

Interface

Lorain County Computer Users Group
LCCUG.com (or) info@LCCUG.com
Volume 35 Number 6 June 2024



2024

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**Tuesday
June 11, 2024**



Should I have
a
land line?

*Presented
By*

LCCUG Officers

Our links can be found at:

LCCUG.com/links, There you will find many interesting places to visit. Check them out and see what you can find interesting

**All Meetings will be Virtual and Zoom
Held on Tuesday June 11, 2024 10:00 am**

LCCC Community Learning Center
201 W Erie Ave, Lorain, OH 44052

Please Email: info@lccug.com
if you have any questions or concerns!

A Word From Our President



Here we are in June already! I blinked and here we are!

In May we had another hodgepodge meeting. I particular thought the segment on the new Chat Gpt4o was very interesting. Very exciting technology!!! You can watch it at <https://lccug.com/links/>

Remember that most of our meetings are recorded and available at that website. The short videos we show are always there to watch and review! I find it useful to watch a video again when trying the feature that I want to learn myself. So, a reminder to everyone to take advantage of these links.

At our June meeting we will be looking at videos discussing the pros and cons about having a home phone or “land line”. What are the advantages of having the land line in addition to a smart phone? What do you lose by giving it up. What are cheaper alternatives to the cost of the land line from the “phone company” or the cable company.

As the size of our group diminishes, another cut back will be the closing of our Post Office box. Most members probably didn’t remember that we have had one. If you need to mail something to the group you can mail it to me at this address: 172 Woodhill Dr., Amherst, 44001.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a technology that allows machines to learn from experience and perform tasks that usually require human intelligence. You might encounter AI in various everyday tools like voice assistants (such as Alexa or Siri), which can help you with simple tasks like setting reminders or answering questions. AI can also be found in online services like Netflix or Amazon, where it suggests movies or products based on your previous choices. For seniors, understanding AI can make life easier and more convenient by providing assistance in managing day-to-day activities and staying connected with family and friends through technology.

It's important for seniors to know that AI is designed to be user-friendly and improve quality of life. Many

LCCUG Officers For 2024

President	Sandee Ruth president@lccug.com
Vice President	Vacant 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	Vacant membership@lccug.com
Director of Advertising	Richard Barnett advertising@lccug.com
Director of Education	Neil Higgins education@lccug.com

devices and services that use AI come with simple interfaces and can be easily operated with basic instructions. AI can also play a crucial role in healthcare by monitoring vital signs, reminding you to take your medications, and even detecting potential health issues early. While it might seem a bit intimidating at first, learning to use AI can open up new possibilities for staying active, informed, and independent. Embracing AI technology can enhance your daily routine, offering both safety and companionship.



Fascinating times!!

Sandra Ruth
LCCUG President

**Tuesday
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At our June meeting we will be looking at videos discussing the pros and cons about having a home phone or "land line". What are the advantages of having the land line in addition to a smart phone?

What do you lose by giving it up. What are cheaper alternatives to the cost of the land line from the "phone company" or the cable company.

Hear the issues and join the discussion

LCCUG is on Facebook

Come and visit our Facebook page for interesting facts and ideas. You can get a lot of computer information from our Facebook page. Have a question ask it on Facebook.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/lccug>

Genealogy Tip of the Day

<mjnrootdig@gmail.com@bounces.cloud2.em.secureserver.net>

Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, and Tintypes Preservation

admin, 01 Jun 08:53 AM

Preservation suggestions for Daguerreotypes, Ambrotypes, and Tintypes from the University of Illinois can be found at: <https://psap.library.illinois.edu/collection-id-guide/directimage>



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Woohoo!



Your renewal dues have been changed from \$15.00, To 3 years for \$15.00. When everyone else is raising their prices our Computer Club is lowering their dues, so tell your friends to come and Join in the fun and learn computer information.

Tell your family and friends about this great deal. Once in a lifetime opportunity.

LCCUG
Director of Membership,



Executive Board Meeting Minutes

MAY 7, 2024

The board Zoom video meeting for May was attended by Sandee Ruth, Don Hall, Micky Knickman, Pam Rihel and Neil Higgins.

