Newsletter

Connecticut PC User's Group

Next CTPC Meeting　　　　　　**Tuesday, November 26, 2013 - 6:30 p.m.**

Expanded Random Access

CTPC member Richard Frisch will lead an expanded random access discussion period. Plan to bring you most vexing computer questions.

While there isn't a formal meeting in December, the group will discuss getting together at the Silver Star for a light repast at a date to be decided.

CTPC member Marylou Wilkinson has reported being very impressed with a number of the videos that APCUG has posted on the web. You might remember that I provided a link to these videos (each 45 - 60 minutes long) in a recent email to members about APCUG virtual conferences. For the record, the link is: www.youtube.com/ apcugvideos

The above leads to another subject: CTPC member email addresses. We send only a few emails each year about things we believe would be of interest to CTPC members. If you didn't receive the above-noted, APCUG-related email, then, we don't have your email address. To get back on our email list, contact me at editor@ctpc.org.

Mike Alcorn,
CTPC Newsletter Editor

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

No meeting in December.

Jan 28th Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

GENERAL MEETINGS

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

www.ctpc.org

Ira Wilsker

Free and Deeply Discounted Software at SharewareOnSale.com

For several years, one of the best sources of objective software reviews, evaluations, and tips has been on dotTech.org. Under the active leadership of the well respected "Ashraf", dotTech.org has developed an impeccable reputation for honesty when evaluating software and related computer components. For many PC users, Ashraf has become the resident guru on software, and loyally and faithfully follow his evaluations and recommendations. On an unaffiliated software giveaway website, GiveawayOfTheDay.com (GOTD), best known for its free daily giveaway of one legally licensed commercial software product, Ashraf's comments and review of the day's single software offering are strongly considered by many of the GOTD users

before deciding whether or not to download and install the day's offering. Ashraf's opinion appears to influence the daily volume of downloads.

DotTech.org has now been online for five years (October, 2008), and is viewed

WEBSITES:

http://sharewareonsale.com
http://dottech.org
http://azadinetwork.com
http://giveawayoftheday.com
http://sharewareonsale.com/s/free-softorbits-sketch-drawer-pro-79-95-value
http://sharewareonsale.com/s/free-avg-internet-security-2014-54-99-value

on a daily basis by thousands of visitors. Ashraf has expanded the online services that he offers with the creation of his Azadi Network, which he describes as, " ... a web-based company that provides solutions for the digital age." Azadi is an Urdu word which means "freedom", a concept that Ashraf apparently encourages on his websites. Recently (August, 2013), Ashraf expanded his Azadi Network to include a second website, SharewareOnSale.com. Again, according to Ashraf, "SharewareOnSale connects software developers with users, offering daily software deals of free and heavily discounted programs. Although it is a relatively new service, SharewareOnSale has already garnered much attention around the world."

I first found out about SharewareOn-

Sale.com while researching a particular software product on dotTech, and noticed a banner promoting SharewareOnSale. Now, SharewareOnSale is one of the first websites that I visit every day. In order to be better informed about new bargains offered on the site, I chose to sign up for the once daily email that lists that day's offerings; it is important to check the website frequently as the offerings are very dynamic, and frequently changing. Product offerings that may appear on the site early in the day may possibly "expire" before the end of the day as a limited time offer may expire, or a finite quantity of available product may be downloaded, completing the offering prior to a stated expiration of the offer. On two excellent recent offers, both now expired, the offers quickly became unavailable prior to their stated expiration. One was a free, one-year "extended trial" of a newly released and updated, fully functional, comprehensive security suite, AVG Internet Security 2014. On SharewareOnSale.com it was a legitimate free download, rather than paying the $55 charged on the AVG

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Windows 8: New App Controls – Start Screen and Charms Bar

Apps are what make mobile devices -tablets and phones- so useful. That should sound familiar, it was the same opening sentence used in last month's Windows 8 Apps article, and it's still very true. Apps rule. Apps are different from computer programs that operate on the Windows 7 Desktop. Each App runs in full screen; there are no overlapping windows, there are few menus, and Apps run best on a touch-screen device. The Start Screen and the Charms bar are two of the new ways to control or use Apps, the heart of the new features of windows. The Start Screen, which is the default screen after Windows 8 has been started, provides entry into the Windows 8 App Universe (rest assured that the "Desktop App" still gets you back to the old favorite, Windows 7 world). The "Charms bar" is a universal toolbar, and is hidden, but it is always available; just move the mouse to the lower (or upper) right corner of the screen and left click (Windows key+C key, also gets you there). The Charms Bar contains Search, Share, Start, Devices, and Settings. (Now I guess you can see why it is called the Charms Bar. Don't the icons for those options, Search, Share, Start, Devices, and Settings, look like charms you may have seen dangling from a charm bracelet? Well, I guess some people at Microsoft must have thought so.)

Settings, which is the gear charm (or icon), is sort of a Control Panel for the App Universe; don't fret, the familiar Windows 7 type Control Panel is still available at the Start screen, just by typing "Control" and then selecting "Control Panel."

"Settings" provides quick access to six of the most often used controls; Volume, Brightness, Notifications, Power, Network, and Keyboard. Volume, Brightness and Keyboard are pretty straight forward.

"Network" provides an opportunity to connect to a network or monitor the strength of your network signal. It also provides a way to disable all radio transmitters (Wi-Fi, Bluetooth, and cellphone, if present), by turning On, Airplane mode (something you will want to use, when boarding an airplane).

"Notifications" provides the ability to have the notifications pop-up messages disabled for 1, 3, or 8 hours. The idea here is that, in a business environment, you may not want to be interrupted by the fact that you have an incoming mail message, while you are in the middle of an important presentation, or such.

"Power" provides the "Shut down" options, shut-down, sleep, and re-start (hibernate has to be added to the list, if desired). "Power" provides a way to shut down the computer, similar to the options provided on the Windows 7 "Start" button.

