

Next CTPC Meeting

Tuesday, June 24, 2014 - 6:30 p.m.

Details To Come

The May meeting at the Fairfield County Makers' Guild was reported to be very interesting. Also eye-opening was the realization of how good the food is at Uncle Joe's!

As a result of the May experience, the club is considering trying a new venue not too far from Uncle Joe's. Plans are still in flux so stay tuned.

Coincidentally, your newsletter editor is off on a long-planned trip to Wales from June 2 - 18. For this reason I wanted to get this edition of the newsletter

completed before leaving to ensure that members receive it prior to the meeting.

Either Walt Graham or I will send all members an email as soon as plans for the June meeting are finalized. This information will also be posted on the CTPC website no later than June 19th.

Stay tuned.

Mike Alcorn
CTPC Newsletter Editor ♣

June 24th Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Location: TBA

July 22nd Tuesday, 6:30 p.m.
CTPC Meeting
Location: TBA

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

Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, FL, December 2013 issue, PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, [philcorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philcorr@yahoo.com)

Chromecast – Watch On-line Entertainment on Your Big Screen TV

Chromecast is a new device from Google, aimed at getting your on-line entertainment on to your living room TV (or any TV with an HDMI input). For video streaming, Chromecast may be similar to AppleTV and Roku devices, though I haven't used either of these. Chromecast is an exciting device for both consumers and developers alike, because it offers a new, inexpensive (\$35) and simple way to stream entertainment from a Website or a computer to your living room big screen HDTV. (By the way, a less elegant way to accomplish this is to connect your TV directly to your computer, via HDMI, and then go directly to the websites with the computer. This is not usually convenient because of the locations of the computer and TV and the cables and wires needed to set this up.) Chromecast is small and it plugs directly into the back of your TV, keeping it completely out of sight.

Wikipedia adds: "Chromecast is a digi-

tal media streaming adapter developed by Google. The device, a 2.83 inch dongle, plays audio/video content on a high-definition television by streaming it via Wi-Fi from the Internet or local network. Users select the media to play on their television from the Google Chrome web browser on a personal computer or from a supported App on their mobile device."

Chromecast's basic features are as follows:

- 1080p output video resolution
- Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n
- USB powered
- Compatible with Android and iOS devices

The minimum system requirements needed to take advantage of Chromecast are as follows:

- HDTV with HDMI input
- Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n network
- For use with a Tablet or Smartphone:
 - Android OS 2.3 and higher
 - Apple OS iOS 6 and higher
- For use with a computer:
 - Windows 7 and higher
 - Mac OS 10.7 and higher

Chromecast works with devices you already own, including Android and Apple tablets and smartphones. It also works with the Chrome Browser for Windows and Mac. A Browser, with the Chromecast extension, allows you to send the contents of a "Browser Tab" to your HDTV

allowing you to experience photos, videos, and music on your HDTV. It turns any TV with an HDMI input into a smart TV, albeit only as smart as the Chromecast device

Chromecast allows you to view on-line entertainment on your living room HDTV; however, currently it seems to be limited to Netflix, Hulu plus (not Hulu), YouTube, Google Play TV & Movies, and Google Music. Indications are that many others such as Pandora, HBO Go, Vimeo, and Redbox, are in the pipeline. You will need an account with any of the pay services, such as Netflix or Hulu plus (YouTube is free, so far).

Chromecast is packaged in a very neat, compact box. Included in the box are the Chromecast device (it looks like a flash memory device with an HDMI connector), an HDMI extension cable (for hard to reach HDMI connections), a micro-USB to USB cable (to supply power to the device), a power supply adapter (if a convenient USB port is not available), and a tiny 14 page product information pamphlet. The "Getting Started" directions are printed on the inside of a swing-out cover and are clear and simple. Chromecast plugs into your TV's HDMI port, while the power is supplied by connecting the device's micro-USB port to a USB port, on the TV (if available), or to the external

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The Tip Corner

How Often Should I Shut Down My Computer?

This question comes up quite often. Unfortunately there's no easy answer. Are you concerned about your electric bill? How important is it to have immediate access to your computer? What about your own personal preference?

Electricity Costs vary based upon how many watts of power your computer uses as well as what the local utility charges per kwh. Some say it costs roughly \$25 per month, however I do not think it actually runs that high. But if conservation and economics are important to you shut it down each night.

Wear and Tear does play a part, however today's hard drives usually stop spinning when idle and fans don't work as hard in sleep mode.

Many Processes continue to run which has the potential to cause memory losses.

The bottom line? When I researched this tip the suggestion was to shut your computer off when not in use. However, I very seldom shut my computer off. I put it into sleep mode before I go to sleep. So I guess this tip was not too helpful for most of you. But just be aware there are many different opinions out there, so no matter what you do, some will agree and others won't.

Laptop Abilities

Here are a few items you might want to consider when searching out your next laptop. By this time we know that Windows 8 is here and alive and well. But if you still prefer the Windows 7 look Classic Shell and Pokki are two apps that will give you that comfortable Win7 look. And speaking of apps you can get an app that turns your laptop camera into a surveillance system that will automatically start recording when someone enters the room, or even set it up so you can turn on your camera from a remote location and view a live feed.

You can also download a face recognition app, which uses the camera to scan your face during startup to ensure that it's really you who is logging on to your machine. But, while this is more fun than punching in a password, it's a little less secure. Holding a photograph of you in front of the computer would work. There are other apps that can turn your laptop

into an easy-to-use photo booth. Look for one that lets you accessorize portraits with digital costumes, add thought-bubbles, and even alter the color to make the photos look old-fashioned. These apps and software are usually not pre-installed, so until you download them, your camera will be less functional.

