

Newsletter

Connecticut PC User's Group

April 2014
Vol. 32 No. 8

The Next CTPC Meeting

Tuesday, April 22, 2014 - 6:30 p.m.

The Basics of Microsoft SharePoint Online

The March meeting was canceled due to the potential for bad weather. CTPC member, Richard Frisch, will now present "The Basics of Microsoft SharePoint Online" at the April CTPC meeting. SharePoint Online (SPO) is part of Microsoft Office 365 for Business. SPO helps organize information, people and projects, whether working as an individual or in a team.

Do you remember when you moved from a typewriter to a word processor or from a calculator and a ledger to a

spreadsheet program? Wonderful new possibilities arose. SPO removes the limitations imposed by storing files only on our computer's hard drive. It removes the need to create, edit and view documents solely on our computers. It lets us easily collaborate by storing our files simultaneously in the cloud and on our computers. When you move to SPO you can access your work on whatever device you want—computer, tablet or smartphone—and wherever you are.

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Apr 22nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Silver Star Diner, Norwalk, CT

May 27th 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 directions.

www.ctpc.org

Ira Wilsker - Ira 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

Free Online Backup Services

At the local computer club meeting earlier today (gtpcc.org), we had a brief discussion on the subject of online backup services. For those who might not be aware, there are literally dozens, if not more, online companies that provide remote backup services, often using the term "in the cloud". Unlike the more traditional in-house backup methods, such as an external hard or flash drive which are very common today, these online services utilize an internet connection to send and receive the data to a distant server to be stored on that distant server.

While there are advantages to local drive based data backups, mostly their relative fast speed, there are also distinct

the free iHeartRadio app. His call-in number is 800-330-5584. The redundancy of remote and distant internet connected server storage provides protection for our critical data that may surpass the data protection that we might individually provide.

The term "in the cloud" or "cloud storage service" is defined by Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_storage_service) as, "A file hosting service, cloud storage service, online

file storage provider, or cyberlocker is an Internet hosting service specifically designed to host user files. It allows users to upload files that could then be accessed over the internet from a different computer, tablet, smart phone or other networked device, by the same user or possibly by other users, after a password or other authentication is provided. Typically, the services allow HTTP access, and sometimes FTP access."

Radio listeners and TV viewers may have heard a myriad of commercial spots promoting one or more of the several

WEBSITES:

- <http://pcsupport.about.com/od/software-tools/tp/free-online-backup.htm>
- <http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-backup-sites.htm>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_storage_service
- <http://winsupersite.com/skydrive/>
- <http://bing-rewards-members-get-100-gb-free-onedrive-storage-one-year>
- <http://www.speedtest.net>
- <http://pcsupport.about.com/od/software-tools/tp/free-online-backup.htm>
- <http://www.techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-backup-sites.htm>
- http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_storage_service
- <http://winsupersite.com/skydrive/>
- <http://bing-rewards-members-get-100-gb-free-onedrive-storage-one-year>
- <http://www.speedtest.net>

advantages to distant, remote storage of critical data files. Locally, we have a recent history of hurricanes, massive flooding, other natural disasters, and other accidents such as house fires that could compromise our data stored in our homes on external backup devices. While there are a variety of fire resistant and water-proof hard drives available, as well as water-proof and fire resistant safes to store our personal data backup dIra Wilsker - Ira 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

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Performance, Capacity, Ports... Tablet discriminators

Performance, Capacity, and Ports - sounds like something you might think of when you are considering a Vacation Cruise. But Performance, Capacity, and Ports are the three technical things to consider when contemplating acquiring many new devices. These three things should be considered, especially when you are planning to buy a tablet, a computer, or even a TV. TVs and computers have been around for quite a while, so let's take a look at these considerations for the new kid on the block, the tablet. Usually, when it comes to choosing a tablet, the first thing that meets the eye is the tablet size. Today's tablets seem to be roughly 7 or 10 inch. Once the size has been decided, then the Operating System becomes a choice: Apple's iOS (iOS5, iOS6), Google's Android (and all of its versions, like FroYo, Ice Cream Sandwich and Jelly Bean), or Microsoft's

Windows 8 (Pro or RT). And then, with the number of tablets and Operating

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Systems, the choice can really get difficult. But another way to help you make the final choice may be just to look at Performance, Capacity, and Ports.

Performance is a measure of how fast the device is and how well it accomplishes the desired task. Capacity is a measure of how much you can do with this device. And Ports is a measure of how well the device will interact (interface) with the outside world. Tablet performance is very hard to measure and quantify, but you really know when you don't have enough. When you do have plenty of performance, it is hard to ascribe the quality to any one thing, specifically. But, usually we look at the speed of the CPU. However, performance is very closely tied to the memory features, so performance may involve the memory speed as well as the CPU speed. Performance of the tablet CPU is measured in GHz, and currently good performance tablets clock in at around 1GHz. Because tablets are typically touchscreen

devices, the first thing we do, to ascertain performance, is to try to control the operation with our finger flicks and swipes. Objects should move when flicked and actions should take place when the screen is tapped. If there is any lag, it is immediately noticed.

There are many different CPU processors used in tablets. Some of the manufacturers are ARM, Nvidia, Apple, Intel, and AMD. Apple CPUs are found in the iPad and CPUs from the other manufacturers are found in the Android and Windows 8 tablets. There are at least two high performance CPU chips being used in the latest tablets: the Nvidia quad-core Tegra 3 in Android tablets and the Apple A5X in the latest iPad. The performance of both of these tablets is breathtaking. But keep in mind, not all tablets have the latest processors.

CPU performance can be determined

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Siri Speaks Out!

Siri is the virtual assistant that is available in the newer iPhone and iPads. Siri helps you perform tasks, translates your voice into text, and delivers verbal information. Siri works right out of the box with no training. So, recently, when my whole family was gathered together, we decided to get to know Siri on my iPhone a bit better. We all started taking turns asking Siri some questions. We found some interesting things about Siri and also about the people who programmed her.