The "Charms bar – Settings" option also gets you to a few other controls, specific to Apps. At the top of the Settings panel, there are entries to "Tiles," "Help" and others like "PC info." These options seem to change depending on what you have been doing with your computer. I've only used the "Help" option which seemed fairly helpful. Also, at the bottom of the "Charms bar – Settings" panel, there is an entry to a whole host of PC settings. To get to these controls just click "Change PC settings". Many of these Settings provide similar capabilities to those found in the Control Panel. The following is a summary of these categories.

"Personalize" provides controls for the "Lock" screen, controls for the "Start" Screen, and choices for your "Account Picture". You can even create a picture for your account using the on-board camera, just look into the screen (camera) and click the Camera icon below "Create an account picture", and then just tap the touch-pad, (or screen if you have a touch-sensitive screen).

"Users" lets you add accounts to this machine.

"Notifications" allows you to determine if Apps can provide Alerts to the operator. Each App's Alert can be individually enabled or disabled. In addition, the Notification sound can be turned on or off.

"Search" provides control over the Search capability and allows you to determine which Apps can use Search. This is also the place where you can "Delete your Search History," for those of you who would like to keep your Searches private.

"Share" provides control over the Apps that can be used to share things, like photos or web pages. You can individually enable or disable Apps like Mail, People, and SkyDrive as methods for sharing.

"General" is a collection of general settings. Here you can set the time, modify the way spelling errors are handled. "General" also includes two new features for initializing your computer, 1-Refresh, and 2-Remove & Reinstall. The first feature, "Refresh your PC without affecting your files" resets your computer settings to their original factory states, and removes any Apps that didn't come from the Windows App Store, while leaving your files untouched. The second feature "Remove everything and reinstall Windows" sets your computer back to the way it was originally delivered. All your files are deleted and your settings are put back to their factory states. This might be something you may want to do when or if you give or sell your computer to someone.

"Privacy" lets you determine if Apps can use your Location, Name, or Account Picture. Some Apps can provide useful information if they are allowed to use your location, like an App that shows you the cheapest gas station nearest to you.

"Devices" displays every device your computer is connected to, such as printers, scanners, cameras, etc.

"Wireless" provides control over your wireless networks. Here you can enable Airplane which would turn off your Wi-Fi network (Bluetooth and/or Cell, if included on your mobile device).

"Ease of Access" provides a few controls to make your computing experience easier if you have hearing or seeing difficulties. All of the "Ease of Access" controls can still be found in Control Panel.

"Sync your Settings" provides individual enable/disable switches for the things you want to synchronize over your internet connection. Your settings, passwords, favorites and other preferences can sync to any Windows 8 machine that you log into.

"Homegroup" provides an easy way to set up a network among several Windows machines at the same location. Within a Homegroup, you can easily share documents, pictures, videos, music, and printers.

"Windows Update" shows your choice as to Update, or not to Update, Windows 8. If you have chosen "Turn on recommended settings" in the Control Panel, then Windows will periodically check for and install Windows updates. Other choices are to "Check for updates but let me choose when to download and install

What I Would Change If I Were In Charge

Yes I am a big fan of technology. I enjoy it. To me, my computer devices (including my tablet and phone) and the things they can do for me are totally amazing. Computers are also very complex. I believe the day has long past when one person can know everything about them. I certainly am not anywhere close to that. But having used computers for a number of years, I am still totally amazed at some of the design decisions that are made about these devices and the software (programs, apps) they use. Do the designers sit around a table and say "Ok, let's do it that way, the users will figure it out."? Does there ever seem a real reason why they do the things they do? Do they ever trial their designs with real people like us?

I don't mean to be rude — maybe just a bit amusing. Here is my "top ten" list of the things I would change if I were in charge:

10. Computer buttons on a device would be a different color from the rest of the device. I would like to be able to clearly see the buttons or switches, especially as the devices get smaller and smaller.

9. When I move or copy a file from one place to another, I would have a pop-up box appear that says "You have successfully moved (or copied) file X to folder Y." That way I could catch a mistake if I dropped it into the wrong folder. If other users are so confident that they would never move something to the wrong place, they could turn off this feature.

8. When updating software, I would keep the most-used commands in the same place in the window. For example, when updating an email program, I would not move the "write" command box from one side of the screen to the other, nor change its color from blue to red, nor change the word "write" to "compose" or "create."

7. I would have the "help" searches recognize the words most users would enter in the "help" search, not just the words the program designers decided to acknowledge. Maybe the software uses the term "font color", but some people may search help for "letter color" or "text color.

6. Finding seldom used commands or options should be easier to find and not removed out of sight because I haven't used them lately.

5. All companies that take my money should have a live person whom I can talk to on the phone in a reasonable time.

4. Companies which use an automatic answering system (a computer voice that answers the phone and asks you questions, also known as a "phone robot") MUST make their own management employees call their own number and go through the same "telephone tree" that their customers go through. And they should all do it at least once every three months because they must "please listen carefully as our options have changed!"

3. If I give an answer to a telephone answering robot, I should not have to answer the same question again from a real person who finally gets on the line to help me.

2. When writing a new version of software, I would initially make it look like the old version and gradually help the user transition and learn as they use the new version.

And now (drum roll please) my number 1 thing I would change:

1. Company employees who finally help me on the phone should be knowledgeable of their own company's web page and the information on it! Yes, believe it or not, you can constantly negotiate totally different deals and prices in person, on the phone, and on the Internet – all with the same company.

Well, I guess no world is perfect. And I am sure you have your "top ten" list too. If any of you get a call from a company asking for your opinion on any of these things, please let me know. For some reason no one calls and asks me. Maybe it's because of my "telephone tree" answering message they have to listen to first.♠

Free Internet Faxing Services: No Fax Machine Required!

Dump your fax machine, the Internet has made this dinosaur obsolete. Think of the savings on toner, paper, and time when all you really need these days is a cell phone, PDA, or PC. I have a big list of sites for you that offer free Internet faxing services. Some of them are completely free, while others offer free or limited trials. Pick the online fax service that suits you best...

