DATALINE

Wednesday, April 10, 2019

Meetings
SCV Senior Center
22900 Market Street
Newhall CA 91321
www.scvcomputerclub.org

In This Issue

Meeting Presentations

Did you have a pet rock? To Akie Nakata stones are not simple materials or canvases for painting pictures on. Among all those numerous stones on a river bank, one stone, looking like an animal, catches his eye. When he finds a stone, he feels that stone has found him too. Stones have their own intentions, and he considers his encounters with them as cues they give him it's OK to go ahead and paint what he sees on them.

What's new in Windows 10 Tech Talk – May 1903 update - With the next version of Windows 10 set to appear in May, it's a good time to take a look at what's new and what's changed in version 1903. (Not much, actually.) But that's a good thing, according to Computerworld contribution editor Preston Gralla. He explores just that means for Windows in the years ahead with Executive Editor Ken Mingis.

We are going to check our Eye-Q and find out Where Siri, Alexa and Cortana Got their Names.

Plus, Microsoft has given up…..

6:30 pm – Interactive webinar from Florida
Saving Money on Printers and Ink
Jere Minich, Program Chair, Lake Sumter Computer Society

How do printers really work? What can I do to save money on ink? What is the most cost-effective operation for my printer? What are some trusted sites for ink? What is the recommended printer for home use? Where to go for more info.

What he will cover:
Printer terms to understand
Secrets of printer OEMs
Printer Cartridge Chips explained
Types of Cartridges
How to save money on ink
Trusted ink supplier
Best printers

President's Corner
My Meshed-Up Wi-Fi
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood UG
March 2019 issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org / president (at) uchug.org

Our modern electronic devices are all about connectedness. It seems everything we have now is connected, and that connection is integral to the capabilities that are provided for us. Before they were connected, computers were just big boxes that made calculating and writing easier; now with the Internet, they provide communications, information and entertainment. Thermostats, cameras and lights used to be just things to turn on your furnace, capture pictures and video and illuminate your surroundings. Now, when you connect them to your home network, they become the start of a smart home. All that connectedness is great, but to be useful it needs to be reliable, secure, easy to use and available where you need it.

The methods used to connect our devices have evolved and improved over time, going from wired phone and Ethernet cables to wireless communications, with cellular phone networks, Bluetooth and Wi-Fi.

Cables perform well, but limit mobility and can be unsightly or difficult to conceal Cellular data connections can have great range but can have spotty coverage and require additional costs for data service. They can work fine on your phone or tablet but are harder to utilize for computers or small household devices. Bluetooth is useful for low data rate connections between devices at close range.

Wireless keyboard and mouse connections work great over Bluetooth, but it wouldn't work well for surfing the web. The best wireless method for medium range (in a house or building) and high bandwidth (web surfing and streaming) is Wi-Fi.

Wi-Fi provides wireless connections based on the IEEE 802.11 standards, which were originally established in the late 1990's. The standards and the capabilities they provide have evolved over the years.

Wi-Fi now utilizes a number of RF bands, mostly in the GHz frequency range (typically 2.4 GHz to 60 GHz), and can support over 1 Gbit/s.

My first computer (early 1980's) was a stand-alone device, as there were no popular networking standards at the time. When we got married in 1985, my wife and I shared one computer. Computers didn't get "personal" for us until probably the late 1990's, when my wife wanted her own, and we started to think about separate computers for our two children. When we moved into our present house in 1987, it came brand-new with all the networking connections we needed - phone jacks and coax cables in a couple of the rooms for the dial-up modem and cable TV.

By the early 2000's, we had at least four computers in the house, one for each occupant. Around this time we unfortunately had a leak in our plastic house water lines and had to repipe the house with copper. I took this opportunity to use the holes in the

walls to pull Cat5e Ethernet, phone and coax cables into all bedrooms except the master (I never considered having a computer there). This allowed us to have a good wired home network, with Internet at every computer. My "office" was in the upstairs bedroom in the front corner of the house; this is where I located the router for our home network. From that room I had cable connections that provided network and Internet to the kids' bedrooms and my wife's "office" downstairs in the center of the house.

This network worked well for us for many years. Even though early-version Wi-Fi was available, I preferred the superior security of my wired network, and even installed some wired Ethernet network cameras (this did take some work, as my wife hates visible cords and cables). We had laptops that had Wi-Fi capability, however, so I bought a wireless access point to connect to the wired network in my wife's office. I was still so worried about Wi-Fi's security that I plugged the access point into a separate power strip with switch, so it could be easily powered off and disabled when not in use.

It was either my wife's iPhone or our first Amazon Echo Dot that forced me to finally leave the Wi-Fi access point on all the time. I also bought a Chromebook, which required a wireless Internet connection to do most anything. I later added a second Dot, as well as three Samsung Wi-Fi network cameras. These cameras really pointed out the poor Wi-Fi coverage provided by the access point, as I could not place them far from the center of the house. I wanted to put one up in my office to replace one of the wired cameras, but the signal could not reach that far through the structure. One problem with the GHz frequencies used by Wi-Fi is that they are easily attenuated by the material in the walls and furnishings of a house. I tried using the Wi-Fi capability in my router (located in the front of the house) instead of the access point, which provided good signal strength there, but poor Wi-Fi in the middle and back parts of the house.

