windows to compress, encrypt, decrypt, store, send and work with individual files.

IMAGE and VIDEO UTILITIES

IrfanView supports a tremendous selection of image and video formats that you can read and many of which you can save. It also features tools such as batch conversion, TIF editing, capturing and much, much more.

MISCELLANEOUS UTILITIES

Foxit Reader: A slimmed down PDF reader that loads the documents faster than the official Adobe product does.

MUSIC UTILITIES

Winamp: A popular alternative method for playing your audio files compared to the Windows included media player.

PRODUCTIVITY UTILITIES

LibreOffice: A well-known free alternative for office applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases and more. It is compatible with Microsoft Office as it can read and save documents in the Microsoft formats.

SAFETY and SECURITY UTILITIES

Avast. The free version of Avast is arguably the most comprehensive set of freely available security features on the market.

That's it for now... have fun and as always... be safe out there on the WWW.

Aloha, Lou

To read all of Lou's columns visit http://tinyurl.com/363qew♠

calls, listen to voicemail messages, review missed calls, confirm the date and time or receive programmed reminders for medication, appointments or other events.

You or a family member can set reminders directly through the corded phone base or with a phone call. When the set time arrives, the system reminds you with a light and audio cue. In addition, the pendant provides a quick resource to call for help in an emergency through the home landline service.

It makes an affordable alternative to personal emergency response systems (PERS) that require monthly fees, installation costs and contracts. The lightweight pendant can be worn around your neck or clipped to a waistband for mobility and comfort.

When immediate assistance is needed, you can push either of the two speed-dial keys or use voice command to call self-programmed contacts, such as 911, a family member, a trusted friend or neighbor.

"Imagine leaving your mother a recorded reminder about her doctor's appointment or connecting with her while she is outside gardening. CareLine provides the independence and security seniors and their families desire," said Matt Ramage , senior vice president of product management at VTech.

Using the DECT 6.0 (Digital Enhanced Cordless Telecommunications) standard, both the wireless handset and pendant are connected up to 600 feet away from the base. Other features designed for usability include:

• Large buttons and displays with full duplex speakerphones on all three devices: the corded phone, handset and pendant

• Voice commands and one-button dialing with the safety pendant to reach preferred contacts

• Audio Assist® that temporarily increases volume for easier hearing on calls

• Visual ringing indicator and Voice Announce® caller ID, so calls won't be missed

• Audio and visual cues for programed reminders

• Photo speed dial on the corded phone for quick reference of frequently dialed numbers

The pendent comes with rechargeable batteries that last seven days in standby mode or up to five hours of talk time. Users are notified when the pendent is at 10 percent of battery life, and a small light indicates proper placement in the charging station.

Available at Radio Shack
Retail price: $119.95

The unit has a limited one-year warranty. For more information on VTech and CareLine, please visit www.vtechphones.com.♠

CTPC Meeting –

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believed to be the first use of technology for improving aging at-home health care, focusing on wellness management. He will discuss the program as well as the tools used to implement it.

Meetings are held at the Silver Star diner in Norwalk. We invite 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.♠

(www.wral.com) even has an app that uses GPS to alert you to severe weather no matter where you travel as long as you have your cell phone turned on. While most other alerts are free, WRAL charges $8 a year for their GPS-based alerts. Check your local news stations for news alerts.

The granddaddy of all alerts, Google Alerts, is a very useful one that you should be aware of. This is one of Google's powerful tools that is completely free. You can use Google Alerts to keep track of anything on the Web. Just surf over to http://www.google.com/alertshttp://www.google.com/alerts and enter a search query. Then choose your options. You can control how often you get alerts (as it happens, once a day or once a week), the type of Web coverage that triggers an alert (news, blogs, video, discussions, books, or all of these), and you can also choose only the best results or all results. Enter your e-mail address and your alerts will start. You can change or remove an alert at any time. Once you start using Google Alerts, you will be surprised at the results.

