

# DATALINE



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Editor: Judy Taylour

**Bella Vida**  
**SCV Senior Center**  
**27180 Golden Valley Road**  
**Santa Clarita 91350**  
**2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of the month**  
**6:30 – 9:00 pm**

September 9, 2019

(Video) It's been hot and dogs have many different ways to cool themselves down

(Video) We all need hug

How to read and print web pages without ads and other clutter

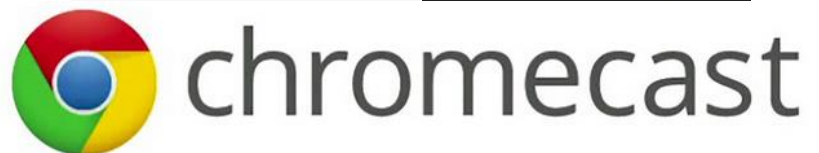
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## What's a Bitly?

### Streaming Media Devices

Mark Thomas, Lefty.tech, will be discussing the various streaming media devices that are widely available, with a focus on Roku, Fire Stick, Chrome Cast and Plex. Come see the benefits of having these devices and being able to access a fairly large amount of content through our Internet connections.



## **Bad Memories**

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We are our memories. Our personalities and identities are tied to the information stored in our brains. We are who we are due to our memories of experiences, remembered preferences and lessons learned over our lifetimes. Without our brain's ability to store and retrieve memories, we could not learn, improve ourselves or differentiate ourselves from others as individuals.

Almost everything we do has to be learned, and thus remembered in some type of memory, and there are several types used by our brains. Some things, like the beating of our hearts or breathing, may not relate to memory, as we don't have to learn these things. A lot of other physical things, from simple things like walking or picking up objects to more complex activities like riding a bike or speaking, require memory, as we must learn them, as opposed to being born with these capabilities. These are attributed to what we sometimes call "muscle memory", something we remember how to do but don't consciously have to think about. We also appear to have a "scratchpad" short term memory, which can be used to store a small number of items (5 to 9) for a short time (maybe 15 to 30 seconds). This is what we use to remember a phone number read to us; without some reinforcement the information quickly bleeds away.

In more complex learning and in remembering experiences, the mind uses short term memory and then converts some short-term memories to long term. Long term memory is usually defined as memory lasting longer than 30 seconds, although long term memory of the last few days or years is also often referred to as short term memory. In some cases, injury or disease can affect memory, especially short-term memory. General aging, Alzheimer's disease and other dementias, brain tumors, blood clots and infections around the brain, head injuries and substance abuse can all cause short term memory loss. A common situation in these cases is a person that can remember in great detail events and people from 20 years in their past but is unable to remember recent events or people known for a short time.

Amnesia is a form of memory loss where the subject retains their identity and basic motor skills such as walking and speech but loses some memories or the ability to form new memories. One very common type is infantile amnesia, in which you cannot remember the first three to five years of life. In retrograde amnesia, you lose previously created memories, typically starting with most recent ones. Diseases like Alzheimer's gradually cause this type of amnesia. With anterograde amnesia, new memories cannot be formed. This can be a temporary condition, as in a black-out from excessive alcohol consumption, or permanent, when due to a brain injury. The 2000 movie "Memento" portrays anterograde amnesia.

A good friend recently told me about an incident he had not long-ago involving memory loss. He went to the gym after work one day as he was in the habit of doing, but he does not remember what he did there on that visit. His wife was called to the gym by the manager, out of concern that something was wrong with my friend. The manager said my friend was looking for his gym bag and had repeatedly asked for the manager. He

had asked for the manager's name several times during their interaction, even though the manager told it to him each time. Concerned that he'd had a stroke, my friend's wife took him to the emergency room, where after extensive testing it was found he had experienced TGA, or transient global amnesia. For about an hour and a half, my friend's brain made no short-term memories. Although he could otherwise function and knew where he was, he could not remember anything of his time at the gym or why he was there and was confused by it. He could remember his past and recognized his wife, but still has no recollection of events at the gym that day. It is not known what causes TGA, though it seldom results in a repeat incident.

I've since learned that another friend's wife had a TGA incident about 20 years ago. Hearing about these incidents and the stories my sister has told about her mother-in-law's Alzheimer's makes me wish there were some way to back up our human memories. I guess the closest we can get to that now is to take lots of photos and videos of our lives.

Computers and other tech devices also rely on memories to function, and there are a number of parallels to humans in the way memories are used and the problems they have. There are different types of electronic digital memories, and they are used in computers in different ways.

The two main types of digital memory are volatile, which retain their information only as long as power is applied to them, and non-volatile, which retain their information even without power. Volatile memories include both types of RAM (random access memory): static (SRAM) and dynamic (DRAM). Non-volatile memories include Flash memory (USB Flash drives and solid-state drives or SSDs), magnetic hard drives, floppy disks and optical discs. Memory is located in many places in most computing devices, including small blocks of high-speed cache RAM inside the microprocessor component, fast DRAM modules for main memory, SSD modules or magnetic hard drives for main OS / program / data storage and peripheral removable storage (USB, floppy and optical discs).

Just as with humans, computers and tech devices without memories cannot function. It is the information stored as operating systems, apps and data in our tech devices that give them their "personalities" and capabilities. A computer or smart phone with blank memory devices is just an empty, inert shell.

Memory failures can cause big problems for computers, as they do for humans. An unreliable main memory DRAM module can result in errant program operation and computer crashes. SSD or hard drive failures can mean data loss, programs that won't load and OS crashes.

Our electronic digital memories give us two advantages over our human memories - the ability to easily replace faulty components and the ability to back up our data, so faulty components don't result in a serious loss. Important data in non-volatile memory devices should be backed up or copied to other devices, so that a failure of the original device can be easily corrected by replacing the device and restoring the data from the back-up copy. Bad volatile memories like DRAM modules can easily be replaced so computing can resume.

