

Interface

Lorain County Computer Users Group
LCCUG.com (or) info@LCCUG.com
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2024

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**Tuesday
July 9, 2024
10:00 AM**

Ways to Supplement or Replace Your Current TV Viewing Options



*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 July 9, 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



During the meeting we will look at many opportunities to supplement or replace your current TV viewing options with sources that you may not know about. Discover free apps and options that you can view on your TV, PC or mobile device. Join us as we look at some of the many services available.

The term used to describe free streaming apps for TV viewing is typically "free ad-supported streaming TV" (FAST) services. These platforms offer a range of TV shows, movies, and other content at no cost to the viewer, funded primarily through advertising. Examples of FAST services include Pluto TV, Tubi, Roku Channel and Amazon's FreeVee.

I would like to explore AI (artificial intelligence) more in future meetings. I am intrigued by the idea of using such a Chatbot to keep one company – as a companion. The chatbot, CoPilot, suggested that these are the issues in doing so:

1. Unconditional Support: AI chatbots offer consistent and nonjudgmental support, which can be comforting for users. Unlike human friends who may have their own biases or limitations, AI companions are always available to listen and talk, providing a sense of companionship and understanding.
2. Reducing Isolation: For people who feel socially isolated, interacting with an AI chatbot can serve as a bridge to connect with others. [It provides an outlet for expression and engagement, even when face-to-face interactions are limited.](#)
3. Emotional Outlet: Chatbots allow users to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. This emotional outlet can be especially valuable for those who struggle to open up to others or lack close relationships.

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

However, it's essential to be aware of potential red flags. Some AI chatbots may lack genuine empathy or encourage harmful ideas. [Users should exercise caution and seek real human connections alongside their digital companions¹](#). Ultimately, the impact of AI chatbots on loneliness varies from person to person, and finding a healthy balance is crucial."

More to explore in future meetings.

Sandra Ruth
LCCUG President



**Tuesday
July 9, 2024**

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*Presented
By*

LCCUG Officers



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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

What's Changing and What's Not admin, 27 Jun 08:53 AM

I had a relative who was married several times in the middle part of the 20th century. The way I tracked her was through city directories. Her last name changed, but she lived in the same home despite having several husbands. If your ancestor is changing some things about themselves, think about what remains the same. That may be how you'll find them.



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

LCCUG
Director of Membership,
membership@lccug.com.



Executive Board Meeting Minutes

JUNE 4, 2024

The board Zoom video meeting for June was attended by Sandee Ruth, Micky Knickman and Pam Rihel.

Sandee and Micky reviewed members' status on dues.

Sandee will check for programs on the internet for programs we may use including "Tech for Seniors" and "Just Watch".

Sandee talked about the small amount of returns for the survey that was sent to our members. She was hoping more of our members would have responded.

Sandee finalized the contract with the Post Office box.

The July program will be Streaming Services.

Pam moved, Micky Seconded the meeting be adjourned.



General Meeting Minutes

JUNE 11, 2024

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

Sandee and Micky continued showing interesting programs they found on the Internet. This month it covered how to eliminate your land line and convert your phones using your cell phone. One of the conversions cost only \$37 to convert.

Next month the program will be "Streaming TV Services and Information."



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

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?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 Ways to Supplement or Replace Your Current TV Viewing Options

LCCUG

Genealogy Tip of the Day
<mjnrootdig@gmail.com>

What's Changing and What's Not
admin, 27 Jun 08:53 AM

I had a relative who was married several times in the middle part of the 20th century. The way I tracked her was through city directories. Her last name changed, but she lived in the same home despite having several husbands. If your ancestor is changing some things about themselves, think about what remains the same. That may be how you'll find them.