Most people start with creating an alert with their own name. My "Sandy Berger" alert tells me when any news article or blog mentions my name. Of course, it also gives me results for the other Sandy Berger. You know — that guy from the Clinton administration who stuffed documents from the National Archives into his pants. Unless you have a very unusual name, you can expect to get news of others with the same name. That's not all bad. In fact, it can be very interesting.

The Google Alerts can be wonderful if you are following the news about a certain item. For instance, they are wonderful if you are interested in following a certain disease, medical condition or treatment. You can use Google Alerts to follow any current event or any specific public figure, actor, or personality.

If you are a transplant and want to follow the news from your old hometown, this is a perfect way to do it. Just enter the name of your old city and state in the search terms. If you want to be more specific, you can just enter the zip code. This will give you results directly from your old neighborhood.

When you set up a Google Alert, you may want to limit the results to just the best results and once a day. If you let Google give you all the results as they happen, I can assure you that you will be inundated with email.

You are sure to find many different ways to use Google Alerts. In fact, it is good to play with the Alerts a little to get to just want you want. Like any Google search, you can enter as many search terms as you like to narrow the results. You can put names in quotes to get exact matches.

Be creative with your alerts. You can have Google search for coupons for your favorite restaurant. You can use it to follow a company whose stock you may be interested in purchasing. You can use it to follow an item that you want to pur‑chase.♠

data to be sold or used for identity theft, or personal information from social media sites exploited for scams, home burglaries or child abductions, our data is sought after by malicious people intent on taking advantage of us. Once again, this may be data that we have no control over, stored on company servers, perhaps with poor safeguards.

Unfortunately, we are often willing, though possibly unknowing participants in this conversion of our lives into data. All the information we freely share on social networking sites can be a treasure trove to marketers, prospective employers and anyone interested in taking advantage of us. As time goes on, new ways are developed to monitor each of us, from location tracking through our phones, keyword analysis of our emails and facial recognition and tracking of our movements through security camera images. Even data collected with the best of intentions can fall into the wrong hands, or the intentions of the collectors can simply change. Once lists are started for convicted criminals, sex offenders, the mentally ill and potential terrorists, how hard would it be to make more lists, like of those that complain about the government? After all, we are only data.

Where to Put All That Data

All the data we store, and that others store about us, has to be kept somewhere. Today it is stored not in the "magnetic ink" of magnetized domains on recording tape, but in magnetized regions of spinning metal platters. Mechanical hard drives, though losing out in some applications like tablets and phones to solid state memory, are still the primary means of bulk data storage. Seagate recently shipped its two billionth unit, the first hard drive manufacturer to reach that milestone. That is a hard drive for almost every third human on earth. While that seems amazing, what is really of interest is how they got to 2 billion. They have been making drives since 1980, and took 29 years to produce and ship their first billion units. Their second billion took only four years.

That is a tremendous amount of digital storage, especially since that last billion were probably each 100 GB or larger drives.

This exponential increase in cumulative drive capacity is necessary, as our need for storage grows exponentially. In 2007, we were uploading just over 5 hours of video to YouTube each minute. Now it is estimated that 72 hours of video is uploaded per minute to the site. To put this in perspective, if you were in the habit of watching YouTube 12 hours a day, every day, then in the five minutes it will take you to read this column, another month's worth of new content was put on the site. The break is over; get back to watching!

High-Tech Pants

I just bought a new pair of my favorite kind of pants, Costco's Kirkland blue jeans, and got a surprise. Costco jeans have gone high tech. The product label advertises a new feature I'd not seen before - a cell phone pocket. It seems that Costco has tinkered with the classic five-pocket design and turned the small right front coin pocket into a cell phone pocket. They made that pocket deeper and a bit wider, so it could hold a standard cell phone. A large smartphone would probably be a tight fit. Of course, making that pocket so much deeper makes it useless for holding (or at least extracting) coins.