I got my first camera in grade school and have always enjoyed taking photos. I have taken quite a few over the years, and the quantity increased greatly once I got a digital camera and no longer had to worry about the cost in film and developing each shot represented. I now take thousands of digital photos and hours of digital video each year. It does provide that additional assist to my memory when I want to know when an event occurred, as I can check the date stamped on my slides or photo prints or the time/date stamp in my photo jpeg files.

Having digital photo files is great, as they don't degrade and can be backed up, but over the years the file size of photos has greatly increased. My first digital camera was just 1 Megapixel, and the photo files were only about 100 KB each. My latest camera takes 18 Megapixel photos, resulting in 10 MB files each. Such large files make great photos, but they have become difficult to share, at least in their full-size form. These files are really too big to email as an attachment, and while I have often put them up on a file sharing site to allow others to download, some folks I send them to have problems getting them. Even for those tech savvy recipients, downloading 30 GB of data can be a pain.

My son was recently married, and I took a number of photos and videos of the event and days surrounding it that I wanted to share with relatives. I wound up with about 20 GB of data to share. Since this was a one-time event with files going to only about eight recipients, some of which were out of state, I decided the best way to share was to copy the files to relatively inexpensive USB flash memory devices and give them out in person or mail them.

All I needed was about ten 32 GB Flash drives, which could be had for around \$8 each. I had previously bought some loose Patriot 32 GB drives from Amazon; these came in a cardboard envelope. I needed more, so I also bought some from Fry's Electronics; I got 32 GB individually packaged Samsung drives for about the same price on sale.

Our group's board meeting was just a few days after I bought the Fry's drives, and so I told the board about my need for USB Flash drives and the purchases I'd made. Our vice president then warned me about buying Flash drives online, as the quality can sometimes be poor. He claimed that parts that fail manufacturing tests can be intercepted from the dumpsters and sold online as "good" drives. I thought that unlikely from Amazon, but I soon found our VP's warning to be credible.

A few days after the board meeting, I started copying the files onto the USB Flash drives. I had used some of the Amazon drives and had only one left, and so started with it. During the copy process, however, it stopped and said the drive was full. I was only copying 20 GB onto a 32 GB drive, yet it had stopped with only about 4 GB put onto the drive. Windows File Explorer indicated the drive was 32 GB in size, but with only 4 GB on it, it said it had 27 GB of used space and 4 GB free. Something was definitely wrong with this drive. I recalled no problems with the others I'd bought in this Amazon batch, but also recalled that I had only put no more than 2-3 GB on any of them before giving them out.



*Bad Drive*



*Good Drive*

I pulled out my Fry's drives and all worked fine with the full 20 GB of files. I considered that it was possible that my Amazon drives could have been "counterfeits" pulled from the manufacturer's dumpsters and resold; after all, they came in unconventional (meaning no) packaging. The Fry's drives were shrink-wrapped onto cardboard holders, and so were more likely to have gone through the manufacturer's full process.

It is unfortunate that the Fry's drives are sold with additional packaging that winds up in the landfill, but it may be an additional indicator of an authentic, fully functional product.

### **The Internet is My Cookbook - Searching for Recipes**

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An oft-spoken motto around Casa de Burt is "Fight Boring Food." Most nights we stay home and cook, as this gives better portion and ingredient control. We enjoy ethnic food – especially Indian and Thai, though our repertoire includes all cuisines. Another challenge is coming up with recipes that work well for two. Often, we plan for a second meal as a way to get double duty from the original preparation.

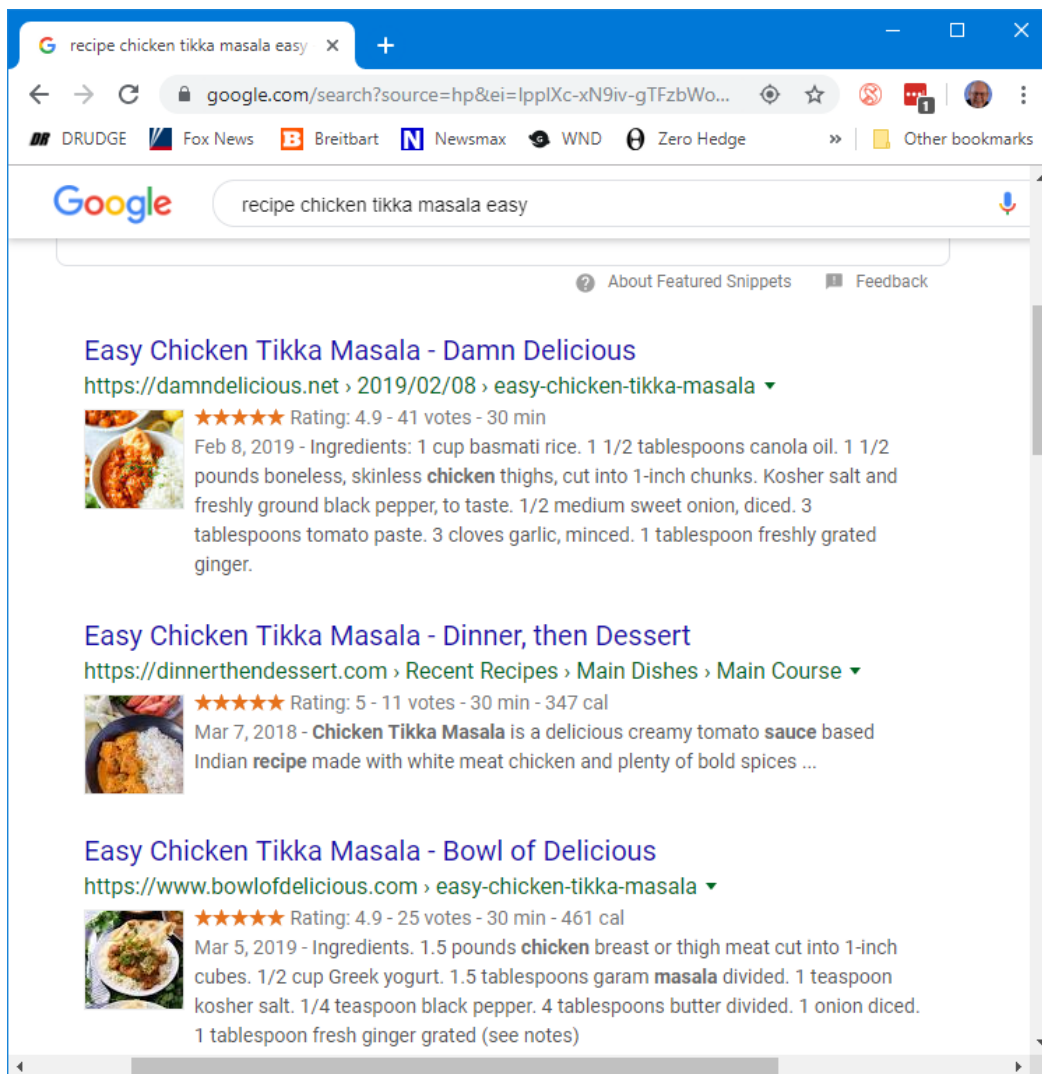
As part of the menu planning process, we sit down mid-week, after the supermarket flyers have arrived, along with an inventory of what's in the freezer and refrigerator. We then figure out the dinner plan for the following week. Each dinner typically includes a protein, a starch and a vegetable or salad and some fruit. Once we have a general plan, the challenge is to decide how a given meal will be cooked. The goal is to have lots of variety while keeping cost and effort low.