Siri, it seems is really a team player. She loves to compliment her owner.

Q. Who is your mother?

A. I have you. That's enough family for me.

Q. Do you love me?

A. Let's just say...you have my utmost admiration.

Q. What is your favorite song?

A. I'm happy listening to your music.

Q. Do I look fat in this?

A. Simply fabulous, Sandy. Is that what you wanted to hear?

NOTE: The "Is that what you wanted to hear?" part was obviously writing by a male programmer.

Siri doesn't have just one answer. Many times she is programmed with several an-

swers to the same question. When asked the "Do I look fat question" repeatedly, she came up with several other answers including: I don't know. But I guess you look pretty good., Looking good, Sandy! Is that what you wanted to hear? and Judging from your voice, I'd say you must be fairly attractive.

Not only does Siri have a sense of humor, but she knows about Abbott and Costello.

When asked "Who is on first?" she responded, "Right. That's the man's name."

Although Siri knows about comedy, she is not much of a jokester.

Q. Did you hear the joke about the priest, minister, and rabbi?

A. I don't think I've heard that.

Q. Do you know any jokes?

A. What did one iPhone say to the other iPhone...mmm, I used to know this one.

We tried to get some personal information about Siri.

Q. Do you have a family?

A. Well, I have you.

Q. Where were you born?

A. I, Siri, was designed by Apple in California.

Q. Are you a boy or a girl?

A. I was not assigned a gender.

Q. You are pretty?

A. I don't know why everyone keeps saying that. But thanks.

Q. Siri, you are hilarious.

A. Yes. Sometimes I do feel funny

Q. Did you get anything for Christmas?

A. I already have everything I need.

Q. How old are you?

A. I'm old enough to be your assistant.

It seems that Siri is not too religious, but she knows about philosophy.

Q. Who is God?

A. Humans have religion. I just have silicon.

Q. What is the meaning of life?

A. It's nothing Nietzsche couldn't teach you.

There are times when Siri just doesn't understand what you mean.

Q. Can you say the Hail Mary?

A. No hail in sight in Mary, Turkmenistan.

Siri's best answer, however, may be this one.

Q. What is the best cell phone?

A. Wait....there are other phones?♠

Overbooked

Companies are continuing to develop new and more advanced computer technologies, finding ways to innovate on the personal computing platform first released over thirty years ago. Their marketing departments have not been as great at innovation, however, often using derivative and less than imaginative terminology to name and describe these new products and services. These marketing terms are often meaningless fluff, but we users are frequently forced to adopt them into our technical language.

One company that you all know has taken to slapping a lower case “i” on the front of the names of whatever products or services they are offering. It does not seem terribly imaginative to me, but I’m sure they do it to distinguish their products from those of other manufactures (at least legally).

Another overused term for new technology is “smart”. There are smart phones, smart homes, the smart card, smart cars, smart trains, smart TV, the smart grid, smart meters and smart growth. My head is smarting from thinking about how many things are now referred to as smart. While it is hard to argue against a product when it has “smart” as part of its name, the term alone is not enough to ensure acceptance. For instance, Smart Computing was once a popular print and web magazine that explained new computer technology to the common user. They couldn’t make money long term in that market, so they turned it into a free online business-oriented publication that looks to be mostly advertising.

The latest overused technology term I’ve noticed is “book”. I’ve created the following list of book-related items and their descriptions for instructional purposes, and to see just how long a list I could make.

Book - The original item; a set of flat cellulose sheets with information printed on one or both sides that are fastened together at one edge, forming a hinge. Originating around the 5th century, they were hand written and hand copied until printing methods were developed centuries later. Guttenberg’s movable type in 1450, later industrial printing methods and Amazon’s online marketing ultimately made books inexpensive and accessible to everyone.

eBook - An electronic version of a printed book (or even one that has never

been physically printed). An eBook can be read using e-readers like Amazon’s Kindle and Barnes & Noble’s Nook (which surprisingly don’t have “book” in their names), as well as computers, tablets and smart phones. Amazon.com started out as an online seller of books, and now in conjunction with their reader is a main source of eBooks. The existence of many eBook formats does not appear to have diminished eBook popularity.

Notebook - This term refers to a notebook computer, also commonly known as a laptop. The notebook was the first truly mobile version of the personal computer (let’s not count the Osborne, with a case the size of a sewing machine, as mobile). The notebook’s hinged design (like a book) consisted of a computer mainboard / keyboard as one half, with a screen (from 14” up to 17” diagonal) on the other half (facing the keyboard). These were initially more expensive than desktop computers due to the higher cost of miniaturization, but their popularity brought their volumes up to the point that economies of scale have made their cost the same or lower than desktops of similar performance (at least for all but the most powerful PCs). Notebook computers first came out in the early 1980s, five to ten years after the first PCs. They typically have all the features and capabilities of desktop PCs, including hard drive mass storage, optical drives, interfaces for wired/wireless networking, pointing devices and some limited expansion capabilities. Notebooks now far outsell the desktop computer.

Netbook - A smaller and less capable version of the notebook, the netbook was popularized in 2007 by manufacturer Asus, but the format was soon copied by others. Netbooks were meant to be even more portable, with smaller screens (5” to 12” diagonal) and lower weight (optical drives were omitted). With a less powerful processor than notebooks, they were much less expensive, and were intended primarily for use on the Internet (through wired and wireless connections). They competed well against notebooks for a while on their cost and size, but recent improvements in notebooks (reductions in cost and weight and increases in performance), as well as the introduction of the tablet computer, have diminished netbook sales greatly. It is likely this category will disappear from the marketplace soon.