The board needs to decide how to distribute some gifts they have on hand.

The board decided our post office account is too expensive so will set up Sandee's address for club business. Also we will cancel the club phone numbers on Google.

Pam moved Neil seconded the meeting be adjourned.



MEMBERSHIP WITH LCCUG:

Yearly dues are now \$15.00 For 3 years. For more information contact:

LCCUG

Director of Membership,
membership@lccug.com.

Meeting Location:

At a new time: from 10 am. - noon
in a new location: LCCC facility at
[201 W. Erie, Lorain](#)

Our meeting space is on the first floor – easily accessible – larger – refreshments available!

Please email

info@lccug.com if you have any questions.

Newsletter Editor: Pam Rihel using Microsoft Publisher, 2019

This Month's contributors: Micky Knickman, Sandra Ruth, Pam Rihel, Don Hall, Neil Higgins, Michael John Neill, Tom Burt, David Kretchmar, Adobe Stock, Scambusters, Ask Leo, APCUG, Google Images, Microsoft Office art online, AARP

Newsletter is now

Online at:

lccug.com/newsletters or lccug.com



General Meeting Minutes

MAY 14, 2024

President Sandee Ruth called the hybrid meeting to order. A motion to accept the minutes as shown in the May issue of the **INTERFACE** was made by Pam Rihel and seconded by Cliff Salisbury. Motion passed by voice vote.

Sandee and Micky continued showing the various programs they found interesting on the Internet. Micky explained how you can see them all on our web page.

One of the programs was "The History of cellular phones 1G to 5G by Ron Brown. Another was Photomyne for \$40 that will add color to old black & white photos.

Next month, land line options will be discussed.



The Lorain County Chapter of OGS

is having its next meeting online:

Check our webpage for the next program.

<http://loraincoogs.org/events.html>

We are having our meetings virtually only, using Zoom

[https://zoom.us/j/6681479672?](https://zoom.us/j/6681479672?pwd=amh0NmtmalZWa0lmRWVBWEwySkxmZz09&omn=92912561207)

[pwd=amh0NmtmalZWa0lmRWVBWEwySkxmZz09&omn=92912561207](https://zoom.us/j/6681479672?pwd=amh0NmtmalZWa0lmRWVBWEwySkxmZz09&omn=92912561207)

Lorain County Chapter is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Meetings are free and the program begins at 7:00 PM.

John Kolb

secretary@loraincoogs.org



Lorain County Computer Users Group

2024 Calendar of Events

<http://lccug.com>
email: info@lccug.com



Using Zoom & In Person
Meeting & program starts at 10:00 am

*2nd Tuesday of each month. Changes are announced on the webpage and the newsletter.
All meetings are open to the public*

If you have anything you would like to know about, PLEASE let up know. We would really like your input.

January 11, Thursday Wireless 5G Internet services

February 8, Thursday HodgePodge

March 14, Thursday Glenn Pubal from Royal Business in Elyria

April 11, Thursday HodgePodge

May 14, Tuesday HodgePodge Part 2

June 11, Tuesday Should I Have a Land Line

July 9, Tuesday

LCCUG

Genealogy Tip of the Day

[<mjnrootdig@gmail.com >](mailto:mjnrootdig@gmail.com)

Dead on a Date

admin, 01 Jun 08:04 AM

An 1884 biography of Thomas Chaney of Bedford County, Pennsylvania, indicated that some of his children were dead. Thomas himself had been dead for thirty years when his biography was published. His children who are noted as deceased may have been dead for decades (perhaps even dying in childhood) or may have died just before the book was compiled.

Just because children were not listed as deceased in the 1884 biography of Thomas does not mean they were not deceased in 1884. Daughter Elizabeth (Chaney) Rampley died in 1883. She is not indicated as dead in the 1884 reference. It could have been an oversight or the compiler may not have known.

Children listed as being deceased in the 1884 biography, could be given a death date of "before 1884" with the biography as a source.