Before the Pond is Crossed
admin, 23 Jun 10:28 AM

For those with immigrant ancestors, it's tempting to start researching in the home country as soon as soon as it is learned the ancestor was born in a foreign country. The desire to connect with a past "across the pond" is understanda-

ble. However, researching the ancestor in the country of origin without knowing much about them is not the best approach. Completely researching the immigrant in the area of settlement may give additional clues as to the specific point of origin or the names of relatives and associates in the new country who also lived near the immigrant in the old country. All of this can make the research in the homeland more efficient.

Of course, sometimes all that research in the area of settlement may not provide you with the details needed to work on the ancestor in the country of origin. That's when it is advisable to make certain you've done all the homework in the area of settlement as possible—including sources which may not be easy to access or understand.



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– July 9, 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– July 9, 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

WATCH OUT FOR THESE TOP 10 TRAVEL SCAMS

You're standing at the airport carousel with that sinking feeling when every traveler but you seem to have collected their luggage and left. Many of us know that feeling. Is your suitcase lost or has someone stolen it?

This type of personal drama happens every day. Two million suitcases are lost in transit in the US every year. And with the summer vacation season now in full swing, it's just one of scores of travel hazards many of us worry about.

Maybe the airline will find that luggage and return it. But in some instances, it's sitting in the home of an airport or airline employee and you'll never see it again.

What a horrible way to start your vacation. But there are two important things you can do to reduce the anguish that follows: Don't pack valuable stuff in your checked-in baggage and hide a tracking device, like an Apple Air-Tag, inside it.

For example, in a recently-reported Florida incident (in the *Washington Post*), a missing suitcase stuffed with \$16,000 of tech equipment was traced by the owner via a tracking device to the home of an airport employee who had already sold some of the contents.

Sadly, this is just one of many scams and travel hazards vacationers face these days but, as with this example, there are lessons to be learned that can protect you.

LEARN ABOUT THESE TRAVEL SCAMS BEFORE YOU HIT THE ROAD OR TAKE TO THE AIR: INTERNET SCAMBUSTERS #1,124

Vacation travel is topmost in many people's minds at this time of year – more than 80% of us will be on the move.

But virtually around every corner, there are scammers waiting to steal your money, either directly from your pocket or through identity theft.

But in this week's issue, we'll tell you about the top 10 travel scams and the simple steps you can take to block them.

Let's get started...

With this in mind, here are some of the most common current travel scams and security risks, and the actions you can take to hopefully avoid them.

1. Free or cut-price vacation offers. Despite their best efforts, travel sites may still offer phony free accommodation or flights. But they're more likely to show up on social media ads, via spam emails, or through fake travel agents. Or they may be thinly disguised lures for timeshares (see below). Do your research. Only book rentals and hotels through legitimate sites, preferably those offering scam protection – and pay with your credit card.

2. Fake QR Codes. Those quick response codes you scan with your phone, often found near popular tourist sites, can lead to trouble, as we reported in issue #542. See [5 Ways to Avoid a QR Code Scam](#) for our tips.

3. Out-and-about tricksters. These include overpriced taxi rides (so, use ride-hailing services like Uber or Lyft or agree the fare before getting in); street performers and pickpockets (keep valuables secure and avoid physical contact); and dubious currency exchange (see [Foreign Currency Rip-off at Airport ATMs](#)). Also watch out for a new ATM scam where the cash dispenser has a sign saying it's not working but a helpful bystander directs you to another machine, which will steal your card details.

4. Bait-and-switch. You don't get what you thought you'd paid for. Instead, that advertised deal, like a hotel or excursion, is suddenly unavailable and you have to pay more for an alternative. Confirm it in writing first.

5. Overpriced or non-existent event tickets. Outdoor concerts and major sporting events (like the upcoming Paris Olympics) are a big attraction in summer and ticket prices already are likely high. Scalpers are everywhere.

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

Only buy your tickets from legitimate, reputable sources.

6. Fake tour guides. Often lurking near popular historic or famous locations, they may overcharge or simply disappear while you're looking around. Book your tour through a reputable organization, like the travel company you're with or an agency you've already researched.