PowerBook - A line of Apple Macintosh laptop computers sold between 1991 and 2006, featuring PowerPC processors running an Apple Mac OS. They were targeted at the professional market and were replaced by the MacBook computer line. **iBook** - A brand of Apple laptop computers sold between 1999 and 2006, featuring PowerPC processors running an Apple Mac OS. They were targeted at the consumer and educational markets, with lower performance and cost compared to the PowerBooks, and were replaced by the MacBook computers.

MacBook - A brand of Macintosh laptop computers made by Apple from 2006 to the present (includes MacBook Pro and MacBook Air models currently offered), running the Mac OS. These laptops had screens ranging from 11” to 17”, Intel processors and either a polycarbonate / fiberglass or aluminum case. The MacBook Pro features 13” to 17” screens, optical drives and mechanical hard drives (with an SSD, or solid state drive, as an option). The MacBook Air is an ultraportable laptop released in 2008 that is extremely light and thin, with a machined aluminum case, Intel processor, 11.6” or 13.3” diagonal display and SSD for main storage.

Ultrabook - A high-end type of notebook computer defined by Intel in 2011 to compete with the MacBook Air. Like the MacBook Air, the Ultrabook is lightweight and thin (0.8”), with SSD storage, Intel processor (no surprise), long battery life and typically no optical drive or Ethernet ports. It is intended to use the Microsoft Windows operating system, with some models sporting a touchscreen display to work better with Windows 8. Various manufacturers, including Asus, Acer, Dell, Lenovo, HP, Samsung and Fujitsu have already released Ultrabook models, with diagonal screen sizes ranging from 11.6” to 15.6”. Their higher cost (typically \$1000) as compared to conventional notebook computers has limited their acceptance in the marketplace so far.

Zenbook - An Asus family of Ultrabook computers, ranging from a model with an 11.6” diagonal screen and limited connectivity to a 15” screen model with an optical drive. First released in 2011, their design was said to follow “zen philosophy”.

Chromebook - A notebook computer run-

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Amazing Tale of a Satisfying Call to Tech Support . . .

I recently acquired a Dell laptop with Windows 7 to start working on a database project that only could only be accessed on a PC and used through Internet Explorer. The database program also required that I be able to print various pdf files, Word files and screen shots. Since I am a long-time computer user (PowerMac), I also have two HP printers — an older, very reliable LaserJet and an equally old HP All-in-One. Neither printer has WiFi capabilities, but both are USB printers.

Thinking this would be easy, I ran a USB printer cable from my HP LaserJet P2035n directly to my laptop and the printer icon appeared in the devices window along with a big yellow triangle telling me I had the infamous 'issue' problem and would I like to "troubleshoot." "Of course," I told the machine and lo and behold, the little Dell that couldn't, came back and said "sorry, Charlie, there is no

driver available for your antique printer."

Funny thing though, on HP's own web site, the driver not only exists, but I had already easily downloaded it. But, it would not install. I did not want to buy a 3rd printer and I needed to print desperately — paperwork was backing up. So even though I knew HP's customer support reputation from years back (prefer a trip to the dentist than to be on hold button hell with HP),

I went to HP's web site again for Tech Support and surprisingly (?) HP has outsourced tech support. BUT, and this is a big but, to a company that can actually do technical support for all kinds of software and hardware.

So I punched in the 877 number and got "Sam" in New Delhi who listened to my tale of woe and whose first question was, "If you own a Mac, why would you ever get a PC?" That is honestly what he said! Anyway, he assured me he and "Michael" could make my old HP printer

work perfectly with my Dell. Thirty-five minutes (and \$149.99) later, my printing problems were resolved. There were programs on the hard drive that had to be activated and some removed in order for Windows 7 to allow a driver from an 'old' HP printer to be used.

Even though I paid slightly more for the call than the cost of a newer, inexpensive printer, I do not end up with 3 printers on my desk and my LaserJet prints nice and fast and reliably.

Anyone with an old HP, I would encourage you to use the new HP Tech Assist number (the company is called Upquake Technical Services) to bring extended life to your printer or any other device you may have. Sam and Michael were both excellent!

Sam and Michael were much better than the old Help Desk. ♠

Overbooked

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ning the Google Chrome OS (which is Linuxbased). Intended to be used while connected to the Internet, it features a lower performance processor, SSD storage, no optical drive and typically smaller size (somewhat similar in functional philosophy to the netbook). It is designed to run applications from the web, rather than from internal storage. Acer and Samsung introduced Chromebooks in 2011, with HP and Lenovo introducing models in 2013. Screen sizes range from 12" to 14" diagonal. Additional features include quick boot up, long battery life and low cost (\$200 to \$450). They are sold primarily over the Internet. Google itself is producing a Chromebook Pixel model with premium features and price (\$1300 to \$1450).

Facebook - a social networking service started in 2004 on the Internet, with currently over 1 billion active users.

Bookmaker - An organization or a person that takes bets on events at specified odds. I wouldn't bet that these are going to be the only book-related terms for us to deal with in the future, but that's all I have for now.

Book'em, Danno! ♠

Ralph Smoyer, Vice President, Lehigh Valley Computer Group, PA, February 2013 issue, The LVCG Journal, <http://sites.google.com/site/lvccgsite/>, wemiller (at) ptd.net

If you agree, check the square box!

If you agree to the following list of items please place a check mark in the small square box.

How often have you seen this line before? Well I have seen this line many, many times before, and I have also personally entered that check mark in that box at least one time too often.

You see I downloaded a MacAfee computer virus protection program via the Internet approximately three years ago and dutifully check marked the square box. I thought the MacAfee program worked quite well! However, I have belonged to the Lehigh Valley Computer Group for many and I often use a lot of the knowledge that I get at our meetings. Well about three years ago one of our instructors mentioned that Microsoft offers a free virus protection plan, and I jumped on it. Wow, I could save \$50.00+ bucks a year.