Many of the laptops, and all the tablets utilize a touch screen. There are finger and hand-swiping commands to be learned. Different brands can have different movements, so look them up to learn how to switch between programs and windows, shrink and zoom in, drag-and-drop, and more. Lenovo's 10-point multi-touch displays offer a wide-range of intuitive gestures that use up to all ten of your fingers. And, if you have Windows 8, you can use Customized Flicks to create your own touch screen commands.

Look for a laptop that has as a minimum an HDMI port, USB drives, headphone output, microphone input, and a DC-in. An SD card reader slot would be useful also, however USB connections could do.

If your plans also include an external USB3 device you want your new laptop to come with a USB 3.0 port. Data transfer is up to ten times faster with a USB3. And you may want to see if there is a firewire port so you can hook up digital cameras. But whatever they have, take a few minutes to familiarize yourself with all its capabilities.

You might have noticed I did not comment whether it should be a Mac or PC. Today both contain almost all the programs you need. The cost of a Mac and associated programs are usually more expensive than the PC. This is because there are a lot more PCs out there which make it cheaper per unit. Most young people prefer the Mac, but that is because of the great marketing job done by providing Macs in the schools. If your laptop is also going to be used in business, it should be compatible with the equipment at the office.

CTRL + ALT +DELETE

Occasionally a program gets stuck. It stops working and will not close no matter what you do. The answer is CTRL + ALT +DELETE. This opens a window with a few options: Lock, Switch User,

Log Off, Change Password and Start Task Manager. The Task Manager will show all programs that are in use. Sometimes you can see that a program is not functioning if it says 'not running', however it might show that the program you are having trouble with is still running. This can be true or not. It could be hung up in a memory loop, or really just taking a very long time to respond. In any event you can just highlight the program you are having trouble with and click on End Task, and the program will be shut down. Using the Task Manager means you do not have to shut down the computer in an incorrect manner.

CryptoPrevent (4.2.4)

There is a bad program going around called Cryptolocker which locks up your files and you can only unlock them by paying money. CryptoPrevent is a tiny utility to lock down any Windows OS (XP, Vista, 7, 8, and 8.1) to prevent infection by the Cryptolocker malware or 'ransomware', which encrypts personal files and then offers decryption for a paid ransom.

Additionally, due to the way that CryptoPrevent works, it actually protects against a wide variety of malware, not just Cryptolocker!

You can get it here: <http://www.foolishit.com/vb6-projects/cryptoprevent/>

This tip was provided to me by one of my readers. Thanks.

Has Your Browser Been Hacked?

Many of you have noticed that without warning a new toolbar appears in your browser. Or when you click on a site you get misdirected to another site touting some product.

Since there is no such thing as a free lunch, and many legitimate companies are allowing this to happen what can we do to minimize this unwanted intrusion.

Some times this comes from a cookie or temp file that ended up on your computer due to a casual click in a site. More often than not it appears when you are installing an update from a legitimate program. In more simpler times when an update is downloaded all we had to do is install it normally. We never thought of clicking on the custom update button. But that is what we have to do. If we click on the nor-

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Microsoft Releases Free Version of Office for Android and iPhone

As more of us have been using smart devices, such as Android phones and tablets, iPads, iPhones, and portable Windows devices, it was inevitable that Microsoft would release a free (for personal use) version of its blockbuster Office suite for many of those smart devices. Some of the Microsoft's smart device software competitors have used the famous Shakespeare title "Much Ado About Nothing" as for several years, they have offered both free and commercial competitors for the smart device version of Microsoft Office, rendering Microsoft as the latecomer to the party. Excellent competitors to the newly released free smart device version of Microsoft's Office product, most of which can read and write Office formatted files, have been previously offered by Google (Quick Office), Kingsoft Office, Mobile Systems Office Suite 7, Olive Office, and others. Just as Microsoft has dominated the desktop Office market, despite quality competitors like Corel (WordPerfect and Quattro), Libre Office, Open Office, and others, it is apparent that Microsoft also wants to be the dominant provider of Office products for the smart device market.

In the story "Microsoft expands cloud services for mobile scenarios" posted on the official Microsoft News Center (microsoft.com/en-us/news/press/2014/mar14/03-27mobilecloudpr.aspx), dated March 27, 2014, Microsoft formally, "... announced several new and updated applications and services including Microsoft Office for iPad and free Office Mobile apps for iPhone and Android phones." At present, the iPad version requires a subscription to Microsoft Office 365, but the Android and iPhone versions have been released as a free product.

As most of my smart devices are Android devices, I downloaded and installed the free Android version of Microsoft Office Mobile from the Google Play Store (play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.microsoft.office.officehub). Dated March 27, and displayed as version 15.0.2720.2000, Microsoft Office Mobile for Android is a 27MB download, and will run on almost any device with at least An-

droid 4.0. According to the Play Store, between 1 million and 5 million copies have been downloaded.

The iPhone version of Microsoft Office

included in Office Mobile has a "Slide Navigator" view which can display complete slides along with any imbedded speaker notes, allowing the user to practice

or coordinate a PowerPoint presentation. While the apps can be used to create new Word and Excel documents, they are not (yet) fully capable of creating a new PowerPoint presenta-

tion, but all documents, including Word, Excel, and PowerPoint can be edited from the smart phone. Comments made by others in a collaborative document (Word and Excel) can be reviewed on the phone, and the Office Mobile can add new comments to the collaborative stream.

In terms of data connection, recently used documents can be viewed and edited offline, but will then be uploaded to the cloud with the next network or Wi-Fi connection. Once a document is completed, edited, or commented on, the document can be sent by email, or saved to OneDrive or SharePoint.