Emailing that Clerk?

admin, 30 May 10:28 AM

Emailed a county clerk in a rural US county yesterday and they were able to answer my question and get me a copy of the page I needed. I asked a very specific question about a specific item in a record set I had used before. I was not going on a fishing expedition.

However, to maximize the chance of success in general, remember to ask specific questions, learn about the records (as much as you can before emailing), be patient, and always ask if there's another way to access the information other than via an email correspondence.

Keep in mind that while records may be open, offices do not necessarily have to respond to email requests. Always look and see what finding aids and other materials are online first—particularly at FamilySearch, the state archives/library, or the actual county records office in question's website, etc.

We are taking orders for More Genealogy Tip of the Day, which is scheduled to be released in mid-to-late June. Details are on our announcement page. It's over 400 pages!

NEED HELP?



Here's Who to Contact:

Neil Higgins

440-985-8507 - higgins.neil@gmail.com
Evenings 6 p.m. -10 p.m. + Weekends
Hardware, Linux & Windows Operating Systems,
Chromebooks, Tweaking your system

Micky Knickman

440-967-3118 - micky@knickman.com
Daily 5:00 am to 3:00 pm. Leave message if no answer.
General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation, Basic to Advanced Windows

Richard Barnett

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

Sandee Ruth

440-984-2692 - sandee29@gmail.com
Basic Word Processing, Windows, & Web Design
Advanced Internet

Pam Casper Rihel

440-277-6076 or 440-308-8196
6:00 p.m. to 9:00 pm Monday thru Thursday
Genealogy help
prihel1947@gmail.com

Denny Smith Unavailable at this time

440-355-6218 - dennis.smith@windstream.net
Microsoft EXCEL
Leave message on machine if no answer

If any of our members are interested in helping other users with what programs you are adept at, please contact any of our officers with you name, what program or programs you would be willing to give help with, you email address and or phone number and when you would like to have them call you. Thanks



LCCUG ONGOING WORKSHOPS

ALL ARE FREE AND SOME ARE OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Problem Solving Workshop

Date: Tuesday– June 11, 2024
Time: 12PM –Please show up by 11:30
Instructor: Micky Knickman
Place: LCCC @ 201 W. Erie Ave., Lorain, OH

Learn how to repair or update your computer by changing hard drives, memory, CD ROMs, etc.

This workshop is limited to LCCUG members in good standing.

The Problem Solving Workshop is being held at our new building, LCCC, 201 W. Erie Ave. Lorain, Ohio

You are asked to bring in your computer, laptop and other electronics that you need help with unless the problem/question can be replicated on any device.

Learning About Electronics

Date: Tuesday– June 11, 2024
Time: 12PM –Please show up by 11:30
Instructor: Sandee Ruth
Place: LCCC @ 201 W. Erie Ave., Lorain, OH
Learn how use you electronic devices.

Members are encouraged to bring their tablets, iPod, kindles, etc. for assistance from Sandee and any other knowledgeable members. The public is welcome to sit in on these sessions.



Member of Association of Personal Computer Users Groups

STOP DATA BROKERS FROM HARVESTING AND SELLING YOUR INFO

Hundreds of US firms are busy gathering and selling information about you right now. They're called data brokers and, in the main, what they're doing is perfectly legal.

Privacy has gone out the window. And you'd probably be shocked by how much these companies know about you, your family, and your finances. Worst of all, their information can easily be sold to scammers as well as to firms for legitimate marketing purposes.

You may think there's nothing you can do about this. Even staying away from the internet doesn't guarantee your privacy because of the way data brokers gather snippets of information about you, which they then use powerful software to compile a detailed profile.

But there are lots of ways to delete much of the info they have about you and to make sure it stays that way.

WHERE DO DATA BROKERS GET INFORMATION ABOUT ME?

Data harvesting is a continuous process that can include searching public records, monitoring online activity (especially social media posts), and buying stolen data on the Dark Web, often from data breaches.

The most likely result is that your profile could include your name, address, likes and dislikes, purchase decisions, family members, your address, education, legal records, phone numbers, employment, hobbies, and perhaps photos.

