Interface

**Tuesday
January 11, 2011**

National, State
&
Local Weather

presented by

Mark McKinley, Oberlin FAA

**Tuesday
January 25, 2010**

Homeland Security Tour

Guided by

Tom Kelly

Its stated goal is to prepare for, prevent, and respond to domestic emergencies, particularly terrorism.

**Monthly Meetings Held At Gould Auditorium
2ⁿᵈ Floor, St. Joseph Community Center, Lorain, OH
5:30 PM Doors Open With Q & A Sessions
6:55 PM Meeting & Presentation Begins**

A Word From Our President

2011!! Here we come!

Lorain County Computer Users Group is smaller than it has been in years past but we have a faithful group of members and a wonderful group of officers and volunteers who welcome our many members.

I think our biggest wish for the New Year is to have more people attending our meetings!

If you haven't been to a meeting lately, check it out!! We have had some great topics this past year and we will have some really exciting programs coming in 2011!

January 11 - Wouldn't you like to hear how the Federal Aviation Administration deals with weather issues? This division operates to support the air traffic controllers in Oberlin. Learn the exciting and important weather issues and how they are handled. These are so important in keeping airplanes safe!

January 25 – Field Trip!! We will tour the Homeland Security Department facility in Elyria. Get a first hand view of where important activities and actions take place for our county.

February 8 – Crash reconstruction - Vehicular accident reconstruction is the scientific process of investigating, analyzing, and drawing conclusions about the causes and events that occurred in an automobile crash. Learn about this fascinating investigative process.

February 22 – Learn about Smart Phones! Do you have a smart phone? What is the fascination with these kinds of phones? Learn about their PC like capabilities. These are important because this is where the future of mobile computing lies.

March 8 - Are you a fan of Bones and CSI TV shows? If so, you will enjoy this program on Forensics and Computer Crime.

How cool do these sound?
We are continuing to precede our meetings with a 30 minute, short mini-lesson or Q & A. Something for everyone!

Don't miss these great programs! These are great opportunities to learn about fascinating agencies and companies and technology!

Join us to experience the sense of community that you

LCCUG Officers For 2011

Office	Name / Email
President	Sandee Ruth president@lccug.com
Vice President	Lou Koch & Carole Doerr vp-programs@lccug.com
Secretary	Don Hall secretary@lccug.com
Treasurer	Micky Knickman treasurer@lccug.com
Newsletter Editor	Pam Rihel newsletter@lccug.com
Web Page Editor	Richard Barnett webpage@lccug.com
Statutory Agent	Sandra Ruth statutory_agent@lccug.com
Director of Membership	Dennis Smith membership@lccug.com
Director of Advertising	Richard Barnett advertising@lccug.com
Director of Public Relations	Carole Doerr public_relations@lccug.com
Director of Education	Kaye Coller education@lccug.com

have with your fellow members! Come to meetings to have an opportunity to ask about your problem computer questions. Your help is there!

Remember that the club's webpage **http://lccug.com** – is your source of the upcoming meetings. Scroll to the bottom for the next ½ dozen meetings announced.

Also that is where you go to check on the status of the next meeting when it is in question. When the weather seems questionable and you wonder if we are going to hold that evening's meeting – check your email for that announcement. We will also post it on the webpage (unless it is such short notice that our webmaster can't get to his computer). But for sure you will get an email. Hopefully, we won't need to cancel any upcoming meetings.

Mark your calendars for the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month and take advantage of our superior meeting topics . We would like to see our meeting attendance increase in the coming year.

Sandee

TUESDAY
January 11, 2011

National, State & Local Weather

presented by

Mark McKinley, Oberlin FAA

This promises to be a very interesting and enlightening program in the use of computers and computer programs in predicting the weather.

How much do you know about the weather? Do you know or remember why and when we first started getting weather reports? How accurate were these original reports compared to today and how far have we come?

Have you heard of the Climate Prediction Center, Center Weather Service Units, Central Weather Advisories, Tornado, National Weather Services, and Hurricane Centers? When did the first live meteorologist show up?

Mr. McKinley will let us know the history of weather tracking and where the above centers are located in the US, how and why they are different and just what each one does. When and why were these centers originally set up? How accurate are they and far in the future is weather predicted and why?

Mark is one of four people who work in Oberlin, Ohio for the FCC working with a variety of computers checking the weather for local flights for airmets and sigmets. Any idea if airmets and sigmets are for small or large planes, scheduled and unscheduled flights? You will know by the end of his presentation.

He will discuss what kinds of web designs have and are being used to track weather. What companies are interested in long-term weather predictions around the country? Hint: What if Sears wants to have summer tent sales around the country at all of their stores? Bet they would like to have an idea what the weather might be like.

Mr. McKinley has worked on both the West and East Coasts during his career in weather. He has been in the Oberlin FCC facility for 8 years. If one would/could visit his office, no other lights are necessary beyond the multiple computer screens.

TUESDAY
January 25, 2011

Homeland Security Tour

by

Tom Kelly

Its stated goal is to prepare for, prevent, and respond to domestic emergencies, particularly terrorism.

If you miss this Club Presentation, you will have missed a very interesting program.

The tour will be at:
Lorain County Office of Emergency Management & Homeland Security

322 Gateway Blvd. North
Elyria, Ohio 44035

Directions:
Take I-90 at the Elyria Exit — Rt. 57 South Exit Ramp. Go 4 (four) traffic lights directly south.

{DO NOT FOLLOW THE SR 57 route which makes a left hand turn after the 2nd traffic light!}

As you pass through the fourth traffic light (Lake Avenue), you will see an old school building on your right. Drive past the front of the school and then turn right (west) onto School Street.

EMA is connected to the REAR of the old school.

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

NOVEMBER 30, 2010

Attending were Sandee Ruth, Carole Doerr, Don Hall, Micky Knickman, Pam Rihel, Dennis Smith, Kaye Coller and Richard Barnett.

Sandee will report to the board the results of the APCUG election when the results are available.

Carole printed additional club flyers and they were given to Richard.

Richard will be on WEOL radio at 7:35 AM promoting the Discount Computer Parts raffle benefitting the Second Harvest Food Bank. He will also put out an e-mail to members and do a write up for the newsletter.

Carole presented a motion that the club buy a laptop computer as a money making raffle item. Pam seconded, motion passed.

In an effort to increase member attendance at meetings Carole moved there be a random drawing at each meeting from the membership. The member must be present and will be awarded 5 dollars. Richard seconded, motion passed.

Carole gave hand-outs to the board explaining the CERT training program. Sandee will explain the program to the members.

Pam moved, Kaye seconded the meeting be adjourned.

General Meeting Minutes

DECEMBER 14, 2010

President Sandee Ruth called the meeting to order. A motion to accept the minutes as shown in the December issue of the INTERFACE was made by Donna Kuczyn-ski, seconded by Kaye Coller. Motion passed. She gave a rundown of upcoming presentations and tours for the next few months.

After Sandee read the slate of officers running and received no new nominations from the floor, Neil Higgins moved the slate be approved as read. Nancy Smith seconded, motion passed.

Those attending then enjoyed the fun of our annual Chinese Raffle and finger food while socializing.

John Dunn moved, Pam seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Pam Rihel **LadyGeneo@roadrunner.com**

Here are some links to online death certificate databases available for several states, etc.

Kentucky (Kentucky Vital Records Project)
http://kyvitals.com/
http://kyvitals.com/vis/search/search_death_recs.php

Michigan (Seeking Michigan/Michigan State Library) Partial
http://seekingmichigan.org/discover-collection? collection=p129401coll7

Missouri State Archives **http://www.sos.mo.gov/ archives/resources/deathcertificates/advanced.asp**

Ohio (Family Search Lab)
http://search.labs.familysearch.org/

They are in the Current Projects Family Search Beta **http://beta.familysearch.org**

It requires you to register (free registration)

Utah (Utah State Archives)
http://historyresearch.utah.gov/indexes/20842.htm

West Virginia (West Virginia Division of Culture and History)
http://www.wvculture.org/vrr/va_dcsearch.aspx or **http://http://www.wvculture.org/** (Archives and History) (Births, Deaths, and Marriages) (Deaths)

Philadelphia, PA. 1803-1915 (Family Search Lab)
http://search.labs.familysearch.org/

Shelby County, TN. (Shelby County and the Register of Deeds) (under the Archives logo change Search Type to "Death Records 1848-1956")
http://register.shelby.tn.us/

Additionally this website includes a statewide index of deaths from 1949 to 2005.