I downloaded the 27 MB file to my Android smart phone and tablet, and have mixed opinions (many negative) about Microsoft Office Mobile, which somewhat match those published in the media as well as posted in blogs and comments on the Play Store and iTunes app pages. I specifically agree with many of the comments posted on the Play Store app page which were critical about the display; the lack of the ability to use local storage such as an SD card, since OneDrive cloud storage is required; the inability to print from the smart device; a noticeably slow response and slow speed in opening and editing documents; the inability to create a new PowerPoint presentation; the inability to open Excel spreadsheets that were password protected on a PC; and several incompatibilities on other Android devices, including some of the most popular Android tablets, which are running Android 4.0 or later. On the Google Play Store, Microsoft Office Mobile only had an average user rating of 3.9 out of 5, with almost all of the most recently posted comments being decidedly negative about this new release. I spent several hours playing with Microsoft Office Mobile for Android on

WEBSITES:

<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/mobile>
<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.microsoft.office.officehub>
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-office-mobile/id541164041?mt=8>
<http://www.microsoft.com/en-us/news/press/2014/mar14/03-27mobilecloudpr.aspx>

Mobile, also dated March 27, 2014 and bearing version number 1.1, is a 49.2 MB download available on iTunes at itunes.apple.com/us/app/microsoft-office-mobile/id541164041?mt=8. This iPhone version requires iOS 7.0 or later, and is optimized for the iPhone 5, but will also run on an iPad, and iPod touch.

The description posted by Microsoft on both the Google Play Store and Apple's iTunes App Store says, "Microsoft Office Mobile is the official Office companion optimized for your Android phone. You can access, view and edit your Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel and Microsoft PowerPoint documents from virtually anywhere. Documents look like the originals, thanks to support for charts, animations, SmartArt graphics and shapes. When you make quick edits or add comments to a document, the formatting and content remain intact.*" The asterisk (*) at the end of the description links to the following: "Sign in with a free Microsoft account to create, edit and save documents for home use." An Android user must have a free Microsoft account in order to fully utilize the software, but any existing Hotmail, Outlook, Live, Bing, or similar sign-in should work with this Android version of Office. Business and other commercial users must have an Office 365 account in order to use the Android app.

On both app stores, an identical detailed description of Microsoft Office Mobile is displayed. Primary storage of Office data is "in the cloud" on one of Microsoft's cloud services, including OneDrive (formerly called SkyDrive), OneDrive for Business, or on SharePoint. The "look and feel" and the display of documents in Office Mobile have been optimized for display on the smaller screens of a smart phone, and can include Word, Excel, and PowerPoint charts, animations, shapes, and SmartArt Graphics. The PowerPoint

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My Life with Devices

It all started about six or seven years ago with my first device, an iPod Touch. This cell phone-sized device does not make phone calls, but does nearly everything else. It introduced me to the seemingly limitless i-Tunes store and helped me navigate through the maze of managing my music and “apps.” This little device made me realize that I could carry hundreds of photos and songs in my purse, as well as get access to the Internet and my email in any Wi-Fi hotspot. I walked the treadmill at the gym to the rhythm of my workout playlists and showed photos of my grandchildren to everyone who would look.



My second device was an original Kindle, an electronic book reader. As both a reader and a traveler, I was looking for a way of transporting the several books I'd need for one of our long cruises. Amazon's Kindle was nothing fancy, but was exactly what I wanted. It too was a Wi-Fi only device, although the Internet was only needed for downloading books. Even now before a trip, I search for and download a number of books from the Kindle Store at Amazon, most free or very low cost. Then I turn off the Wi-Fi to save battery power and read away. When I fall asleep at night while reading in bed, Kindle also goes to sleep in a few minutes, saving my place in the book.



When the iPad first appeared on the market in 2010, I bragged to friends that I didn't need anything that big when I could do it all on my iPod Touch. But being the techno fan that I am, I couldn't resist jumping in when iPad 3 came out in 2012. It's amazing how much easier it is to read email or play Words with Friends on that larger screen. Over time I got smarter about apps: fewer games and more utilities. When the Florida thunderclouds appear overhead, I check the time lapse radar



with my RadarCast app. I keep in touch with my son and daughter with FaceTime or Skype. Although I still use my Kindle for reading books, I enjoy magazines on the iPad because they're in color and never get recycled. Email is easier on the iPad, too, both reading and writing. When my husband and I do the morning NYT crosswords each day, the iPad is our quickest cheating option. I have a portable stock of favorite recipes in the Recipe Book app and regularly download new ones from many of the best-known websites.



I was a late adopter of cell phones, and even then I chose a cheap, basic phone. My mother was in her 90's; I needed to be on call. About then, a friend gave me very good advice: “Have no more than one device that has a monthly fee.” The cellphone became that device. It was only this year that I recycled the basic phone in favor of an iPhone 5. And it has turned out to be the right move. Last summer we rented a cottage on a lake where there was no Wi-Fi. I found that my iPad lost about 75% of its use to me because I had no Internet access. But my iPhone could do it all – read/send email, search the Net, play music, locate restaurants, talk to me, and take better pictures than my camera. You get the idea. A smartphone makes traveling a lot easier.

Steve Costello, President / Editor, Boca Raton Computer Society, FL, December 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 December 2013.

Tell Your Relatives: No, Microsoft Won't Call You About Your Computer

There has been a rash of telephone calls from scammers claiming to be from Microsoft. Read this post so you can recognize the problem, and let family members who might not be so tech savvy know about it.

