

Interface

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



2026

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**Tuesday
August 11, 2026**



We will not be having our usual meeting in August. Instead we will gather for lunch at Olde Town Pizza in Amherst at 11 am. On Tuesday, August 11

Olde Towne Pizza, 195 Cleveland Ave
Please email membership@lccug.com and let us know you can come. We want to plan on how many seats to save.

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

**This gathering will be in person only.
Tuesday August 11, 2026 at 11.00 am.**

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



A Word From Our President



I wanted to take a minute to talk about the virtues of FAST TV (Free Ad-Supported TV) that is available over the internet. I use these services on my TVs that are connected to the internet using media streaming devices like a Roku Stick or Firestick.

Recently, the Kim Komando newsletter (Free-for-all TV) and Luke Bouma of Cord Cutters News discussed this https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_pLSrRCM3J0

Frequently referred to FAST (Free Ad-Supported Streaming TV). Nielsen's latest ratings reports that the (free) Roku Channel is America's most-watched free streaming service, pulling more viewing time than Tubi and Pluto TV.

The big three, and what each does best:

- The Roku Channel: The heavyweight. 500+ live channels plus thousands of free movies and shows. No Roku device needed. Grab the app on your phone or smart TV, or watch on the web. Allows you to buy paid content but that's optional.
- Tubi: The library. More than 300,000 movies and shows, plus 400+ originals. No credit card, no subscription, no excuses.
- Pluto TV: The cable clone. Hundreds of channels that play old-school, channel-surfing style. Crime marathons, Yellowstone reruns, food TV. Perfect background viewing, zero decision fatigue.

LCCUG Officers For 2026

President	Sandee Ruth president@lccug.com
Secretary	Don Hall secretary@lccug.com
Treasurer	Micky Knickman treasurer@lccug.com
Newsletter Editor	Pam Rihel newsletter@lccug.com
Director of Education	Neil Higgins education@lccug.com
Statutory Agent	Sandra Ruth statutory_agent@lccug.com

If you're not familiar with these, try them out. You may find you don't need to subscribe to services such as Netflix, Peacock+, and other video-on-demand services.

August 11, 2026 meeting/lunch

I hope to see many of you at this event. (see the front of this newsletter and the webpage for details). Please RSVP at membership@lccug.com

Sandra Ruth
LCCUG President

LCCUG

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,
membership@lccug.com.

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>

**Tuesday
August 11, 2026**

**We will gather for lunch at Olde Town Pizza
in Amherst at 11 am.
On August 11**

Please let one of the officers know if you can attend. We need to know how many are attending so we can let Olde Town Pizza know how to set up for our group:
membership@lccug.com



Genealogy Tip of the day

Michael John Neill Rootdig.com
Genealogy Tip of the Day
July 22, 2026

What are Your Genealogy Goals

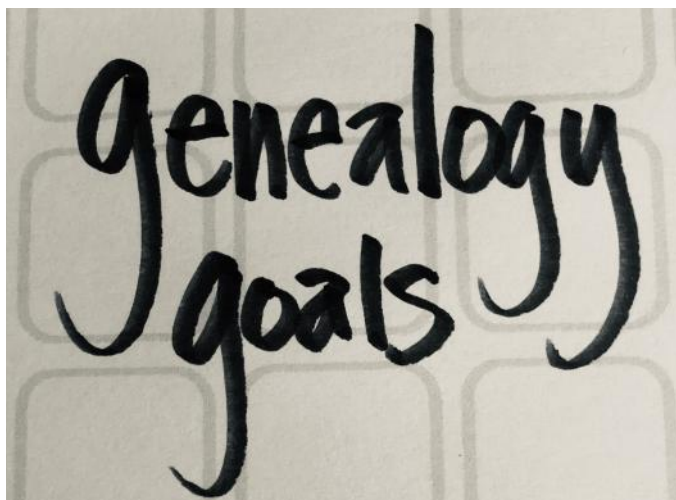
Researching for information on your ancestors and distant relatives can be a lifelong passion. It's a great way to learn about your personal connection to history and perhaps to discover something about yourself as well.

But do you have any genealogy goals other than continuing to search? Is it proving or disproving a family story? Is it identifying who is in that old picture? Is it tracking as many ancestors as you can? Is it locating as many descendants as you can of a specific set of ancestors?

Think about what your genealogy goal is and how you are working to achieve it.

And it's ok to just want to locate more information—there's fun in that too.

But sometimes a little direction is helpful. What are your genealogy goals?



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Executive Board Meeting Minutes

JULY 6, 2026

The July officers meeting was held July 6 at Old Towne Pizza in Amherst with Sandee, Don, Micky and Pam in attendance.