Washington State (Family Search Lab) (contains only extracted information from death certificates and no images) **http://search.labs.familysearch.org/**

Additionally Washington State, in cooperation with Microsoft Research, is digitizing many of the state's public and historic records. Eventually images of the death certificates will be available online but no date is projected.   Washington State Digital Archives - Digital Archives Home.

Social Security Death Index
http://GenealogyBank.com
This is a pay site, but you can get a trial membership.

Online Searchable Death Indexes:

http://www.deathindexes.com/

http://www.deathindexes.com/cemeteries.html

http://www.germanroots.com/deathrecords.html

http://ssdi.rootsweb.ancestry.com/

http://www.deathindexes.com/censusmortality.html

There are more sites and some are pay sites, but I believe that these sites are all free. FamilySearch.org has many records from many states already online as you can see by how many family search hyperlinks there are in this article and this is also a free website. It pays to check this website often, as LDS adds more records quite often.

Where to Write For Vital Records

http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/howto/w2w/w2welcom.htm

If you Google what you are looking for you just might get a hit. Try it!

WIN A NEW LAPTOP!

LCCUG Board members are excited to announce that our club will be sponsoring a raffle to win a brand new HP Laptop computer, starting in January. There will be only 200 tickets sold.

HP EliteBook 8440p laptop
Core i5 2.4 GHz Dual Core Intel processor
2 GB Ram
250 GB Hard Drive, Sata 7200 rpm
DVD/CD RW
14 inch screen
Nvidia graphics processor 512K
2 megapixel integrated camera
Fax/modem
SD/Multi-card reader
Intel Wireless Network Interface card
Windows 7 Professional
Includes the following software:

WinZip, HP Quick Launch Button Software, HP ProtectTools Security Manager, HP Client Manager Software (free download), HP Wireless Assistant, Synaptics Touchpad Driver, HP QuickLook 3, Microsoft Office Professional 2007 (60 days trial), McAfee Total Protection for Small Business (60 days trial), HP Webcam Software, PDF Complete Special Edition, HP SoftPaq Download Manager, HP Recovery Manager.

Please help support LCCUG by purchasing tickets. You could win an outstanding laptop computer for the mere price of a ticket. Odds of winning are 1 in 200.

Thank You,
LCCUG Board

2011 LCCUG Officers Inducted

President: Sandee Ruth
Vice Presidents: Lou Koch & Carole Doerr
Secretary: Don Hall
Treasurer: Micky Knickman
Newsletter Editor: Pam Rihel
Webpage Editor: Richard Barnett
Statutory Agent: Sandee Ruth
Director of Membership: Dennis Smith
Director of Education: Kaye Coller
Director of Advertising: Carole Doerr
Director of Public Relations: Richard Barnett

Congratulations to all the officers upon their election.

We now have a full roster of officers this year, although some are holding two offices.

The board has many new ideas for the coming year, so be sure to keep checking our LCCUG.com web page for updates and keep reading the Interface newsletter for more information about our club and classes being held in 2011.

We are always looking for new ideas, so speak up and tell us what you want to learn about. If you don't let us know we can't have programs that you are interested in.

Invite your family and friends to come and enjoy an interesting evening at the Gould Auditorium.

Everyone is welcome to come to our meetings.

The Lorain County Chapter of OGS

is having it's next meeting on :

January 10, 2011- "Caring for Your Textiles" by Nicole Hayes of the Inter-museum Conservation Association of Cleveland. She will share easy techniques for properly storing and handling heirloom fabrics such as quilts, wedding dresses, uniforms, table cloths etc. using items in your home.

Meetings are held the 2nd Monday of the month in the North Ridgeville Library on Bainbridge Rd., east off Rt. 83-just south of Rt. 20.

Meetings start at: Social time 6:30; and 7:00 PM for the program. Meetings are free and open to the public.

Come and enjoy some interesting genealogy programs.

Inserting the Template Name in Your Document

Every Word document has a template attached to it. Depending on your version of Word, this template defines things such as your menus, toolbars, macros, and styles (among other things). If you do not explicitly attach a template, then Word uses the Normal template.

The name of the template file attached to your document can be inserted into your document and updated automatically. To do this, follow these steps:

1. Position the insertion point where you want the template file name to appear.
2. Display the Field dialog box. (In Word 2007 or Word 2010 display the Insert tab of the ribbon and then choose Quick Parts | Fields from the Text group. If you are using an older version of Word, choose Field from the Insert menu.)
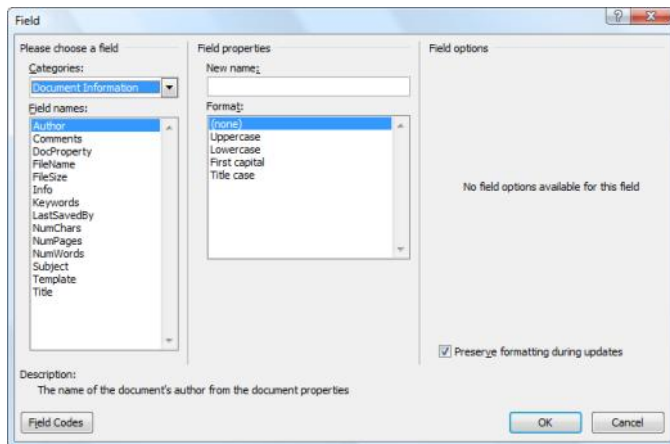
The Field dialog box.

3. In the Categories list, choose Document Information.
4. In the Field Names list choose Template.
5. Click on OK to close the dialog box and insert your field.

LCCUG Treasurer's Report

11/30	Beginning balance	$	8,546.65
	membership dues	$	200.00
	raffle & Amazon donations	$	22.38
	Refreshments for meetings	$	(120.59)
12/18	**LCCUG Certificate of Deposit**	$	5,000.00
12/18	**General Fund balance**	$	3,648.44

AutoFill with Random Numbers

Excel includes a feature that allows you to automatically fill a range of cells with information you have placed in just a few cells. For instance, you could enter the value 1 in a cell, and then 2 in the cell just beneath it. If you then select the two cells and drag the small black handle at the bottom right corner of the selection, you can fill any number of cells with incrementing numbers. This AutoFill feature sure beats having to type in all the values!

You may wonder if there is a similar way to use the AutoFill feature to place random numbers in a range. Unfortunately, the AutoFill feature was never meant for random numbers. Why? Because AutoFill uses predictive calculations to determine what to enter into a range of cells. For example, if you entered 1 into one cell and 5 into the next, highlighted the cells and then used AutoFill, the next number entered in the cell below would be 9 because Excel can deduce that the increment is 4. It is a constant increment that can be predicted.

Random numbers on the other hand are, well, random. By nature they cannot be predicted, else they wouldn't be random. Therefore the predictive nature of AutoFill cannot be applied to random numbers.

However, there are ways around this. One is to simply use the various formulas (using RAND and RANDBETWEEN) to generate random numbers. These formulas can quickly and easily be copied over a range of cells, using a variety of copying techniques.