<http://www.howtogeek.com/176605/tell-your-relatives-no-microsoft-wont-call>

You may have noticed that I haven't mentioned computers among my devices. I have both a desktop and laptop and find them invaluable. When I need to write an article or set up a budget or make a greeting card or create a presentation — in other words, when I need to produce something – nothing beats my computers. The iPad offers several word-processing apps, even a small version of Word, but I like the full power of Microsoft Office, Photoshop Elements, and other full-featured productivity applications which work best on a PC, say nothing of the large monitor and classic keyboard. I use my “little” devices, as my husband calls them, for enjoying media and gathering information.

Besides the cost, there are challenges to owning all these devices: three cords for recharging, three cases, syncing, updating, and carrying them through security at airports. But I have a feeling that we are right now in a short transitional period. I have no doubt that within the next decade or two we will be able to do it all on a device that's no bigger than a ball point pen that can project a keyboard on the table and a monitor on the wall, all in response to our verbal commands. It will let us produce, entertain us, and keep us in touch with friends and family. All our personal devices will be packed into one. For now, though, like many other people, I'm dealing with a device management challenge that I really don't mind at all. ♠

-you-about-your-computer/

7 business card apps for smartphones: Scan 'em and store 'em

This post from Computerworld talks about some apps to scan and store business cards on your smartphone. I use the Evernote app myself, instead of a separate app just for business cards, but this might be useful for others. If you don't use something to keep track of them, you can never find the proper business card when you look for it later.

http://www.computerworld.com/s/article/9244134/7_business_card_apps_for_smartphones_Scan_em_and_store_em?pageNumber=1

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125 Free E-Books to Help You With Your Computer, Smartphone, or Life

Let's face it. Most of us really do not know how to fully make use of the hardware and software that we use on a regular basis. Sure, we can likely perform normal tasks, and maybe discover a new tweak or feature, but our hardware and software are often more capable than we know. There are lots of websites, online guides, and commercial books available that might improve our insight, but sometimes one of the best resources for us to improve our computing and smart device satisfaction might be a free e-book that we can download and read on our device as we need guidance, or can print so we have a hard copy to review when desired. One of my favorite sources for this free information is the online web service at MakeUseOf.com, which currently has 125 free e-books available to download, as well as thousands of pages of other interesting content, including over 30,000 articles.

On the "about" page at MakeUseOf.com (makeuseof.com/about), it says, "MakeUseOf is a leading destination for digital productivity tips and your guide to cool stuff on the Internet. Online since June 2006." According to the statistics on this page, MakeUseOf.com has, "250k Facebook Fans, 500k Subscribers, 70k Twitter Followers, 60k G+ (Google+) Followers, 12m Monthly Visits, 32k Articles, 329k Comments." One of the most popular features offered is a frequently updated compendium of free e-books, currently totaling 125 titles on a multitude of hardware and software topics, as well as books on how to make the best use of online services. Almost all of the books can be freely viewed online, downloaded for free in PDF and ePub formats (ePub is a widely used format compatible with most dedicated e-readers), or available for inexpensive purchase (mostly 99 cents) in Kindle format from Amazon.com.

The listed books are generally current in their content; some of the titles are a little dated, but still contain valuable and useful

information that is likely still applicable to today's users. Since many people do not always use the newest and latest versions

of hardware and software, some of the older titles may still provide substantial insight both to those users, as well as to those with the newer versions of hardware and software.

While many of the titles listed are technical in nature, many others are more for personal enhancement and benefit. One of the first of the free publications that I downloaded was the "Research Your Family Tree Online" by Christian Cawley. I chose to download the 34 page book in the free PDF format as I can easily view it on any of my devices. This e-book, published in December 2013, consists of seven chapters and an appendix which explain how to use your computer to uncover your ancestors, explains the different software that can be used to track your genealogy, online genealogy resources, shows how to most efficiently utilize Ancestry.com, using online research for offline discoveries, putting family history on multimedia, and "Your Family History Is Waiting To Be Discovered." The appendix is a compendium of applications, online research websites, desktop genealogy software, and the industry standard GEDCOM genealogy file format that can be used to exchange data between most of the software utilities and online file sharing services.

In 2013, according to several published reports, worldwide sales of tablet computers may have passed laptop computer sales, and by 2015, tablet sales may pass the combined sales of laptop and desktop units (Source: idigitaltimes.com/articles/17881/20130528/tablet-vs-laptop-sales-android-samsung-apple.htm). While a little dated, the e-book "MakeUseOf Tablet Buying Guide: Sum-

mer 2013" has hints, tips, and recommendations on purchasing a tablet computer. This 23 page book, written by Joshua

able as a free PDF or ePub file, or as an Amazon Kindle download for 99 cents, has a wealth of information that might ease the purchasing process by providing the potential buyer with useful, easy to understand information.

One of my coworkers recently entered the 21st century by purchasing a new iPhone, which replaced the much simpler "dumb" cell phone that he had been using for several years. His new phone uses iOS7, an operating system that he is totally unfamiliar with. I will be recommending that he download "Your Guide to iOS7", by Tim Brookes, dated September, 2013 (makeuseof.com/pages/your-guide-to-ios7). This 20 page book has five chapters that cover "Getting Started With iOS 7", new features of iOS7, updates, instructions on how to use the integral software and additional apps, and other practical information. Another related series of e-books include basic, intermediate, and advanced levels of "How to Use Your iPhone".