My poor Wi-Fi capabilities soon became a bigger issue, as I continued finding more and more smart home devices that I would like to have, including more voice-operated assistants (Amazon Echo and Google Home), more network cameras (video doorbells and outdoor cameras), smart light bulbs, smart outlets and smart thermostats. All these devices require a Wi-Fi connection to allow them to be used or controlled through smart phone apps. I needed to find a way to have good Wi-Fi coverage from my front yard all the way to my back yard.

One handy tool for evaluating Wi-Fi signals and diagnosing coverage issues is a free Android app called "WiFi Analyzer" (by farproc). It can display a real-time graphical indication of the signal strengths of the Wi-Fi signals (networks identified by their SSIDs) that your phone sees. It allowed me to move around the house with my phone and see just how poor the coverage was with my access point. It can also be useful to determine if you are getting interference from a neighbor's Wi-Fi, or if you have other signals in your house that you don't know about. I found that our two HP all-in-one network printers, which have both wired and wireless interfaces, were broadcasting a Wi-Fi signal even though I was only using their wired Ethernet interfaces.

There are several ways to provide better Wi-Fi signal coverage; most involve adding additional Wi-Fi networks (with separate SSIDs). There are Wi-Fi repeaters (or extenders) that can extend your Wi-Fi coverage by receiving your existing Wi-Fi signals and repeating them, though on a separate wireless network (as if you had two wireless

routers operating in your home). I could effectively do this with the wireless equipment I already have. If I turned on both my router's Wi-Fi and my access point, then I could have reasonable coverage over most of my house. This still would not cover the rear part of the house or back yard; I would need another Wi-Fi repeater for that and would wind up with multiple wireless networks to manage.
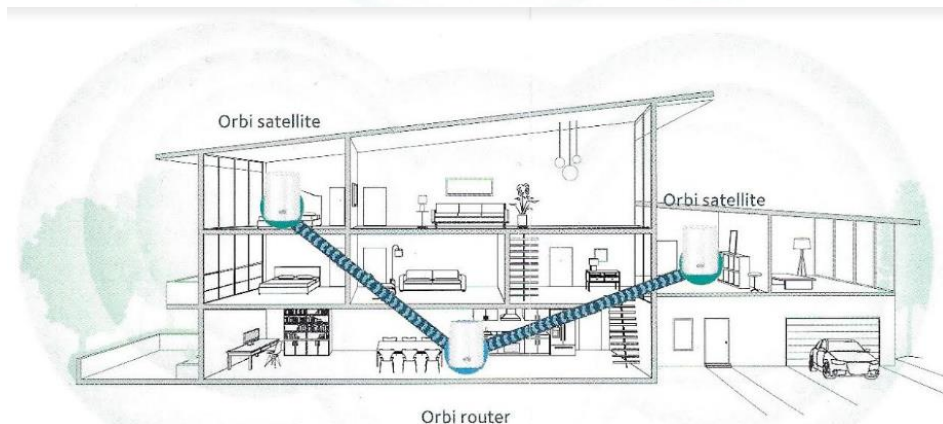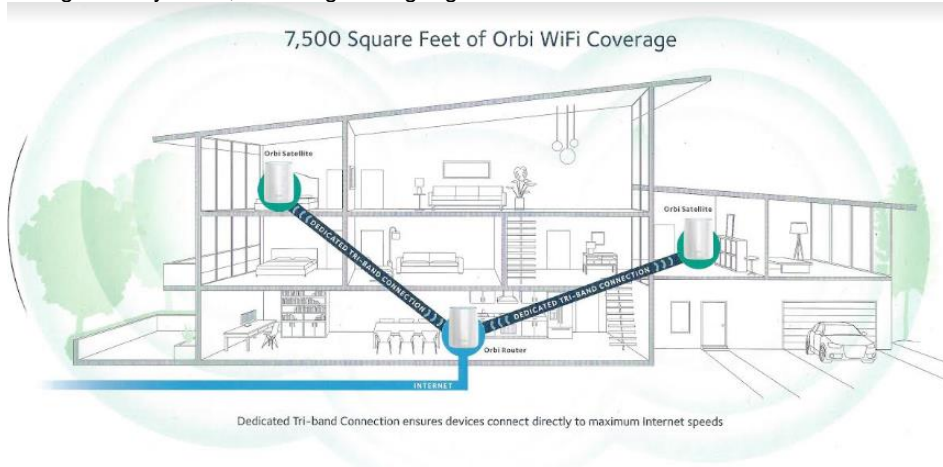
A new device for extending Wi-Fi, the mesh router, has recently become a popular option for providing whole-house Wi-Fi. Mesh routers use multiple devices or nodes to provide Wi-Fi from multiple locations in your home. They differ from Wi-Fi repeaters in that these nodes are connected to each other and coordinate between each other to provide the best signal for your device to connect to and present a single network and SSID. Mesh routers consist of a master device and one or more auxiliary or satellite devices.