Another approach is to use a feature of the Analysis ToolPak which makes putting random numbers into a range of cells pretty easy. Just follow these steps:

1. Choose Data Analysis from the Tools menu. If you are using Word 2007 or Word 2010, you display the Data tab of the ribbon and then click Data Analysis in the Analysis group. (If you don't see the Data Analysis option on the Tools menu or, in Word 2007 or Word 2010, you don't see the Analysis group on the Data tab of the ribbon, it means that you don't have the Analysis ToolPak enabled.) Excel displays the Data Analysis dialog box.
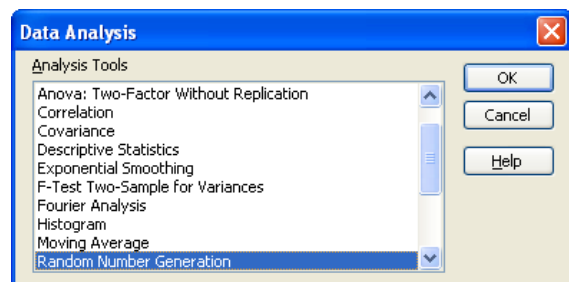
The Data Analysis dialog box.

In the list of functions in the dialog box, choose Random Number Generation.

3. Click on OK. Excel displays the Random Number Generation dialog box.
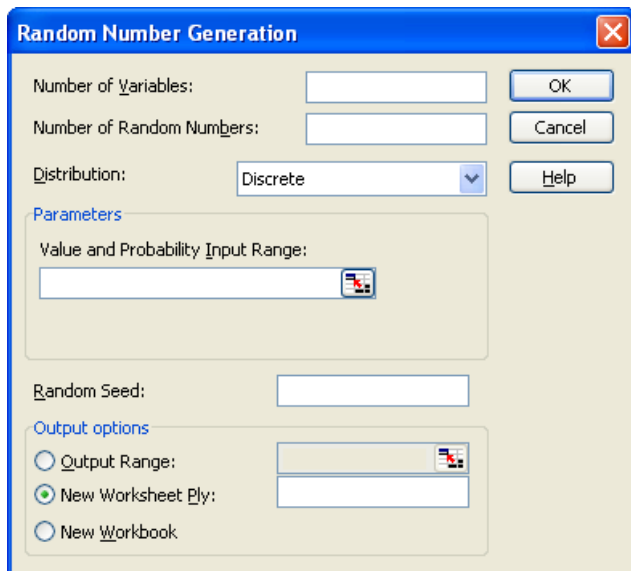
The Random Number Generation dialog box.

4. Using the controls in the dialog box, indicate the parameters you want used in generating a range of random numbers. (Make sure that you specify a range of cells in the Output Options area of the dialog box.)

5. Click on OK.
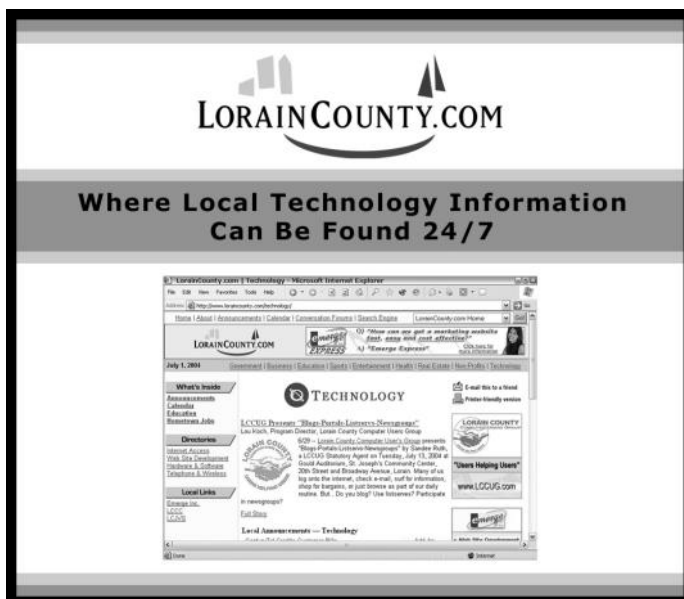
ScamBusters.org

Is It Possible To Stop Spam?
Probably not -- but you can significantly reduce it.

As pioneers to stop spam for the past 11 years, we predicted years ago that the spam problem would quickly get out of control. And, or course, it has.

Many of us get thousands of spam messages a day. In fact, ScamBusters gets many more than that. And one of our friends gets **a staggering 250,000 spam messages each day!** Yikes…

So, it's not surprising that people need relief -- they want to do whatever they can to **stop spam**.

Unfortunately, many of us now spend so much time filtering and deleting spam that our biggest concern has become that we not lose messages we really want.

Many double opt-in email newsletters are being incorrectly filtered, so recipients who sign up never know they've been sent. And even personal communication and one-on-one email is now regularly being filtered at the server level.

In fact, according to an article in *Time Magazine,* **between 40% to 70% of all email is currently getting blocked by spam filters!** That means recipients never have a chance to read it.

So, the cure has become as bad as the disease. This is especially true of some filtering solutions with overzealous criteria.

Nevertheless, this article is about how to stop spam. So, here are 7 good tips that will help you dramatically reduce the amount of spam you receive.

Using these tips and resources, **we've reduced the amount of spam we get by over 55%.**

7 Tips to Help You Reduce or Stop Spam

1.**Use a separate email address** when you post messages to any public forum, such as newsgroups and mailing lists. Never use your personal email address for this purpose -- or you'll be flooded with spam. Then, you can quickly go through the email in this account to see what's spam and what isn't. And your main personal email address won't be as clogged with spam.

For example, AOL users can set up a special user name for free, and use that for their postings. Then, they can just discontinue that account if they start to get too much spam.

2. Consider acquiring multiple email addresses for

different purposes. This helps you to identify different sources and senders, and lets you filter more effectively.

For instance, you may have one for personal use only by friends, family or colleagues that is never used to request information or to subscribe to newsletters, discussion lists, etc.

Another might be used just for sales inquiries or orders, or for making online purchases. This can be arranged through your ISP, web host or through any number of online email service providers.

Even free mail services like Yahoo! Mail and Gmail can be used for this purpose.

3. You can subscribe to services online that provide you with disposable addresses that can be deleted if they begin to attract spam messages.

You can create a unique address for each email newsletter or forum you subscribe to. Then, when an email address begins getting spam, you 'throw it away' and start using another email address.

This works because the disposable email addresses actually forward to a real email address of yours. The software lets you track which addresses are getting spam, and you can just re-subscribe using a new, spam-free address.

For information on what you need to know about disposable addresses, visit: **http://email.about.com/library/weekly/aa072002a.htm**

Our favorite company that offers disposable email accounts is Sneakemail. It even has a free trial: **http://sneakemail.com**

4. Remove your email address from your website. If you list or link to your email address, you can expect to be spammed.

Address-harvesting robots will spider your site and extract them. So remove them wherever possible and use web-based forms instead. This will drastically cut down the amount of spam you receive if you have a website.

5. NEVER buy anything from a company that spams. Don't visit their sites or ask for more information. (If you respond to their spams, you're encouraging them to continue spamming -- they only need a tiny fraction of responses to be profitable.)

There's another reason not to buy anything from a company that spams: **over 95% of spam offers are scams!** In fact, not responding to spam is the single most effective way to not get scammed on the Internet.

6. Filter your email. Using filters is key to managing your email effectively. It may take a short time to figure out how to do this, but it's definitely worthwhile.

For more anti-spam filtering information, visit: **http://email.about.com/cs/spamfiltering/**

For more on negative spam filtering, visit: **http://email.about.com/library/howto/htnegativespamfilter.htm**

7. Consider subscribing to a spam prevention service. We're not enthusiastic about these services, but many people find them invaluable. They range from the good to the bad to the downright ugly, and from free to fee-based.

Many of these services are "challenge response" services. This means they require that people who send you email to respond by clicking, visiting a website, and/or typing in a code that only a human (not a spam bot) could do correctly.

Unfortunately, many people -- and most newsletter publishers -- simply refuse to participate. That's because it requires people who are sending you legitimate email to take THEIR time to ensure YOU get email.

In fact, many of us consider it rude for you to even ask.