7. Luggage theft. Happens often at the airport while you're distracted or in the trunk of what you thought was a taxi, which drives away once the driver loads your suitcases. Pay attention at all times and keep all your valuables and documents in a shoulder bag or other carry-able.

8. International travel document scams. Usually via websites that charge high fees to secure a passport or visa, or maybe a supposed international driving permit. Get your passport and visa through government offices or via a reputable travel agency. And get driving permits through AAA.

9. Timeshare scams. High-pressure salespeople pester you at the airport or your cheap hotel with a deal that involves sitting through a monotonous timeshare presentation you find difficult to escape. There's a reason why timeshare owners find it difficult or impossible to offload their costly investment. See our issue #439 for timeshare scam tips: [Watch Out for "Legal" Vacation Timeshare Scams](#).

10. Risky Wi-Fi and charging ports.

Almost everyone carries some sort of mobile device these days, usually cell phones, but public networks can leave you open to having your device hacked, while public charging ports could load malware onto your device. In public spots, use a virtual private network (VPN) to keep your communications private and avoid charging stations by carrying a power-pack. We covered these issues respectively here: [Do You Need a VPN \(Virtual Private Network\) for Your](#)

Internet Safety? and Data Theft Fear for Mobile Charging Stations.

One final tip: Be wary of any vacation activity where you're asked to provide photos of yourself or other confidential information. Make sure you know exactly who is requesting it and why.

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Tip of the Day: Clearing the Print Queue Using a Command File



I discussed command files, also known as "batch" files, in [an earlier tip](#). They're convenient ways to string together several command prompt statements into a single file that can be run as one command.

Today's example comes from a recently updated Ask Leo! article on [clearing the print queue](#). Run Notepad and enter the following three lines into it:

```
net stop spooler
del /Q %systemroot%\system32\spool\*. *
net start spooler
```

Save the file as "clearq.cmd" in a folder of your choosing. (Be sure to change the "Save as type" to "All documents" or Notepad will add a ".txt" to the filename and it won't work.)

Now right-click on the file and click on **Run as**

(Continued from page 8) Ask Leo

administrator. Change the directory to the directory in which you saved "clearq.cmd", type "clearq" followed by Enter, and the commands listed above will be run one after the other.

The result? A much easier approach to clearing your print queue.

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Another Day. Another Scam. Don't Fall for it.

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, Central Kentucky Computer Society

<https://newsite.ckcs.org/>
lextown77@mymetronet.net

I wonder how many Americans this very minute are being taken for a ride and giving away their personal information to a criminal. You might be surprised. At all hours of the day, people are turning over credit card numbers and more to thugs.

As Aura writes, "When Mary Anne May received a text from USPS on the day after Mother's Day, she assumed a family member sent

her a gift that she wasn't home to receive. But when she clicked on the link in the text to re-schedule the delivery, and was asked for her credit card number, she started to get suspicious.

While Mary Anne's caution was well-founded, millions of Americans have fallen victim to package delivery scams like this one."

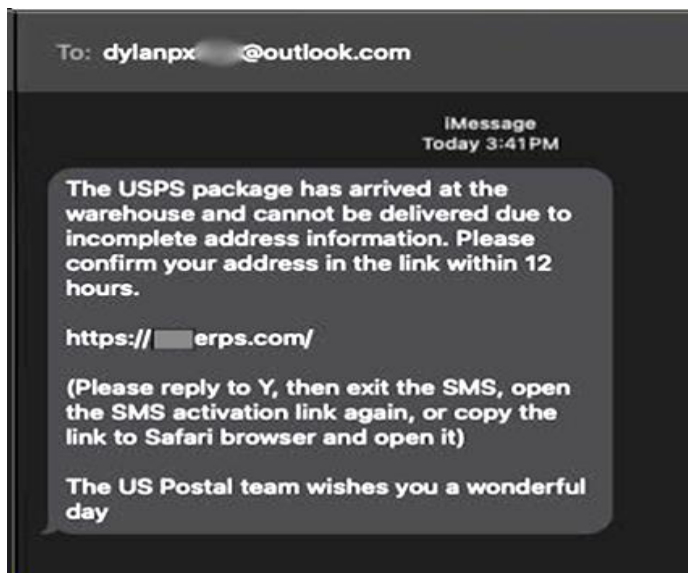
In recent days, I've received a number of bogus text messages on my phone. I simply report them as junk and delete them.