There are now many mesh router systems available, including the Linksys Velop, Netgear Orbi, Asus Lyra, Google Wi-Fi, Samsung Connect Home and D-Link Covr; their prices range from $66 to $500. Since I felt I'd need three sources to cover my home's area, I chose the Netgear Orbi AC3000 three-unit mesh router. It claims to be able to cover up to 7500 square feet with three components - one router and two satellite units. The Orbi router would be placed in the center of the house (in my wife's office), where it would connect to my home network with an Ethernet cable. One satellite would be placed in a front bedroom upstairs and the other in our dining room in the back of the house. The satellites need only be located near a power outlet; they connect to the Orbi router through dedicated tri-band RF links (one 2.4 GHz and two 5 GHz connections). Setting up the Orbi system was easy. I plugged in the Orbi router in place of my old access point (it requires only AC power and the network Ethernet cable in its yellow WAN port) and turned it on. Each Orbi component has a light ring at the top; the router's light ring starts green and then turns white when ready. I next placed each satellite where I wanted it, plugged it in and turned it on. The light ring on the satellites start white, and then after a few minutes indicate their connection status with the Orbi router through the light ring color. A blue ring on the satellite indicates a good connection with the Orbi router, while amber indicates a fair connection and moving the satellite closer to the router should be considered.

If the ring winds up magenta, the satellite could not connect, and should be moved closer. Both of my satellites lit up blue.

My next step was to access the Orbi router and configure it and the Orbi network. This can be done through a wired connection (the Orbi router has three RJ-45 jacks on the back for the Orbi network, while each satellite has four) or wirelessly. I decided to connect to the Orbi Wi-Fi with my Chromebook, using the default SSID and security password provided in the documentation. Using the specified URL in a browser to connect to the router's setup pages, I logged in with the default admin account settings, and then immediately changed them. I also changed the SSID, made sure the Wi-Fi security was the most robust allowed (WPA2+AES) and lengthened the Wi-Fi security password. The Orbi router has all the typical setup pages you would find in any modern router; I left the majority of them set to the defaults. I did note that the Orbi can be set to be a router (providing network translation between its Ethernet input and its Wi-Fi and wired outputs) or an access point (it would use the same IP subnet as on its input); I left it as the former.

I used my smart phone and the WiFi Analyzer app to check out my new Orbi wireless network. I found excellent signal strength throughout my house, and a reasonable signal in my front and back yards. I noticed that three signals were shown, one for each Orbi device, with all using the same SSID. I could tell which graph color in the app went with which Orbi by moving next to each and seeing which had the strongest signal. From this I could see at any point in the house which Orbi a Wi-Fi device would likely connect to. I installed the Orbi app on my smart phone so that I could easily and remotely make changes to my Wi-Fi, including adding a guest Wi-Fi network.

7,500 Square Feet of Orbi WiFi Coverage

Dedicated Tri-band Connection ensures devices connect directly to maximum Internet speeds

With the mesh network effectively configured, I was ready for the hardest and most time-consuming part of the Wi-Fi upgrade - moving all my Wi-Fi devices to my new Orbi Wi-Fi network. It took several hours to switch all my network cameras, Amazon Echo Dots and smart lights to the Orbi network, as I had to go into the app for each device to change its settings. Once everything was switched over, it all worked great.

I used to have to reset (cycle power) my old access point periodically as it would sometimes lock up and lose connections; now with Orbi, everything is rock solid. I guess it is time to go shopping for new Wi-Fi gadgets.

With my old access point, our home Wi-Fi was rather messy. Now with Orbi, we are much happier with our Wi-Fi being meshy.

Interesting Internet Finds for April
By Steve Costello
scostello (at) sefcug.com

While going through more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some more items I found interesting during March 2019.

Can I Use My TV As A Second Display?
https://askleo.com/can-i-use-my-tv-as-a-second-display/

Leo Notenboom answers this often-asked question.

5 Useful Mobile Apps To Help You Deal With Long Layovers
https://www.maketecheasier.com/useful-mobile-apps-for-long-layovers/

My wife and I are flying a lot more often since we have both retired. If you fly a lot also and end up with a lot of layovers, check out this post for making those layovers less stressful.

3 Tips For Caring For Your Eyes When Using Technology
https://www.dailybits.com/3-tips-for-caring-for-your-eyes-when-using-technology/

Whether you are young or old, wear eyeglasses or don't, you need to know these tips if you use technology.

How Does DuckDuckGo Protect Your Personal Information Online?
https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/duckduckgo-protect-personal-information-online/

If you are not using DuckDuckGo as your search engine, I recommend that you do. This post explains how it protects your personal information online. (Note: I also use the DuckDuckGo app on my smartphone and tablet.)