Imagine a newsletter publisher like ScamBusters with 100,000+ subscribers. If even 20% installed this kind of system, that would mean the publisher would have 20,000 challenge/response requests. If each took only half a minute, that would be 167 hours -- or more than four weeks to reply!

Not very likely...

Tip: Make sure that any software or system you select gives YOU control of which email you get (and doesn't automatically erase messages).

On a related note, safeguard your newsletter and discussion list subscriptions. If you, your ISP or web host use spam filters or white lists, be sure to let them know that you want to receive messages from any newsletters or discussion lists that you subscribe to.

Do it as soon as you sign up... otherwise, it's very easy not to notice that you're not receiving them.

While these 7 tips may not actually stop spam, they will certainly help you drastically reduce the amount of spam you get.

NEED HELP?—
Here's Who to Contact:

Neil Higgins

440-967-9061 - higgins.neil@gmail.com
Evenings 6 p.m. -10 p.m. + Weekends
Hardware, Linux & Windows Operating Systems,
Tweaking your system

Micky Knickman

440-967-3118 - micky@knickman.com
Evenings 5 p.m. – 8 p.m. + Weekends
General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation,
Basic to Advanced Windows

Lou Koch

440-985-1585 - lkkoch@centurytel.net
Microsoft Office: Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Access, &
Outlook, Basic to Advanced Windows

Edie Lewandowski

440-282-4188 - elew@erienet.net
Daytime - midnight
Desktop Publishing, General File Management, Eudora Email,
MSWorks Tools,

Richard Barnett

440-365-9442 - Richard216@aol.com
Evenings & Weekends
General Software Configuration, HardwareInstallation, Basic to
Advanced Windows & Web Page Design

Sandee Ruth

440-984-2692 - sandee29@gmail.com
6 p.m. - 10 p.m. except when at work
Basic Word Processing, Windows, & Web Design
Advanced Internet

Jeff Kasler

440-967-7142 - Jeffk@roadrunner.com
10 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Burning CDs using Record Now

David Kennett

440-327-8624 - w8kfj@yahoo.com
9 a.m. - 8 p.m.
Video Editing & DVD Burning

Cathy Ratcliff

therats1@verizon.net
Though she lives in Coshocton, you can call
740-327-1483 before 8 pm
Paint Shop Pro, other Photo Editing programs,
Microsoft Office programs

Keith Kuhn

440-967-6509 - kthkuhn@yahoo.com
8 a.m. - 11 p.m.
Downloading Music & Burning CDs

Don't forget to check the Members' page for up-to-date infor-mation about programs & events:
http://www.lccug.com/members

LCCUG ONGOING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS
ALL ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Problem Solving Workshop

Date: January 18, 2011
Time: 5:30 - 8 pm   **Instructor:** Micky Knickman, et al.
Place: Amherst Church of the Nazarene
210 Cooper Foster Park Rd.,44001

Learn how to repair or update your computer by changing hard drives, memory, CD ROMs, etc.
Members are encouraged to bring their computers any-time before 7:30 pm for assistance from Micky, Neil or other knowledgeable members.

Genealogy Class

Date: January 18, 2011
Time: 3:15 - 5:15 pm
Instructor: Pam Rihel
Place: LCCC Learning Center.
St. Joe's Com. Center, 21st & Broadway

Learn more about finding your ancestors with public rec-ords & online websites. How to start & sources to use.

You must register - Phone: 440-277-6076 or
Email: **LadyGeneo@roadrunner.com**

Intermediate Computing

Date: January 11, 2011
Time: 3:00 - 5:00 pm
Instructor: Jean Griffith
Place: LCCC Learning Center.
St. Joe's Com. Center, 21st & Broadway

Bring your questions if you'd like. Jean will start with the basics and move on to intermediate topics if time allows. Learn MS Word, copying & pasting, for-matting text, saving files, basic file management, basic PC maintenance, etc

Register by calling LCCC Learning Center:
440-366-4507

We are looking for teachers. Volunteer to teach something you know something about. You don't have to be a master of the subject; both teachers and students usually learn! LCCC has a great comput-er lab at St. Joseph's Community Center, that we are able to use. You just have to call Dina and set up a time for your class and to let her know if she is taking the reservations or if you are.
Dina: 233-7240 or 366-4507

Let one of the officers know so we can put it in the classes section of our newsletter and on our web pag-es.

January 2011 Classes

Class Type	Location	Registration	January	Time	More Info
Classes / Workshops					
Problem Solving Micky Knickman	Amherst Church of the Nazarene 210 Cooper Foster Park	Not Required	**January 18, 2011**	5:30 to 8:00 pm	Page 10
Genealogy Class Online & Off Pam Rihel	LCCC Learning Center St. Joe's Com. Center 21st & Broadway	Reg. required LadyGeneo @ roadrunner.com	**January 18, 2011**	3:15-5:15 pm	Page 10
Intermediate Computing Class	LCCC Learning Center St. Joe's Com. Center 21st & Broadway	Jean Griffith Register by calling: 440-366-4507	**January 11, 2011**	3:00-5:00 pm	Page 10

Is there a class you would like to teach or a class you would be interested in attending, please let one of our officers know.
We want to fill this last row with something new to be taught.

ScamBusters.org

Don't Waste That Gift Card!

Gift cards are popular gifts to give and to get. I bet you have a few in your wallet right now. If you have a gift card or two or three that you know you'll never use, don't look at it as a 'wasted' gift. Instead, cash those cards in.

Cash for gift cards
It's bound to happen at some time or another. You get a gift card that you'll absolutely never use in a million years. The giver had good intentions they just missed the mark. If this has happened to you, don't waste that card. The research firm, TowerGroup, estimates that in 2009, over $5 billion gift cards went unused. That's a lot of wasted money.

That doesn't have to happen anymore. Now there are gift card sites that come to the rescue. **PlasticJungle**, **GiftCardRescue**, and **GiftCards.com**, will buy your unwanted gift cards.

While they won't give you full face value of the card,

they will pay you 60% to 90% of the value. An extra bonus at GiftCards.com is that you can use the money to pay other bills directly from their site. For instance, you can use the money from your unwanted gift cards to help pay your utility bill.

If you don't happen to have any unwanted gift cards, you can still take advantage of these sites by buying discount gift cards at 30% less than their face value. This is a great way to save.

So, what are you waiting for? Open your wallet. Dig in your purse and drawers at home. Find that unused gift card and cash it in today!

Things you learned in school that are just plain wrong.
Strangest American Laws Still on the Books.
Unpopular Science (this one is very funny).
The Best of Acrobatic Basketball Dunking.

ScamBusters.org
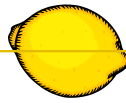
THE LEMON LAW

The state lemon law is found under every State's consumer legislation, which governs pretty much everything about how goods can be sold, in what kind of condition, and under what terms and circumstances.

The lemon law legislation is intended to protect the average consumer (who isn't expected to know everything!) from the fraudulent sales of goods, including motor vehicles.

These laws have come to be called 'lemon laws' because vehicles that have more-than-your-average-amount of repairs and mechanical troubles are called 'lemons.' Some of these lemon laws cover RVs, boats and motorcycles, in addition to cars and trucks.

Each state's lemon law is different. We've recently created a site that gives a summary and the full text for each state **lemon law** -- you can find it here.

Here are 8 ways to protect yourself from ever needing to look up your state's lemon law:

1. Do your research. If a particular make or year of vehicle appeals to you, find out everything you can about that vehicle. There may even be current claims made according to the lemon laws. There are lots of consumer report sites online, books you can buy, and magazines you can read that have documented 'the good, the bad, and the ugly' on almost every make and model of vehicle sold in North America.

2. If you are buying a used vehicle, take it for a test drive. If you are not familiar with mechanics, try to bring someone along with you who is -- and make sure he or she has a good look at the engine, the body, the front end and the rear end of the vehicle. Better that than having to look up your state's lemon law!

3. Look up the 'Blue Book' value of the particular vehicle. The Blue Book has a listing for every vehicle's value according to some national standards. Avoid paying more for a vehicle than the 'Blue Book' price.