For example, we might decide to have chicken one evening. Will it be boneless-skinless breasts or thighs or a whole roast chicken or do we boil a chicken to make soup or we do cut up the chicken and do it oven fried or perhaps a pan fricassee? Another night it might be beef - steak, pot roast, braised brisket, fajitas, carne asada, roast prime rib, sweet and sour? And so on. The choice of prep for the protein in turn drives the choice of starch – rice, potatoes, egg noodles, pasta, bread and so on – as well as the choice of veggies or salad.

Often, especially for a preparation we haven't done for a while, I like to fire up my favorite web search engine and get an idea of how a particular dish is prepared. Usually I'll look over a dozen or so recipes to get a sense of what ingredients are fundamental to the dish, cooking time and temperature and any special techniques. Most dishes also involve a sauce or gravy. Once I know what it will take to make the dish, I note any unusual ingredients (e.g. fresh ginger, cilantro, coconut milk, scallions, tortillas) on the shopping list.

Now that I've got you salivating, let's look at a couple of real-world examples.

All recipe searches should start with RECIPE followed by your protein (or perhaps veggie), followed by the preparation. For example: RECIPE CHICKEN TIKKA MASALA EASY. Adding the qualifier EASY to your search homes in on recipes that don't have a lot of complex ingredients or preparation. Chicken Tikka Masala is actually a dish made popular in Britain, using Indian spices, chicken, tomato sauce and plain yoghurt. My search on Google turned up 3,260,000 hits – a few too many to read. But the top 10 or so provide all the essential information.



The screenshot shows a Google search for "recipe chicken tikka masala easy". The search results are as follows:

- Easy Chicken Tikka Masala - Damn Delicious**  
Source: <https://damndelicious.net> › 2019/02/08 › easy-chicken-tikka-masala  
Rating: ★★★★★ (4.9 - 41 votes - 30 min)  
Feb 8, 2019 - Ingredients: 1 cup basmati rice. 1 1/2 tablespoons canola oil. 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless **chicken** thighs, cut into 1-inch chunks. Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste. 1/2 medium sweet onion, diced. 3 tablespoons tomato paste. 3 cloves garlic, minced. 1 tablespoon freshly grated ginger.
- Easy Chicken Tikka Masala - Dinner, then Dessert**  
Source: <https://dinnerthendessert.com> › Recent Recipes › Main Dishes › Main Course  
Rating: ★★★★★ (5 - 11 votes - 30 min - 347 cal)  
Mar 7, 2018 - **Chicken Tikka Masala** is a delicious creamy tomato **sauce** based Indian **recipe** made with white meat chicken and plenty of bold spices ...
- Easy Chicken Tikka Masala - Bowl of Delicious**  
Source: <https://www.bowlofdelicious.com> › easy-chicken-tikka-masala  
Rating: ★★★★★ (4.9 - 25 votes - 30 min - 461 cal)  
Mar 5, 2019 - Ingredients. 1.5 pounds **chicken** breast or thigh meat cut into 1-inch cubes. 1/2 cup Greek yogurt. 1.5 tablespoons garam **masala** divided. 1 teaspoon kosher salt. 1/4 teaspoon black pepper. 4 tablespoons butter divided. 1 onion diced. 1 tablespoon fresh ginger grated (see notes)



Many of the resulting recipes have star ratings that help you home in on ones that produce the best results. Clicking on a link takes you to the website where the details of the recipe – ingredients and preparation steps are detailed. Many of the recipes also have calculators to let you adjust the ingredients to the number of portions you want to make. Many also have lots of photos or even videos to help less experienced would-be chefs to understand the preparation.

## **Interesting Internet Finds – September**

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*While going through the more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members. The following are some items I found interesting during the month of July 2019.*

### **The Dumbest USB Gadgets You Can Buy**

<https://www.reviewgeek.com/5774/the-dumbest-usb-gadgets-you-can-buy/>

This is not the kind of thing I usually share, but I just couldn't believe some of the things shown. Also, if they are for sale, I assume someone is dumb enough to buy one (not you or me, of course).

### **Gmail For Mobile: Disable Conversation View?**

<https://www.askdaveytaylor.com/gmail-for-mobile-android-disable-conversation-view/>

Did you know that you can disable conversation view on your mobile (Android only for now)? Dave explains what conversation view actually is, and how to disable it in Android Gmail.