In the criminal realm, they collect your credit card numbers, sign-on and password details, your Social Security number and your financial account details. And they sell them for a pittance compared with the financial harm they can cause you.

HOW TO WIPE YOUR DATA

Deleting your data is not easy, at least for now

and, unless you know of every data broker in the nation, it's unlikely you can totally "erase" yourself.

But some of the actions you can consider in order to protect yourself include:

- **Contact the brokers and tell them.** First, you have to know who they are. You'll find a [comprehensive and searchable list of registered brokers](#), along with contact links, from the Privacy Rights Clearinghouse.
- **Use free tools.** Without a list, you need to scan broker databases to discover who's holding your information. We've been unable to identify any totally free tools for doing this, but many paid-for providers (see below) offer a free initial scan or free tier.
- **Paid-for tools.** With so much of our personal privacy now under threat, a whole segment of apps will not only scan databases but also continuously monitor them. Some may send opt-out requests to brokers but there's still a lot of legwork for you to do. To explore your options, search for "data broker deletion" or a similar term.
- **Data removal services.** You can also pay some specialist companies to do all the hard work for you but they're quite expensive. Around \$200 a year is not uncommon. But if your time is worth more than your money, they may be worth considering. You might also think about using anti-track software that checks and removes cookies that some firms use to track your activities and site visits. Some internet security software providers offer anti-tracking as an add-on.
- **Protect yourself.** Use a personal "virtual private network" (VPN) to disguise yourself and location. (We wrote about VPNs in Issue #813: [Do You Need a VPN \(Virtual Private Network\) for Your Internet Safety?](#)) Also examine the privacy tools that are available both on your browser and security software.

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(Continued from page 7) Stop Data Brokers ...

- **Be vigilant.** Nearly every website you interact with, and piece of software you install, stores your information and, in some cases, sells it to brokers. Be sure to read their terms and conditions and privacy statements to find out what they're up to. Also check the privacy settings on programs and apps that you use and set them to the highest setting you're comfortable with.

BUT DOES DATA WIPING REALLY WORK?

As we said, it's probably impossible to securely remove all the records every data broker holds about you. A 2021 report by the non-profit Privacy Rights Clearinghouse identified at least 540 data brokers operating in the US – that's a lot to track down and contact.

And, since the whole industry is said to be worth up to \$200 billion a year (Source: PrivacyBee.com), new data broker firms are popping up all the time.

But things might be about to change.

Some states have already enacted legislation to control the activities of brokers, for example, by forcing them to register and abide by certain rules.

But unless you're paying – quite a lot – for a monitoring service to do it all, you still have to do most of the legwork by contacting each broker in order to opt out.

However, one state – California – has introduced a Delete Act, which will enable residents to just file a single opt-out request that all brokers, at least the legal ones, must comply with. But, still, you can't delete information about you that can be found in public records.

In the final analysis, vigilance and common sense are your key weapons against the harvesting of your data – for example, by using caution about what you post online and who you give information about yourself to.

THIS WEEK'S ALERTS

Dropbox breach: You may have read an an-

nouncement earlier this month from cloud storage company Dropbox of a breach affecting users of its document-signing service. The breach collected details such as email addresses, usernames, phone numbers, and certain passwords. The company says it's contacting affected users but it's always a good idea to change your password anyway. Learn more: [A Recent Security Incident Involving Dropbox Sign](#).

Elder targets: Scams targeting older folk – in this case those over the age of 60 – jumped 11% last year, costing this section of the population at least \$3.4 billion, according to a new report from the FBI. The actual number may be much higher, says the agency. Download the full report: [2023 IC3 Elder Fraud Annual Report](#)

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Tip of the Day: Get a Quick Disk-Space Summary in Windows 10 and 11



Applies to Windows: [11](#), [10](#)



(Animation: askleo.com)

One of the more common problems computer users face over time is disk storage. The longer a machine has been in use, the less available disk space it is likely to have. Many things contribute to this, of course, ranging from the fact that newer software programs and updates assume larger and larger hard disks (and therefore are larger and larger themselves), to random files, programs, and whatnot accumulating on our machines.