4. The old adage, "If it seems too good to be true, it probably is," has never been more true than when applied to buying a used vehicle.

Use common sense when you are thinking of purchasing one. Is there a reason the car's been sitting for a year? Why do you suppose the rear door looks 'different' than the rest of the car?

Have your 'fraud antenna' up really high, and ask lots of questions -- an honest seller won't be offended by your extra caution -- and most sellers are aware of the state lemon laws.

5. Be sure to ask for a carfax report, which will detail if the vehicle has ever been in an accident.

6. Ask to see any historical documentation on the vehicle -- copies of repair or purchase orders, oil change logs, etc.

7. Check the VIN (Vehicle Identification Number) of the vehicle to find out if it has ever been classified as a lemon according to the lemon law of your state. Visit:

http://www.cardetective.com/lemon-help.html

8. Ask if there are any Technical Service Bulletins (TSBs), which are manufacturer's instructions to alert dealerships of problems in any particular models.

More ways to protect yourself:
If you have already bought a vehicle or are in the process of buying one, make sure you take the following steps to protect yourself even further:

1.Keep a notebook about every conversation you have with the person selling you the vehicle, including phone calls. Include the date and time, and enough information about what was discussed so it will jog your memory later if it's needed.

2. Ask to keep any documentation you looked at when you purchased the car (repair orders, etc.), including the warranty book and owner's manual. Then continue to keep copies of any further documentation regarding your vehicle from the moment it's yours.

If you have bought a vehicle that you think might 'qualify' as a lemon based on the definitions in the State lemon laws -- in other words, it has a long history of repairs -- sit down and create a 'timeline' organizing each shop visit by date, the number of repairs that have been done, and the amount of total time your vehicle has spent in repair shops and out of service.

If you think you might have a case, check out the state lemon law for where you live, and contact an attorney in the state where you purchased your vehicle.

http://www.statelemonlaw.org

That's it for now. Have a great -- and safe -- week!

Here's a neat little Easter egg for Mozilla Firefox users. Open up Firefox, and in the address line type: about:robots

about:robots
You should see this:

Creepy! But it shows that the folks over at Mozilla still know how to have fun!

Remember: this tip only works in Firefox version 3.5 and above!

~Andrew

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XP Users, Find and Run Robot Free Download   WORLDSTART.COM

Many people out there would say that Windows XP's search feature isn't anything to be desired. And I would have to agree. Also, many people would say it's hard to find a program via your All Programs menu. I would also agree with that statement.

Well, all of those difficulties can be solved with a free download called the **Find and Run Robot**. Its little box allows you to quickly type what you're looking for and simply click to launch! For example, I installed the Find and Run Robot and then typed in "Windows Update." The Robot found the Windows Update application the moment I stopped typing. I clicked on it and had my system updated immediately!

If you have a lot of stuff on your computer, you should try the Find and Run Robot. It's easy to install and very easy to use. You can download the Find and Run Robot for yourself right **here**. Enjoy!

http://download.cnet.com/Find-and-Run-Robot/3000-2072_4-10433609.html
~Gary

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Q. Help, my wireless mouse fell asleep! How do I wake it up?

A. Some wireless mice are programmed to go into the sleep mode after approximately eight minutes of non-use. So, if you leave your computer for more than eight minutes, you will probably come back to a sleeping mouse. The main reason they do this is to save some battery life while you're not using it. Some common brand names that are known to have mice like this are Memorex and Logitech.

When you get back to your computer, you may see the mouse pointer on your screen, but you'll notice that it doesn't move at first. You either have to jerk it awake by moving your mouse back and forth quickly or some-times, if you just give it a quick click, it will turn back to a working condition. That's easy enough, right?

It may be a little annoying, but hey, you gotta look at the positive, it saves you battery power in the end! You can't complain about that, now can you?! Also, keep in mind that this doesn't happen to every wireless mouse, so you may have lucked out and got one that doesn't, but if yours does, you know how to bring it back to life now!

~Erin

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EXAMINING ERRORS

COMPILED BY
KIM QUADE

## Microsoft Office Outlook

Error: The Junk E-mail Filter is not available for your Microsoft Exchange email account because you are working online. To enable the Junk E-mail Filter for this account, switch to Cached Exchange Mode.

Translation: This message may appear in Microsoft Outlook when you right-click an email and select Junk-Mail. The message means that the junk mail filter is not working because Cached Exchange Mode is turned off. This message won't appear if your office does not use Microsoft Exchange.

Solution: Enable Cached Exchange Mode to eliminate this error. When this feature is enabled, a copy of your mailbox is kept on your computer. Updated regularly, it boosts Outlook's performance. The junk mail filter uses this locally cached copy to filter spam. To switch to Cached Exchange Mode in Microsoft Outlook 2007, click the Tools menu and select Account Settings. When the Account Settings window appears, click the Email tab and then select your email account. Click the Change button. Under Microsoft Exchange server, check the Use Cached Exchange Mode box. Click the Next button and then click Finish. A message appears, telling you to restart Outlook for the changes to occur. Microsoft offers instructions for enabling Cached Exchange Mode in Microsoft Outlook 2003 and 2010 at tinyurl.com/29nwulv. In the search box, type **change to cached exchange mode**. The search results include links to instructions for the different product versions.

Internet Explorer

Error: Do You Want To View Only The Webpage Content That Was Delivered Securely? This webpage contains content that will not be delivered using a secure HTTPS connection, which could compromise the security of the webpage.
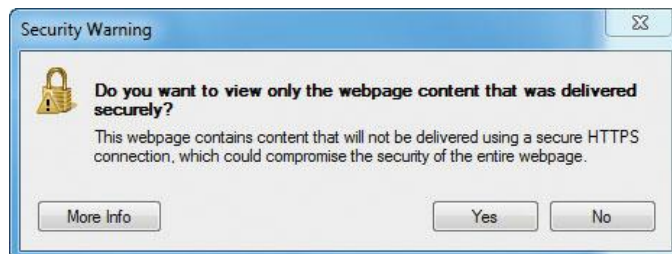
Translation: This is a warning, rather than a standard error message. It may pop up when you use Internet Explorer 8. It means that the protected Web page you are about to view contains both secure (encrypted) and non-secure (unencrypted) items. The item could be an image or video, among other possibilities. Unencrypted items have the potential to be compromised by malicious users. This message won't appear when you visit unencrypted Web pages (most pages are unencrypted), but it will appear when you visit a page with a URL (Uniform Resource Locator) that begins with HTTPS (Hypertext Transfer Protocol – Secure), which is meant to indicate that the page is protected.

If you click Yes, IE8 will open the page without displaying the nonsecure items on the page, meaning that some of the content will be missing. If you click No, both the secure and the non-secure items (collectively referred to as mixed content) will be displayed, and you will see the entire page. Clearly, the safest choice is to click Yes.

Solution: Because this message is for your safety, you don't need to take any action to prevent it from appearing. That said, if you would like Internet Explorer to stop prompting you when you encounter pages with mixed content, you can disable the message. Be aware that you will no longer be notified that the Web pages you are viewing may contain mixed content, which means your data may be at risk. To disable the message, click Tools and select Internet Options. Click the Security tab. Click the Custom Level button. Scroll down to the Miscellaneous section and change Display Mixed Content to Enable.

Stunning video: a remote-controlled plane flies over and around the Brooklyn Bridge, buzzes the Statue of Liberty, and explores New York from a point of view even "real" airplanes rarely see: http://www.flixxy.com/rc-airplane-flying-around-new-york-city-hd.htm

Mr. Modem

Win7, We Hardly Knew Ye

By Richard Sherman

My technological odyssey began with a Heath-kit H8, which I purchased in January 1978 and completed building in—well, I'm going to finish it any day now. My first store-bought computer was a Zenith, dual-floppy beast running DOS. I loved DOS and still get misty-eyed when I think about the many happy hours I spent frolicking on the command line.