FaxZero lets you send free faxes from a simple web-based interface. Just enter the sender and recipient info, type in your message, and hit the "Send Free Fax Now" button. The rich-text editor lets you add basic formatting, highlighting and fonts to your text. You can also fax a file from your hard drive. Supported file formats include PDF, Microsoft Word (DOC, DOCX or RTF), Excel spreadsheet (XLS or XLSX), image files (PNG or JPG), TXT, HTML, and PowerPoint (PPT). You can attach multiple files, but the combined size of all attachments must be 20MB or less.

And yes, it's really free to send a fax to anywhere in the USA or Canada. You can send five free faxes per day, each with a maximum of three pages. No ads are inserted on your faxed pages, but the FaxZero logo will appear on the cover page of your outgoing fax. You can even use FaxZero to fax your U.S. congressperson or senator. I've written more about FaxZero in my Send a Free Fax article.

GotFreeFax is basically a clone of FaxZero, with some minor differences. You can send 2 free faxes daily to the USA or Canada, with a 3 page per fax maximum. No ads or branding appear on the cover page. GotFreeFax supports PDF, Microsoft Word, OpenDocument Text (.odt), and Rich Text (.rtf) file formats only. One unique feature is the ability to substitute tokens in the message, such as {RECEIVER_NAME}, {RECEIVER_COMPANY}, and {RECEIVER_FAX}.

PamFax is another free faxing service that offers 3 free outgoing pages (after signup) with no ads. You can also get a free fax number for inbound faxes. PamFax has an address book for convenience, integrates with Outlook, and works with popular cloud services such as DropBox, Google Drive, and SkyDrive.

PopFax is yet another free fax sending service. Like the others, you can input a brief text message, or upload a document from your hard drive. But I can't recom-

website for the same product. I registered on the SharewareOnSale website (one time, simple and free), put the program in my shopping cart, and checked-out with a zero balance due, with no credit card or PayPal necessary to pay for the free item. On the following screen were download links for both the 32 and 64-bit versions, which were pre-registered and fully activated when installed. Even though the AVG Internet Suite 2014 was labeled as a fully functional, not crippled in any way, trial version, the expiration date of the trial was a full year in the future. All services and updates would be available for a year, no different than any other program with an annual license. When I downloaded the AVG Internet Security 2014, SharewareOnSale said that the offer was still good for five more days, but just two days later this particular offer was listed as "expired" (sharewareonsale.com/s/free-avg-internet-security-2014-54-99-value).

Another offer that I was fortunate enough to take prompt advantage of, prior to its quick expiration, was a free download of the $40 Wondershare Video Converter Pro (sharewareonsale.com/s/free-wondershare-video-converter-pro-39-95-value), and excellent program for converting videos in almost any video format to almost any other video format, including dozens of formats for PC, Mac, online, YouTube, and individual smart devices. I told one of my neighbors about it the day that I downloaded and installed Wondershare Video Converter Pro, but by the next day, when he went to download it, the offer had already expired. The important object lesson here is to frequently check the SharewareOnSale.com website, and download (or purchase) any desired item right away, as tomorrow may be too late.

On the positive side, as mentioned above, is that the content on the site is very dynamic, as new software items are very frequently added, and other offers expire. As I type this, there are several interesting deals posted, which may likely expire before readers of this column have a chance to get them, but new offers will inevitably replace the expired ones after this column is published. Some of the items currently available (which will likely expire soon and be replaced with new offers) are:

SoftOrbits Sketch Drawer Pro, a

$79.95 value, available free for a very limited time; this product can, "turn your digital photos into works of art! SoftOrbits Sketch Drawer Pro converts photos/images to sketches in just a few clicks."

SoftOrbits Photo Digital Suite Personal on sale for $4.99 ($349.95 value if each component purchased individually, or $99.95 if purchased together as a suite). According to the posting, "SoftOrbits Digital Photo Suite Personal is a software pack of 10 software titles: Batch Picture Resizer, Photo Stamp Remover, Batch Picture Protector, Html Web Gallery Creator, Red Eye Removal, Private Photo Album, Flash Drive Recovery, SoftOrbits Photo Retoucher, SoftSkin Photo Makeup, and Sketch Drawer."

GiliSoft #1 Video Tools on sale for $4.99 ($380 value). "GiliSoft #1 Video Tools is a 7 + 2 software bundle of nine different programs: seven programs by GiliSoft (Video Converter, Screen Recorder, Video Editor, Slideshow Movie Creator, Movie DVD to Video, Movie DVD Backup, Movie DVD Creator) and two bonus gifts by EaseUS (Data Recovery Wizard and Partition Master Pro)."

Tenorshare Data Recovery WinPE on sale for $2.99 ($39.95 value). One of my personal favorites for recovering deleted or damaged files, "Tenorshare Data Recovery WinPE lets you recover lost, damaged, formatted or deleted data from a bootable/recovery CD/DVD/USB without booting into Windows."

Free BlazeVideo SmartShow ($49.95 value). " BlazeVideo SmartShow offers you the easiest way to create a unique movie with your favorite pictures, video clips, music and voice-over."

While it is somewhat inevitable that many, if not all of these offers will expire prior to publication, Ashraf has been very good at keeping SharewareOnSale.com well stocked with an assortment of free and deeply discounted software products. Examples of some of the other now expired offerings include Wondershare PDF Converter, a $60 utility given away for free, that can convert PDF files in a large variety of other editable formats including Word; RoboForm Everywhere, a very popular $20 password manager, that was also available for free for a limited time; Process Lasso Pro, an excellent $15 system and memory manager, that was available for free; Paragon Partition Manager 12, a

very popular $40 hard drive partition manager, that was available for $2.99; Ashampoo Burning Studio 2013, a comprehensive $40 CD and DVD burning utility, that was given away for free; and dozens of other utilities that either given away for free or sold for very nominal prices. As each of these offers expired, they were replaced by newer offers, a cycle that has been repeating since the inception and availability of the service.