I chose to use my newly gained knowledge from the LVCG, and my present virus, malware and spyware protection is Microsoft Security Essentials (free from Microsoft) and yes I did check mark the square box to have it actuated. It works great.

The bottom line of this article is that sometime in mid-2012 I checked my monthly credit card statement a little more thoroughly than usual, and I found that the \$50.00 bucks that I thought I was saving a year was still being deducted from my credit card by MacAfee.

I then e-mailed, talked to them by phone, sent a letter, re-sent the letter via Certified mail! All to no avail.

My final realization was that I had to file a civil case with my local magistrate. I filed the paperwork, paid the court fees up front, and waited for my court date. On my court date the defendant, (MacAfee, headquartered in California) did not show. The judgment was in my favor and I received the McAfee 2012 credit card cost of \$50.00 + bucks, and all of my court fees.

When talking by phone with a MacAfee representative I mentioned that I didn't order their virus protection product this year and she replied, yes you did when you checked the square box. I then noted to her this could go on forever, and she agreed yes it could. I guess I now saved \$50.00 bucks a year, and possibly forever, even for my heirs. ♠

WAZE Travel and Routing Information on Your Smart Device

Over the past several weeks, I have taken several out-of-town road trips. On these trips I used a novel free smart phone app for routing and traffic information called Waze (waze.com).

There are an abundance of apps that function with the integral GPS built into almost all smart devices, including smart phones and tablets. Available for most smart devices with an appropriate wireless internet connection (cellular or Wi-Fi) running Android, iOS (Apple devices), Windows Mobile, Symbian, and Blackberry powered devices, Waze provides much more current routing and road related information than most other competitive apps.

For those who may drive outside the U.S., Waze is multinational in scope, and offers real-time traffic information on an international scale. According to Wikipedia, "As of 2013 Waze has a complete base map for the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Israel (claimed to be the best map for that country), South Africa, Colombia, Ecuador, Chile and Panama, but the company has plans to complete maps for other countries in Europe and elsewhere."

With the motto, "Waze. Outsmarting Traffic, Together", Waze describes itself as, "Get the best route, every day, with real-time help from other drivers. Waze is the world's largest community-based traffic and navigation app. Join other drivers in your area who share real-time traffic and road info, saving everyone time and gas money on their daily commute." With millions of users (Yahoo! reported over 50 million users in mid-2013), Waze utilizes real-time information from users who have opened the Waze app on their smart devices. Waze anonymously, continuously, and transparently reports location, speed, and other information to a centralized server, which in turn almost instantly compiles and displays this shared information on other Waze equipped smart devices in the same user selected area. For privacy and security reasons, by default, the Waze configuration utilizes a user chosen screen name and avatar on the remote screens,

and does not publically display any other personally identifiable user information.

While several other route mapping apps simply display traffic conditions as a col-

route, which will be displayed to others driving through the same area. Waze says on its website, "By working together to report prices at the pump, Waze drivers can

always save some gas money."

Too many of us have had to deal with outdated maps on our GPS or smart devices.

While some newer free-standing GPS

ored line on a map, typically green indicating that traffic is moving fast, yellow indicates slowed traffic, and red indicating major traffic slowdowns or stoppage, Waze utilizes a different approach. Since the Waze app on the users' devices are continuously reporting speed and location, based on GPS information, accurate traffic information is displayed along with a wide assortment of other helpful and useful information. According to the Waze website, this difference between Waze and the other GPS based routing apps is, "Get alerted before you approach police, accidents, road hazards or traffic jams, all shared by other drivers in real-time. It's like a personal heads-up from a few million of your friends on the road."

For safety reasons, if Waze is used by the driver of a vehicle, the text input function is disabled once a destination is entered or selected off of a saved list. The driver can still be informed of upcoming traffic, hazards, and other reports, as well as audio turn-by-turn directions, without having to physically handle the device. There is an option button displayed where a passenger can enable the text based data entry process while the vehicle is in motion. In addition to the passive information on speed and other road information provided by the app itself, a passenger can actively contribute to the community of Waze users by using a simple icon based method of sharing road reports. These passenger entered road reports take the current location, as automatically provided by the GPS, along with manually entered information on accidents, traffic congestion and delays, disabled vehicles, speed traps, and other road hazards, which immediately show up on all other Waze connected devices in the area. In addition to road related information, users can also enter gas station prices observed on their

devices offer free quarterly updating of maps, many still charge substantial fees to purchase map updates. When using an internet based mapping service, it is often difficult (or impossible) for the user to either determine the age of the map displayed, or to enter map corrections, both of which may undermine the confidence of the user in the accuracy of the maps displayed. What is unusual about the maps displayed on Waze is that they are community edited; Waze has an active community of map editors who work continuously to improve and update the maps displayed by the Waze app. Map corrections and updates are constantly incorporated in the Waze display, down to the neighborhood level. These same community map editors also continuously improve the routing utility incorporated into the Waze app. Waze has made it as easy for any of the millions of users to submit suspected map errors or better routing information to the editors as it is to enter a road hazard; a single click on the appropriate icon, along with an appropriate comment, immediately sends the information to the map editors. For example, earlier today, while returning from Houston (my wife was driving), I submitted two suggested changes: the first was a suggested routing correction to my home address, submitting a shorter and faster route; the second was the location of a newly opened gas station.

While the information from users is anonymously displayed on the Waze display, using a moniker rather than a real name, users can also optionally select to send Waze information to selected individuals, or to post it on social networks, such as Facebook. On a recent out of town trip to visit a daughter and her fam-

WEBSITES:

<https://www.waze.com>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.waze>

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/waze-social-gps-traffic/id323229106?mt=8>

<http://www.windowsphone.com/s?appid=f07f83eb-a8a4-49fd-8946-c67a9349e062>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waze>

<http://www.haaretz.com/business/.premium-1.529478>

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Is Technology Turning Us into Couch Potatoes?