Most people today think that fifth pocket was designed for coins, but in the days before cell phones and wrist watches, it was meant to hold a pocket watch (the kind on a chain). That was the intended purpose of that pocket on the first Levi's 501 jeans introduced in 1890. If this cell phone pocket thing catches on, it would thus be appropriate, as many people have stopped wearing wrist watches, using their cell phones as timepieces instead. If we get to the point where we also use our phones for making retail purchases like they do in Japan, then we won't need to worry about where to put our displaced coins either.

Just A Minute

Intel has produced a graphic and video outlining what happens today in an Internet minute. It shows 639,800 GB of global IP data transferred on the Internet in a minute, with the amount of various activities in that time listed. Some numbers are staggering (6 million Facebook views, 204 million emails sent), some are crazy (320+ new Twitter accounts, 1.3 million video views) and some are scary (20 new victims of identity theft, 135 botnet infections). And just as with hard drive shipments, future growth for the Internet appears to be exponential. Today the number of networked devices equals the global population; by 2015, it will be 2x. If the Internet and the number of devices on it keep growing this way every minute, it won't be long before humanity is minute by comparison. http://intel.ly/wjibt1 ♠

Freeware

During the many years that I have been writing the Computer Hysteria Column, I have been a strong advocate of using freeware. On my computer, the only commercial software is my operating system. All the rest of the software on my system is freeware. Perhaps this frugality has something to do with my Scottish ancestry or I could be considered just plain cheap! In any event,

I have done my best to give my readers some tips on freeware that I have used on my system that is exceptional. Free software is a valid choice for the home computer, office computer and Internet server uses. It is very important to remember that freeware is not cheap or an inferior option. Freeware comes in two basic types, free software with proprietary (private) code, and open-source software. Some freeware can be functionally superior to equivalent commercial software and even of higher quality.

For example, the Firefox browser was built and developed by a large distributed workforce as opposed to a small centralized one. A large number of programmers can contribute a range of skills, and whose input is graded by peer review. These programs can be tested and developed in a wide variety of locations and situations. These community based projects would cost millions to create commercially. The bottom line, free software can be of the highest quality and should not be considered inferior to commercial products. The products they generate are among the most successful applications in the world, PHP, MySQL, Apache, and various types of Linux.

What are the best free programs that work the best? It used to be utilities.

Google Safe Browsing – You Probably Have It But Don't Know It

[Ira provides a number of interesting screen shots to go along with each of his articles. Due to space constraints, I omit them from the printed version of the newsletter but post all of them on the CTPC website. They are at the end of the HTML version of this article - see the September online newsletter. CTPC Editor]

WEBSITES:

https://www.google.com/transparency-report/safebrowsing

https://www.google.com/transparency-report/safebrowsing/malware

https://www.google.com/transparency-report/safebrowsing/notes

https://www.google.com/transparency-report/safebrowsing/faq/

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Google_Safe_Browsing

Most of us know Google as the mega search engine, the provider of Gmail services, an online mapping utility, and the provider of several other online services. What many of us did not know is that Google is also very involved in the detection, notification, and eradication of dangerous websites that spread malware or are phishing (identity theft) websites that spoof real websites for the purposes of stealing personal and financial information.

Google's Safe Browsing initiative has been in place since at least 2008, but now has become used regularly by over a billion people; what these billion people do not know is that they are utilizing Google's Safe Browsing service, because it is totally transparent to the user, and requires no registration or intentional application in order to use it. At present, anyone using recent versions of Google Chrome, Apple Safari and Mozilla Firefox web browsers (but not Microsoft's Internet Explorer) are using the Google Safe Browsing service. These modern browsers automatically check web requests (addresses, URLs) when entered by the user either by typing them in to the address bar or when clicking on a hyperlink on a webpage displayed on one of the included browsers. Google continuously compiles lists of web based threats, and the browsers themselves quickly check the web addresses entered against the Google Safe Browsing list of purloined websites; depending on the browser, the user is either warned or blocked from accessing those listed websites that are known to harbor malware or are engaged in identity theft.