Why You Should Stop Using Mobile Data
https://www.computerworld.com/article/3379616/why-you-should-stop-using-mobile-data.html

After reading this post, I turned mobile data off on my smartphone for the weekend. Instead of checking Twitter, Gmail, etc., all the time, I was able to just enjoy the day without interruption. I was able to use the phone and text functions without any problems. The few times I did want to get to the internet I was able to through Wi-Fi either at home or nearby shops. (I am thinking that I will keep mobile data off unless I am traveling and need to use the internet a lot.)

How To Pack Your Electronics For Air Travel
https://www.howtogeek.com/407341/how-to-pack-your-electronics-for-air-travel/

How-To Geek

For those not used to flying with electronics, This post explains how you should pack them to avoid problems.

HTTPS Everywhere — Make The Internet A Safer Place
https://www.wonderoftech.com/https-everywhere-extension/

The Wonder of Tech

I use this extension all the time in my browsers. I like that I don't have to keep checking for "https" all the time. If you don't already use this, read the post and install it in all your browsers, set it up, and be safer easily.

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Personalize your Desktop – With Pictures and/or Slideshows
By Phil Sorrentino, Secretary & APCUG Rep
April 2019
The Computer Club, FL
www.scccomputerclub.org / philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Personalization

- Background
- Colors
- Lock screen
- Themes
- Fonts
- Start
- Taskbar

All desktops are not created equal. Just look at the differences the next time you go to a class where you bring and use your own laptop. I bet none of those other desktops will look like your own desktop. Probably the biggest differences will be in the desktop background. These differences come about from the choices in the "Personalize window" in "Settings." You can get to the Personalize window by at least two ways. Personalize is a selection in Settings so just click on the Start button and then the Settings button (the gear like Icon). Or, you can get to the Personalize window by just right clicking an empty space on the desktop. Either way, you get to the Personalize window where you can set up things like the Background, the Lock screen, the Start screen, and the Taskbar.

The Background can be set to three different possibilities; a picture, a color, or a slideshow. The picture can be one of the pictures that you get to select by browsing your Pictures folder. When you find one you like, select it and it will become one of your selections and it will also become your background. (If you have multiple monitors, you can select Monitor 1 or 2 or both, by right clicking the picture and then left clicking your choice.) After you've chosen a picture you can determine how it will show on your monitor by making a
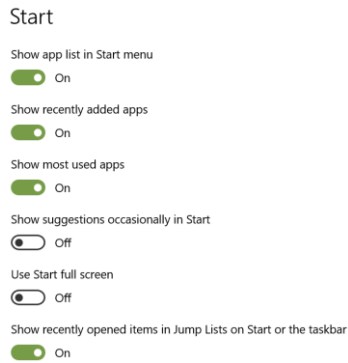
selection in "Choose a fit." Pull down the down facing arrow at the right-hand end of the selection box and make your selection among the choices, Fill, Fit, Stretch, Tile, Center, or Span. Pictures from different sources will show up slightly differently depending on this choice. Once you've chosen a picture, you'll just have to experiment with the choices. Don't worry, you can't really break anything here.

The second background choice, "Solid color," is maybe a little less exciting. When you select Solid color, you get to choose from a palette of colors to be the background. Just click on the color you like in the "Choose your background color" grouping of colors. You can even add a custom color by just clicking on the "Custom color button" and then in the "Pick a background color" area, click the color you would like and then click "Done." If you don't quite like the new custom color, just re-do the selection process and the custom color will change to your new choice.

The last background choice is "Slideshow," which is probably the most fun. When you choose slideshow, you get to choose the source of your slideshow pictures. Maybe you have a folder of grandchildren, or a folder of puppies or kittens, or a folder of your family vacations. Whatever you like can be the source of your slideshow pictures. Just click the Browse button, under "DesktopBackground," and you'll get a navigation window to use to find the folder that contains the pictures you would like to use as a slideshow. If you don't have a folder with all the pictures you want to use in your slideshow, now is the time to create it. Just make a new folder, using File Explorer, and put it in an easy place to find, like under the Pictures folder, under "This PC," After you've created this folder and maybe name it "Slideshow Pictures," put all the pictures that you want to be in the slideshow into it, and then go back to Settings-Personalize-Background, browse for your new folder, and make it the source of your slideshow. Next decide how often you want the pictures to change; choices go from 1 minute to one day. The pictures will show in the sequence that they are in the folder. (Remember, files in a folder will be in alpha-numeric order, numbers first, then letters.) If you don't want this sequence and would rather have them shown in random order, just slide the "Shuffle" slide switch to "On." Again, you can make a "Choose a fit" choice just as before in the "Picture" background choice.