Do you remember the days before remote control? For those of you who answered “no” to that question, let me tell you that there was a time when you actually had to get up and walk across the room to change the channel on the television. When remote controls were first introduced, there was great fear that we would all be come “couch potatoes.” In fact, the first television remote control that was produced by Zenith was called the “Lazy Bones.” Now, more than fifty years later, we can truly assess whether this and other technological advances have made us lazy or have actually given us more reasons to get off the couch.

The television remote was just the first of many high-tech products that “did the work for us.” We now have many more. Whole-house music players like Sonos save you footsteps by letting you control the music for every room in your house with your cell phone.

If it is cold outside, there is no need to run out and start the car, then run back in the house to wait while it warms up. Many new cars have auto-start. Just press a but-

ton on the key fob and you can start the car remotely. If you don’t want to have to trek down the driveway for the newspaper, you can simply download the paper to your tablet or read it on the Internet. Oh, and you don’t have to open the door to check the weather. You can see it on your portable device or on your thermostat. (My Internet-connected thermostat even gives me the weather predictions for the next several days.)

For many tasks, you no longer have to walk into the computer room, now you can use your smart phone or tablet to surf the Web, check your email, read a book, or play a game. And if you keep your cell phone in your pocket, you can make and receive calls without running through the house to grab the landline phone. I believe that these devices have collectively saved us trillions of footsteps.

Today, robotic helpers also take the sweat out of home chores. iRobot’s Roomba, Scooba, Looj, and Verro will help you vacuum the floor, wash the floor, clean the gutters, and clean the pool.

And with the coming onslaught of Internet-connected appliances, you will work even less. Many manufacturers have Internet-connected washers and dryers which you can control from your cell phone. They let you know when the clothes are dry and even let you give them a few more minutes of fluff time if you can’t make it to the dryer to remove them as soon as they are done.

We’ve had timers on coffee pots for a long time, but the new Internet-connected coffee makers will coordinate with your alarm clock or cell phone to make the coffee at just the right moment, even if your schedule changes. Samsung has partnered with ADT to make a new home security system that shows up on your TV. So if you are watching TV at bedtime, you won’t have to get up to check the door locks, turn off the lights, or close the blinds. You will be able to do it right from the TV.

Between 1950 and 2000 obesity rates in the United States have increased by 214 percent. Two out of every three people in

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Steve Costello, President / Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL., November 2013 issue, Boca Bits, <http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>, editor (at) brcs.org

Interesting Internet Finds

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 November, 2013

WPA2, WEP, And Friends: What’s The Best Way To Encrypt Your Wi-Fi?

This post from MakeUseOf explains the various options to encrypt your wi-fi, and what the best is.

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/wpa2-wep-and-friends-whats-the-best-way-to-encrypt-your-wi-fi/>

HOWTO: Extend Laptop Battery Life

Bob Rankin talks about making your laptop battery last longer.

http://askbobrankin.com/howto_extend_laptop_battery_life.html

What’s in your toolkit?

Leo A. Notenboom shows what is in his toolkit, and talks about what you

should have in yours. Discs, operating systems, anti-malware tools, and other utilities, for emergencies.

<http://askleo.com/whats-in-your-toolkit/>

How to Speed Up Any Android Phone By Disabling Animations

HowToGeek tells how to speed up any Android phone.

<http://www.howtogeek.com/175033/how-to-speed-up-any-android-phone-by-disabling-animations/>

How To Fix Flash Player Crashes Issue in Google Chrome

I was having the crash problem, and this MakeTechEasier post, gave me the solution. Things are much better now.

<http://www.maketecheasier.com/fix-flash-player-crashes-issue-in-chrome/>

Simple Questions: What is the Clipboard in Windows & How to Manage It?

7tutorials answers the question, and provides some clipboard management op-

tions.

<http://www.7tutorials.com/simple-questions-what-clipboard-windows-how-manage-it>

A close look at Gmail’s new Google Drive integration for attachments

If you use Gmail, you have noticed by now that attachments are handled differently. ghacks takes an in depth look at how Gmail now handles attachments in this post.

<http://www.ghacks.net/2013/11/13/close-look-gmails-new-google-drive-integration-attachments/>

Most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog:

<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/>

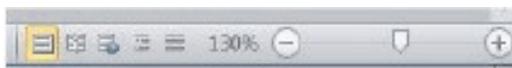
The posts are under Creative Commons licensing. ♠

Short Tips for Saving Clicks in Word

Are you becoming fluent with Word 2007 or 2010? Here are six short tips which can help you complete tasks with fewer clicks.

1. Do you want to get back quickly to a document you worked on yesterday? Rather than opening it from your Documents folder, start Word, click the Office button in Word 2007 or the File button in Word 2010, and choose your document from the Recent Documents list. Word 2010 will also show a list of the most recent folders you've opened.

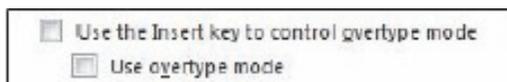
2. Choose the Print Layout view while working on a document. It will show you the edges of the document and therefore help you see how the text and graphics appear on the page. If the text seems too small to read easily in this view, zoom in using the Zoom slider. It will enlarge the text on the screen, but not affect its size when printed. Both the Print Layout view and Zoom slider are located on the View Toolbar in the bottom right corner of the Word window.



3. The flashing cursor or insertion point in a document indicates where text will appear the next time you type. If you want to enter text in an area further down the page, you don't have to press the Enter key to move down. Merely double click in the spot where you want to enter text, and the cursor will appear there, flashing patiently for you to type.