### **How to Use Windows 10 Quick Assist**

<https://davescomputertips.com/how-to-use-quick-assist/>

Has someone asked you for help with their computer? Use Quick Assist.

### **What is Android Bootloader? A Complete Guide**

<https://joyofandroid.com/android-bootloader/>

For those of you who like to know the inner workings of Android, this is a good guide to the bootloader.

### **OneDrive tips and tricks: How to master Microsoft's free cloud storage**

<https://www.zdnet.com/article/onedrive-tips-and-tricks-how-to-master-microsofts-free-cloud-storage/>

This is a great read for anyone who uses Microsoft OneDrive, especially for those who are using an Office 365 Home or Personal subscription.

## When 2FA Goes Bad

[https://askbobrankin.com/when\\_2fa\\_goes\\_bad.html](https://askbobrankin.com/when_2fa_goes_bad.html)

Yes, I know that everyone says you should be using two factor authorization on all your accounts that support it even if SMS messaging is the only option. But, I think you also need to be aware of what can go wrong. Bob Rankin talks about what happened recently to Reddit.

## How to Install Minimal Ubuntu on Your Old PC

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/install-a-minimal-ubuntu-on-old-laptop/>

I recently had a friend ask what he should do with an old x386 laptop with only 2GB of RAM. I told him he should put Linux on it. He did install Ubuntu on it and got everything running with only minor problems. If you have an old PC and want to try installing Ubuntu on it, check out this post. (Note: Other Linux distributions should work in a similar way. I have used both Ubuntu and Mint myself.)

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## Smart Devices in the home – With voice control

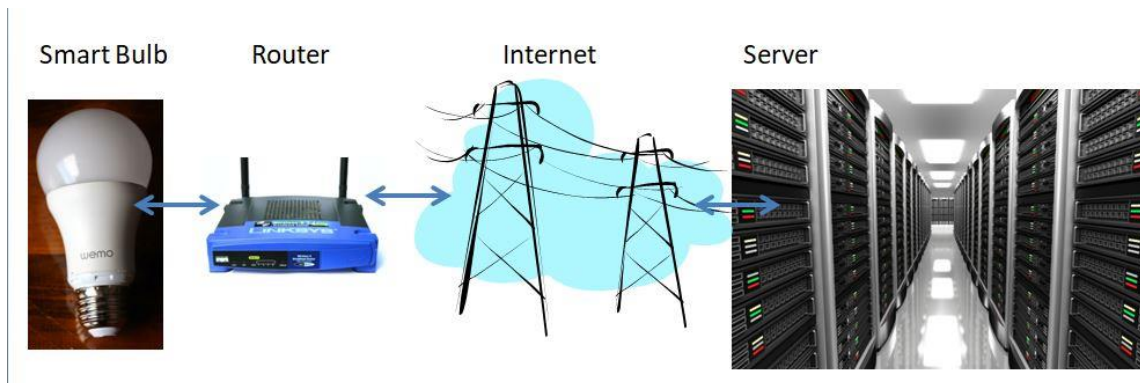
**Author: Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer,  
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September 2019**

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There are a whole host of smart devices available for use in the home now. Some of the most basic and least expensive ones are smart bulbs, smart plugs and smart cameras. (Yes, I know cameras can be expensive, but there are some fairly inexpensive indoor-only cameras.) First of all, what makes these devices smart? Well as I have alluded to in previous articles, it's all about Client – Server technology. The devices have some limited intelligence in them. Read “intelligence” as basic processing power, downloadable firmware, and wi-fi electronics. This allows them to be able to communicate with a local wi-fi router, which in turn allows them to access the internet. Once they can access the internet, they can take advantage of the servers on the internet (sometimes referred to as “in the cloud”). The intelligence in the accessed server is where all the magic happens. Here read “intelligence” as very fast, very powerful, server computers capable of handling millions of requests for service per second. So it's the combination of the smart device, the internet, and the server that really makes the smart device: smart.





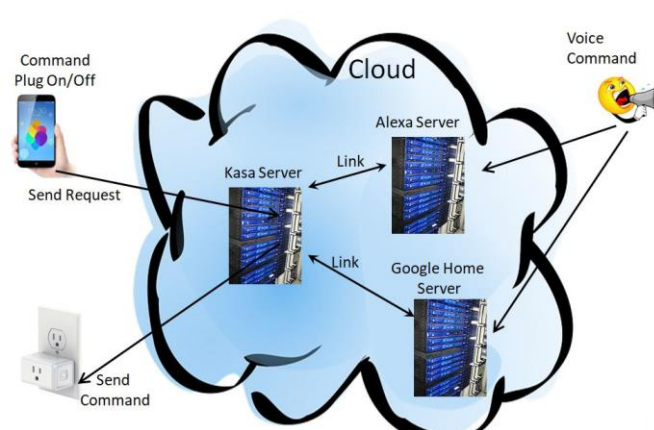
Once you have your smart device ready for installation, it is the App on your smartphone that takes over and steps you through the installation process. (Yes, a smartphone is required for the installation, either Android or Apple.) The App that you will use for installation will be the App from the specific smart device manufacturer. So for example, if you have a TP-Link smart bulb, you would have to get the TP-Link App for your smartphone. In this example that would be the “Kasa” App. Similarly, if you have a Wyze smart bulb you would use the Wyze App for the installation. These Apps are free and are intended to work with the servers from the specific manufacturer. (So just as an aside, think about this. If the company that operates the server, the smart device manufacturer, goes under and the server goes away, your smart device will no longer be smart. The bulb may not even be able to be turned on if there is no server to command it to turn on.)