A discussion was held with regard to an eating place for the membership. It was decided Old Towne Pizza would be a good fit.

AARP Fraud Watch Network

Did you know that AARP makes available free articles on preventing scams & fraud? Visit this site for more information:

<https://www.aarp.org/membership/benefits/finance/fraud-watch-network/>

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, Don Grim, 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

JULY 14 , 2026

President Sandee Ruth called the Hybrid meeting to order. A motion by Micky was made to accept the minutes as shown in the July issue of the **INTERFACE**, seconded by Ellen Wadge. Motion passed.

Sandee and Micky Presented a program, "More Fun & Interesting Topics & Videos" which covered topics from the 20 links they had chosen from the Internet, many from Ask Leo. One covered when are subjects case sensitive on the internet? The safe answer is use lower case when in doubt.



Member of Association of Personal Computer Users Groups

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

How Do I Tell If an Email Was Written by AI?

The news isn't good.

by [Leo A. Notenboom](#)

Question: *I got an email that smells fishy. Something isn't right, but I can't put my finger on it. Could it have been written by AI?*
Sure.

It could also have been written by a human. While there might be subtle clues in today's AI-generated text, as I keep saying, it's only getting better.

AI or Human written?

You can't really tell anymore. AI writing is getting too good. Old clues, like perfect grammar or odd wording, are fading. Don't judge an email by how well it's written. Judge it by what it asks you to do. Your scam detector still matters most.

Using AI to craft AI

I've never had AI craft an email for me, so I asked Claude (using the Fable 5 model¹):

What's a good prompt to you to have you write a solicitation email for me? Say, a prompt to get you to write a message to someone I want to hire?

It responded with:

Claude (Fable 5)

The key is giving me the specifics I'd otherwise have to guess. A good prompt covers who, what, why them, and what happens next.

Write an email to [name], a [their role/background], asking if they'd be interested in [the role/project]. I found them via [how you know of them — referral, their work, LinkedIn]. Key selling points: [pay/flexibility/interesting work/etc.]. Tone: [warm and casual / professional]. Keep it under 150 words, and end by asking for [a 15-minute call / their rate / a reply].

It also included an example version of that prompt with the placeholders filled in. I then asked:

Write an email to Sally, an unemployed retail worker, asking if they'd be interested in a work-from-home technical support job. I found them online via their Linked In profile. Key selling points: flexible hours, work from home, interacting with a wide variety of people. Tone: warm and casual. Keep it under 150 words, and end by asking for a reply.

Here's what it came up with:

Claude (Fable 5)

Subject: Work-from-home tech support role — thought of you

Hi Sally,
I came across your LinkedIn profile and wanted to reach out. I'm hiring for a work-from-home technical support position, and your retail background caught my eye — helping customers troubleshoot problems face-to-face is a lot of what this job is, just over the phone and chat instead.

A few things you might like about it: flexible hours you can shape around your life, no commute since it's fully remote, and plenty of variety — you'd be talking with all kinds of people every day.

If that sounds interesting, I'd love to tell you more about the role and hear what you're looking for. Just hit reply and we'll go from there.

Best,
Leo

About 125 words. Note how the retail experience gets reframed as a genuine qualification — that's the "why them" doing its work.

If you got that mail out of the blue, would you think it had been written by a human?

If you were looking for a job, would you reply?

The uncanny valley applies to writing

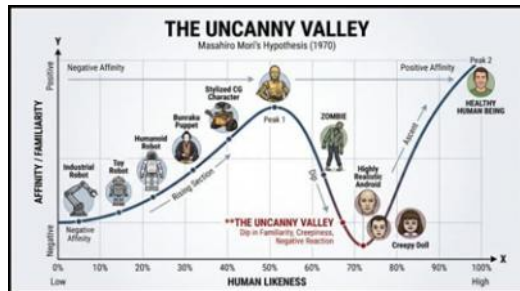
The "uncanny valley" typically applies to our

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(Continued from page 5) How do I Tell if an E-mail was Written by AI

visual perception of the human form. If it's obviously human, that's great. If it's obviously not human, that can be great, cute, or disturbing, but it's clear what it is.

When it's not-quite-human and not-quite-not-human, things get weird and "uncanny".



The uncanny valley. Click for larger image. (Image: Google Flow)

The same concept can be applied to writing. Bad writing is clearly bad. This can be for a variety of reasons, ranging from having a different native language to having poor writing skills.

What I'll call "natural" writing is also usually obvious. It typically has a style, a rhythm, and perhaps a collection of nuances unique to the writer, but it reads as normal or natural.