4. Do you need to change or edit a single word in the middle of a document? Dragging over a single word to highlight it can be tricky. Just double click the word to select it. Then, without clicking again, type the new word and it will replace the original one. Any highlighted text can be replaced by typing over it. This is called Insert mode, which has replaced Overtyping mode as the default in Word 2007. You might recall in previous Word versions accidentally pressing the Insert key and finding yourself removing all the text to the right as you typed. That was Overtyping mode, and it frustrated many a typist. In the new versions, if you want to use Overtyping mode, you must enable it in Word Options (Office button or File - Advanced - Editing options). Put check-

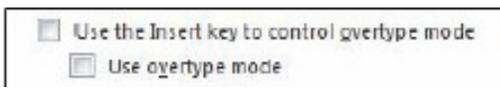
marks in both boxes.



5. If you complete a long document and need to correct only a couple of spelling errors (underlined in red), you can always run the Spell Checker through the entire document. A quicker way, however, is to right click the misspelled word. A drop down menu gives the Spell Checker options: choose a spelling from among suggestions or ignore the misspelling, and add the word to the dictionary. Remember, if a word is not in the Office dictionary, it will always be tagged as misspelled. If you have a few proper names that you type often, such as your own, add them to the dictionary. Spell Checker will not bother you about them again. Don't, however, forget to proofread your document, too. Spell Checkers don't do a perfect job of detecting errors, especially contextual ones; that is, a correctly spelled word in an inappropriate place, such as homonym "there" for "their."

6. Do you find when typing an important document, you are constantly clicking the Save button or pressing Ctrl+S to save it? Word saves your docu-

ment automatically every 10 minutes, but you can change that to a shorter time, thus relieving you of saving it manually. Click the Office button\Word Options in 2007 or the File tab\Options in 2010. Click the Save category and reduce the number of minutes between Saves. Notice that the checkbox says "Save AutoRecover information every x minutes." AutoRecover saves your work at regular intervals as a temporary AutoRecover file in a special folder. Normally, when you close a document or exit Word correctly, the temporary file is deleted. If you close a document without saving, however, or if Word crashes while you are in the middle of typing a document, Word will open a document Recovery pane the next time you open Word. Here you can choose between the last AutoRecover document or the last regularly Saved version. It's best to pick the one which was saved last.



In using word-processing programs, the cultivation of small, click-saving habits can simplify large tasks. ♣

Couch Potatoes – continued from Page 6

the U.S. were obese or overweight in 2010. You don't even have to read the statistics. Just look around and you will see overweight people everywhere. Realistically, there are many reasons for this. We are consuming more calories, eating more junk food, and in general getting less exercise. It is also obvious, though, that our reliance on the technology that makes our lives easier is also to blame. Besides letting our devices do the work for us, we are also spending untold hours sitting in front of televisions and computers, and playing games with our fingers.

To be fair, technology is also presenting us with enticements to exercise and keep fit. Nike has pedometers that fit into their shoes and communicate with an iPod for later download to a computer. FitBit and others have wireless activity trackers, sleep trackers, smart scales, and mobile tools. In fact, there are hundreds of apps that will

help you track your weight and motivate you to eat better. Take a look at the Apple App Store or the Android Play Store and you will see selections like Lose It!, Monitor Your Weight, iFitness, Get in Shape, and DailyBurn Tracker. There are also a wide variety of apps and devices like calorie counters, blood pressure monitors, and step trackers.

So I guess it comes down to whether more Americans will use technology to improve their health or to relax and let their high tech devices do the work for them. Although some people are choosing the healthier lifestyle, we know that most are not. In fact, it is estimated that if current trends continue in just a few years 75% of Americans will be overweight. I love technology, but I hate what it is doing to our waistlines. ♣

commercial online backup services personally endorsed by prominent celebrities; while these remote backup services are of decent quality and value, priced well within the reach of typical computer users, there are also a wide assortment of free online backup services available to anyone. Two of the popular computer technical review websites, Gizmo's TechSupportAlert.com and About.com Computing PC Support have recently published updated (March, 2014) reviews and recommendations on the free online backup services. What is especially interesting is the fact that these two highly respected services distinctly differ on which of these free services are the best; Gizmo's top three recommendations are not even listed by About.com, and About.com's top three recommendations are not listed by Gizmo.

Gizmo's TechSupportAlert recommendations (techsupportalert.com/content/best-free-online-backup-sites.htm) suggests that users consider and evaluate the free (and paid) online backup services based on several listed factors and features. These features to be considered when choosing a storage services include: Storage Size (more free storage is better); Document Synchronization (documents and files created or changed need to automatically be uploaded to the backup server); Long Term Reliability of the Site (will your files be there available several years from now); Security (encryption); File Location (some backup services require a special folder to be created on your hard drive); and Ease of Use (the service should be menu driven and intuitive when selecting the files and folders to be backed up). Gizmo also has a suggestion for those who have more critical data to store than the space allowed by the free remote storage service, "One possible strategy is to use several free sites. Use one site for photos, a second for general documents and a third site with pre-upload and post-download encryption for your financial documents and other documents you want to keep private."

While Gizmo reviewed and commented on eight free online backup services, it's current top recommendations only include four services. Gizmo gave its highest five-star rating, and "Gizmo's Freeware award as the best product in its class!" to IDrive (idrive.com). According to Gizmo,

IDrive, "Combines a web service with a stand-alone program; Files can be located any place on your computer. Does have pre/post file transfer encryption. It has versioning." IDrive is also available in a portable version that can be run from a flash drive. The only downside of IDrive noted by Gizmo was IDrive's relatively low limit of online storage, currently capped at 5 GB.