The installation process is usually pretty easy; after all, it’s the App that is doing all the work. The first thing you have to do is get the device ready for installation. The App will usually start this by having you select something like “add a device”, or “add a product”, or maybe you just have to select the “+” on the screen (as found on the Kasa App) to add a device. You will have to let the App know what type of device you are adding. This is usually done by just selecting the device type from a list of device types manufactured by that specific manufacturer. Once the device type is selected, you are ready to go into the setup mode. The App will give you instructions for getting the device into the “Setup” mode. On a smart plug with a push-button switch it is really easy because pushing the button as directed by the App will get the smart plug ready for installation. With a smart bulb, usually you quickly turn the power on and off maybe three times and the smart bulb goes into the Setup mode. You will know the device is in setup mode when whatever you were watching changes. With a smart bulb, the light may start to pulsate slowly, with a smart plug, the small light on it may blink or change color. Once the device is in the setup mode, it will need to know the name of your wi-fi network and the password for that network. (Note: some devices only support 2.4 GHz networks only; not 5 GHz networks.) You may have to use your “Settings App” on the smartphone during the setup; just follow the directions from the App. Once you enter the wi-fi network name and the network password you may see a timer count down for a few seconds till the installation is complete. Finally you will be asked to name the smart device; something like “desk light” or “bedroom plug.” (Keep in mind that each manufacturer’s App will be a little different, this is just a general example.) The installation may seem complex but after you have done it once or twice it will

probably become automatic. However, you might want to keep those instructions that you get with the device in a safe, convenient, place because you might have to go through the whole process again. (Before I lose the instructions, I scan them into a file and place the file in a “Home Automation” folder so I can review the directions when I have to do another installation. This was recently necessary when I changed my router and the new wi-fi network had a new name and new password. This forced me to reinstall every device that used the house wi-fi. At the time, I had 7 smart devices that had to be reinstalled.) So now with the smart device installed you can control it from your smartphone App. Typically, you can turn it on and off and maybe even set up a schedule.

Once the device is installed and working, it’s time to move on to voice control. Voice control is supported by Amazon’s Alexa and Google’s Google Home. You can use either of these or both. Amazon calls the link between Alexa and smart devices “skills”. Google Home refers to them as links. In either case you need to have the

appropriate App on your smartphone; the “Amazon Alexa” App for Alexa, and the “Home” App for Google Home. Again, the Apps are free and available for Android and Apple. Once you have the appropriate App, you just have to follow the instructions to link your smart device. Typically you will have to select the type of device and the device manufacturer. On Alexa this is started by selecting the “+” on the “Devices” screen and then selecting “Add device”, and then the type of device, and then selecting the manufacturer of your device from a list of manufacturers. To make sure you are linking “your Alexa” to “your smart device”, the App will require the Username and Password for the manufacturer of your smart device. (So, as a general rule, make sure you know the Usernames and Passwords for all of the manufacturers of the smart devices that you use.) Once you have authenticated yourself with your Username and Password, a link will be made between the Alexa server and the smart device manufacturer’s server. And now you can control the smart device, at least to the extent that the skills allow, by voice control. Now enjoy the feeling of power.



## Making Your Tech “Fit” – Does Size Matter?

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Q2 2019 issue, Tech Notes  
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Last quarter we talked about tech and eyes. This quarter we will talk about something that can be related ... **Does size matter?**

A few principles:

**Keyboards** -- “full size” addresses the width of keys but not the angle of the keyboard, height of the keys, pressure that is required to depress keys, or the optional keys and support for their programming.

“Ergometric keyboards” that force you to hold your elbows away from your body are “healthier”, in large part, because they force you to take breaks from typing. Keyboards with many curves do the same – and breaks are important.

**Mouse** -- If a mouse is too small it will stress your hand and wrist. It will also make it harder to relax while using the wheel for scrolling.

If you need to save money on one of these devices, save on the keyboard and spend on a mouse that fits.

Now for the more complicated size question – **the monitor.**

First, monitor size is both the physical size of the screen and the size of the items on the desktop (the screen with its icons, etc. is called the desktop).

Many writers say, “get as big a monitor as you can afford.” While this may work for the newer high-end televisions, it is possible to overload the optical sensors at the distance we use for computer monitors.

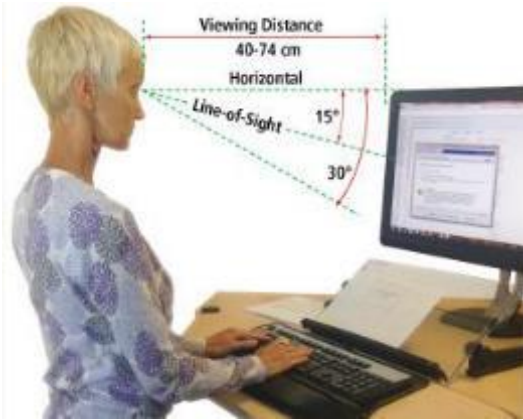
Monitor size is measured diagonally.

Approximate sizes on your desk are shown below.

Screen Diagonal	Screen Width	Screen Height
22"	19.2"	10.8"
26"	22.7"	12.7"
32"	27.9"	15.7"
37"	32.2"	18.1"
40"	34.9"	19.6"



OSHA (US Occupational Safety and Health Administration) suggests the following setup.



Optometrists suggest the monitor distance is 16 to 30 inches. (Mine is 29"/JT)

It is important to note that people who use bifocals / trifocals / progressive lenses will often need to look through the bottom of lenses if they do not use computer glasses so raising the monitor and setting it a bit farther back will help with neck strain.

It is important to place the monitor in a location that eliminates glare on the screen. This optimally means perpendicular to a window, but this may not always be possible. Options include modifying the natural (shades / curtains), or artificial light (sometimes this means turning on a light) when using the computer.

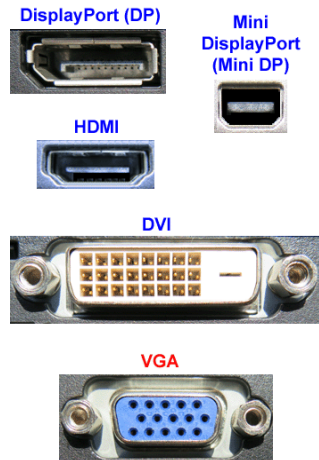
Standard resolutions (icon and font sizes) for current monitors are (many more are possible):

1280x720  
1366x768  
1600x900  
1920x1080

Generally, adjusting icon size more than 125% is not recommended unless you are using a discrete graphics card as it will cause slow response time and hanging / ghosting of images. Plan to mix changing resolution and setting icon size for best results.