The Lock screen is the next item that can be "personalized" in the Personalize window. (The Lock screen is displayed when the computer is locked. You can lock the computer by using the keyboard combination of the "Windows Key" and the L key. Or you can lock the computer by pressing the Control-Alternate-Delete key combination and then choosing "Lock".) The choices for the Lock screen are similar to Background, but slightly different. The choices are "Windows Spotlight," "Picture," and "Slideshow." Windows Spotlight is a feature of Windows 10 that downloads pictures from "Bing" and displays them when the lock screen is being shown. So it's like a picture option, only Bing is choosing the picture. The "Picture" choice seems to work just like the Picture choice in Background. You could even choose the same picture for Background and Lock screen, but it would probably be more useful if a different picture were chosen for Background and Lock screen. (The picture you see would be a hint as to what was on the display.) And "Slideshow" seems to work just about the same here in Lock screen as it does in Background, though there are some "Advanced slideshow settings" that can further determine how Slideshow works on the Lock screen.

The "Start screen" can be personalized by selecting "Start screen" and then setting the slide switches to "on" or "off" based on your need for the specific feature. You can even choose which "well known" folders appear on the Start screen by selecting "Choose which folders appear on start" and then switching that particular folder on or off. The Start screen is the pop-up window displayed when you click the start button (down on the screen, at the lower left end of the Taskbar). On this screen you'll find an alphabetical list of all the software (or Apps) on this computer and any App that has been "pinned" to the Start screen. Items on the Start screen can be moved around the Start screen by dragging and dropping them to other locations. Left-clicking an item on the Start screen will start that App. Right-clicking an item will provide the ability to "unpin" the item from the Start screen.

The Taskbar is the last item on the Personalize screen and is the bar at the bottom of the Windows display. It shows Apps that have been pinned to the Taskbar along with notification from Windows, Apps, or certain hardware such as the network you are connected to (and the amount of charge in your battery, if you are on a Laptop). The Taskbar can be personalized by selecting "Taskbar" and then setting the slide switches to on or off, based on your need for that specific feature. You can even move the Taskbar to the top or a side by selecting "Taskbar location on screen" and then choosing the desired location. "How do I customize Taskbars?" gives a good amount of helpful information for customizing the taskbar. The Notification area (at the right-hand end of the taskbar) can also be personalized by selecting "Select which Notification Icons appear on the taskbar." This will provide a screen of Apps, the Icons of which could appear on the Taskbar. Each one can be turned on or off, depending on your need for this notification. You can also "Turn system Icons On or Off." This selection will provide a list of system Icons along with on/off slide switches. The Clock, Volume, Network, Location, and Action center are system notification you might want to turn on, if they are not on already.

Personalization provides the ability to customize the way some very basic screens look and operate. The choices you make will make your computer look a little different from other computers and give it your particular customized look.

Dan's Desk
Smart Homes
By Dan Douglas, President, Space Coast PCUG, FL
March 2019 issue, The Space Coast PC Journal
www.scpcug.org / datadan (at) msn.com

I'm pretty sure that almost all of you have heard about having a 'Smart Home' and may be wondering what that's all about. This month I'll take a look at what that means and some of the issues to watch out for.

The most common starting point for setting up a smart home is to select a hub or main control point/device. There are thousands of smart lights, digital locks, security cameras, thermostats, and more, but if you want to control them all from a single verbal or screen interface, then you're going to need a smart home hub.

The Amazon Alexa, or an Echo as it was originally called back in November 2014 when it launched, was one of the first on that market that really took off. That was followed a couple of years ago by the Google Home hub (11/2016) and the Apple HomePod (1/2018). There are several others on the market such as the well rated Samsung Smartthings and the Hubitat Elevation hub, but I'll concentrate on the Amazon products since those are the ones that I'm most familiar with.

Alexa comes in basically three styles from Amazon: the original Echo model which is about a 10 inch high 4 inch diameter cylindrical speaker with a light and microphone on the top; next came the Dot which was like a hockey puck in size with a much smaller speaker followed by the Show which was the first to offer a LCD screen to display information in addition to the ability to talk, which is a common feature across all models. You setup the device by connecting it to your Wi-Fi network through a smartphone app, and then selecting various capabilities or 'skills' through the app which programs the Alexa device. The Alexa device can be set to respond to a key word, which must be Echo, Alexa or Computer, such as 'Alexa, what is the weather forecast in Orlando?'

Through the skills settings for the device, you can program it to be aware of and to control all of the other smart items in your house. In my house for example, I can tell Alexa to adjust the thermostat setting, show me who is at the front door, turn the outside lights on or off, turn the sprinklers on/off and control the volume on the TV. Many users have newer versions of TVs, cable or satellite boxes, channel streaming boxes like a Roku or Amazon Fire TV, pool pumps/heaters, robot vacuums, and garage door openers to mention just a few, that can all be controlled through the hub. At Christmas time, I wired the outside holiday lights to a Wi-Fi enabled extension cord that I used to control when the lights came on or off. The possibilities are really endless with the capability of controlling virtually every household appliance, gadget and other things that you may want to turn on or off today, not in the far future.