It is somewhat amazing that Ashraf has been able to compile and make available several dozen decent utilities of various types, during the two months that ShareOnSale.com has been in existence. For those who may like notice of the free or bargain software available, I recommend signing up for the free, once daily email announcing the offerings, using the form on the top right of each SharewareonSale.com web page. Just like our local weather, if you do not see anything that you like, just come back in a few minutes or tomorrow, and the offerings will likely be different. ♠

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.

[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 each article – see the November online newsletter. CTPC Editor]

CTPC Dues Due 01/01/14

You can mail your check (postdated or not) to the CTPC, PO Box 291, New Canaan, CT 06840. You can also bring your check to the November meeting.

There is no official meeting in December but we will produce and mail a newletter. This will give us another opportunity to remind you about your dues. ♠

The Tip Corner

Making a copy of your file listing

I wanted to make a list of all my music files. Back in the old Days of C: prompts it was very simple to make a copy of all the files in one of your folders. And even to print them out. I believe there are a few programs out there that can do that for us, and if you want one just Google 'how do I make a list of file names' and a few will pop up. But here is a simple and free solution.

Suppose you wanted to make a list of all your songs. Open up the folder with all the music files. It would look something like this: C:/Documents/Music/Mp3. Go to that pane and highlight the complete line and then type in cmd. You should get a black DOS screen with the name of the folder that is open. At the prompt just type in dir *.* name.txt. Close the DOS screen. Now, if you look in the open folder you should find the name.txt file that you just made. You can copy it anywhere and open it with notebook or any other text editor. If you want to print out a copy right from the DOS screen you can just type dir/p.

Keep your PC clean with Microsoft Security Essentials

While there are a lot of Security Programs out there, both free and commercial, if you haven't yet tried Microsoft Security Essentials you should give it a try. This program is not only free, it protects you against viruses, spyware and Malware, works quietly in the background and doesn't slow down your system at all. The security suite is integrated into the operating system and as a result it's able to function in the background without hogging system resources and hindering any work that's going on in the foreground. As per various tests conducted online, it's able to detect and remove 99% of all threats in various virus and spyware forms.

This performance is not only impressive but a huge upgrade over what Microsoft had to offer previously. One little tip. Before running a scan always check for updates since the definitions are updated frequently.

Personalize Your Gmail Inbox Background With A Photo

We all love the functionality of our Gmail Inbox, but it is a little plain. We can spruce it up by adding a personal photo.

Start by selecting Settings in your Gmail inbox and choose Themes. There are a wide variety of themes to choose from, but scroll down to Custom Themes where you can choose between a light or a dark theme.

You'll be asked to select a background photo. You can choose from featured photos, your own Google + photos uploaded from your phone, a URL or you can upload the photo of your choice. Most of your photo is going to be covered up by the photo, so choose something that looks nice with just the edges showing. Pictures with a landscape orientation look best. Since you will only see parts of the photo, you'll probably want to experiment with different images and see what works best.

Overdrive

If you still go to the library to borrow books, then you should check out Overdrive. Overdrive is the software that you use to download the media from your library. You can go to your library's website to get the information, or just go to overdrive.com. There is an app for phones and tablets. You can search Overdrive for libraries all over the country. To download books you must have a library card from any library you want to borrow from. Once your library is found you can open it up in Overdrive enter your library card number and a password if required. The good news is that you can get audiobooks or E-books and download them directly to your Bookshelf. The following formats are available: Kindle, Overdrive READ, Epub, and PDF (e-books) as well as .MP3 and WMA for audiobooks. Android phones cannot play the WMA versions of the book.

The bad news is that your library has only licensed so many copies of any book to lend at a time, so the book that you want may not be available. The website will tell you how many copies the library has, how many are available and how many holds there are ahead of you. If you can't check it out immediately, you can simply place a hold on the book, just like you would a paper book, and the library will notify you when it will be available for you to download. Whether you check it out immediately or get it through a hold you will have three days from the time that it becomes available to download it.

Some libraries offer different "lending" periods for their books. If they do, choose the period that would be right for you. A usual time is around 14 days, but while you cannot renew a book you haven't finished you can re-download it. Usually the book will disappear by itself, but you can have it returned and deleted at any time. You can usually borrow up to seven books at one time. It is also possible to transfer your book to another device. You can change the font, rewind and forward at will, and they are so light to carry around. If you have the app on your phone or tablet you can download via Wi-Fi.

Erase Your Hard Drive

We all know that if we are going to destroy our PC or give it away there is a problem with data on the hard drive. When you delete something in windows—it just marks it to be written over . Formatting a hard drive does not permanently erase stored data, it just reconstructs the allocation table and checks the blocks on the disk. With the right software, old files can be recovered. Well here are a few programs that will totally erase data. Two free programs that can do the job are:

Darik's Boot and Nuke which is an application that you can install on a bootable floppy or CD Rom. Boot and Nuke uses several methods to wipe the data on your drive to an unrecoverable state. Go here to get it: http://dban.sourceforge.net

The second title is Eraser 6. Though this software is free as well, a $15.00 donation is encouraged. This software does a great job of sanitizing your hard drive by removing all magnetic and solid state memory. It does this by using several different techniques including "pseudorandom data overwrite" and techniques defined by the Department of Defense. http://www.heidi.ie/eraser/

Once one of these procedures is performed the drive is ready to be given away or thrown out without fear of privacy invasion, fraud, or worse. A word to the wise.

Microsoft

As you might know, Microsoft is converting Hotmail to Outlook. There are pros and cons on both sides, but in the meantime here are a few Word and Out-

Bill Hart, Member, The PC Users Group of Connecticut, July 2013 issue, The Program, www.tpcug-ct.org, adrabinowitz@ieee.org

The Other Side of the Street Monthly Column

Google

Google, it seems, has not just the most wonderful web search device in its arsenal; it is also accused of collecting private data from its clients (that's us) – far more than we necessarily know or suspect. No one in this country seems to bother about that much, but in Europe....

Think of it: how has Google become so huge? And I mean HUGE. If it's just there for us to use as a combination dictionary, gazetteer, art museum and library – for free – how can it amass the $millions necessary to keep those battalions of servers waiting to satisfy us almost instantaneously? The answer is: Cookies.