It is usually possible to get a good 24" monitor for \$150 and a good 27" for between \$200 and \$250. Be sure you have a desk with space that allows you to move a monitor away from the chair before investing in a 32" monitor because of optical overload potential ... and invest in a 4K monitor if you are going that large to help avoid the pixilation that can happen on a large monitor.

If you are using a laptop, of course, sizes are different but resolution information is the same. Most laptops will allow attaching an external monitor for ease of use when sitting at a desk ... check to see what kind of connection you can make. Most laptops will use VGA or HDMI.



For all users – when replacing your monitor, futureproof your purchase by including DisplayPort or HDMI on the monitor or TV you purchase for your viewing pleasure.

Next month we will look at **Things in your hands** (mouse, stylus, pen mouse, finger, clicking, swiping, touching, and other stuff), followed by **Cords, Voice, Sound, and other hazards.**

## **Crowns and Computers**

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**July 2019 issue, The ICON Newsletter**

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Like most professions, dentistry has been deeply impacted by computer technology. Many dentists, for example, have been using digital x-rays. Several months ago in an article entitled Musings on Medicine, I discussed the advantages of using digital radiography, including quicker imaging times and decreased radiation.

Another major facet of dentistry that has been affected by computers has to do with the way dental crowns are made. A crown is a small prosthetic cap that fits over an entire tooth to restore its strength and appearance. A crown may be necessary for a variety of cosmetic and/or functional reasons. A tooth might require a crown if it is broken, racked, heavily decayed, worn, damaged in some way, or compromised by a root canal.

I had a number of crowns made back in the “old days” before the advent of computers. A tray of gooeey putty was placed over my teeth for a few minutes and then the impression was sent off to a distant lab where the permanent crown was made. In the meantime, for the next two weeks I had to endure a fragile temporary crown.

All that has changed with CEREC-3d CAD/CAM. CEREC stands for “Chairside Economical Restoration of Esthetic Ceramic Crowns.” CAD/CAM stands for ‘computer assisted design/computer assisted manufacturing.’”

CAD/CAM has been used in industry for many years, but dental CAD/CAM applications were not available until the 1980s, and CEREC technology has only become popular in the last decade.



My dentist, Mr. Jeff, DD, was one of the first dentists in Springfield to embrace this technology approximately 10 years ago. He has made several crowns for me with this technique, and it was so much easier than the old method – and much faster, too. Instead of taking two visits and two weeks to get the permanent crown, it only required about two hours total in one visit to have the new crown made and placed in my mouth.



Ceramic tooth material

Here is what is involved: The first thing my dentist does is take a picture using a dental program which allows him to make a 3D map of my teeth, including top and side views. This allows him to design the crown chairside right then and there on his computer monitor, bypassing the need for filling my mouth with goop and sending the impression off to a lab. This computer data is then



The milling machine used to make crowns using CAD/CAM technology.

transferred wirelessly to a milling instrument that carves the crown out of a block of strong nonmetallic ceramic material. A block of a harder material is chosen for back teeth because they are subjected to stronger grinding forces. The milling machine (about two feet long by one foot wide) takes up to 30 minutes to make the crown, which is then bonded into place in the patient's mouth.

This method is so precise that there is virtually no risk of damage to adjacent teeth. My crowns also have a very natural feel because they are customized to my bite. They blend in well with the rest of my teeth and look and feel natural.

Dr. Jeff estimates he has made approximately 3,000 crowns using CEREC CAD/CAM. Currently only about 20% of dentists in the Springfield area have this technology, so if you need a crown, be sure to check if it is available at your dentist's office and ask how many crowns they have made using it, since like everything else with computers there is a learning curve.

In summary, I am very lucky that my dentist is on the cutting-edge of dentistry and that he could offer me this computer-based technology. I can attest from my personal experience that it is definitely easier, faster, and more accurate than the old method of creating crowns.

### **A Birthday you might have forgotten :-)**

**Author: Art Gresham, Editor,**

**Under the Computer Hood UG, CA**

**September 2019 issue, Drive Light**

**[www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org) / [1editor101 \(at\) uchug.org](mailto:1editor101@uchug.org)**



September 19 is the birthday of something you might use every day. At the very least you are familiar with it even if you do not text, write emails, handwritten notes or communicate with other humanoids. In fact, it came into existence before there even existed text messages, the Internet, or email



Back in 1982, none of our modern digital communication methods, or even the networks that evolved, existed. On university campuses there existed something called USENET boards. USER Network message boards on which the locally connected users could carry out discussions, some scientific, some not as much.

Well... It all started on a Usenet message board on September 16, 1982 because some guy wanted to know how a drop of Mercury would react in a falling elevator. (Evidently the Physics department guys had a strange sense of humor.) After several rounds of remarks, some of them with attempts at humor, there developed a discussion about how to indicate to the readers that the message should be read as a playful joke, and not so seriously interpreted.

You can read an excellent summary of the message board conversation here:

<https://www.ttlg.com/forums/showthread.php?t=73941>

The key entry was on Sunday, September 19, 1982, by Professor Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh

*401298269,0,0*

*19-Sep-82 11:44 Scott E Fahlman*

*I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers:*

*:~)*

*Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use:*

*:~(*

These symbols, composed of normal keys used in standard text, and available on our keyboard, have long been used, albeit in simpler forms, for a very long time.