In addition to providing information about dangerous website threats directly to a participating browser and its users, Google also immediately notifies the ISP (Internet Service Provider) of threats (dangerous websites) hosted on their networks and servers. Reputable webhosts will promptly suspend or remove websites that contain malware code that could infect a remote computer that simply opens the contaminated website, or websites that are used for the purposes of phishing. While most webhosts are ethical and act promptly to neutralize any dangerous sites on their servers, there are many webhosts in the U.S. and around the world that knowingly host illicit websites, and will purposely not remove a dangerous site.

The number of users who often unknowingly connect to dangerous websites is staggering. According to Google (www.google.com/transparencyreport/safebrowsing), "Approximately one billion people use Google Safe Browsing. We help tens of millions of people every week protect themselves from harm by showing warnings to users of Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox and Apple Safari when they attempt to navigate to websites that would steal their personal information or install software designed to take over their computers." According to Google, during the week of June 2, 2013 (latest date available at this writing), 78,799,217 users saw a warning on their browser when they navigated to a website that Google Safe Browsing had previously identified as unsafe. The week of June 2 warning number is almost 10 times the number of warnings that were displayed during the week of March 10, 2013, when "only" 8,654,246 warnings were displayed. It needs to be reiterated that these warnings were only displayed to users of later versions of Firefox, Safari, and Chrome, and not to users of the very popular Internet Explorer, and other lesser browsers.

The number of unique unsafe websites detected by Google is also very high. Google Safe Browsing is looking for websites containing malware (viruses, Trojans, spyware, and other dangerous software), and websites that host spoofed websites that parody legitimate websites in order to dupe unsuspecting users into entering personal and financial data for the purposes of identity theft (phishing). While no one can absolutely detect and enumerate absolutely all dangerous websites, Google has had some notable success in detecting dangerous websites, notifying users of the threat, and asking service providers to take down the dangerous websites. In the week of June 23, 2013 (latest available), Google detected 38,836 new websites containing malware, and 27,247 new phishing websites. Google defines "Malware sites as, " ... sites (that) contain code to install malicious software onto users' computers. Hackers can use this software to capture and transmit users' private or sensitive information." Google then defines Phishing websites as, " ... sites (that) pretend to be legitimate while trying to trick users into typing in their username and password or sharing other private information. Common examples are web pages that impersonate legitimate bank websites or online stores."

Web surfers need to understand that the newly detected dangerous websites are not the total number of dangerous websites that pose real threats to the user, but are only newly detected websites. This implies that the total number of dangerous websites online at any given moment may be much greater than this "newly detected" number, as not all detected dangerous websites are taken down promptly (if at all) by their webhosts, and remain a continuing threat to unsuspecting users. The Google Safe Browsing service notifies the user of both newly detected dangerous websites, and older websites that still present a threat to the user.

Websites that contain malware that can infect the computer of a visitor fall into two general categories, "Attack Sites" and "Compromised Sites". Attack Sites are websites purposely created by miscreants to host and disseminate malware to the computers of anyone viewing that particular website. Many of these "Attack Sites" are opened by unsuspecting users who connect to them from listings on the major search engines or from links planted on other, sometime legitimate, websites. Some examples of these planted links in-

Playstore icon on one of your home screens that will take you there. During the initial phone setup you will have created an account with Google that identifies what phone you have. The Playstore is tied to your account so will indicate to you if an app you are looking at is compatible with your phone and will not install anything that is not compatible. During the app installation there will be a checkbox for allowing automatic updates of the free or purchased application. This choice can be changed at a later time, but only through the phone connecting to the Playstore. If you log onto the Playstore from a PC the checkbox for changing the update selection will not show.

Most phones have slots for micro secure digital or some other type of digital memory. When you add memory you might be thinking that you will never run out of memory. Well, there is internal phone memory that is a fixed part of the phone and there is external memory. For this discussion we will call external memory the SD card. You cannot move any of the built in apps from phone memory to the SD card. Any extra apps you add to the phone install to phone memory by default. Most apps will require cache memory to function which is stored in phone memory. Also, text messages, documents, and pictures taken from the built in camera or saved from other sources will go into phone memory. So you may have a 16 or 32 GB SD card installed, but you will still have the internal phone memory as your biggest limitation.