Windows 10 and 11 provide a quick way to see

(Continued from page 8) Ask Leo

what's taking up disk space at a high level.

In the settings app, click on **System**. Then, in the left-hand list, choose the **Storage** item. Windows will perform a quick scan of the system drive (typically C:) to categorize how the disk space is currently being used. An example of the result is shown above.

This allows you to quickly determine what's taking up space or perhaps see that you have no problems.

If you have more than one drive, click on **View storage usage on other drives** to see their status.

If you need or want to dive deeper and get more specific results (or if you're running a version of Windows prior to Windows 10), there's always Tree Size for more detailed analysis.

Visit [Tip of the Day: Get a Quick Disk-Space Summary in Windows 10 and 11](#) for moderated comments, related links, and updates.

Have a question? An idea or request for a future Tip of the Day? Use [Ask Leo! for Patrons](#) to drop me a line.

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Tip of the Day: Search Google's Cache



(Animation: [askleo.com](#))

The "cache:" operator allows you to search Google's cached store of webpages rather than the live sites.

For example, searching for:

cache:[askleo.com](#)

will return Google's most recently cached copy of the *Ask Leo!* homepage.

Google's cache is useful in a number of different situations, the two most common being:

- A site is offline. The cache will allow you to view the content Google found the last time it scanned the site.
- A site has recently changed. The cache *may* allow you to see the prior version of the webpage in question.

There are a few important caveats.

The cache is only as current as Google's most recent scan, or "spider", of the site. While some sites, like *Ask Leo!*, are spidered often — perhaps once or even multiple times per day — others are scanned less frequently. Depending on what you're trying to accomplish, this can help or hinder your efforts.

It's also important to realize that the Google cache isn't a historical record. For that, you'll want to investigate the Wayback Machine at [archive.org](#).

Visit [Tip of the Day: Search Google's Cache](#) for moderated comments, related links, and updates.

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LCCUG

Backup Tools and Procedures

By Tom Burt, Vice President
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
<https://www.scscclb.com>
tomburt89134@cox.net



It's been a few years since I've written about tools and procedures for backing up your computer. With the growing popularity of smartphones and tablets, the need for backup has expanded to include those devices and traditional Windows, Macintosh, and Linux PCs. I can't stress enough how important it is to make regular backup copies of your data files and of your computer's entire hard drive. The backup landscape has changed somewhat, so it seemed a good time for an update.

What is Backing Up?

Backing up means accurately copying some or all of the data and software stored on your computer's storage drive. The copy is commonly stored on some type of external storage device that is not generally connected to your computer. The external device may be a USB hard drive or flash drive, a removable rack-mount hard drive, a folder or partition on another computer on your in-house network, or a server elsewhere on the Internet such as Dropbox, MS OneDrive, or Google Drive. A personal backup solution may include some or all of the above.

Why Back Up?

The reason to make backups is that (putting it politely) **BAD STUFF HAPPENS!** Computer equipment is highly reliable and may run for years without failing, but sooner or later, storage devices fail. More commonly, accidents (drops and spills, turning off the PC's power, power failures and power surges, and so forth) happen, causing a storage device or other device component to fail. A vast array of malicious software waits for any opportunity to attack, damage, or lock up saved data. There's also a fundamental human error – accidentally deleting a file or a folder.

Without a safe backup copy, data saved on your computer may be irretrievably lost. For ex-

ample, consider digital photos, videos, music, and financial / tax records. Also, if you had to start over with a new, blank hard drive, it would be relatively easy to reinstall Windows, Linux, or MacOS, but what about all the other programs, settings, and all your data?

Full Disk Backup – Cloning and Imaging

A **clone** of a hard drive is a complete copy to another hard drive. All information needed to boot and run the computer and all the programs, settings, and data are written on the backup hard drive. A clone fills up all the backup hard drive; only ONE clone can be written to the backup drive. To **restore** after the computer's internal hard drive has failed or been corrupted, one can either clone from the backup drive to the computer's (possibly new) internal drive or remove the failed drive and install the backup drive in its place. Cloning back should be the first choice on a laptop or all-in-one computer, provided the internal drive hasn't failed. Removing and replacing a laptop's internal drive is a challenging task.