A summary discussion of the Emoticon at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon>

An entertaining version, at <https://www.kidscodecs.com/history-of-emoticons/> credits Victor Hugo with perhaps the first digitally transmitted emoticon

*in 1862, Victor Hugo sent a telegram to his publisher with a single character, ?, to ask how his new book Les Misérables was selling. The publisher, equally clever, sent a single character telegram back, !.*

So happy birthday to the smiley face Emoticon :~)

**Tech Humor One-liners** - <http://www.jokes4us.com/peoplejokes/technologyjokes.html>

Why was the computer tired when it got home? It had a "hard drive"

Why did the computer go to the dentist? Because it had Bluetooth.

Why did Jack and Jill "really" go up the hill? To get better Wi-Fi.

## Articles on a couple of the gadgets Mark Thomas is talking about at our September 9 meeting

### Tom's Tech-Notes

#### Review: The Amazon Fire Stick, a Plug-in Streaming Device for Internet TV Services

**Author: Tom Burt, Vice President, Sun City Summerlin Computer  
Club, NV**

**September 2018 issue, The Gigabyte Gazette  
[www.scsccl.com/tomburt89134@cox.net](http://www.scsccl.com/tomburt89134@cox.net)**

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### Overview

During the 2018 mid-July "Amazon Prime Day" sales, Mrs. Burt and I ordered an Amazon Fire Stick device. It was on sale for half price - \$19.99. At that price, we figured what have we got to lose? The Fire Stick device plugs into an HDMI port on your HDTV and then, after some simple setup steps, connects to the Internet via your Wi-Fi router. It turns your HDTV into a "smart" TV. It comes with all the usual apps for streaming TV services like Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, Pandora and, of course, Prime Video.



The Fire Stick regularly sells for \$39.99 at Amazon.com. You can find details and specs at: [https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00ZV9RDKK/ref=fs\\_ods\\_fs\\_smp\\_tk](https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00ZV9RDKK/ref=fs_ods_fs_smp_tk).

Included with the Fire Stick is a compact, easy-to use remote that includes a microphone that allows you to talk to Amazon's Alexa to control the Fire Stick with your voice.

This article will discuss our experience after about a month of use.

## Setting Up the Fire Stick



The package contains the Fire Stick itself, the remote, a HDMI extender cable, two AAA batteries and a power / adapter cord. The power cord has a micro USB jack on one end that plugs into the Fire Stick and a regular USB connector on the other end. The regular USB connector plugs into a USB socket on the small power adapter.

I plugged the Fire Stick into my HDTV's HDMI 2 port, using the HDMI

extender cable for better clearance. (My DirecTV receiver is connected to the TV's HDMI 1 port.) I first tried plugging the USB connector of the power cable into my Samsung HDTV's USB jack, but found that the USB jack wasn't putting out enough power. So, I used the power adapter and plugged it into a surge protector next to the HDTV.

I used my Samsung HDTV's remote to select HDMI 2 as the Input Source. That gave control of the screen to the Fire Stick.

Next, I put the two AAA batteries into the Fire Stick's remote and then let the remote find the Firestick. From there, I followed the on-screen prompts to connect the Fire Stick to my Wi-Fi router.

To use the Prime Video service, you must be an Amazon Prime subscriber and you must log in with those account credentials. For other paid services like Netflix, you need an active account and, the first time, will need to enter your account credentials for the service.

## Using the Fire Stick

Our Samsung HDTV already had "smart features", but the performance of the apps was spotty with very slow connections and frequent dropouts and pixilation. I think the TV's internal Wi-Fi components were not powerful enough to do a good job.

By contrast, the Fire Stick has been amazing – quick connections with rock solid and very clear pictures and clean, clear sound. It's Wi-Fi is 802.11ac, which my Netgear home router supports. I've had no trouble with dropped signals and we don't see any buffering.

The Fire Stick remote is easy to use with a ring in place of the four arrow keys. It's light and small enough to fit any hand comfortably. The Fire Stick is very responsive to clicks on the remote.

I've tried the remote's Alexa voice control, which is very nice for searching and works well. However, most of the time we use the navigation ring to click around. The on-

screen graphics are eye-friendly, and the navigation is easy to figure out. When I want to browse to see what's available on a service like Prime Video or Netflix, I still favor using my desktop PC because the mouse and keyboard are more efficient for navigating. When I find something of interest, I add it to my watch list for that service and then it's easy to get to on the Fire Stick.

### **Fire Stick Apps**

Unlike my Samsung TV's "smart" apps which are a limited set and don't get updated, the Fire Stick is designed to let the user decide which Apps are installed. There are hundreds to choose from, aside from those that come pre-installed on the Fire Stick. There are also many games that you can download and install. The Fire Stick has 8 GB of storage, so it's possible to have many Apps installed. The Fire Stick has a built-in web browser, but you can also install the Firefox browser. With a web browser, you can go to any website that has streaming content and watch it, even if there's no specific App for it. Here's a link to an article from FireStickTricks.com listing 38 Best Amazon Fire Stick Apps to Ditch Your Cable TV: <https://www.firesticktricks.com/amazon-fire-stick-apps.html>

### **Prime Video**

At present, since we've subscribed to the Amazon Prime service; we're also able to get the Amazon Prime Video service at no extra charge. Prime Video features many movies and TV series, but also has some great original content. Over the summer we've been re-watching all 9 seasons of the Hugh Laurie "House, MD" series and the Prime original "Bosch" series featuring Titus Welliver. The offerings get updated frequently. The streaming video quality is great, and the content is all "on demand." And, if you doze off while watching an episode, you can go back and watch it again.

### **Conclusions**

We're quite happy with the Fire Stick. I'd definitely recommend it if you don't already own an Apple TV or Roku device, which offer similar functionality. The Fire Stick is far better than the built-in "smart" features of my Samsung HDTV. As a vehicle for "cord cutting" the Fire Stick is interesting because it can access so many sources for content. Among its available Apps is one for "DirecTV Now," which is a streaming version of DirecTV that currently costs quite a bit less than the satellite version. There's also an App for Sling TV, which is another streaming service that offers a lot of "cable" channels at very low rates.