A Cookie is a small file of data sent by a website to a contact and stored on the contact's computer. When you log in to a website which uses cookies it will create a quick summary of who you are and maybe what you have accessed on the site and this will be saved on your computer so that next time you log in you can be recognized and perhaps welcomed by name. Fine; but think of it: the site now knows who you are, what your email address is, maybe (if you set up a more formal link) the User ID and password you created to use the site, and even the fact that you looked at, say, electric kettles rather than glassware. And for Google, what you looked at could be anything.

So Google can collect this data and sell it to others: to marketers of electric kettles to warn them you are on the prowl for one, say – the list could be endless. And as you move from searching history to ski equipment to checking maps to reading the news, a fairly full idea can be formed of the sort of person you are. Rather like the personal live-in servant who, over the years, knows a lot more about who you really are than even you may realize. And this worries a lot of people – particularly in Europe, which has had more than its share of secret police over the years.

So now Google is in trouble in Europe, and most of all in France. The trouble really came with the introduction of Google Street View, when specially-equipped vehicles drove the roads of the world recording pictures of what they were passing. It turned out than someone had added to the equipment a Wi-Fi recorder which was picking up all sorts of extraneous information – emails, data transfers, passwords and such. And though Google

officially denied authorizing this and promised to delete the data recovered, it turns out that they have not done so. Two years ago an investigation was begun. It is still raging today, as the authorities try to rein Google in. Now the BBC reports Google has been given 35 days to delete the material. After that, who knows? Can France remove the website www.google.fr from the world?

Back to cookies. They started in the 1990s when a commercial site wanted to retain some information on visitors, but found this would quickly clog its data storage. So they asked the browser writers (Netscape in those days) to arrange for small files to be stored by the browser on each personal machine instead. When they were originally implemented nobody knew they even existed, let alone they were being stored locally. But there are now, as a result of complaints, rules for cookie construction (each issuer can only read its own cookies, for example) and ways of reducing the numbers.

You can, for example, turn them off completely ("I do not wish to help you recognize me at all!") but this may backfire.

There are sites today which will not let you onto them unless you allow them to store cookies on your machine. My Firefox browser is set to tell me when cookies are requested and I can reply Yes or No. This is interesting: I have seen sites that want to place as many as six cookies at a time on my machine (Six? Why?). I often reply No and wait to see if the request is repeated until I say Yes, or if I can get onto the site without.

Many sites also, as they create the data stream for building their picture on your screen, branch to other sites which then ask for cookie permission. One of the most notorious is DoubleClick (which is now owned by Google too!). DoubleClick is purely advertising-related: we can provide marketers (for a fee) with information on the effectiveness of their ads, or the shopping habits of the public. It seems all they do is drop cookies and read them. By being called from a website as part of its setup, routine, they get by the restriction that only the issuer can read a cookie. This annoys me. I try to say No to DoubleClick cookies when I can.

Steve Costello, President/Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL, Aug 2013 issue, Boca Bits, www.brcs.org, Editor (at) brcs.org

Interesting Internet Finds – July 2013

In the course of going through the more than 200 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting during the month of July 2013.

Are You Being Fingerprinted Online? - http://askbobrankin.com/are_you_being_fingerprinted_online.html

5 Ways to Bypass Internet Censorship and Filtering - http://www.howtogeek.com/167418/5-ways-to-bypass-internet-censorship-and-filtering/

Find out if your Android is vulnerable to the MasterKey exploit - www.ghacks.net/2013/07/10/find-out-if-your-android-is-vulnerable-to-the-masterkey-exploit/

The Best Cloud Storage Services that Protect Your Privacy - http://lifehacker.com/the-best-cloud-storage-services-that-protect-your-priva-729639300

12 Things You Need to Know About Internet Privacy - www.techsupportalert.com/content/twelve-things-you-need-know-about-internet-privacy.htm

Introducing Instant RSS Search - http://www.labnol.org/internet/rss-search/19238/

5 Practices That Can Enhance Your Mobile Privacy
http://www.maketecheasier.com/5-practices-enhance-mobile-privacy/2013/06/30

I did it for science: editing Word docs on my iPhone and iPad
http://www.badlanguage.net/editing-word-docs-on-iphone-and-ipad

Going Paperless: My Paperless Cloud
http://www.jamierubin.net/2013/07/09/going-paperless-my-paperless-cloud/ ♠

[It may be easier to grab these links from the online version of this article on the CTPC website at www.ctpc.org. CTPC Editor]

Google Offers Free QuickOffice App With 10GB Storage

It should not be a surprise to anyone that the use of smart devices, including tablets and smart phones, is now beginning to eclipse the use of more traditional laptop and notebook computers, and making inroads on desktop computer use. While many of the traditional battles for desktop software and hardware are starting to ebb, the battle for smart devices is flaring, resulting in the rapid development and availability of significant and powerful new applications (apps). Originally in the realm of full featured desktop and laptop computers, the major software powerhouses are now battling for market share in the increasing crowded field of comprehensive office suites for smart devices.

In the desktop and laptop battlefield, Microsoft's ubiquitous Office, in its many iterations, has become the predominant Office suite, followed by excellent commercial and free competitors including Google Docs, Corel's WordPerfect suite (X6), LibreOffice, OpenOffice, Kingsoft Office, and others. With well over a billion smart devices flooding the world market, and more being sold every day at a much higher rate than more traditional computers, it was only inevitable that the battle for acceptance would turn to the smart device market, with most of these software publishers already releasing, or preparing to release, apps for the smart device market.