Read that email above again. Does it read as normal and natural?

My take is that while I see it somewhere near the right side of the uncanny valley, it's close enough to fool most people, especially people for whom English is not their native tongue. I might think twice about it, but a) it's on my radar to keep that kind of thing in mind, and b) I write for a living these days.

AI has entered the chat. And the email. And the voice call. And the video. It's making scams even harder to detect.

Obvious signs are disappearing

It used to be fairly obvious. AI didn't use contractions ("I am" instead of "I'm"), for example. The writing was robotic in tone and terminolo-

gy.

Even now, in our examples above, AI seems to use the em-dash ("—") more often than a natural writer would.

Even now, in our examples above, AI seems to use the em-dash ("—") more often than a natural writer would.

Yet AI continues to improve. Those and other signs are slowly disappearing in AI-generated text.

Perfection could be a sign

Very few people write perfectly. Even those of us who do it for a living often make mistakes.² Usually, those mistakes are infrequent and subtle, but they're there.

AI-generated text typically doesn't include errors. It's one of the reasons overseas scammers love using it, because what was once a clear sign of a scam — broken English — is now easily avoided.³ The result is messages in grammatically perfect English.

I'm tempted to say *unnaturally* perfect, but I don't want to offend those humans among us who naturally write 100% accurately.

So, it's perhaps a sign. For now. It wouldn't surprise me if AI were to begin to introduce natural errors, either on its own or at the instruction of whoever's using it.

Does it really matter?

AI usage is controversial. But at the end of the day, does it truly matter whether AI was used? Ultimately, it's just a tool, after all.

The content of the message matters more.

A scam is a scam, no matter how well it's written or who wrote it. We still need to rely on our [manure](#) detectors when reading any message. Yes, we've perhaps lost one signal: proper English is no longer a sign of legitimacy, but was it ever really something you could rely on entirely? Of course not.

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At the other end of the spectrum, if a message moves you, speaks to you, or informs you in some significant way, does the possible use of AI dampen the message? I know some will say yes, but my take is no. Something that speaks to me speaks to me regardless of the source.⁴

Do this

Do not over-rely on how a message is written to determine whether it's legit or not. Scammers have access to AI, as do normal people. Similarly, don't rely on imperfection as a sign either way.

And don't over-fixate on whether or not AI was used. As controversial as it may be, it's just another tool that anyone can use for good or evil.

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Scambusters.org

Pop-Up Ad Safety Tips: Scambusters #1,234

Pop-up ads can show up quickly, but so can online scams. Many websites use pop-ups to promote newsletters, discounts, or other important messages. However, cybercriminals also use fake pop-up messages to trick people into clicking on harmful links, installing unwanted software, or sharing personal information. Learning to spot



the difference can help you stay safe online.

Pop-Up Ad Safety: How to Recognize Legitimate Ads and Avoid Scams

Pop-up ads are incredibly annoying! There's really no polite way to say it. If you are using any electronic device, you can pretty much expect a pop-up ad to appear.

Pop-up ads are small windows that appear on websites. They may advertise something, warn you about a virus, or ask you to claim a prize. While some pop-up ads are harmless, others try to trick you into clicking a harmful link. It's important to know how to identify the deceptive ones, block them, and respond if something goes wrong. This can help protect your device and personal data.

A Brief History of Pop-Up Ads

Pop-up ads were invented in the late 1990s by Ethan Zuckerman, a web developer at Tripod.com. He created them to show ads separately from the content they relate to, so advertisers wouldn't feel embarrassed about where their ads appeared. This format spread quickly because it was hard to ignore, making it very popular with advertisers.

By the early 2000s, pop-ups became so common and annoying that browser developers added ad blockers into their software. Despite this, pop-up ads did not disappear; they simply changed over time.

Who Uses Pop-Up Ads?

Pop-up ads are used by various organizations:

- Legitimate businesses use them to promote sales, collect newsletter sign-ups, or offer discount codes.
- News and media websites use them to ask visitors to subscribe or turn off ad blockers.
- Nonprofits use pop-ups to ask for donations or gather petition signatures.
- Cybercriminals and scammers use fake pop-ups to spread malware, steal personal information, or extort money.

Are pop-up ads mandatory on websites?

No, pop-up ads are optional. Website owners decide to use them because they can grab attention or help boost sales. No law or rule

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(Continued from page 7) Pop-up Ads Safty Tips...

requires a website to show pop-up ads.