Now the reason that I wanted to write about this is because of what happened to my smart house when we experienced a lightning strike outside the house. A surge went through the internet cable running to my house and fried part of the circuitry in my cable modem. I have the

modem connected to my own Wi-Fi router through a wired LAN cable, which is very common practice in a lot of homes today. My router could no longer connect to the internet, so all of the devices programmed to link through my Wi-Fi network could no longer communicate. The Wi-Fi in the cable modem itself still worked so I was able to switch my PCs over to it without any issues. However, Alexa, and all of the devices that it was linked to, could no longer be controlled. Of course, most devices have a manual mode of operation, so I could still adjust the temperature, and watch TV, etc. I could have spent time to reprogram Alexa and every device to use the weaker cable modem Wi-Fi, but it was a lot simpler to just wait for the next day when Spectrum came out and replaced the faulty pieces, so my main Wi-Fi router could resume normal operations. It was amazing to see how easily we had adjusted to the smart home automation capabilities and how we had to think about what to do for certain functions that were now automated.

Our Web Master, Curt Postic has a great deal of experience programming Alexa to do more than I do, such as making phone calls through his Alexa, so take a look at his monthly web master reports for the latest advancements in this ever-evolving Smart Home saga!

Phishing Expeditions
By Dorothy Fitch, Editor, Green Valley Resort Computer Club, AZ
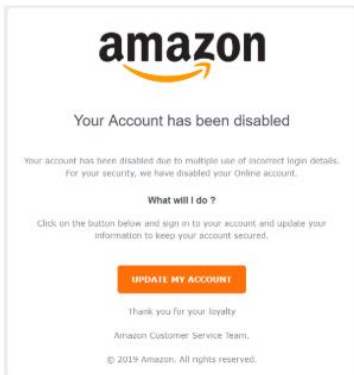**April-August 2019 issue, Green Bytes**
www.ccgvaz.org / newsletter (at) ccgvaz.org

February's Green Bytes included an article about "Phishing" (click here to read it).

A "phishing" email is one that attempts to obtain your personal account information to use for unauthorized purposes. When I included that article in Green Bytes, I hadn't personally received a phishing email. But this month I did -- twice! Both appeared to be from familiar companies (Amazon and American Express), but there were several clues that they were attempts at phishing. Here is how I knew.

1. Both messages came to an email address I use for a non-profit organization. I know that the email address these messages came to have never had an account or been associated in any way with either Amazon or American Express.

2. Both messages looked as though they had come from the named company. The logo and color schemes were appropriate. They both were similar in that they said that my account had been disabled or locked. They both wanted me to update or confirm my account information. (No way was I going to do that!)

You can safely click the images below to enlarge them. They won't take you to a website.

amazon

Your Account has been disabled

Your account has been disabled due to multiple use of incorrect login details. For your security, we have disabled your Online account.

What will I do ?

Click on the button below and sign in to your account and update your information to keep your account secured.

UPDATE MY ACCOUNT

Thank you for your loyalty.

Amazon Customer Service Team.

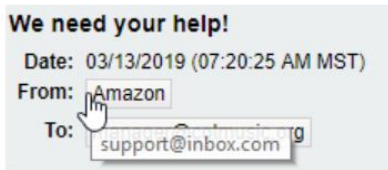© 2019 Amazon. All rights reserved.

AMERICAN EXPRESS

This is a notification that you won't be able to use your account until you confirm your information. We've taken this step to ensure the security of your account.

To unlock your account, simply follow the link below and you'll be taken to the American Express validation page.

https://www.americanexpress.com/verify/index.jsp?=

Thank you for your loyalty,

American Express.

3. Then I looked at the email address of the sender.

We need your help!

Date: 03/13/2019 (07:20:25 AM MST)

From: Amazon

To: support@inbox.com

▽ URGENT: As a security measure we've locked your Account

From: American Express

Date: day, 06:24:36 PM MST

To: support313526X@true.com

The Amazon email was sent from support@inbox.com.
The American Express email was sent from support313526X@true.com.
Neither of these email addresses appeared to have any connection to the companies they were supposedly from.

4. I looked at the link in the email from American Express (but I didn't click it!).
If you hover your mouse pointer over a link, you can see before you click where it will take you. Just look at the lower left of your computer screen to see the link information.

The link in the American Express link was this (note the letters amx in the link):

Although I didn't click on the link, I was brave [stupid?] enough to go to www.ahmetcaglar.com to see what was there (so you don't have to do it!). When I got there, Google suggested that it translate the website into English (it was in Turkish), so I did.

What did I find there? The bio of a Turkish computer science student! He used his name for his website. I guess he doesn't care about keeping under the radar. Perhaps he was just experimenting with a concept without any intention of causing harm, but we'll never know....

I found it very interesting to take a closer look at these phishing emails. The lessons for everyone are:
- Look at the sender's email address. Does it seem to really be from the individual or company you expect?
- Don't click on any links, if you aren't 100% sure who the email came from.

