

April 2015

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“JOIN US FOR FUN AND LEARNING AT CROSSVILLE’S COMPUTER CLUB”

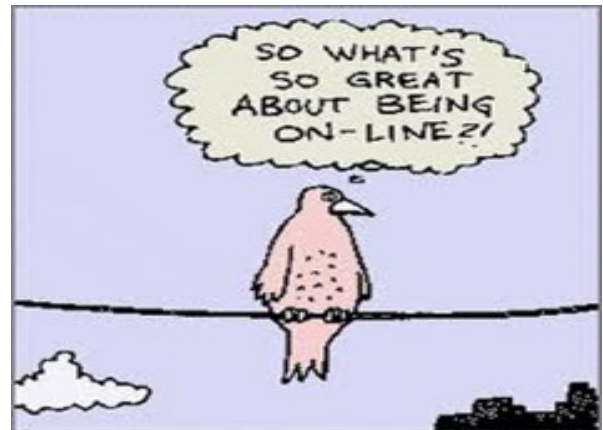
Volume 21, Issue 4

This Month’s Meetings

Photo Editing Workshop
Thursday, April 9 at 1:00 P.M.
At FFG Library Bldg.

General Meeting
Monday, April 20 at 6:00 P.M.
At 127 S. Senior Center

Plateau Photography Club
Thursday, April 16 at 1:00 P.M.
At FFG Library Bldg.



April Program Topic

Learn how to protect yourself and your computer from scams and identify theft.

Bob Willis, one of our club directors, will present a program to help you prevent identity theft, with emphasis on protecting your computer.

He will introduce the Fraud Watch Network, a free service provided by AARP that provides local and national scam alerts, a website with lots of fraud identification and prevention information, and the Fraud Fighter Call Center to help you spot and report fraud.

Learn about new software and other ways to protect your computer from Malware and unwanted software.

Every 2 seconds someone’s identity is stolen. Last year 13.1 million Americans were victims of identity theft. Identity theft, investment fraud and other scams cost Americans \$18 billion last year alone.

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“FREE” Table

We have set up a table at our member meetings to share our “extra” goodies with other club members. If you have something to give away, bring it in and put it on the FREE table. It’s first come, first served. If you see something you want, help yourself.
Guest fees

Join the Club!

Anyone interested to attend the general meeting or any of the SIG meetings as a guest will be charged \$3.00 per person for any or all meetings in that month. Afterwards, you are encouraged to become a member of the Plateau PC Users Group, and the guest fee will be applied towards your membership dues. A significant portion of our dues goes toward a college scholarship for local high school seniors. Our Club cannot exist without you, the members.

Membership Dues

Our annual dues are now payable July 1st of each year. Annual dues are \$24 per single person / \$30 per family starting 7/1/2014.with partial years dues as follows:

Join Date	1st Qtr. 2015	2nd Qtr. 2015	3rd Qtr. 2015	4th Qtr. 2015
Single:	\$12	\$6	\$24	\$18
Families:	\$15	\$7	\$30	\$22

Student memberships (21 and under) are \$10 annually. Corporate memberships are \$30 a year for the first two memberships and \$10 a year for each additional membership from the same company. Contact the PPCUG Treasurer (931) 707-3677 for pro-rated dues of these types of memberships.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCLAIMER

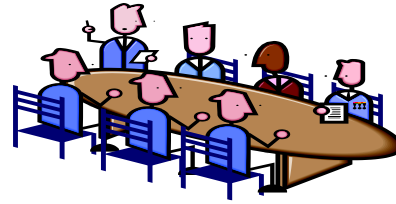
All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible consumer, it is up to you to discuss, before retaining a member, any and ALL charges for repair services and time consuming tutorial activities.

It is not the desire of this Board of Directors to set fees for individuals for services rendered, nor the responsibility to intervene between members who enter into a contract among themselves

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Photo Editing Workshop	Ed Thornblade	(931) 456-6020
Plateau Photography Club	Jim Mansfield	(931) 484-6920

Up Coming May 2015 Meeting

The next General Meeting of the
PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP
Will be on May 18 at **6:00 P.M.**
at 127 S. Senior Center

New Members

Gregg Kleinwachter

Classes

Please send ideas for new classes to Alan Baker
(ambaker@citlink.net)

Cool Tips & Sites

Right-click everything

At first glance Windows 7 bears a striking resemblance to Vista, but there's an easy way to begin spotting the differences - just right-click things.