After an initial, brief-but-disappointing encounter with Windows 1.0 in late 1985, I was so traumatized, I retreated to the comfort and familiarity of DOS until the release of Windows 3.1, in April 1992.

In August 1995, I was beside myself with anticipation of the arrival of Windows 95. My lawn chair and I spent a sweltering evening outside a CompUSA to be first in line when it went on sale at midnight. (I apparently didn't know the meaning of the phrase "Get a life!" in those days.)

Jumping ahead a few years, it was a dark, steamy, downright sweltering Phoenix evening in June 1998, when we (me, my lawn chair, and Speedo) camped out again, eagerly awaiting Windows 98, or a restraining order, whichever came first. Good times, indeed. In February 2000, I dutifully purchased Windows 2000, followed later that same year with Windows Millennium Edition. Big mistake. To this day, I maintain ME stands for "Miserable Experience."

In October 2001, Windows XP arrived to rave reviews, followed by the V-bomb in January 2007. Somewhere along the line, my OSE (Operating System Enthusiasm) began to wane. It had been too many years, learning too many operating systems. Dreaded technological fatigue was setting in.

In October 2009, with about as much enthusiasm as I have for Christmas hugs from my cousin Muriel with the unfortunate mustache, I rallied once again and embraced Windows 7. For those keeping score, that's a mindnumbing, eye-glazing, 10 operating systems. "Enough is enough," I declared to nobody in particular.

It was my master plan at that point to ride Win7 into the sunset, accompanied by my trusty sidekick Ubuntu. Then, a few months ago, I received The News: Windows 8 was in the works. At first I felt queasy—could have been some bad clams—but the more I learned about Win8, the more intrigued I became. It was comforting, however, to learn that Win8 is estimated to be two years away from release. Whew! But I like what I'm hearing, so technological fatigue notwithstanding, I will

definitely be on board with Win8 from the get go. No camping out this time. That much I know.

So what is it that has activated my aging adrenaline? Here are four tantalizing Windows 8 features and sneakpeeks that have slithered out of Redmond:

1. Faster startup. At long last, Windows 8 will feature faster booting through the use of a new feature that combines Log-off and Hibernate modes. LiberNate? HiberLog? We'll just have to wait and see.

2. Push-button reset. This will allow users to reinstall Windows with the push of a button, while retaining all files, settings, and applications. If true, this one feature alone could be life-altering.

3. Facial recognition. A new security option that will let you log on by scanning your facial features. I'm not so sure I like this. After a typical evening of sobbing uncontrollably, sometimes my eyes are all puffy.

4. Improved energy efficiency. An updated kernel manager will result in reduced power consumption and better sleep and resume functions. (I wouldn't mind better sleep and resume functions, either, now that I think of it.)

I will keep you posted as additional rumors, innuendo, and wild-eyed speculation bubble to the surface, but if you would like to monitor Win8's progress in the interim, here are several excellent resources: Windows 8 News & Tips (**windows8news.com**), Windows 8 Center (**windows8center.com**), Windows 8 Beta (**windows8beta.com**), Windows 8 Update (**www.windows8update.com**), and Windows 8 Forums (**www.eightforums.com**). For me, it's onward to Operating System 11!

LCD Resolutions

LCD monitors are super. They're flatter, lighter, and let's face it, cooler than the bulky old CRTs out there. However, unlike CRTs, LCDs look their sharpest at their native resolutions, such as 1,280 x 960 or 1,600 x 1,200 pixels, as listed in their users manuals. If you have your computer's display settings set to a different resolution, on-screen text and graphics may appear slightly fuzzy. On the other hand, the native resolution may be so fine relative to the physical size of the screen that on-screen objects may be way too small for your tastes. If the labels of your icons are too tiny to read at the LCD's native resolution, try lower settings until you find a resolution that's reasonably sharp. To change the resolution in Win7, right-click your Desktop and click Screen Resolution. Choose your desired resolution from the corresponding drop-down menu. Click Apply to test the change, and OK to save it.

Microsoft Office 2010
What's New In The New Office

BY TREVOR MEERS

Are you still wandering around Office 2010 in search of what's new? Or still deciding from afar whether it's worth the upgrade? Either way, you'll find the info you need in this top-line overview of the Office 2010 features that are attracting the most interest. Look for full articles on many of these tools in the coming months.

Revised Ribbon. This oft-criticized Office 2007 feature got one upgrade that's sure to please: customization. While the 2007 Ribbon was essentially unchangeable without special add-in programs, the 2010 Ribbon lets you create your own tabs and place buttons where they're convenient for you.

A clearer picture. The ramped-up photo editing tools in Office 2010 approach those of full-fledged programs such as Adobe Photoshop— at least the parts average users need. One feature many people already love is Background Removal, which lets you lift part of an image out on its own without jumping to a dedicated photo editing program. Similarly, you can now edit videos right in PowerPoint. You can add visual effects to the videos and do some cool stuff such as place markers in the video to trigger animations.

Save that screen. If you create many instructional documents, easier screen captures (pictures of what's on your screen) can certainly speed up your workflow, even if they're not a worldchanger. Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint now include a built-in screen capture tool that eliminates the multiprogram runaround required in the past.

Smarter art. Office 2010 expands the selection of SmartArt, those business-quality graphics that let you quickly turn info into compelling illustrations. New options include Picture SmartArt graphics, which make it a snap to drop your photos into professional-looking lists, charts, and more.

New look for numbers. Excel 2010 lets you easily insert at-a-glance graphics. Sparklines are an instant favorite. These nifty little charts let you drop something such as a trend-line chart into a cell right next to data in your worksheet. Now you can scan down the column, looking for sparklines that show the trend you're looking for.

Go backstage. The Office button has given way to a full File menu that provides access to Backstage View, which handles much of the housekeeping details relating to file management and other basic tasks. You'll especially like Backstage's Print tool, which puts all the options on a single screen rather than burying some of them several clicks deep.

Fresh transitions. PowerPoint features several new animations and transitions for slides, including a few that really start to make you look more like a TV producer than a presentation amateur addicted to old standbys, such as the Checkerboard transition.

On the air. PowerPoint's new Broadcast Slide Show feature offers a simple version of video conferencing, letting you deliver presentations live via the Web, even to users who don't have PowerPoint.

Paste goes live. Remember all those times you've pasted text into a document, only to have all the existing formatting go haywire? The Paste feature's new Live Preview lets you see your Paste options and gives you a chance to make choices accordingly.

Easy as PDF. Finally, we're glad to see easier PDF (Portable Document Format) integration in Office 2010. While you needed an add-on to turn Office 2007 documents into this universal format, Office 2010 includes a Create PDF option within the applications.

Human ventriloquist. Ventriloquist Paul Zerdin surprises us with a different & very entertaining performance.

Wireless Network Lockdown — Smart Computing *In Plain English*

Anyone who's experienced the headaches associated with stringing CAT 5 cable up and down the office understands the convenience of using wireless access points to set up a wireless network. Unfortunately, the dangers of an unsecured wireless network can easily offset the benefits of connecting computers without messy Ethernet cable. Without the proper security measures, your wireless network could be susceptible to the wiles of a wardriver.

The term "wardriving" originated with the 1983 movie "WarGames," in which a computer hacker dialed phone numbers to find a system to break into with his computer. Modern-day hackers have modified this practice and drive through cities using a wireless laptop (or any other device capable of using a wireless signal) to detect and infiltrate wireless networks. To protect your network from wardrivers, it's imperative to enable wireless encryption on all of your network's wireless routers and access points. If your networking hardware doesn't offer encryption, it's not worth owning in the first place. Wireless networking products with built-in firewalls are even better. Finally, configure your access points so they will only grant access to your network according to your networked computers' specific MAC (Media Access Control) addresses.

YouTube Video Stats

This is too cool not to share. I was clicking around on YouTube last night, when I noticed a button I hadn't seen before. It's called the **Show video statistics** button, and it opens up a whole new world, when it comes to stat tracking on YouTube!