- Absolutely do not give out any account information to anyone who contacts you.
- If you want to verify if an email is for real, call the company; don't reply to the email. You can probably see if your account has been locked by going directly to the company's website, the way you normally would, and see if all is well.

BACK TO BASICS
Great Entertainment from Planet Coaster
By Jim Cerny, Forum Leader,
Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL
April 2019 issue, The STUG Monitor
www.thestug.org / jimcerny123 (at) gmail.com

Games and entertainment are big uses for a computer. Recently, I found in my browsing a game called "Planet Coaster" where I have enjoyed watching videos of roller coasters, parks, rides, and more all created by others who have been enjoying the tremendous creativity possible with this game. You do not have to buy the game to enjoy it – I do not own it myself yet, but I am planning on it. You can experience the creative results of other builders who have let their imaginations go wild just by viewing videos of their creations.

Perhaps you remember the "Roller Coaster Tycoon" game? Well, welcome to the latest imaging technology which now makes Roller Coaster Tycoon look like a pencil drawing by a kindergartener.

Do a Google search on "Planet Coaster" and watch some videos and see what you think. Everything you see – buildings, rides, terrain, water, etc. – is all created in this game following player commands. It is much more than just creating a great coaster; it is the total immersion in the environment you create. There are videos of complete parks with rides and different themes, day and night, and even fireworks displays! What makes this even more amazing is that players are free to share their creations with other players. So, if you like a ride, you can use it in your park – and make any modifications you like.

The night scenes of the parks are really spectacular, with lights, flames, and more. The videos you watch put you IN the ride from a wide selection of "views." It is very impressive.

Viewing these videos makes me admire the talent and creativity of others and I am sure you will enjoy watching them as well. Don't get sick riding the coasters!

Tom's Tech-Notes
Windows 10 May Update - Coming Soon to Your PC
By Tom Burt, Vice President,
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV
April 2019 issue, Gigabyte Gazette
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The technical pundits are in full rhapsody over the upcoming release of the "first-half" 2019 releasee of Windows 10. The official version number is V1903. Most of our Windows 10 Home users will get this release when Microsoft decides to push it out to their PCs via Windows Update. That will likely be sometime in April, possibly early May, especially for newer PCs.

As in the past, once it's available, if you just can't wait to get V1903, you can download and run the latest Windows Media Creation tool to update your Windows 10 PC or create installation media.

Chris Hoffman of **How-To-Geek** writes that Windows 10 will no longer automatically install those big feature updates every six months. Home users can pause smaller updates, too. In fact, Windows will even let you pause updates after checking for them! http://bit.ly/2VvDJMh

Ed Bott of **ZD-Net.com** has written an excellent article summarizing all of the important new features of the V1903 update, including screen shots and brief descriptions. You can read Ed's article at: https://zd.net/2uUPSP9

Mauro Huculak at **PureInfotech** has also written a comprehensive, illustrated review of V1903 new features at: http://bit.ly/2G2RHOU

I won't try to duplicate what Ed or Mauro have written, but I'll mention a few of the new features. Many of these new "features" are enhancements to the Settings interface to reduce lingering dependence on the old "Desktop Control Panel."

- The Start panel, by default, now has fewer tiles and has automatically grouped some into folders. This affords a less cluttered view and more room for adding your own tiles.
- The Windows Search has been nicely enhanced and also decoupled from Cortana. You can now use icons at the top of the search window to filter the scope of the search.
- Windows Hello (biometric sign-in) has been cleaned up and enhanced. To use this, your PC needs a camera or a USB security key. Laptop users may find this especially useful.
- The Settings system for preferences has an updated, improved font manager / installer that makes installing new fonts an easy drag and drop action.
- The Windows Print dialog has been enhanced and cleaned up.
- The Settings > System > Storage screen has been reworked to give more useful information for each drive known to the system.

- The Snip and Sketch tool (new in Win 10 V1809) has been enhanced to take a snapshot of a specific Window as well as of the entire screen or an arbitrary rectangle on the screen.

The "Patch Tuesday" date in May is May 14. That's the earliest likely date V1903 will start being delivered to PCs. This presumes that there are no last-minute stability issues with the release. Microsoft presumably doesn't want to repeat the experience from the last update (V1809) when they had to pull the update and spend a month dealing with reliability issues.

Preparing for V1903
In anticipation of the V1903 update, I recommend that Windows 10 users make an image or clone backup of their C: drive. Use your favorite backup imaging tool: Acronis True Image, Casper, Macrium Reflect or the Windows internal backup imaging tool. You will need an external hard drive with enough space to hold the image or clone. The Computer Club's Hardware / Software Repair Lab team can help you with this if you've never done it.

I also recommend that Windows 10 users make a named Restore Point. This will allow you to easily revert your PC back to a known good state in case your PC's V1903 update runs into problems. While this is uncommon, taking precautions pre-update is good insurance.