An **Image** of a hard drive is a complete copy written to a single compressed file on another storage device. The compressed image file doesn't typically use as much space as the original data; only the actual space is backed up. Keeping several image files on a single external storage device is usually possible. As with a clone, the image file contains all the information needed to boot and run the PC, along with all the programs and data. However, the image file is not itself bootable.

A bootable recovery disk (CD or DVD) or flash drive is required to restore either a clone or an image file. All the primary backup tools include a tool to create bootable recovery media.

Popular Full Disk Backup Tools for Desktop Computers

There are several well-known software tools for backing up the hard drives of desktop PCs and Macs.

Acronis Cyber Protect Home (2023)

- <https://www.acronis.com/en-us/> or <https://ugr7.com/>

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(Continued from page 10) Backup Tools & Procedures...

- Integrated suite of backup, anti-virus, and ransomware protection.
- Excellent for backing up entire hard drives or partitions.
- Makes both "clones" and "images."
- Can "mount" a backup image as a logical drive.
- Can make bootable "Rescue Media" for both backup and restore.
- It can also back up individual files and folders.
- Single PC essential subscription lists at \$50 / year, family pack of 3 about \$80 / year

There are premium offerings, including cloud storage. User Group Relations (Gene Barlow) prices are 50% lower. <https://ugr7.com/>

CASPER by Future Systems Software

- <https://www.fssdev.com/products/casper/>
- Makes "images".
- Features bootable images.
- The single system price is about \$60; a family pack of 5 for \$80.
- Has a 30-day free trial.

Macrium Reflect 8 Home

- <https://www.macrium.com/products/home>
- The free version has been discontinued but continues to work on Windows 10 and 11.; you can subscribe to the "Home" edition for an annual fee of \$49.99 or buy a one-year license for \$70 (no support after the first year). They offer a 30-day free trial.
- Can back up entire hard drive or partitions.
- Makes both "clones" or "images."
- Can "mount" a backup image as a logical drive.
- Can make bootable "Rescue Media" for both backup and restore.

EaseUS ToDo Backup FREE

- <https://www.easeus.com/backup-software/tb-free.html>
- See feature comparison,
- Makes "images". You can "boot" from an image.
- You can upgrade to a fuller-featured "Home" edition for \$39.99 annually, one year free upgrade, or a "Lifetime Upgrades" edition for \$79.95.

I tried using EaseUS ToDo Backup to back up my C: drive to a USB 3 external 7200 RPM hard drive. It required 52 min to back up 300 GB of data. The resultant image size was 184.5 GB. A substantial number of MP4 files on the C: drive had already been compressed.

Windows 11 Backup (Windows 7) FREE (built-in to Windows 10 and 11)

- This backup tool is reached via:

Control Panel > All Control Panel Items > Backup and Restore (Windows 7)

- You can use it to back up key library folders or "Create a system image." Once there, you can add additional drives or partitions to the basic C: drive partition set.
- I set it up and let it run to make an image of my C: drive (300 GB of data). It ran for 92 minutes. The final image file size was 300 GB; there was NO compression.

Macrium Reflect Free Edition has been my favorite of the above offerings. It's fast, easy to use, and does everything I need for whole disk backup. And the price was right! However, I'm presently evaluating free and paid alternatives. Here's a link to a good article listing some free backup software tools:

<https://www.techradar.com/best/best-free-backup-software>. I'm disenchanted with the built-in Windows 7 backup. It's too slow, and the images aren't compressed. I'm also disenchanted that Acronis and Macrium will use an annual subscription model. EaseUS ToDo Backup Free edition looks promising as a replacement for the Macrium Reflect 8 Free edition.

File Backup Tools

Full disk backups are great, but users don't typically run them daily because they take time, and the backup drive has to be retrieved and connected to the computer. This creates a risk that data files that change may not be accurately reflected in the backup. Consider your saved email and contacts, financial and accounting files, and other documents and spreadsheets you may be working on.