All you have to do is browse over to YouTube.com and then look for a video - any video will do.

At the bottom of the video screen, click on the button that looks like this:
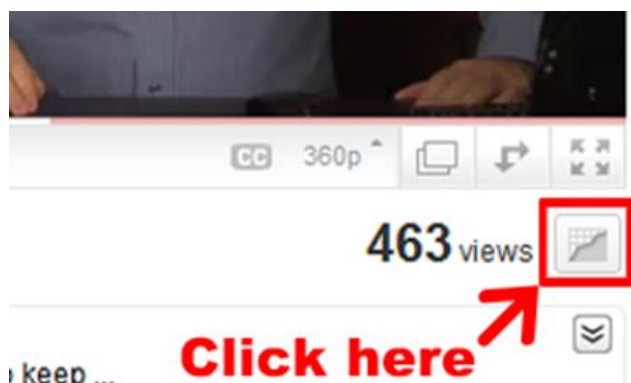
The resulting window will give you an idea of how popular the video in question is, how many views it has received since being posted, and even the area of the world it's most popular in!
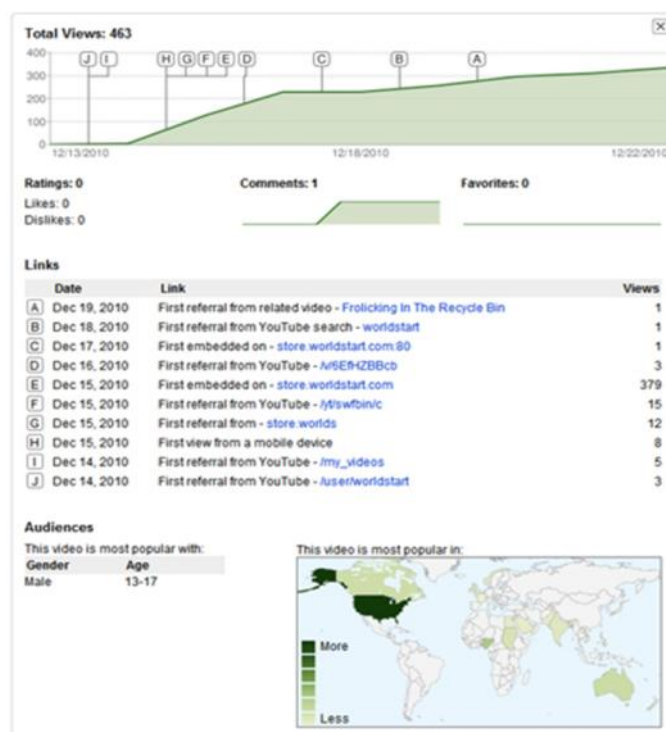
Remember, this works with any video on YouTube - not just your own - so, get out there and track some stats!

~Andrew

Google & Microsoft Win Government Cloud Deals

Less than a week after the General Services Administration chose Google's Web-based mail and word processing (Gmail Docs) apps for its 15,000 employees, Microsoft won a similar agreement with the U.S. Department of Agriculture for its 120,000 employees. In an interview with Bloomberg, Microsoft VP Ron Markezich said his company's USDA contract represented the biggest U.S. government use of cloud services.

Navteq Invests In 3D Mapping

Navteq, which provides maps, traffic data, mobile advertising, and numerous location-based services, has purchased the Carlsbad, Calif.-based Pixel Active, which specialized in 3D mapping capabilities to Navteq's 2D offerings, which are used in automotive GPS systems, wireless devices, Web-based mapping systems, and elsewhere. Terms of the deal were not disclosed.

Seagate Releases 1 TB Enterprise Drive; Dell Snaps It Up

Seagate released its first 1 TB 2.5 inch enterprise hard drive, the constellation 2. The constellation 2 is designed for manufacturers to include in DAS (direct attached storage), NAS (network attached storage), systems. In a press release, Seagate stated that Dell will optimize its PowerVault storage enclosures and PowerEdge servers to use the new hard drive.

Dell Announces Endpoint Encryption

According to the Ponemon Institute, a data breach for a U.S. company can cost as much as $6.75 million. To help businesses meet various regulatory and compliance requirements and to avoid the costs associated with exposed data, Dell has begun offering its first endpoint encryption software, called Dell Data Protection. Designed for easy integration into midsized to large businesses, Dell Data Protection uses FIPS (Federal Information Process Standards)-validated encryption and is available as an option in Dell's Precision workstations, OptiPlex desktops, and Latitude notebooks.

DIY Project:
Clean Your Office Keyboard & Mouse

BY SETH COLANER

By now, you've no doubt heard the disturbing factoids about the number of germs living on the average computer keyboard. If you haven't, here's a hint: toilets are cleaner than your keyboard. And, yes, that's alarmingly disgusting.

Germs aside, do you ever notice the gunk that accumulates under and around the keys on your keyboard? That's mostly you—your skin flakes, dandruff, coughs and sneezes, and crumbs from when you eat lunch at your desk. Your mouse is no different, really; although a mouse has fewer cracks and crevices that collect crumbs and dirt, it's still as germy as your keyboard.

Both peripherals are also coated in a fine layer of finger grease. Although depositing grease on your tools is an unavoidable byproduct of being a human, it's a good idea to periodically address the situation and keep your desktop implements shiny, clean, and germ-free.

There are a number of ways to win the battle of nastiness with your keyboard and mouse; here are some practical tips and products that can help.

Tools You Need
There are a few simple items you should have when you clean your peripherals. Compressed air in a can, available anywhere office supplies are sold, is perfect for blasting out crumbs and dust. A couple of lint-free cloths, especially the type that are adept at removing grease, are indispensable. A small amount of isopropyl alcohol is great to have on hand, as well as some cotton swabs (commonly known as Q-tips) to dig into those tiny crevasses. You'll also want to have a small flathead screwdriver or similar tool.

Remember, as you clean, avoid excess moisture; don't spray water or cleaning agents directly onto your keyboard or mouse. Don't use any household cleaners other than isopropyl alcohol. Household cleaners may contain chemicals that can permanently damage your devices.

Preparation
Before you start working on your keyboard or mouse, be sure that your computer is powered down and disconnect your keyboard or mouse from your computer.

It's wise to do your deep cleaning away from your workspace, perhaps even outside—otherwise, you're just kicking up a lot of junk into the air, and some of it will settle right back onto your desk, which defeats the pur-

pose of cleaning. Also, be courteous to your co-workers; no one will appreciate your newfound cleanliness if you blow your gunk toward your desk mate or the cubicle across the way.

Regardless, make sure you're in a well-ventilated area to avoid any fumes from cleaning agents and the compressed air.

If you're going to be removing keys and using cleaning agents, make sure you leave yourself enough time; you may need to wait awhile for moisture to evaporate before using your device, and removing and replacing keys, though simple, can be time-consuming.

Desktop Keyboards
To give your keyboard a good once-over, turn the keyboard upside down, give it a few gentle but firm taps, and blast it with a few shots of compressed air. When using compressed air, don't tilt the can too far or hold down the trigger; that will cause liquid to shoot out, which is damaging to components.

Instead, hold the can upright and use only short blasts of air. To clean the top of the keys, moisten a lint-free cloth with the isopropyl alcohol and gently but firmly wipe them down. Take another lint-free cloth, this one dry, and go over the same surfaces to ensure that any moisture is completely removed. For a deep cleaning, you'll want to remove some or all of the keys from the keyboard. To do so, use your flathead screwdriver and gently pop off the keys you want to remove, making sure to keep track of where all the keys go. Give them a good rubdown with isopropyl alcohol and the lint-free cloth and snap them back into place when they're dry.

You can scrub removed keys with a rag or toothbrush to get any stubborn grime off of them, and use a cotton swab to wipe out any tiny crevices on the keyboard. (For all the good compressed air does, sometimes friction is the only thing that will remove buildup.) Afterward, blow air into those areas again to remove anything you may have loosened.