When I first obtained an Android device, I downloaded the free version app of Kingsoft Office so I could access and edit most of my Microsoft Office Documents. While adequate, it was not as useful or as powerful as the Microsoft Office that I use as my primary Office suite at home and at work. One of my daughters has a Windows phone, which she expressly purchased to better enable her to work with Microsoft Office documents while away from work or home. Recently, Microsoft offered a series of apps in Windows (phone and tablets), iOS (Apple iPhone and iPad versions), and Android formats to enable users to access its cloud based Office 365 services, with much of the same usability as users are already familiar with on their desktop and laptop computers. While it is obvious that Microsoft aims at acquiring office market share in the smart device market place, substantial competition is appearing from another powerhouse; Google has made its Quick-

WEBSITES:

http://googleenterprise.blogspot.com/2013/09/freeing-quickoffice-for-everyone.html
http://www.google.com/drive/apps.html#quickoffice
https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/quickoffice/id578386521?mt=8
https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.quickoffice.android&hl=en
https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/
https://office.microsoft.com/en-us/mobile/#a
http://docs.google.com
http://www.libreoffice.org

Office product available as a free app for iOS and Android devices.

Google has quietly developed a large and loyal following of its free Google Docs service (docs.google.com), where registered (free) Google account holders can "Create, share, and collaborate on the web with documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and more." On numerous occasions, I have uploaded many of my Word documents, Excel spreadsheets, and PowerPoint presentations to my Google Drive (cloud based storage) both for redundant backup purposes, and the ability to access, view and edit them as desired using any computer and browser with internet access. Since Google Docs allows secure online collaboration, I have worked on several group projects that required multiple users to have access to specific documents; we all could access the selected files stored on Google Drive, which could then be opened and edited by the authorized members of the group using Google Docs.

With Microsoft heavily promoting its mobile apps for Office 365, Google could not concede Office market share to Microsoft, especially since Google's Android operating system is by far the predominant smart device operating system, with over 75% of the market (compared to only a tiny minority of Windows Mobile users). Prior to September 19, 2013, Google sold QuickOffice for $14.99 for phone versions (iPhone and Android phones), and $19.99 for the Android and iPad tablet versions, but as of September 19, QuickOffice is free to all, as long as they have a free Google account. With free versions (apps) that can run on almost any modern Android or iOS (Apple) smart device, Google obviously has the marketing capabilities to be-

come the primary purveyor of smart device Office products, much to the chagrin of Microsoft. With its flagship mobile Office 365 product facing stiff competition from Google's QuickOffice, I sincerely doubt that Microsoft will roll over, but instead become an even more intense competitor.

Those who may not be familiar with Google's QuickOffice (or Google Docs) may wonder about what it is; according to a recent post on a Google blog by Alan Warren, head of engineering for Google Drive, "We're making Quickoffice available for free to everyone: students, businesses, nonprofits, governments, consumers and anyone with a Google Account. Simply sign in with your Google Account to start editing Microsoft Office Excel, Word and PowerPoint files on your iPhone, iPad, Android phone or tablet."

I downloaded the Android version of QuickOffice to my Samsung smart phone, a 17mb download, which will run on Android powered tablets and phones with Android version 2.2 or later. Despite the small virtual keyboard on my phone, I was able to create new documents in Word and Excel format, and save them to my existing Google Drive account. I then opened an existing PowerPoint file that was on my Google Drive, and edited it, saving it back to my Google Drive. The main issue that I had using my small Android phone was the limited view due to the small screen on my phone, and encountered some slight difficulty selecting text and images for editing, primarily because of my large fingertips. I was able to open and view stored PDF files without problems, other than the obvious size limitation imposed by the limitations of my small phone screen. As a quick test, I attached a Word file, newly created on my phone with QuickOffice, and attached it to an email addressed to myself, which I opened on my desktop Windows 7-64 computer. The attached QuickOffice Word file opened flawlessly in my desktop Microsoft Word 2010, with all formatting, fonts, and small graphics precisely as I cre-

Take One Tablet and Text Me in the Morning

I've been pretty lucky with contests this year. My winning started at our group's January meeting, where I won the copy of Office Professional 2010 that Microsoft gave away at our party at the Microsoft store. Then at a local electronics component trade show in May, I won a drawing for an iPad Mini. Though it was the low-cost 16GB Wi-Fi version, it was still a more expensive tablet than I would have bought for myself.

I had been thinking of getting a new tablet, as the low-cost Velosity Micro Cruz reader I bought a few years ago was never more than fair at getting on the Internet. Since my wife had gotten a Kindle Fire HD for Christmas and my son bought himself a Google Nexus 7, I felt left out of the tablet world. I initially considered selling the iPad and buying a Nexus 7, but in the end kept it, concluding that this was probably the only way I was going to own an Apple product.

I have nothing against Apple; I think they make very good products, but feel they are overpriced. Though I may admire BMW automobiles, I'm fairly certain I'll never own one for the same reason. For me, it is all about value. I'd never considered buying an iPad Mini, as I felt there were a number of alternatives that were at least almost as good, but at 2/3rds of the price. I've known a number of Apple fanatics, some acting like cult followers. I figured this windfall would allow me to more fairly review an Apple product and perhaps give me some insight into the cult.

Though I've had the iPad for a few months, I have not really made much use of it. Its ability to browse on the web is excellent, beating my old Cruz reader by at least an order of magnitude. The iPad easily displays any web page and allows me to bypass those horrible mobile-oriented pages that seem so neutered. Still, I favor wired network connections at home, so I've used the iPad mostly when traveling. I also have not yet figured out how to transfer files to or from the iPad easily. It appears to have a great camera, but I have not been able to transfer photos. Problems with my Apple ID are contributing to the lack of wider use, and I'm still confused as to how to easily bridge the Apple and PC worlds.

In spite of relatively little use, the iPad did work well for me while on two weekend getaways with my wife early this summer. I'm accustomed to taking my laptop with me when traveling (I prefer a smaller 14" screen for greater portability), but on these trips I also brought the iPad along as it is so small. Since it is so quick to start up, the tablet became my preferred device for web searches for nearby restaurants and attractions. Once back home, however, I went back to my PC ways.

A few weeks ago I learned that I was a winner once again. I had entered a web contest with Littelfuse, a manufacturer of electronics protection components, and got the call that I was one of 10 winners of their Speed2Design contest. The prize was a trip to the NASA Ames Research Center in Mountain View, CA, for an all-day engineering-oriented tour on August 15.