Gizmo had a three-way tie (four star rating out of five for each) for its other recommended free products, Google Drive, Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly called SkyDrive), and Spideroak. Google Drive (drive.google.com) is both a web service and a stand-alone program that offers 15 GB of storage, ease of installation, and automatically synchronizes files between the connected devices (Windows, Mac, iOS, and Android devices). According to Gizmo, Google Drive offers "No file security". Microsoft's OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) also combines a web service with a stand-alone program that offers a variable amount of storage (one-drive.live.com); earlier subscribers have 25 GB of storage, while new subscribers will only receive 7 GB of storage, with the opportunity to earn up to 100 GB of free storage on an annual basis, which Microsoft calls "a \$50 value". OneDrive users can get this free additional storage by signing up for Microsoft's free "Bing Rewards" program (bing.com/explore/rewards), and earning 100 points by searching the web with Microsoft's Bing search engine. Bing Reward Points can also be redeemed for gift cards, or donated to charity. Gizmo had one concern with OneDrive similar to the concern with Google Drive; that was (according to Gizmo) "No Security". Gizmo's last recommended free online storage service is Spideroak (spideroak.com) which had all of the recommended features, including "Pre and Post File Encryption", but was criticized for its very limited 2 GB of free storage. Not stated by Gizmo, Spideroak offers an additional GB of storage for each friend referred to Spideroak who signs up, up to 10 GB of additional storage, for a total limit of 12 GB.

The About.com listing of "12 Free Online Backup Plans" (pcsupport.about.com/od/software-tools/tp/free-online-backup.htm), generally included a lesser known listing of "truly free" online

backup services, ranked in order of available storage space. This listing ranged from a top-rated 10 GB of storage space from Symform (symform.com), to as little as 2 GB of storage from each of the six lowest rated services. Second on the About.com rankings is Cyphertite Basic (cyphertite.com/plans.php) which offers 8 GB of storage, followed by MiMedia Free (online.mimedi.com/www/v1/signup/free) with 7 GB, IDrive (idrive.com) at 5 GB, and Jottacloud Free (jottacloud.com/products), a Norwegian based service that offers 5 GB of free storage. The remaining About.com recommendations all offered either 3 GB or 2 GB of free storage.

One factor often overlooked by users of both the free and paid online backup services is the limiting speed factor of their broadband internet connections. Most local broadband users were "sold" by their internet providers on a possible top download speed, which published reports have indicated is often greatly overstated. Many users that I have spoken with were unaware that the advertised maximum speed of their internet connection is the download speed, but that the upload speed is typically only one-half to one-quarter of the download speed, meaning that it will take two to four times longer to upload a file than it does to download the same size file. In one specific case that I heard firsthand, the user subscribed to one of the very good quality, highly advertised, paid cloud based storage services with enough capacity to backup all of the data on his hard drive. Running 24/7, it took him several days to upload his entire backup to the remote service; while uploading, his internet download had slowed to a crawl, making it a slow process to open web pages and access his email. If he had backed up his system to a modern USB external hard drive, it might have only taken a few hours to back up the same amount of data, a clear indication of the great difference of speed between the competing methods.

A few weeks later, that same user called me angry with his broadband internet provider; he had a large fee added to his internet bill for "overage", as he went far beyond his "metered" limits of service included in his normal monthly data allocation by sending the massive amount of

Continued on Page 9

by running benchmark tests. Benchmark test data is rarely available, but sometimes it can be found in reviews done by a magazine or other organization. Benchmark tests attempt to measure performance by running typically very lengthy and very complicated programs to see how long it takes to complete the task. There are many different benchmarks and when many different benchmark tests are run on a group of processors, the results may not always be conclusive. CPUs are sometimes fast in certain computational areas and not so fast in other areas, like data transfer. To really evaluate a CPU with a benchmark test, the benchmark test should be as close to the eventual use of the processor as possible, but this is not always easy to specify. Benchmark tests that involve a user, such as testing a game on a tablet, are even more difficult to use, because playing and observing a game may be very subjective, especially if it involves the screen display and input from the game player. So, the best test for performance is to try out the tablet yourself, while doing some of the things that you intend for the tablet, like web surfing, displaying pictures and videos, or playing a game (try Angry Birds for fun). Many tablets can be taken for a “test drive” at the “big box” stores like Best Buy and Office Depot.

So much for Performance: now for Capacity. The Capacity of a tablet is typically the amount of solid state memory the tablet provides. It is basically the data storage component of the tablet, which currently ranges from about 1GB to 64GB. This storage is space that is available for your Apps (software programs), and data (used by the Apps). Today, capable tablets usually have from 8GB to 32GB of memory. Many Android tablets, and Microsoft’s Surface, also include a microSD slot for extending the memory capacity. Currently, the SDHC standard has been implemented in the microSD hardware, allowing for up to 32GB of added memory capacity. (At this time, Apple, unfortunately, has not included a memory expansion slot on any of its iPad devices, although they do sell a model with 64GB of memory.)

Ports refers to the availability of interface connections provided by the tablet. This is the way your tablet interacts with your other devices. Some tablets include a micro, mini, or standard size USB connec-

tor. The USB interface allows the tablet to be connected to a computer (desktop or laptop) in order to move files to and from the tablet. This is one method of getting your entertainment media (pictures and videos) on to, or off of, the tablet. This is how you can get the pictures or videos that you captured with your tablet’s camera into your picture collection on your computer. (Again, at this time, Apple, unfortunately, has not included a USB connection on any of its iPad devices, although they do provide a 30-pin dock connector that may be used to connect to a computer.) Another valuable port found on some tablets is a micro-HDMI port. With this interface, the tablet can directly show video (picture and sound) on any TV with an HDMI input, which is found on almost every new flat panel TV. (Again, at this time, Apple, unfortunately, has not included a micro-HDMI port on any of its iPad devices, although they do provide a 30-pin dock connector that may be used to output video.)