Right-click an empty part of the desktop, for instance, and you'll find a menu entry to set your screen resolution. No need to go browsing through the display settings any more.

Right-click the Explorer icon on the taskbar for speedy access to common system folders: Documents, Pictures, the Windows folder, and more.

And if you don't plan on using Internet Explorer then you probably won't want its icon permanently displayed on the taskbar. Right-click the icon, select 'Unpin this program from the taskbar', then go install Firefox, instead.

PPCUG ISP

We wish to thank the following for providing
ISP connections:

Frontier for DSL at the :
127 Senior Center, Crossville, TN

News of the Special Interest Groups

The PPCUG sponsors several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) tailored to meet the varied needs of our many members. Each SIG is a small group whose leader prepares material for presentation and encourages open discussion and questions. We urge you to attend the SIGs and hope you will find one or more of interest to you. Ideas for additional groups are welcome, as are volunteers to form and lead new SIGs.

Plateau Photography Clubs

Note location and date changes :

A photo editing workshop is held at 1:00 PM at the Fairfield Glade Library Bldg. on the second Thursday of each month. Members meet to discuss & demonstrate various editing software programs available to enhance their photographs. The SIG leader is Ed Thornblade.

The Photography Club, a PPCUG SIG, meets the Third Thursday of each month at the Fairfield Glade Library Bldg. at 1:00PM. Topics vary each month but we show and discuss member's photos each month. The SIG leader is Jim Mansfield.

The new Photo Club/SIG website

The new Photo Club/SIG website is now up. Access to it is through the PPCUG website, using the "Photo Club" navigation link at the top of each PPCUG page. I think that this is a big improvement, and could not have been done without the work of Dallas Richards.

PPCUG Website

Visit our website at www.PPCUGinc.com. The Learning Center class schedule and Gazette are all available on our web site.

Send your comments and suggestions to the
Webmaster, Alan Baker
Webmaster@ppcuginc.com (931) 788-2201

General Meeting Minutes March 16, 2015
AARP Tax Preparation Program (Bob Willis presenter)

This particular meeting was a surprise! The surprise was that almost nobody attended. In the past this subject has been well received and well attended. It was felt that several factors contributed to keep people away, not the least of which was the spectacular weather and the fact that many were still trying to recover from the recent major ice storm. Most folks are still trying to dig out, clear debris and just plain get back to normal and this was one of their first opportunities to do so.

The beginning of the meeting was delayed for almost forty minutes on hopes of more people showing up but that did not prove successful. During the delay Carl Nordeen, was able to help a newly joining club member Gregg Kleinwachter, with a “blue screen of despair” problem on this persons recently purchased window 8, touch screen laptop. In just a few minutes Carl was able to return the laptop to normal working order and update at the same time. See,, joining the PPCUG group is money well spent.

The normal question and answer portion of the agenda was not conducted, in an effort to get back on schedule and Bob Willis of the AARP Tax Preparation Group went about making his presentation for those present.

Bob’s presentation material can be found on the club website at, www.ppcuginc.com . Rather than trying to duplicate the presentation here, I would encourage you to go to the website and research it there. In general there are not a great many changes for tax year 2014 but the most well publicized one is mandatory health care, the “Affordable Health Care Act” and how it impacts taxes and potential penalties.

Due to confusion and late developments in government circles this was the first year when tax forms and tax preparation pamphlets were not readily available at post office and libraries as before. This did cause concern for many. The AARP Tax Preparation program proved to be even more appreciated in this case. As you will see in the power point program slides, the emphasis is on E-Filing. There are very good reasons why this is so. Electronic submission of your returns has a significantly greater chance of eliminating the most common mistakes found in the paper filing procedures of the past where data must be re-entered by IRS personnel into their system manually. E-Filing also will normally be processed much faster than the paper manual method and is required if a Tax Preparation service is used to do ones taxes.

Mr. Willis will also be the presenter of the April program portion of our regular monthly meeting. At that time he will be making a presentation on, Recognition and Prevention of Fraud While Using Computers.

Submitted by Secretary:

Dick Del Frate



Tech Support Scam – Received a Tech Support call lately?