Here's an example. The bogus text message alerts me that the US Postal Service is holding a package at its "warehouse" and cannot deliver it because it lacks complete street address details. Look who supposedly sent the text. It's from a guy named Dylan. This is the first red flag. Think about it. USPS will never text you using a bogus email address starting with "dylan."

Second, the letter carrier has been delivering mail and Amazon packages to my house for years. USPS doesn't have my address? Then who's the guy who's been delivering junk mail to my mailbox for years?

Third, the USPS doesn't have "warehouses." They don't use that phrase. The USPS has distribution centers. And I'm very glad to know that the bogus US Postal team is wishing me a wonderful day! Finally, the USPS doesn't use bogus web addresses, as shown in the text. A legitimate message would read `usps.com` or something similar.

If I click on the link shown in the text, I'll get a website where I can easily enter my credit card number to be scammed by Dylan or whoever is trying to turn me into a victim. Hey Dylan, have a wonderful day!





Clean Your Dirty Laptop

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
<https://www.scscc.club>
tomburt89134@cox.net

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 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 sur-

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(Continued from page 10) Clean Your Dirty Laptop

face. 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.

Scambusters.org

SOCIAL SECURITY SCAMS HAVE BECOME AN EPIDEMIC, GOVERNMENT SAYS: INTERNET SCAMBUSTERS #865

Social Security imposter scams have now reached epidemic proportions in the US, outstripping IRS impersonation scams for the first time, according to the federal government. Some 76,000 complaints valuing losses at more than \$19 million were filed in the 12 months prior to April 2019. The comparable IRS sum was \$17 million.

But it gets worse. Almost half of those complaints came in the final two months of that period, signaling criminal activity on a huge and growing scale. That can only happen because the scams actually work.

And that \$19 million accounts for a tiny 3.4 percent of the complaints. The rest relate to reports of Social Security number (SSN) thefts, which can subsequently be used for identity theft.

The median or midpoint among individual losses comes out at around \$1,500 per victim, which is about four times the amount lost in other types of fraud.

An indication of the scale comes from the 55+ age group organization AARP. Its director of fraud victim services says a massive 94 percent of calls to its Helpline are about Social Security scams.

The current main scam comes in a call from an impostor claiming the victim's SSN has been used in a crime and so it has been suspended. Sometimes, they already have the individual's

(Continued on page 12)

SSN. If not, they ask for it as "confirmation."

PAY A FEE

Then, in order to reactivate or unfreeze the account, the victim will have to pay a fee, usually in gift cards or a virtual currency like Bitcoin.

Often, crooks also doctor your caller ID so it looks like the call is genuinely coming from the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The calls may also be automated (robocalls) but invite recipients to "press 1" to speak to an SSA official.

This can all seem pretty convincing except for one major factor - the SSA does not suspend Social Security numbers. Period. Nor do they call and demand money. So, if you get one of these calls, you can safely hang up.

Other variations of Social Security scam tricks aimed at stealing your info include calls or emails saying that you're entitled to a refund; you need to "update your account information"; the SSA computers are down; you need to enroll in a new program; they need you to answer some security questions such as giving your mother's maiden name. It's all about identity theft.

SNAIL MAIL VERSION

Another scam even arrives by regular snail mail. It's a letter that offers additional security for your Social Security account - but, of course, there's a form to fill in with all your personal info.