Before my coworker purchased his new iPhone, it might have been beneficial for him to have read the e-book "Smartphone Buying Guide, Winter 2013" by Joshua Sherman (makeuseof.com/pages/smartphone-buying-guide-winter-2013). This 21 page book in four chapters, explains the factors to consider before purchasing a new smart phone, gives details on the different operating systems available for smart phones, discusses the phone manufacturers and carriers, and finally compares and contrasts many of the most popular models available. While new

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WEBSITES:

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/research-your-family-tree-online>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/makeuseof-tablet-buying-guide-summer-2013>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/your-guide-to-ios7>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/smartphone-buying-guide-winter-2013>

<http://www.makeuseof.com/pages/project-gutenberg-just-free-books>

<http://www.gutenberg.org>

<http://m.gutenberg.org> - Mobile website

Sherman, and published in August, 2013, explains the different types and features of tablets, the different operating systems commonly used on tablets, and a directory of tablet manufacturers. For anyone thinking of purchasing a tablet, this free e-book, avail-

Smart Device Users Beware: Fraud May Be Just a Click Away

This was forwarded from a CPA Member of SEWWUG. Even if you don't have a described "smart device," it explains a lot about the QR Codes we often see.

You've installed anti-virus software to protect your personal computer and business network. You know the signs of phishing scams (including unfamiliar senders, poor grammar and misspelled words). And like most people who use the Internet today, you never open a suspicious e-mail or download files from a questionable website.

But what have you done to protect your iPhone, Android or tablet from cyber theft?

Many smart devices currently operate without anti-virus and malware protection. Although there haven't been many high-profile fraud cases involving smart devices, opportunistic hackers are targeting these devices as the world of quick response (QR) codes grows.

http://www.bizactions.com/img/Technology/lores_security_mobile_phone_code_safety_kk.jpg

Scammer's Delight

QR codes appeal to fraudsters for several reasons:

- They're easy and cheap to create. All you need to do to set up a QR code is go to an online service and enter a web address. The site generates a QR code in seconds for free.
- Malicious codes can be printed on stickers and placed on top of legitimate QR codes. Or a fraudster might post the code on a subway station bulletin board or a tourist monument and wait for curious victims to click on the image.
- The human eye can't decipher QR codes. People can't tell a legitimate QR code from a malicious one. So it's easier to hide a "click jacking" scam than a phishing scam or virus. Smart devices don't usually slow down or show any other signs of "infection" until the user's data has long-since been compromised.

QR codes are relatively new, but rapidly growing. Hackers will increasingly exploit QR codes as more people purchase smart devices and more businesses use them for marketing purposes.

Users new to the QR code world may be unfamiliar with the risks of clicking on malicious codes and may not be security-conscious enough when using their smart devices.

What are QR Codes?

QR codes are square, two-dimensional barcodes that were originally used by auto manufacturers in the 1990s to track vehicle parts. Today, QR codes have become a popular marketing tool for businesses to connect with customers using smart devices.

You've probably seen QR codes in magazine ads, on business cards and product packaging — even in taxis. Instead of remembering a web address and typing it into your browser, you can simply snap a photo of a QR code with your smart device.

Once clicked, QR codes perform all kinds of functions, quickly and easily. For example, a code might link to product specs on the company's website, enter the user into a prize contest, provide directions to an event, purchase a product using a PayPal account, "like" a company on Facebook or download coupons.

Unfortunately, QR codes can also be used to commit fraud.

Anatomy of a QR Code Scam

Some QR codes are self-contained. That is, all the product information is coded into the image. If you have a QR reader on your smart device, it auto-converts the image and directs you to a website.

Other QR codes require you to download or purchase an application (app) to access an online server, which looks up the desired information or performs some other function. Both types of QR codes — direct and indirect — are susceptible to fraud.

Scammers can, for example, embed shortened URLs into QR codes to misdirect victims to cloned websites, where the fraudster sells product without ever fulfilling the contract or installs malware to gain control over the device. The next time the user accesses his or her mobile wallet or PayPal account, the malware captures that information and makes fraudulent charges.

Alternatively, proprietary apps pose a security risk by allowing the QR code

author to install measurement and tracking systems onto the smart device. Most QR code apps require consent to a user's agreement — which many people fail to read — and these could authorize the QR code author to track your cell phone usage, access your contacts and other personal information, or ring up charges for premium texts on your cell phone bill, for example.

An even bigger threat occurs when the user connects the smart device to a computer to charge it or sync data. The malware can "leap" to the PC, infecting it and any networks to which the computer is linked. This security risk is one reason some companies are leery of implementing bring-your-own-mobile-device (BYOD) programs.

Users Provide the First Line of Defense

Surprisingly few iPhone, Android or tablet users have taken steps to protect against fraud. Here are four simple things you can do to protect your smart device starting today:

http://www.bizactions.com/img/Bullets/arrow_10x20_red_mb.gif

Never click a QR code in a public place, such as a bus stop or mall. Only scan QR codes from trusted sources or vetted by third parties. Be especially careful when traveling overseas where QR code "click jacking" scams tend to be more common.

http://www.bizactions.com/img/Bullets/arrow_10x20_red_mb.gif

Always check a QR code for a sticker before scanning it. Use your fingernail. If it looks like a sticker, it could be a scam.

http://www.bizactions.com/img/Bullets/arrow_10x20_red_mb.gif

Never provide personal information or passwords if requested by a website linked to a QR code, even if the site appears to be legitimate.

http://www.bizactions.com/img/Bullets/arrow_10x20_red_mb.gif

Install a QR code scanner app that screens URLs before directing you to the site. These apps block unsafe sites and stop online threats before they're downloaded to your device. Search for "secure QR reader" on your smart device. Read the reviews and select one from an anti-virus software provider you know and

Continued on Page 9

Backups and Disk Cloning

Brian Riley, Vice President of the NNCUG, gave a Membership Meeting presentation on computer backups and cloning of hard drives. Most of his presentation centered on what you can do to get your computer working quickly after a virus infestation or hard drive failure.

He explained that while backing up is necessary, the problem is that you have to have a working operating system and backup software to restore the backup you made. This may entail having to reinstall the operating system and backup software before you can even start to get your computer back.