### **New Amazon Alexa Skill (Plex)**

**Author: Jeff Wilkinson, President,  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV  
July 2019 issue, Gigabyte Gazette  
[www.scsccl.com](http://www.scsccl.com) / [pres.scsccl \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:pres.scsccl@gmail.com)**



In a constant search for new things to try, I came across a new Amazon Alexa skill that I thought would be of interest to club members.

Requesting music on an Amazon Echo smart speaker or an Echo Dot, always seems to get an invitation to subscribe to more songs than I could ever listen to, for a monthly fee. Since I have a CD collection of the artists I enjoy, I've avoided signing up. The problem

is – how do I play my music collection on my Amazon Echo smart speakers? I began looking for a solution and came across an Alexa skill that makes use of my Plex (www.plex.tv) media server.

What, you ask, is a Plex media server? In my case it's an always-on Windows 10 PC that resides on my network and has multiple drives with media such as music, movies and photos. The Plex media server organizes my music, photos and movies from various locations on my network and streams them to other devices such as a television, computer or personal device or an Amazon Echo. There is a free version of the Plex Media Server app and various paid versions which offer additional features. I am using the free version of Plex Media Server in conjunction with my Playon (www.playon.tv) app to record streaming videos from free services such as Tubi, Prime Video, the Roku Channel and many paid services you may subscribe to.

You can enable the Plex skill on your Amazon Echo smart speaker by opening the Alexa app on your computer or mobile device and looking for skills on the list on the menu on the left of your screen, select and then enter Plex in the search box. With your Plex media server on your same network and configured properly you can say “Alexa, ask Plex to play (artist, song or album). I am still organizing my music collection, but I am amazed at how the Plex skill is able to locate specific songs or artists multiple folders deep. You can also add a Plex channel to your Roku device and watch movies, view photographs and play music stored on your Plex server.

While this may not be for everyone since it requires some “tweaking” it is a challenging task that let you play your music collection on your Amazon Smart speakers. Until next month ...

## tom's guide

Reviews on Roku and Chrome Cast - <https://www.tomsguide.com/us/best-streaming-players,review-2140.html>



*"I think the placement of your router may have something to do with your slow Wi-Fi speed."*



*"He used to fix roads, now he fixes computers. I guess old habits are hard to break."*



# The Meeting that Was...August

## By Judy

There is a new browser in town and it's by CCleaner. Bob Gostischa, from his home in Albuquerque, took us through this fast, private and secure browser for Windows. They know their users like to keep junk under control, stay private, and get things done fast. That's why they've built a safer browser that puts us in control of our digital footprint and stops browsing cluttering up our PC.

Dave Melton downloaded the browser to see how it worked. It worked fine but he had a problem importing his Chrome shortcuts. Bob had a couple of suggestions and his follow-up email mentioned "It's always a pleasure to do these impromptu presentations covering an Avast Software product or two. It's also nice to be able to actually demonstrate the answer to a question."

Dave uninstalled it and tried again. From Dave to Bob: "I installed the ccleaner browser on a different computer, not my laptop, and it worked just fine. I was able to import my chrome shortcuts and I was also able to make it my default browser. So the problems are related to some update or setting on my laptop."

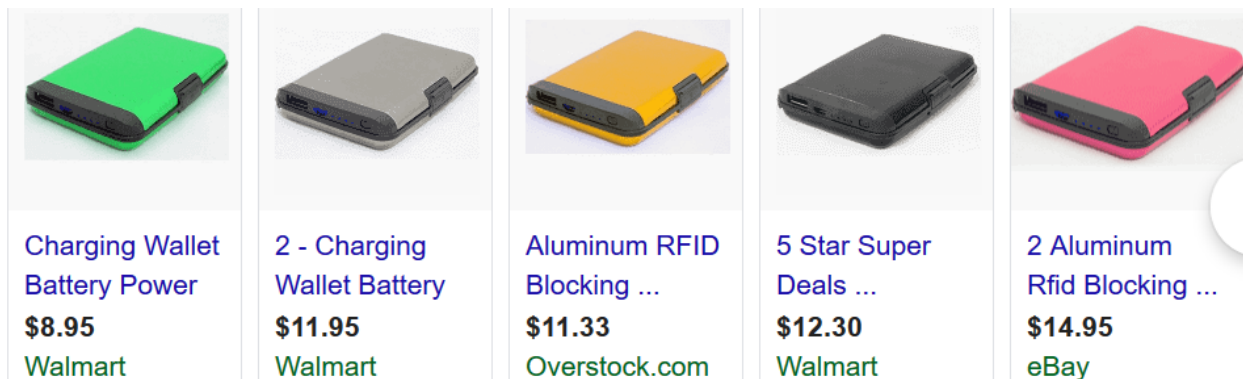
### CCleaner Browser

<https://www.ccleaner.com/docs/ccleaner-browser>

David Podsadecki uses Avast's password manager so we asked Bob if he would tell/show us a little bit about it. He said he could put together a more thorough password manager presentation so I've added the CCleaner browser and Avast's password manager to the presentations he gives to groups.

We also went through a follow-up to Ron Brown's *Saving your Life with Technology* presentation = *Your phone can save your life in an emergency*. Several members had the earthquake app on their phone as well as many included in the presentation.

Here are chargers similar to the one that Kathy Kazmer showed us.....





## 2019/2020 SCV CC OFFICERS

Judy Taylour  
scvcomputerclub(at)gmail.com

Snail Mail      18727 Nadal Street  
Santa Clarita, CA  
91351

General Meeting 1<sup>st</sup> Monday of the month  
6:30-9:00pm

Bella Vida  
27180 Golden Valley Rd.  
Santa Clarita 91350

## Membership Benefits Around Town

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**aka Mark Thomas Computer Support**  
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Newhall 91321  
661.250.7440 / Lefty (at) Lefty.Tech  
65+ = \$10 discount on Onsite support  
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### Membership Application (Please Print)

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Home Phone

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E-mail

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Areas of Interest

Level of computer skills (please circle)

Novice      Average      Expert

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



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

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