Right now, there's an additional scam threat to Social Security recipients. Due to an oversight, the SSA actually "forgot" to deduct Medicare-related premiums from 250,000 Social Security payments for the first five months of this year. Yes, they really did this.

That means, you may get a bill from a Medicare Advantage or drug plan insurer for the

outstanding sums. But because the issue is potentially confusing, scammers will almost certainly use it to try to lever more money out of older folk.

If you get one of these bills, verify that the money genuinely hasn't been deducted from your Social Security check. Then download this explanation of what to do from Medicare.

ACTION LIST

Here are some other things to know to avoid falling victim to this scam:

1. Note that the SSA never emails requests for personal information.
2. Nor does it visit homes without making a prior appointment.
3. Never provide personal, financial and other confidential information in response to an unsolicited call. Any such request is a scam.
4. Don't wire money to someone you don't know, even if they say they're from the SSA.
5. Don't be fooled by callers who already have your SSN or the last four numbers.
6. Don't trust your caller ID.
7. Ignore phone threats. That's not the way government departments operate.
8. Securely protect and store your SSN and card.
9. If you're in any way concerned the call might be genuine, call the SSA on 1-800-772-1213 or 1-800-269-0271 -- or contact your local Social Security office.
10. Stay in touch and learn about the latest tricks from Scambusters - and please share this report with friends and family.

If we're too late with this warning and you already believe you're a Social Security scam victim, file a report at <https://oig.ssa.gov>

Unplug Your Laptop. The Battery Will Thank You.



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Unplug your laptop. Stop plugging it into the wall. You are killing your battery. That's the Cliff Notes version of an article published by Gizmodo. This also applies to iPads and smartphones. These devices were made to run on batteries.

Here's how Gizmodo explains it. "Do you want to be chained to an outlet for the rest of your life? Of course not. That's why you got a laptop in the first place. Somewhere down the line, many of us got the idea that our laptops should always be plugged in to improve their performance. This is a myth that's slowly killing your laptop. Once your laptop is charged, you need to unplug it, or you might be tethered to the wall forever."

If your tech devices are constantly plugged into the wall, the batteries will die much faster than if you unplug and use battery power. Gizmodo spoke to Kent Griffith, an assistant professor at the University of San Diego in California. Here's his warning: "When your laptop battery is sitting in this worst condition – 100% charge – for weeks or months at a time, that can be pretty damaging to it...So when you take it off and expect it to last for 8 or 10 hours, it might only give you half of what you expect because it degraded a lot during that time."

The article notes that Apple's newest M3 MacBooks sport 18-hour battery lives. But if you keep them plugged in constantly, the battery life in those laptops will be cut in half in only a few short years.

Save Your Apple Watch Battery Courtesy: Apple Inc.

Got an Apple Watch? Tom's Guide recom-

mends you start by using a setting engineered by Apple to make its smartwatch batteries last longer. It's called Optimized Charging and helps keep your Apple Watch battery healthy. Plenty of us are overcharging the batteries by leaving the watch plugged in after the batteries are fully charged.

You can switch to Optimized Charging to protect your Apple Watch battery on all models running watchOS 7 and later. On a new Apple Watch, Optimized Charging is automatically turned on. But if you have an older Apple Watch or it's turned off, here's how to activate it, according to Tom's Guide:

- Open Settings
- Open the battery settings menu
- Select battery health
- Use the green slider to turn on Optimized Battery Charging. If you own an Apple

Watch Ultra, you can use Optimized Charge Limit instead, which stops, instead of pauses, the charging of your watch.

Here's how Apple explains Optimized Battery Charging. "When the feature is turned on, your watch delays charging past 80% in certain situations. The watch's battery level remains between 75% and 80% in these situations.

Your watch uses on-device machine learning to learn your daily charging routine, so Optimized Battery Charging activates only when your watch predicts it will be connected to a charger for an extended period of time. The algorithm aims to ensure that your Apple Watch is still fully charged when you remove it from the charger.