Prior to this, I had not considered my streak of luck in contests so significant that I should block out the time in my schedule for the prize trip when entering. I received notice that I had won only two weeks before the NASA trip, so was fortunate that the trip did not interfere with the family mini vacation to Catalina Island I had scheduled for two days afterwards. Since I had already scheduled vacation for the Catalina trip, I decided to minimize the vacation needed for the NASA trip and fly up to San Jose in the afternoon on Wednesday, the day before the tour. I needed to be there at the hotel by 6 PM for a reception, and felt flying mid-afternoon on Southwest Airlines would get me there in time. I'd flown to San Jose many times for business and was very familiar with the airport and area, justifying my lack of much margin on the travel arrangements.

Air travel used to be fun, but now with all the security scrutiny, crowded airports, baggage restrictions and added fees, it has become something like going into battle. I signed up for flight updates by text message with Southwest and with my favorite flight tracking website, Flightaware (www.flightaware.com). While still at work on my departure day, I received messages that my flight's departure would be delayed by 35 minutes. Since I believe delays breed delays, I started getting anxious about arriving in time for the evening reception.

I had planned on bringing my laptop and checking a bag (I like to be prepared, which often means bringing more stuff than I typically use), but with the news of my flight delay, I decided to see if I could just carry everything on and eliminate the time waiting in the baggage claim area in San Jose. Since this seemed more reasonable if I left the laptop at home, I decided to take only the iPad. I rushed home from work, repacked my bags to take only the tablet, and headed for the airport. Fortunately, my flight was not delayed further, and I made it to the reception in time.

Littelfuse really treated us great, and put us up at the Santa Clara Marriott. My only gripe with the hotel was that they charge $6 per day for in-room Internet access ($13 for bandwidth enough for video chat and streaming video). The hotel did provide free Wi-Fi in their lobby, but once again it is indicative of this added-fee culture in the travel business. I've stayed in hotels all over the Bay Area and had always found free in-room Internet access. And this is in the city of Santa Clara, which provides free public Wi-Fi over most outdoor areas of the city (when Santa Clara switched to smart power meters this year, it provided the free Wi-Fi in conjunction with the wireless network needed to read the meters). I was able to sit in the Jack In the Box across the street from the hotel Friday morning after the tour and surf the web on the Santa Clara city network while having breakfast (sorry, I'd forgotten my other Marriott gripe: their hotel breakfast was $22).

The NASA tours arranged by Littelfuse on Thursday were the experience of a lifetime. Our day was packed with tours and presentations on nine different topics, all of which were excellent. In addition to touring the world's largest wind tunnel and learning about NASA's latest efforts to sustain humans in the closed environment of a space station though forward osmosis filtration of waste liquids, I saw several items that would have been of particular interest to our group. One was the Hyperwall display and Pleaides supercomputer.

Pleaides is a 1.79 petaflop supercomputer, made up of 130,000 cores in 182 racks. To make sense of the results of the complex simulations run on it, NASA uses the Hyperwall, a matrix of displays 12 wide and 7 high. It can all be devoted to the display of one simulation, like a world-wide view of ocean currents, or instead display the outputs of many simula-

ated them on my phone. I did the same with both Excel and PowerPoint on my phone, and subject to the limitations of my phone's small screen size, the spreadsheet and PowerPoint emailed from the phone to my PC all opened and displayed perfectly, without any other issues or problems. Obviously on an Android or iPad tablet, with its much larger screen and easier to manipulate keyboard and desktop, it would be much easier to create or edit Office compatible documents than it is on a much smaller phone factor.

I looked at QuickOffice on an iPhone and iPad, and found it similar to the display on comparable Android devices. QuickOffice for Apple devices, both iPad and iPhone, is a large 59.8mb download. As I found on Android devices, the display and functionality on an iPad was about the same as it was on an Android tablet, considering the design differences between the Apple and Android products.

Since anyone can register for a free Google account, including a minimum of 10GB of free cloud storage on Google Drive, and then download the appropriate free QuickOffice app for Android or iOS, anyone with a compatible smart device can now read, create, and edit Microsoft office files, saving them to Google Drive, or emailing them as desired. Once on Google Drive, files can be securely accessed via any internet connected device, including PCs, Macs, and other web enabled devices. For those desktop and laptop users who may not have Microsoft Office installed, and who may desire a free competitor to Microsoft Office, my personal choice (free) is LibreOffice (libreoffice.org), which will run on any desktop operating system (including Windows, Mac, Linux, and others), and can open, read, and write virtually any office format in the world, including all of the Microsoft Office formats.

While QuickOffice worked satisfactorily on any Android or iOS device that I tried it on, the usability of QuickOffice is greatly improved on the larger screens of a tablet, but is somewhat hindered on the smaller screen of a smart phone. ♠

New App Controls
cont'd from Page 2

them," and "Download updates but let me choose whether to install them." "Turn on recommended settings" is probably the safest choice.

Now you see that we have all the necessary control over Apps, let's go and take some out for a test ride. Well, maybe in a future article. ♠

look tips.

Word Screenshots

Microsoft Word 2010 provides you with the capability to take a screenshot from another open program and paste it within Word. Just click the Insert tab and select Screenshot.

Office 2010 Search

When searching for text, you may find a word in several locations in a document. To help you quickly locate the specific use of the word you want to change, Microsoft Word 2010 provides you with an excerpt of the text surrounding the word you searched for. Examine all of the excerpts to find the exact text you want to find or change.

Outlook Conversation View

In Outlook 2010, you can group messages by subject, so you can condense email threads by removing any redundant messages.

Paste Preview In Office 2010

Office 2010 offers a feature where you can preview the different formatting choices before you actually paste. Just hover your mouse over the "Paste Options" menu when pasting content. ♠

Take One Tablet – *continued from Page 8*

tions at once (http://vimeo.com/71358105). And I thought my dual display of 23" monitors at work was hot stuff.