Windows File History or MacOS Time Machine

One approach is to use an automated file backup tool that scans a designated set of folders at some specified time interval (say every hour). It makes a copy of any new or changed files to a backup storage device such as a flash drive, external hard drive, or a shared folder on another computer. I use File History, checking once an hour, to supplement full disk backups for specific key file folders.

Windows File Explorer or MacOS File Manager / Finder

For simple one-shot backups, you can still use the built-in file manager programs to select a set of files and copy them to an external flash drive, hard drive, or network-

shared folder.

Cloud Backup Tools

There are many free and paid cloud backup services. Most of these include an automatic sync tool that copies files from your computer to your private space on the cloud server. Here are some of the free ones:

(Continued on page 12)

(Continued from page 11) Backup Tools & Procedures...

Google Cloud (Google Drive) - FREE

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/my-drive>
- Requires a Google / Gmail account
- 15-17 GB of free cloud storage
- **Install Google Backup and Sync** app (Windows)
- Use Settings to specify a set of folders to be monitored and backed up to the Google Cloud whenever a change is detected (very similar to Windows File History)

Microsoft OneDrive - FREE

- <https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/>
- Requires a Microsoft Account
- 5 GB free (more if you've had a Microsoft ID for a long time). If you're subscribed to Microsoft 365 (the Office suite), you get 1 TB per license user, up to 6 TB in total.
- Syncs from a OneDrive folder on your PC or device to your OneDrive cloud storage.

Apple iCloud – FREE

- www.apple.com/icloud
- Requires an Apple ID (Account)
- 5 GB free, can add more space for a fee
- Built into all Apple devices, can install an App for Windows
- Syncs across all your devices

What About My Smart Phone or Tablet?

Many computer users now rely on a mobile device as their primary computer for communication, news, and entertainment, taking photos and video clips, and recording sound. What are the options for backing up mobile devices?

Android Phones and Tablets

If you have a Google account and have configured your device to link to it, you get quite a lot of automatic backup of files to your Google Drive cloud space. You will want to be connected to a WiFi router when this happens, or your Android device may use up a lot of your monthly data allotment.

You can also connect your Android device via a USB cable to your desktop computer and use the Windows File Manager or MacOS Finder to copy files from the mobile device to a folder on the desktop computer. You can also copy files from the desktop computer to the Android mobile device.

To fully back up all your Android device's data, you can purchase and install third-party backup Apps. Try a web search for **Android Full Backup** to see what's available.

Apple Phones and Tablets

If you have an Apple ID, all your devices, including iPhone, iPad, Mac, and Apple Watch, already have

built-in iCloud support and will back up data files to your iCloud private storage space on Apple's servers. If you have several Apple devices, a concern is using up your free 5GB allocation; you may have to buy extra space to cover backups from all your devices.

You can connect your iPhone or iPad to your PC or Mac via a USB cable and then use Apple's iTunes program to synchronize various file types between your mobile device and your desktop computer. This isn't quite as general as what Android offers, but it takes care of many file types. iTunes also provides an easy way to fully back up all the data on your Apple mobile device into a file on your desktop computer.

Having the iCloud backup enabled on your mobile device is a good idea. This takes care of frequently changing files. Use the iTunes full backup occasionally to ensure ALL your devices' files are backed up.

With these backups in place, if your phone or tablet is damaged, goes up in flames, or gets lost, you can replace the phone or tablet with relative ease, restore all your saved data files, and be back in business.

Clean Your Dirty Laptop



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After being used regularly for months or years, our laptops accumulate dust, grime, skin oils, sneezes, and who knows what else. Your laptop is most likely due for a cleaning, and I'm going to pass along some suggestions for how to do it effectively without harming this delicate piece of equipment.

You know your laptop is filthy. You can see the dirt and grime on your screen and keyboard. You might also be able to see grime accumulated on your trackpad. So, it's time for a cleaning.

A shining, newly cleaned laptop should be a joy to use; the keys are clean, and the screen is free of smudges and splatters. These cleaning suggestions might also be helpful if you buy a used laptop since the previous owner doesn't always leave it in pristine condition.