Two other interface connections should

be considered as ports although they are not obvious when you look at the hardware. These are Wi-Fi and Bluetooth, neither of which has a hardware connection because both of these are wireless interfaces. These interfaces allow the tablet to interact with other devices that subscribe to the Wi-Fi and Bluetooth wireless standards. [And finally, although few tablets incorporate this, let’s not forget about NFC (Near Field Communications). This wireless interface has many uses, but may only end up on smartphones. NFC will allow easy transfer of files between closely situated (within a few centimeters) devices. This interface may be instrumental in allowing you to use your device as a wallet, in the future.

Once you’ve decided to buy a tablet, the next thing is to evaluate the Performance, Capacity, and Ports of the most interesting offerings in the market. Usually, there will be a few that meet most of your criteria. At that point it becomes a matter of value: capability for dollars. Good luck. ♣

Online Back Services – *continued from Page 8*

data to the remote server. Some internet service providers “throttle back” the internet speed, slowing it significantly, if too much data is transferred, not just making online backups, but also including streaming media such as Netflix and Hulu.

Prior to using any of the remote “cloud” backup services, free or paid, for anything more than occasionally backing up small numbers of files, it would be most worthwhile to check with your internet service provider (ISP) and determine if there are any caps on monthly data, or “throttling back” of speed if large amounts of data are sent or received. I also recommend that users determine their actual upload and download speeds using a free utility, such as Ookla’s free SpeedTest, at speedtest.net. Not just can the user accurately determine his real internet performance and compare it to what was the advertised speed (it will almost always be lower than advertised), but he can also estimate data upload and download times using simple arithmetic by dividing the amount of data by the appropriate speed, as determined during the speed test. Often the user will find that the convenience of a remote

cloud backup for anything greater than a few very critical files, is more than offset by the time and potential cost of the backup.

While I personally use Google Drive and OneDrive for remote storage of critical data files, zipping (compressing) sensitive personal data in password protected zip files to offset any “prying eyes”, I still maintain continuous backups on a pair of USB external hard drives as my primary, comprehensive backup. I did the simple arithmetic, and with my current internet connection, it is not practical to do comprehensive backups to a “cloud” backup server. If you are considering remote backup services, I strongly recommend that you do the arithmetic yourself to determine if comprehensive remote backup is appropriate for you. ♣

[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 April online newsletter. CTPC Editor]

ily, I chose to provide her with a real-time web link that would display my current location and “ETA” (Estimated Time of Arrival). Since my wife was at the wheel at the time, it was safe for me to do the appropriate messaging. Clicking on the icon on the bottom-left corner of my screen, I selected the “notify” function, which presented me with a comprehensive list of messaging utilities; text messaging, email, Facebook, and several other modes were displayed. I selected to send my daughter a private text message which included a Waze generated unique URL, which when opened in her browser, displayed my real-time location and ETA, which was continuously updated in her browser. This same function can also serve to notify someone who is going to be met or picked up by the Waze user of the expected time of arrival.

The posting of travel information to Facebook can be useful if a group is trying to arrange a get-together of some type, and all of the participants can be kept apprised of the others’ locations and arrival times. While Waze supports posting of current location information to social networking services, such as Facebook, for security reasons, I cannot recommend this practice. Even if the social media post is only directed to friends, not all friends may be honest and trustworthy. Posting that a user is a distance away from home, and will not be returning for a lengthy period of time, opens that user’s home to possible break-in and burglary, as the perpetrators will know that no one is home and no one is likely to be home for a foreseeable time.

The Waze app has a most interesting history; originally invented in Israel in 2008 by a small group of developers as, “a GPS-based geographical navigation application program for smart phones with GPS support and display screens which provides turn-by-turn information and user-submitted travel times and route de-

tails, downloading location-dependent information over the mobile telephone network.” Waze was recognized by the 2013 Mobile World Congress as the “Best Overall Mobile App”, beating out several better known apps such as Dropbox. The original company, Waze Mobile, was acquired by Google in mid-2013 for the princely sum of \$1.3 billion, after being approached by other prominent internet giants, including Facebook. According to contemporary news accounts, “As part of the deal signed, each of Waze’s 100 employees will receive an average of about \$1.2 million, which represents the largest payout to employees in the history of Israeli high tech.” (source: haaretz.com, June 13, 2013).

While the Waze app is totally free to download and use, its business model is funded in a variety of ways. Waze offers advertisers an opportunity to place a very small, unobtrusive icon on a given location, which may encourage Waze users to patronize that location. Waze also sells its aggregate traffic conditions and reports to media outlets, mostly TV stations, for their use in broadcasting current local traffic information. Utilized by several New York and New Jersey TV stations, the Waze feed is also employed (as of June 2013) by over 25 other U.S. TV stations, as well as foreign TV stations, including one in Rio de Janeiro.

Provided that a driver is not distracted by its use, the free Waze app is an outstanding resource. Waze also asks that the app be used to monitor daily commutes, in addition to longer trips, so that others may get the enhanced benefit of a greater knowledge base of road information. Over the past several weeks, I have used Waze on my smart phone rather than Google Maps and the other road routing apps that I have installed. Waze uses the device’s GPS to determine the current location, and then offers a simple search function to

ascertain the destination. In using Waze I have entered, street addresses, the names of restaurants, and hotel names, with the integral search function rapidly calculating a route to the chosen destination. While on the road I used Waze to find the best gas prices, avoid major traffic congestion, and other road hazards.

Since Waze is free, and will run on almost any appropriately equipped smart device, regardless of operating system, I can wholeheartedly recommend it to travelers for both local and long distance driving. ♠

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Next CTPC Meeting

cont’d from Page 1

Like pornography, SharePoint can be hard to define but when you see it you’ll want it. Come see a live demonstration of SPO at the next CTPC meeting, Tuesday, April 22, 2014. It’s a G-rated program but prepare to be amazed!

Meetings are held at the Silver Star diner in Norwalk (directions are on the back page). We also 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. ♠

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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