Another interesting project we saw was the PhoneSat. To try to reduce costs and gain more knowledge quickly, NASA has developed small cube satellites (approx. 4" x 4") based on cell phone processors (http://vimeo.com/71356259, www.phonesat.org). In early incarnations, there were actual cell phones built into the cubesat. The phones they prefer to use are based on the open source Android operating system (sorry, Apple).

On the flight back from San Jose, I was on a Southwest plane with inflight Wi-Fi. They of course wanted a fee for web browsing ($8 per day), but on that flight they also had some free live and on-demand TV shows courtesy of Dish Network. The iPad Mini provided a great display for the TV, but since I had not brought headphones, I had to settle for watching their free flight tracker for most of the flight. Installing this Wi-Fi system in their planes is a win-win situation for Southwest, as they can get the extra revenue from the Internet and movie fees as well as save flight weight, as they are making their passengers bring their own screens for movies.

The iPad Mini worked so well on the Littelfuse NASA trip that I again took it in place of my laptop on the Catalina trip. With Wi-Fi at our hotel, it again was great for checking on activities and dining on the web. It is certainly a lot lighter and easier to travel with than a laptop. It does not fill all the travel needs that a laptop does, however.

One thing I have used my laptop for on travel is for photo storage. When my camera's memory card is full, the photos can be transferred to the laptop's hard drive. With the iPad Mini, which has no SD card slot and limited internal memory, I had to bring enough spare SD memory cards for the camera. Another thing I do frequently is to create a document before each of my trips, which contains all the trip information (flight, hotel and rental car times and confirmation numbers, planned activity details and other trip info). I typically keep this document on the USB Flash drive I always carry with me, and then can view it on my laptop if I lose the paper copy. With no USB capability on the iPad, I have to rely only on the paper copy. I suppose I could have put the document in the cloud so it could be viewed on the tablet, but I don't think I want all my travel details in the cloud. For a short trip, the tablet works well, but the laptop might be better on longer ones. ♠

mend PopFax for several reasons. In the Terms of Use on their website, it says that PopFax does not guarantee "the possible alteration of the data sent by the User nor the service availability." It also says they are not liable for damage "following to an alteration of the User data transfer." This could be badly translated legal mumbo-jumbo, but yikes! Also my Chrome browser crashed when trying to send a DOC file with PopFax. On another attempt, it said my fax number was "invalid." After sending a test fax to another number, it never arrived. Of course, your mileage may vary, but with so many other choices, I'd steer clear of PopFax.

Sign up with K7, a messaging system that will send free faxes and voicemail to your email address, with an option to view or listen to your messages via the web. You get a free fax/voicemail number which you can give to your family, friends, and business buds. Just sit back and wait for the faxes to start dropping into your inbox as email attachments. If a K7 number is inactive for 30 days (no incoming voice or fax messages), it will be terminated. K7 cannot be used to send outgoing faxes. My companion article Free Inbound Faxing goes into more detail about Faxaway, an almost-free service that forwards incoming faxes to your email.

eFax claims that they are the largest online network on the planet with over a million subscribers in 2,500 cities and 27 countries. Also known as Zipfax, you can send and receive faxes as email attachments. You simply use the recipient's fax number and eFax's address. The 30-day freebie allows you to send or receive up to 150 pages. If you don't cancel during the initial month, you will be charged $16.95 per month. See also Free Inbound Faxing for more details on eFax Limited Accounts, a free service that forwards incoming faxes to your email.

Nextiva Fax offers a 30-day free trial, including 500 free faxes. Send a fax by email, or send and receive faxes from Microsoft applications. Instead of hitting the print button, simply select "fax" right from Word, Excel, etc. Nextiva also lets you send and receive faxes from mobile devices. After the trial period, you'll be $8.95 per month, unless you cancel.

RingCentral is designed for small businesses, not only can you receive and send faxes via email, they can supply you with toll-free fax numbers, custom greetings, an auto-receptionist, voicemail, and multiple extensions. The company offers a 7-day free trial, during which you get 500 free fax pages. After the trial period, you'll be $7.99 per month, unless you cancel.

I couldn't find a smarphone app that sends free faxes. There's an app called scanR that's supposed to do that, but apparently it's defunct. CamScanner is a free app that turns your iPhone or Android smartphone into a scanner, fax machine and PDF creator. Take a picture of a document, receipt, business card, etc. CamScanner turns it into a searchable PDF that you can fax, print or upload to various cloud storage services. Faxing costs 99 cents per page.♠

The Other Side

cont'd from Page 6

What fascinates me is that "google" has become a word in common use. We no longer search for information; we google it, even if we are using another search engine. I remember as a child that Hoover came into the common English lexicon. We did not vacuum the carpet; we hoovered it. And my parents owned an Electrolux hoover. That is, to me, the ultimate in Having Arrived!♠

Mike Alcorn   **CTPC Newsletter Editor**

Look Before You Leap!

Leo A. Notenboom had an 18 year career as a programmer at Microsoft. After "retiring" in 2001, Leo started Ask Leo! in 2003 as a place for answers to common computer and technical questions. I think many CTPC members might be interested in signing up for Leo's free weekly newsletter.

He ran a short piece not long ago about something I had not previously thought about: shortened URLs. Some of the authors that appear in the CTPC newsletter utilize these. It's a lot easier to get your fingers around http://goo.gl/Vm7MT than http://www.maketecheasier.com/understanding-various-vpn-connections/!

Personally, I wouldn't have too much worry about a shortened link appearing in the CTPC newsletter. However, if you receive shortened links in emails you might want to worry about where they are really taking you.

Leo mentioned a site called longurl.org where you can simply cut-and-paste a shortened URL from any source and see the full destination link. There is also a "meta description" which should help you decide if the destination is really one you want to go to.

He also mentioned that with Bit.ly shortened URLs you can simply add a plus sign to the end of the link to see where you would go absent the plus sign.

Leo advised that TinyURL has a preview feature that you can turn on by visiting tinyurl.com/preview.php.

Here's to safer computing.♠

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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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