He then explained the difference between cloning a disk and making a disk image. With cloning a disk, you get an exact copy of the disk, that if inserted into your machine, will allow you to resume work from the point the clone was made. Disk imaging on the other hand, which is how backups work, makes a copy of the contents of the disk in some kind of compressed format (zipped), which then has to be restored by a program that can read that format.

Usually this is done with a "restore" disk, which is a bootable CD or DVD that contains enough of an operating system to run the backup software that can restore your drive, but requires you to make that disk ahead of time. If you haven't done that (and most backup software, including what comes with Windows 7, has utilities to make one of those disks), you need to restore from the original Operating System Install disks. This is a time consuming process!

Brian showed us what he called a "toaster" drive, which is a USB or ESATA device that allows you to put a regular 3 ½ " (desktop hard drive) or 2 ½" (laptop drive) in a slot, and run your backup or clone to it.

Tiger Direct has a listing of toaster drives here (NewEgg and Amazon have them also)

http://www.tigerdirect.com/applications/category/category_slc.asp?MfrId=0&CatId=2785

He then explained that if you have chosen a computer that has your C: accessible from the outside of the machine, you can take that disk and easily and quickly replace the damaged or infected drive with

it.

Brian explained he had made a clone of the laptop drive he was giving the presentation on the night before, he simulated the computer becoming infected with a virus, shut it down, replaced the hard drive, and rebooted continuing the demonstration, all within three minutes.

He pointed out making a clone is not the complete answer to backups: clones do not do versioning of your files for example, and it is still important to do a regular backup.

There are two key questions you have to ask yourself in choosing a backup method:

- How important is my data? Is merely having a second copy of it enough, or does it have to survive a catastrophic event like a fire? If it is the latter, you must have an offsite backup, if it isn't then just a backup copy will do.
- How much important data do I generate in what period of time? If you spend all day working on a project, then you probably want a backup on a daily basis. If redoing everything you have done for a week isn't a problem, then a weekly one will do. If all you do is play games on your computer and answer e-mails on line, then you probably don't need more than a clone – your data isn't changing.

Things that cause data loss come in many forms: from "happy clicking", where you accidentally overwrite something you have been working on all day with an inappropriate up-date; virus infestation that makes your machine unusable and may scramble the contents of your hard drive; hard drive failure (sooner or later they all fail); or catastrophic event such as a fire or burglary.

Even if you are using anti-virus software, your machine can become infected by a virus that was built to get around that software. Often the first thing these viruses will do if they manage to get a foothold on your machine is turn off your anti-virus software.

Brian suggested a simple step: since many viruses work on the account level, you should always create a second account on your machine with administrative privileges.

This may allow you to log in as that

other user and run your anti-virus software that has been disabled under your main account.

He also suggested you should hover over any link with your mouse to see where it is sending you. Depending on the application, the address the link is sending you to will be displayed in a tool-tip or on the bottom of the screen. If that address goes somewhere unexpected, don't click on it!

What backup software should you use?

Windows 7 ships with backup software, and allows you to make a restore disk. It doesn't do cloning, it isn't easy to tell what it is backing up, and the backup requires a disk larger, sometimes double the size, of the drive you are using as your C: In other words you would need a one terabyte drive to back up a 500 gigabyte one.

It was suggested using Macrium Reflect, which is available as either free or paid software. The major difference for the home user between the two is the free version can't do incremental backups (that is, only backup the files that have changed since your last full backup). You can read more about it on their website:

www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx

Along with the free version, the Standard version costs \$49.99, and the Pro version costs \$58.99.

There is cloning and backup software available from other vendors also.

Acronis is another backup/cloning program. Brian and Rob stated it is much more

Bloated but not as user friendly as Macrium.

If you are interested, reviews of 10 of the top contenders for 2013 can be found here:

<http://data-backup-software-review.top-tenreviews.com/>

Brian emphasized that if your concern is getting your computer up and operating as quickly as possible from a simple hard drive failure or virus infestation, then cloning is the way to go.

He also made the point that one does NOT have a backup UNTIL it is confirmed that the data can be RESTORED from the backup!♣

So You Got a New Android Phone: Here's All You Need To Know

Some of you may have gotten a new Android phone over the holidays. MakeUseOf gives you all you need to know to get started with it in this post.

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/so-you-got-a-new-android-phone-heres-all-you-need-to-know/>

How to Fix Android's Biggest Annoyances: 2013 Edition

Lifehacker addresses Android annoyances and how to fix them in this post, and others linked to it for specific annoyances. A lot of useful information for Android users here.

<http://lifehacker.com/how-to-fix-androids-biggest-annoyances-2013-edition-1488535064>

Get Free TV With Hulu?

Thinking of cutting the cord from your cable company? Bob Rankin explores using Hulu to do so.

[Http://askbobrankin.com/get_free_tv_with_hulu.html](http://askbobrankin.com/get_free_tv_with_hulu.html)

Sandboxie Review

I have been using Sandboxie (the free version) for years now. Check out this recent review to see if this might be helpful for you.

[Http://www.ghacks.net/2013/12/11/sandboxie-review/](http://www.ghacks.net/2013/12/11/sandboxie-review/)

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

7tutorials answers the question, and provides some clipboard management options.

<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. ♠

The Tip Corner – continued from Page 2

mal update button, bundled with the update are all the Advertising, Loading toolbars, Redirection, and other marketing tools. Sometimes the boxes to add toolbars are shown in the opening screen, but more and more they appear within the custom install and there we are able to decline to add those pesky toolbars. So what you have to do is read everything you upload. The advertising media is big money and doesn't seem to be going away soon.