How to Spot a Deceptive Pop-Up Ad

Not all pop-ups are harmful, but some try to trick or hurt you. Watch for these warning signs:

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How to Spot a Deceptive Pop-Up Ad

Not all pop-ups are harmful, but some try to trick or hurt you. Watch for these warning signs:

If a pop-up shows any of these warning signs, do not click anything inside it, not even the close button. Close the tab on your browser or shut down your browser.

Do Pop-Up Ads Work Differently on Mobile Devices?

Mobile users often face extra challenges with pop-ups.

On desktop or laptop computers, pop-ups usually open in a separate window, which makes them easier to see and close. Most desktop browsers come with pop-up blockers that stop many of these windows from opening.

On smartphones, pop-ups can be trickier. They often look like full-screen alerts or notifications, making it hard to tell them apart from real messages. The small screen size also makes it easy to accidentally tap on a link. Many mobile pop-ups encourage users to download apps, which can sometimes contain malware.

To handle suspicious pop-ups, the advice is the same no matter the device. Avoid clicking, close the window or tab, and clear your browser if needed.

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ScamBusters at
<http://www.scambusters.org>*



Adding Sight to Sound

By Don Grim, Editor, Computer Users of Erie
April 2026 issue of the CUE Newsletter

<http://www.cuerie.com>
grimcyber@yahoo.com

It used to be, during the 1970's or earlier, you would listen to music without any visuals. Anything you happen to see while listening to music is in your mind, from your own dreams or imagination, and it's still a nifty visual because it matches what you interpret from the music.

However, then came MTV in the early 1980's and certain songs were expected to have a visual, a "music video" on TV, to try to help it become a hit.

Having a visual with a song (a music video) is a step beyond just lyrics and music. It can add even more magic to music! In some cases, it is nice to create your own music video so it matches your interpretation. Also, a useful addition is to include lyrics for viewing in a music video. I had not designed a music video before, so I checked into it. I looked at Microsoft PowerPoint for Windows and Google Slides for a Chromebook, but I was not comfortable with either. With more time, I may have liked that better, but I tried other programs. I didn't want anything fancy, just a slideshow with a song playing in the background.

I tried NCH PhotoStage Slideshow Software, and it worked well for me. I used the free version for personal home use, which is available for a Chromebook. A free version is also available for Windows or Mac computers.

I didn't know much about making a music video, so I faked it and fumbled along.

Another term for that is "self-learning". In the past, that would involve a book, but now there is Google and AI to help answer your questions as you learn.

(Continued on page 9)

I decided to create my first music video for the first song that I produced through AI, my “Back to Woodsfield” song. You can read how I created that song and hear the song at:

www.mathisapath.com/DonSunoSongs.html

My first music video for that song, using PhotoStage, was a flubbed failure! The video ran, but the screens looked bad and grainy, like they had weathered through a storm, and the song did not play in the video. So, I looked at it further and found it defaulted to a low screen resolution. I set it at a higher resolution. I had added the MP3 audio song at PhotoStage, but I had not yet slid it over to the work area at the bottom of the screen.

After the above adjustments, I had a successful music video! The pictures were sharp rather than dull, and the song played in the background. So, in a nutshell, all I needed to create the music video was to add pictures and the song to the PhotoStage program, set the seconds for each picture to play on screen, and export it to an MP4 video file. I also saved the project. From there, I went to youtube.com and uploaded the MP4 file so the music video can be viewed by almost anyone at:

<https://youtu.be/2JBhLld-ur0>

To find pictures, I had some of my own, and I could search for royalty-free ones on Pixabay.com and Unsplash.com. I cropped some of the pictures to make them a little bit better to use. I could have edited the screens in PhotoStage, but I found it more comfortable to create each screen first as a page in Microsoft Word, including lyrics at the bottom of each page. I then saved the Word file as a PDF file. Then I went to www.smallpdf.com, which allowed me to convert each page of the PDF to a JPG. You can do the same conversion at www.ilovepdf.com. Those JPG files are the images I added to each screen in PhotoStage.

With hindsight, it probably would have been better to use landscape screens instead of por-

trait screens and to use a larger, more readable font for the lyrics.

It's nice to add your own selected pictures to a song, turning it into a music video of your choosing. It gives a whole new meaning to seeing what you hear and hearing what you see!

But, I'm not planning to add any other senses to a song, like vibrating touch (abrupt bass guitar), a smell to a song, a taste to a song, or even subliminal telepathy!

Attention-Attention

Join LCCUG for a lunch get together.



We are hoping to have a nice get together at Olde Town Pizza on Tuesday August 11, 2026, locate at: 195 Cleveland Ave, Amherst. Email membership@lccug.com if you will be joining us.