So you may ask, what do you use SD memory for if everything wants to natively store to phone memory? After installation, some of the added apps can be moved from phone memory to the SD card. Others will require residing in phone memory and will not move. I have found that an app called "AppMgr" (also known as App 2 SD) by Sam Lu will help to quickly determine if an app will move from phone to SD and easily complete the action. It also has the added benefit of clearing cache files for all apps with one click, a job that would otherwise take opening each app in the built in Android Application Manager. It also shows you at a glance what apps are installed in which memory and how much internal phone memory if free for use. Another app called "Send to SD" by Denis Nelubin will help you to quickly send pictures and documents to a folder in your

SD card by adding a SD Card item to the Share menu. The Share menu is accessed by touching the extra menu items button that looks like lines of text at the bottom of the screen or physical button at the bottom of the phone.

Most versions of Android have a built in file manager app called Filer. You will find it grouped in with the Apps when you touch the Apps main screen icon. Filer is kind of limited as it only allows you to see what the developers thought was safe. Kind of like Windows Explorer at its default setting of not allowing you to see system files. For viewing directories and file management I like to use "ES File Explorer" by ES APP Group. It has no restrictions and many nice features. I used it to create a folder on the SD card for moving pictures from my phone memory to the SD card using the Share menu item "SD Card" created by the "Send to SD" app.

For keeping the bad guys at bay I installed the Avast! Antivirus app located in the Playstore. Avast has the best ratings for protecting Android devices and is free.

Other apps that we have found to be extremely useful are:

- SwiftKey Keyboard by SwiftKey – Replaces your Android dumb keyboard with a keyboard that learns your writing style and makes auto corrections and saves typing by allowing you to select words as you type. It is spooky how it quickly gets to know what you want to write. After the trial period the free version does not give you guesses to select word insert. We paid out the $3.99 for the Pro version because we found the word insert to really save time.
- Split N Tip by Handy Apps – This free tip calculator app not only calculates tips quickly and easily but also helps to split the bill between any number of people.
- Wi-Fi___33 Analyzer by Farproc - Turns your android phone into a Wi-Fi analyzer!! Shows the Wi-Fi channels around you. Shows signal strengths and info for wireless routers within range. Helps you to find a less crowded channel for your wireless router.
- Epson iPrint by Seiko Epson Corp – Easily find your wireless or networked

Epson printer and print to it from your phone. You can also scan documents or photos to your phone. If you do not have an Epson printer you should be able to find other similar apps for your printer brand.
- Barcode Scanner by Zxing Team – This free app scans barcodes on products then looks up prices and reviews. You can also scan Data Matrix and QR Codes containing URLs, contact info, etc. Also share your contacts, apps, and bookmarks via QR Code
- iHeartRadio by Clear Channel Digital - iHeartRadio offers free music in an all-in-one, digital internet radio service that lets you find more than 1,500 live radio stations. With the free music app for Android, create commercial-free, all-music Custom Stations featuring songs from the artist you select and similar music. We especially like listening to talk radio shows.
- SugarSync by SugarSync, Inc. - SugarSync is the easiest and most advanced way to sync, share, as well as search and access all of your files – documents, photos, videos and music. SugarSync for Android puts all of your files from across all of your computers right at your fingertips, making you more productive when you're on the go.

My phone came with 512 MB of internal phone memory. The OS and pre-installed apps take up 350 MB leaving me 162 MB free for my installed apps and contacts. Updates to pre-installed apps also take up internal memory. So with all the stuff and apps that I have loaded I am left with 32 MB of phone memory free. Not a whole lot, but I am managing it. My son had to one up the Old Man with a more current Smart Phone that came with 1 GB internal memory. So I am envious as he has yet to get the dreaded "Out of Memory" warning that I get if not diligent with keeping everything clean. Oh well, maybe on my next phone…

If you have not used a Smart Phone before you will be delighted and amazed at just what you can do with them.