Fortunately, most of these marketing bullies can be uninstalled or deleted quite simply. So if you see some new icons show up in your browser, try to figure out what they are. Depending on your browser, there should be a section on "add-ons". Visit that and see if some strange toolbars are installed there. And go to the Programs and Features in the Control Panel to uninstall. Just remember: it is all about money. ♠

Chromecast – continued from Page 1

power supply that plugs into ac power (recommended). Because Chromecast accomplishes its magic using your Local Area Network, aka Wi-Fi, you will need to enter the password to your Wi-Fi network during the setup process. The Setup, in a nutshell, is simply, Plug the device into your TV, Connect it to your Wi-Fi, and let it do its thing. The setup is really easy to do and it took only a few minutes, although the TV screen did go dark for a few tense moments while the Chromecast was rebooting leaving an uneasy feeling until the "ready to cast" screen appeared. Once Chromecast was "ready to cast", streaming from an Android tablet or the Chrome browser was easily accomplished.

(Note: It is a good idea to follow Google's directions to download the Setup App on to your mobile device first. With this done, setup was very easy.)

Google's uses the term "cast" to indicate streaming. The "cast" icon appears in the tablet App or in the Chrome browser in order to enable "cast"ing to the Chromecast device. The "cast" icon is a rectangle with a symbol in the lower left corner that looks like a Wi-Fi symbol.



Using a tablet, the Chromecast App is used in conjunction with You-

Tube (or other Chromecast enabled App, such as Netflix). After you start YouTube (or Netflix) on the tablet, touch the "cast" icon towards the top of the screen. A window will open to allow selection of the tablet display or the Chromecast device (that has been discovered). Select the Chromecast device and the YouTube video will be shown on the HDTV hosting the Chromecast device. The tablet acts as a controller to direct the video/audio from the source to the Chromecast device for use on the TV. Could it be any easier? (Return to this window to return YouTube back to the tablet display.)

Google has set up a website at <https://support.google.com/chromecast/> for product information and it includes some very good directions for using Chromecast. This site is a very good Help resource for getting started with, using, or just learning about Comcast's capabilities.

Google has indicated that YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu Plus are just the beginning. Many others have voiced their support, and many independent developers have started to develop Apps for this new device. It's only a matter of time before Chromecast has many new uses. ♠



Review: East-Tec Eraser 2014 – www.east-tec.com

It's a miracle! Yes, finding something on the internet can seem to be miraculous. But the actual miracle is no longer finding what you are looking for; it's finally completely getting rid of what you've found! In fact, getting rid of what you've found is the real miracle. Pound on your delete key all you will, take an oath it's gone and forgotten, and don't you know that some smart-aleck computer enthusiast will come along and make a liar out of you despite your fervent oath.

Bringing back the text or photo you have vigorously deleted is not as miraculous as it may seem. The real miracle is how easy it can be to bring back from the dead. With surprisingly little effort your deleted item can be readily restored. Now if your restored text or photo happens to

really want to get rid of without worrying that it will show up unexpectedly because someone was able to restore it. What's more, it's easy to use and fool-proof.

After an easy installation, East-Tec Eraser opens with a vertically placed menu bar the first item in which is Privacy Guard. Its purpose is to erase sensitive data you have gathered from Windows and the internet that was extracted without your knowledge or permission. It will not erase files you have saved or that are needed for normal operation.

The Privacy Guard engages as the first and basic "hot" item in Eraser's menu and in my initial venture gathered a collection of 2,351 previously "deleted" files that had been originally quarantined by Malwarebytes or Norton Utilities over a several

year period among a collection of other files that I had long ago considered "gone forever". Well what do you know? There they were just sitting there unknown and out of reach to me, just waiting to be reclaimed by someone with the smarts to do it. With the click of a single button in Privacy Guard, one by one each of those 2,351 files was finally and finitely laid to rest by

Button #3, Erase Deleted Data, ensures that previously deleted files are removed from specified drives on your computer beyond recovery.

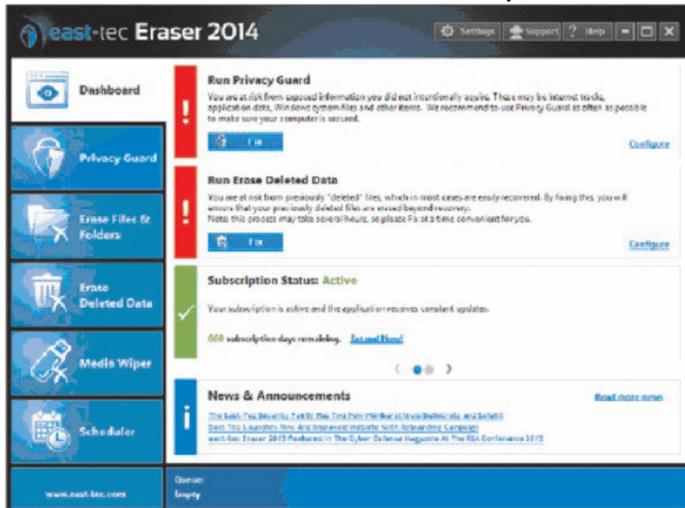
Button #4, Media Wiper, was designed to address all removable media devices up to 64 GB. It also has provisions for wiping entire disks or partitions.

Button #5 cleans traces of your online activities at certain intervals which you specify.

How does it all work? To the best of our judgment, East-Tec competently removed everything it boasted it was going to. We had the opportunity to put East-Tec Eraser through its paces in both Firefox and Chrome browsers. It worked equally well with both and can be expected to work similarly with other common browsers. Erasing the free space allocated to previously deleted files needs to be done while the computer is not in normal occupied usage. It takes plenty of time.