Your Supplies

You don't need much to clean a computer: rubbing alcohol, a mild dish detergent, soft lint-free cloths (microfiber cloths are ideal), Q-tips, and canned

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air. Ninety percent or higher isopropyl alcohol is what you want since it won't damage the internal components. And if you have some particularly embedded dirt, a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser (or other melamine sponge) can also work wonders. However, it should be an absolute last resort since it's abrasive and can leave permanent scratches.

Don't waste your money on specialty cleaners you see at Amazon or big box electronics stores like Best Buy. They work just fine but no better than what you already have at home.

Start With the Inside

Starting with that dirt on the keyboard and screen might be tempting, but you should start with the internals. Canned air will blow dust and dirt everywhere, so if you start cleaning the screen, you'll have to clean it again after you've used canned air. Start by blowing out the dust, then move on to the outside.

You shouldn't have to open your laptop to clean the inside. Turn off the laptop, unplug the power cable, and remove the battery if it pops out (removable batteries are becoming a thing of the past). Give it a quick burst away from the laptop to eliminate condensation, and then start blowing air into any cracks and crevices: the keyboard, the vents, and even the USB and other ports. Blow in short bursts since longer sprays can cause moisture to accumulate inside your computer. You can also damage the fans by making them spin too fast.

You probably won't see a significant change after doing this. The goal is to prevent dust buildup over time, which can cause your laptop to overheat and possibly spontaneously shut down. If you can see dust bunnies in the vents, you've let it go too long without a cleaning. If you see dust stuck behind the vent that you can't dislodge by blasting it with compressed air, consult your user manual to open the case. Be sure you remember which screws went where for the reassembly. Snap a picture or two of your laptop for reference before opening the case, and be super-organized with the screws as you remove them.

Smokers and pet owners should take special care to clean the inside often since you'll likely experience a much quicker buildup of dust, smoke, hair, and other dirt. Computers exposed to smokers can have their useful life cut by as much as half.

Wipe Down the Outside

Remember, when cleaning a laptop (or desktop)

computer, apply the cleaning product to the tool you're using to clean, NEVER directly onto the computer. So, grab your microfiber cloth, pour a little alcohol onto it, wring it out so it isn't dripping wet, and wipe down the surface. Cotton swabs and alcohol are helpful for the keyboard keys and the small spaces between them. (If there are marks that won't come off, you can try rubbing them with a Mr. Clean Magic Eraser or other cleaner very lightly, but again, they're mildly abrasive, which can alter the surface's finish.)

It may take a few passes to get all that grime off, but you should notice a dramatic difference once you do. If your laptop is particularly old, you may not be able to get rid of the shine on the keys; some of us may have worn down the top layer of plastic and even the letters on the keys. There's not much you can do about that.

You should be able to wipe fingerprints off your screen with a dry microfiber or soft terry cloth. If you need more cleaning power, a slightly damp cloth that has been thoroughly wrung out first can help. Some manufacturers, including Dell and Lenovo, even say you can use a 50:50 mixture of isopropyl alcohol and water to remove tough dirt. Avoid household cleaners with harsher chemicals like ammonia or Windex on the screen.

Get Rid of Bad Smells

Let's say you have a particularly terrible case of a gross laptop, and even after the above steps, your laptop still carries the essence of whatever it has been exposed to. I've seen many laptops that smelled like smoke, and getting rid of that is challenging or impossible. Cleaning the surface can help, but many of those smells may also be inside the computer. For that, you can turn to a natural deodorizer: charcoal. Don't go digging through your grill for briquettes! Cooking charcoal is different from activated charcoal. Activated charcoal is made with much more (micro) surface area to be more absorbent.

Another common household item is kitty litter. It's a great odor eliminator because most kitty litter formulas have activated charcoal to neutralize litter box smells.

Seal the laptop in a bag or closable bin with a cup or so of the activated charcoal or litter and leave it for at least 24 to 48 hours. If you don't have a cat, people also had good luck with diaper pail deodorizers, which are neat little packets of charcoal you can throw away when you're done. The longer you leave the computer in the bin, the better.