PS from his better half - With this wonderful article Bob forgot to mention the fact that you have Google, Google maps, and Google navigation readily available on

However, today there are many priceless small programs that work better than the operating systems resident applications. Free software is a viable solution in every possible area of a computer's work. The acceptability of freeware is demonstrated as the standard server solution. Freeware is widely used in PC security situations. Free versions of popular firewalls, antivirus and antispyware programs are often accepted as first choice How do you find the best freeware to use on your system?

For years I have recommended Gizmo's Freeware be bookmarked on your computer for fast reference when you need fully reviewed and recommended freeware. In August 2010, PC Magazine included Gizmo's Freeware in its "100 Top Websites of 2010." As of November 2011 it was rated by Alexa in the top 3000 sites in English speaking countries and in the top, 5,000 worldwide with more than 100,000 people visiting the site every day. It is also the most bookmarked site under "free-ware" at most of the web's major bookmarking services.

Gizmo's Freeware is a community-based site dedicated to keep the site independent and noncommercial. The site is maintained by hundreds of volunteers. Freeware is reviewed for safety and performance by these volunteer editors with comments from users. Gizmo's best freeware list is available at the website and has been used for years to locate the best freeware. You can post on forums, respond to reviews after using the freeware, and even write review depending on your computer skills. I would strongly encourage you to bookmark and visit this website which will save you money as well as increase your computer capabilities.

http://www.techsupportalert.com

I will have to admit that I am "hysterical" about this website. ♠

tended to send innocent users into the trap are often listed on social media websites (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc.), special interest and hobby blogs, emails from hijacked email accounts, and other sources. Sometimes, malware may infect the user's computer when visiting legitimate websites that have been "Compromised" or hacked by individuals who alter the otherwise authentic website to load malware on a visitor's computer. The majority of websites hosting malware are "Compromised" websites; during the week of June 16, 2013, Google detected 38,638 compromised websites, which were added to its alert list. the number of intentionally created "Attack Sites" is much lower than the "Compromised" websites, with 3966 such sites detected by Google during that same week.

One of the problems that is frequently encountered when trying to mitigate the threats of online malware is the slow response from many of the ISPs and other webhosting companies. According to Google's latest report on "Webmaster Response Time (in days)", dated March 24, 2013, it took an average of 48 days for a webmaster to remove a dangerous website transmitting malware. While 48 days

seems like a long time, considering that countless users will likely be victimized in the days between notification and removal, 48 days is a significant improvement in response time; during 2007, the typical response time was 90 days!.

In terms of geography, only about 2% of the 14,226,639 websites tracked (hosted) in the United States contain malware. This compares favorably to the 8% hosted in Russia, 11% hosted in Turkey, 8% hosted in Iran, 5% in China, and the 14% hosted in India. 12% of the tracked websites in Mexico contain malware. Malware hosting is clearly an international problem, and it would take an organization with the fiscal and technical resources of Google to detect, warn, and try to remedy the threats of malware that we all face when surfing the web. There may be some valid contemporary issues and complaints about Google, but Google is to be commended for trying to clean up the threats that are endemic on the internet. ♠

Ira Wilsker hosts "My Computer Show" a call-in tech support show on KLVI radio, 560AM, from 4–5 p.m. Mondays, Pacific time. The show streams live over the net at KLVI.com and on the free iHeartRadio app. His call-in number is 800–330–5584.

Get Smart
continued from Page 9

these phones. Even if you don't have the GPS active the phone will triangulate your location on Google maps from nearby cell towers. By the by, I use the voice recognition on my phone for quick texts and emails. After six months I'm a smart phone junkie!

[* Read more about Get Smart, Maxwell Smart, and the original smart phone, aka shoe phone, circa 1965 – UCHUG Editor] http://nyti.ms/16UVFU7 ♠

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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.

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