East-Tec provides for very secure erasing that meets and exceeds the U.S. Department of Defense standards for the permanent erasure of digital information. If there is a caveat, it is in nomenclature. East-Tec provides for a free trial period for Eraser. You need to wring the software out to make certain you are comfortable with its instructions, straightforward as they may be. It is very powerful software whose purpose is to readily, permanently and irretrievably erase. Not too much imagination is required to imagine problems that can result in improper use. While there is little really difficult in its usage, wisdom dictates caution. East-Tec helps by making a trial copy of Eraser available to you. It will also help convince you it is software you don't want to be without if you desire to maintain unrestricted control over what is available or not on your hard drive.

As you would expect, whatever Eraser activities you may be employing at the moment need be during a period of time when your cyber-activities are not otherwise occupied. Eraser helps by offering a scheduler to properly and conveniently plan the periods of time during which Eraser functioning will occur and prevent other computer or internet usage. ♠



exist in any variety between embarrassing and deadly, you may wish you backed up your delete key with something that really did the job.

East-Tec Eraser is the quintessential software for eliminating anything you

East-Tec Eraser.

Of course the object in the future would be not to wait until a few thousand of those files were accumulated, but to use Privacy Guard regularly on an ongoing basis which I will make it my business to do henceforth. Needless to say, before using Privacy Guard you need to be certain you are not erasing something you plan to possibly restore at a future time. This is a caveat that holds true for anything else you feed to East-Tec Eraser in one or another of its tools. The items selected by Privacy Guard will conform to pre-chosen defaults.

Button #2, Erase Files and Folders, allows you to indicate files or folders that you want to add to your erase list. You can specify certain criteria or otherwise drag and drop specific files or folders to this area.

Smart Device Users

cont'd from Page 6

trust.

The end result of all this is simple: Your smart devices are personal computers. Treat them that way. Don't wait for a major cyber threat to occur to prove that smart devices are vulnerable to viruses and malware. Contact an information technology professional for more information. ♠

both my Samsung smart phone and my generic Android tablet, both of which exceed Microsoft's minimum hardware requirements, and have to concur with many of the posted comments, that this current release is "Not Ready for Prime Time", and that many of the third party competitors handle Office documents better than this version of the Microsoft app.

On the Apple iTunes page for the Microsoft Office Mobile app, the comments are much the same as they were for the Android version, with 237 ratings of this newly released version; iPhone users give this version of the app an average of 3 1/2 out of 5 stars, with many of the same concerns as previously expressed. While many users liked the user interface (UI) of this app, there were security concerns about uploading sensitive or personal documents unprotected to OneDrive; display prob-

lems, especially the inability to zoom by "pinching" the document; problems opening OneDrive with an existing Microsoft account; others expressed concerns about the inability to print, create PowerPoint presentations, and perform other Office tasks common on desktop computers running Office.

For Android and iPhone users who already have a Microsoft account, or who would like to register for one (free), this might be a useful free app for some users. It can somewhat create, display, and edit Word documents and Excel spreadsheets, albeit slow and without all of the editing tools available on the full desktop version of Office. It can edit and view PowerPoint presentations, but cannot create new ones from scratch, as well as lacks some of the features of the full desktop version of PowerPoint.

I will keep the Microsoft Office Mobile that I downloaded, as well as give it a limited recommendation for my students to use. As there are several better competitive and often free office apps available, I will have to wait and see what future builds and improvements are incorporated into this app before I can wholeheartedly recommend Microsoft Office Mobile to more users. I agree that it is "Not Quite Ready for Prime Time." ♠

[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 June online newsletter. CTPC Editor]

125 Free E-Books . . . – continued from Page 5

models of smart phones are constantly being introduced, a quick check of the carriers' websites showed that many of the models listed in this "Winter 2013" buying guide are still being sold by the major carriers and independent sellers.

While this MakeUseOf list of e-books is impressive, with its 125 titles, one of the newest of the available e-books is a guide to what may arguably be the largest source of public domain e-books available, Project Gutenberg. According to the listing, "Project Gutenberg is one of the largest and most well known, but before we examine the nuts and bolts of the site, we need to take a moment to examine the concept of "public domain", which is the whole bedrock of the Gutenberg site." At present, Project Gutenberg has over 45,000 books that have been scanned by volunteers around the world, and then

each converted into one or more digital formats. The e-book published by MakeUseOf, "Project Gutenberg: More Than Just Free Books" (makeuseof.com/pages/project-gutenberg-just-free-books), by Mark O'Neill, published in April, 2014, is 23 pages in seven chapters that explains the principles of public domain, instructions on how to use the website at www.gutenberg.org and the mobile site at m.gutenberg.org, the selection of available digital formats, the availability of many of the books in audio format, how contemporary authors can utilize the self publishing portal, how to become a volunteer proofreader for Project Gutenberg, and a listing of recommended books to familiarize the reader with the resources and formats available. Included in this guide are links to many other sources of free e-books, including a

large selection of free e-books in Amazon's Kindle format.

There are e-books covering many other subjects including how to make money online; guides to Microsoft Office, Gmail, Firefox, Photoshop, Windows 8, Illustrator, and several other software titles; an e-book about BitCoins; Facebook privacy; and dozens of other topics.

Since all of these e-books are free in either PDF or ePub format, or available on Amazon in Kindle format for a nominal sum (typically 99 cents), most people will likely find a lot of useful and interesting information on the free e-books on MakeUseOf's website at makeuseof.com/pages. ♠

[See comment at the end of the above article re available screen shots. CTPC Editor]



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MEETING LOCATION

Silver Star Diner - subject to change!
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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