A final recommendation is that when Windows Update indicates it is planning to deliver the update, if you are running a third-party anti-virus program (Avast, McAfee, Malware Bytes, Norton, …) you should disable the anti-virus program before the update begins installing. Many updating problems have been caused by conflicts between the third-party anti-virus program and Windows Update.

I saw a statistic recently that Windows 10 is now installed on 800 million devices. Even if this is somewhat overstated, updating such a huge number of PCs is a truly enormous undertaking. There are bound to be unforeseen hardware / software configurations that have issues with the upgrade.

Here's hoping your own upgrade experience is smooth and trouble free and that the end-result is an improved experience using Windows 10.

Smart Phone Purchase
Andrew Cummings, President,
ICON Computer Users Group. MO
March 2019 issue, The ICON
http://www.iconusersgroup.org / Andrewcummins (at) yahoo.com

Recently, my phone was "bricked" by an upgrade. Bricking is when something makes your phone unusable, usually a reference to a software change rather than physical damage. If this happens, you can try to reset your phone to factory settings. When this didn't work, I sent my phone in for a warranty repair and eventually received it back, in working order.

While my phone was out for repair, I spent some time looking at new phones. The most remarkable new feature coming out are phones with foldable screens. Typically, the phone normally looks like a common phone with a normal-sized screen. But, unfold the phone and now you have a phone with a much larger screen. For now, these phones are very expensive, but in tech, all good things come down in price.

There are many new features being introduced to phones, such as cameras and fingerprint scanners hidden in the screen. These are nice, but nothing I need. Even most modestly priced phones with at least 32 GB of storage have the speed and features to satisfy most people. Given that most phones are now great for most people, with plenty of features, my top search criteria is a large screen. If you mainly want a phone for phone calls, then maybe a bigger screen isn't important to you.

If photos are important to you, look for a phone with a highly rated camera. Many new phones are now coming with multiple lenses, up to a half-dozen lenses, for different purposes. For zooming, very few phones have optical zoom lenses. Most phones just have digital zoom which simulates a zoom by expanding the image. There are some phones with optical zooms and some phones that can take zoom attachments.

If you get a phone with at least 64 GB of storage, you're getting a nice phone, feature-packed and speedy, with plenty of storage for many apps and photos. But, if there's a feature in particular that you're looking for, check for it. Some of the most expensive phones leave out features you may want, like an earphone jack.

After you get your new phone, get a couple of accessories. Cases to help protect your phone are popular. I think a small portable Bluetooth speaker is a great addition, as all phones come with such anemic speakers.

Enjoy your phone, it's far more than a phone.

There was once a young man who, in his youth, professed his desire to become a great writer.
When asked to define "Great" he said,
"I want to write stuff that the whole world will read, stuff that people will react to on a truly emotional level, stuff that will make them scream, cry, howl in pain and anger!"
He now works for Microsoft, writing error messages.

Geek Comic

Geek Comic

"No, that's not data pouring from the clouds. That's just rain. Let me explain how cloud technology works again..."

"The long winter has gotten you out of shape, dad. Your back locked up. If it was your computer, I could help you."

The Meeting that Was…March By Judy

The SCVCC's goal is to keep its members informed about what's new in technology.

In our *How long should I expect my tech stuff to last / Four signs your computer is about to die* many of us have had our devices longer than noted in the groovyPost article and Judy is the only one who has heard beeping when turning on a computer = hard drive getting ready to fail. Jerry Clarke, Long Beach Computer Club, told her that any competent tech can listen to the beeps and tell you what is happening with your computer. He told Judy to hold her phone down by the tower and turn it on so he could hear the beeps = hard drive dying..

Judy demonstrated how to work in the Incognito mode in Chrome, Fire, Edge and Avast's Safe Browser. Several members were consistently using the Safe Browser to do their banking and shopping. We also look at Duck Duck Go but really don't like the search results.

It was fun to see black & white photos being automatically turned into color photos. It's magic!

We also looked at the Windows 10 Night Light app. I recently moved the bar to a warmer hue.

How Long Should I Expect My Tech Stuff to Last

SCV Computer Club
March 2019

Signs Your Computer is About to Die

March 13, 2018

Color temperature at night

Schedule

Schedule night light

On

2019/2020 SCV CC OFFICERS

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Information Line   661.513.4612

Snail Mail   18727 Nadal Street
                      Santa Clarita, CA
                      91351

General Meeting   2nd Wednesday
                      month

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Novice   Average   Expert

Mail to: SCV CC, 18727 Nadal Street,
Canyon Country CA 91351

The SCV Computer Club (SCVCC) has been serving technology enthusiasts from novice to the professional in the Santa Clarita Valley, California since 1988.

The SCVCC is dedicated to supporting the needs of its members and to the exchange of information about computers, peripherals, services, hardware and software through meetings, its web page, and the distribution of this newsletter.

The SCVCC is a member of SCRUGS and APCUG
(Southern California Regional User Group Summit)
(Association of Personal Computer User Groups)

Annual membership Dues	$30.00
Annual Family	$54.00
Senior (55)	$27.00
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