If you don't want to go to the trouble of prying off any keys, just use a cotton swab dabbed in isopropyl alcohol to wipe between them.

If you want to go the extra mile, you can use a vacuum cleaner with the brush attachment to give the cleaned keyboard a once-over. It can help suck out any stray particles that you loosened. Just make sure that none of the keys are loose before you start.

Laptop Keyboards
There is an enormous difference between a desktop keyboard and a laptop keyboard. Primarily, the former is a relatively inexpensive peripheral device that, should you somehow ruin it, is easily replaceable. However, a laptop keyboard sits atop the computer's motherboard and many other vital components; if you spill on it or use

excessive moisture when cleaning it, you're likely to ruin the laptop, so be very, very careful.

Laptops tend to collect more crud than desktop keyboards by dint of the fact that we drag them through a variety of environments, some of which may be especially dusty or dirty.

Still, the process for cleaning a laptop keyboard is similar to that of a desktop keyboard: compressed air, wiping down the keys, and using a cotton swab to dig out the crud between the cracks. You can remove the keys and clean them individually, but replacing them can be tricky, so beware.

Mice

There are two basic types of mice: optical mice and mice with a physical roller ball.

You need to clean a roller ball mouse fairly frequently, as it picks up dirt and grime every time you move it. Turn the mouse over, twist the ring around the ball to remove it, and drop the ball and detached ring into your hand. (Don't lose these.) The inside of the mouse will likely need a few blasts of compressed air and some friction on the interior rollers. The ball itself is easy to clean—you can even gently scrub it with soap and water, so long as you ensure that it completely dries before reuse. The exterior of the mouse can be wiped down with a moist cloth, and if there is dirt trapped in the crevices of the device, blast them out with compressed air. When the roller ball and mouse are dry, pop the ball back in, secure the ring, and your mouse will be good as new.

Cleaning an optical mouse is refreshingly simple. Unlike a mouse with a roller ball that gathers dirt quickly, an optical mouse tends to only accumulate grime and grease on the pads on the underside of the mouse and on top where your hand rests. Clean the exterior of an optical mouse just as you would a roller ball mouse. To get an optical mouse running fluidly again, place it on a clean sheet of paper, press down firmly, and wipe the mouse across it. This will rub off the grime that has collected on the mouse foot pads.

Keep It Clean

Of course, the accumulation of germs, dirt, grime, and grease is inevitable, but there are a few simple things you can do to reduce the buildup.

Wash your hands frequently—not just after using the restroom, but also after lunch or a snack (when your fingertips are most likely to be covered in residual foodstuffs) and even after shaking hands with clients or coworkers. Using hand sanitizers certainly helps cut down on germs, but hand washing is the only way to get rid of excess grease.

Eating at your desk, whether it's your full breakfast, lunch, or just an afternoon snack of potato chips or a coworker's birthday cake, is the single best way to add crumbs and grime to your desktop. Keep the food away from your workspace.

Still, peripherals will get dirty, no matter how clean your hands are and how far away the lunch table is. You can, however, take some protective measures. For example, to keep your keyboard clean, consider using a plastic keyboard cover. These are typically inexpensive and fit over the keys, effectively blocking anything from permeating your keyboard. Plus, when the cover gets grimy, you can easily wash it off in the sink with soap and water without risking any damage to your keyboard.

You can purchase peripherals that have antimicrobial coating, which helps cut down on germs, from manufacturers such as Unotron (**www.unotron.com**). You can also get washable and waterproof peripherals, making cleaning far easier, from companies such as Rugged Technologies (**www.ruggedtech.com**).

It pays to keep your mouse and keyboard as clean and germ-free as possible, but if you won't do it for yourself, do it for your co-workers. If you use any shared workstations, the cumulative effect of multiple sets of fingertips on the same keys and mouse can be an efficient method of delivering an office-wide flu epidemic. While you may not think twice about rubbing your tired eyes or wiping your nose and resuming your typing, the next person to use that machine will be subject to your germs. (Likewise, to protect yourself, be sure to wash or sanitize your hands after using a shared computer.)

Further, consider the IT personnel that service company computers. IT people need really, really strong immune systems to survive working on office computers all day. With the exception of their own computers, almost everything they touch is used by at least one other person.

When using a can of compressed air, be sure you keep the can upright and use only short blasts lest you accidentally let moisture from the can get onto your peripherals.

You'll need a few tools to clean your peripherals, including a couple of lint-free cloths, a can of compressed air, cotton swabs, and isopropyl alcohol.

A roller ball mouse requires frequent cleaning.

Headphones & Noise

Although headphones with noise-canceling or sound-isolating abilities aim to accomplish the same goal, namely keeping the audio you're listening to clear and crisp while blocking ambient noise surrounding you from creeping in, the two techniques aren't the same. Makers of noise-canceling headphones typically use software to achieve noise-blocking ability. These models usually require battery power (usually two AAA batteries) to power the technology. Sound-isolating models, conversely, don't use battery power and are much lighter than noise-canceling models that use over-the-ear headphone styles. Sound-isolating headphones use earbuds and a combination of ear cushions and filters that attach to the earbuds to create a seal inside the ear canal to keep noise out.

logic error

A problem in a program that causes it to operate incorrectly, but not to fail. Because a logic error will not cause the program to stop working, it can produce incorrect data that may not be immediately recognizable.

Patient Record Safety Not Improved, Study Shows

In spite of better laws to better protect private health information, most healthcare institutions don't feel their patient data is any safer than before. The "Benchmark Study on Patient Privacy and Data Security" by the Ponemon Institute surveyed 65 healthcare organizations. More than 70% feel new federal regulations have not improved the management of patient records, and about the same percentage feels that, even with the passage of HIPAA and the HITECH Act, protecting pa-

tient data is not a priority. Other concerns noted in the report include a lack of resources (71%), insufficient policies (69%), and too few appropriately trained staffers (52%).

Vimeo

Vimeo (**www.vimeo.com**) is a video-sharing site similar to YouTube. Members can load videos they'd like to share on the Web. Basic membership is free; upgrade to the Plus version for $59.95 per year for perks such as better quality video and more uploads per week. **http://www.vimeo.com**
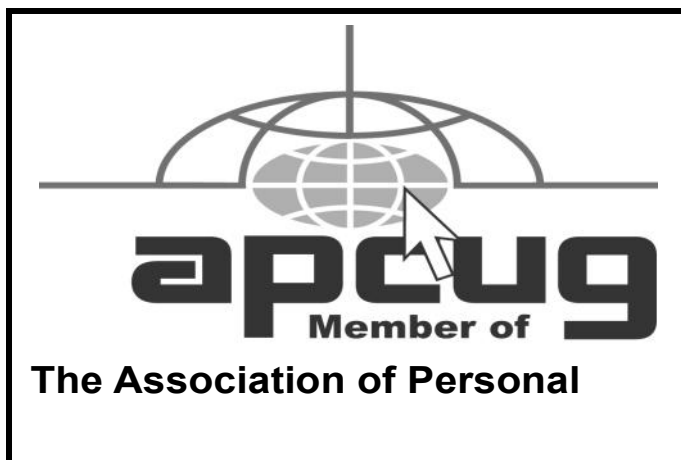
One Calendar Or Two

If you coordinate all of the day's events into one calendar, you may find it difficult to easily locate specific events out of the many notations in your calendar. To improve the organization of events, you may want to consider using two calendars, one for work, such as Microsoft Outlook, and one for your home-life, such as Google Calendar. With the two calendars, you may be able to more easily locate tasks and arrange your schedule accordingly.

Protect Your Discs

Because DVD and CD drives use laser light to read data, music, and movies from optical discs, any scratches on the data side of a disc can cause skips or errors. Always store CDs and DVDs in their cases or sleeves, and never set bare discs down on any surface that could scratch them. If you can't commit to these rules of thumbs, try buying discs with special scratch-resistant coatings.

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