By Phil Sorrentino, Member of The Computer Club, Florida

October 2014

<http://scccomputerclub.org>

Philsorr.wordpress.com

[philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philsorr@yahoo.com)

This is a very nasty, and possibly costly, scam. It preys on people's concern that their computer might be running slow or might be infected with a virus or some other type of malware. It typically starts with a call from, ostensibly, "Microsoft or Windows or Dell or some other, known Computer Manufacturer's Tech Support" organization. And it can end with the computer owner paying for basically nothing, and giving the scammer his credit card information.

Let's make the point here: Microsoft says "You will never receive a legitimate call from Microsoft or our partners to charge you for computer fixes." So, never respond to a call of this nature; just hang up.

There seem to be many variations on how the scam can get started. Sometimes you will get a call from the "Microsoft or Dell Tech Support Desk" saying that they have noticed that there is a virus, or errors, on your computer. Sometimes it is started with a pop-up window on your screen while you are browsing the internet. The window (in a variety of different wordings) indicates that you have been infected by a virus and you should call a particular number to remove the virus. Calling that number puts you in contact with the scammer's bogus "Tech Support Desk". Once you are on the phone with the "Tech Support" technician, the scam begins.

This scam is very insidious because the victim may never even realize that he has been scammed. There are many variations on the details of the scammer's interaction with the computer owner once the call has been made; but basically the steps are: the scammer demonstrates, to the computer user, that there is a virus on the computer; the scammer offers to remove the virus for a fee (\$199 to up to \$549, which may be negotiable); the computer user accepts the offer to remove the virus and pays for it with a credit card; the scammer charges the credit card for the agreed upon fee; the scammer "fixes" the computer; the scammer demonstrates that the computer now has no viruses; the computer user thanks the "Tech Support technician" for his help.

The scammer uses a variety of ways to show you that there is a problem. One such ploy is; the scammer asks you to open the computer's Windows Event Log Viewer to show that there is problem. The scammer attempts to win your confidence by showing you that your system has "Errors". When you open the Windows Event Log Viewer, you see errors which lends credence to the scammer's statement that you have a virus. (The scammer relies on the fact that whenever you open the Windows Event Log, you will see some type of error or warning listed, which is quite normal.) Another way the scammer shows you that there is a problem is to have you view files that look like problems, but are really just views of a file that are not typically seen by the average user, but are quite normal. Still another technique is to have you run the Configuration Utility. You see "stopped" next to some services or programs and the scammer states that "the fact that those programs or services are stopped indicates that there has been some damage

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to the computer". (In truth, it is normal to have some programs or services that are stopped, which may not be obvious to the average computer user.)

So, how can we tell if a scam attempt is in progress? Here are some tip-offs to help you recognize a scam attempt. The first tip-off is that they, the scammer, called you. Note well that, Microsoft, Dell, or any other major company's tech support organization is not very likely to use their resources to get in touch with users to fix their computers. (The scammer may tell you that they are doing this as a Public Service; don't buy into it.) If a Tech Support issue arises with a computer, it is incumbent on the user to contact the appropriate Tech Support organization. The user should make the contact with a known phone number!

A very strong indicator that a scam attempt is in progress is that the "Tech Support technician" will ask you to go to a Website and Install a Tool so that they can Remotely Connect to your computer in order to "fix" the problem. This can be a very good, legitimate, way of having a legitimate Tech Support technician fix your problem, if you truly have a problem, and if you called Tech Support. (There are a few free remote control software tools available just for this purpose, such as TeamViewer and GoToMyPC.) However, if they called you and you then give the scammer control over your computer, the scammer now has the ability download malware (viruses, rootkits, Trojan horses, key-loggers, etc.) to your computer. This malware could then lead to future problems.

This may be another tip-off: the Caller ID on the phone says "Microsoft, Tech Support", or something similar, which gives the appearance of a legitimate number. Remember, he called you. (Spoofing Caller ID information, I'm told, is extremely easy to do, with Voice Over IP technology. Brighthouse or Verizon phones employ VOIP technology.)

A strong indication that a scam may be in progress is that the "Tech Support" technician claims that your computer is "sending out errors", or is "sending out SPAM", or is "infected with a new virus that is undetected by current virus protection software", or something similar. This is an attempt to create fear that the computer is infected and to scare you into taking action to correct the situation.

Another tip-off may be that the Tech Support technician has a heavy foreign accent, but he uses a name that sounds like it is of western origin. He will definitely have an explanation for why he does this, but don't buy into it. (Though, I have talked to a legitimate Tech Support technician, "Bob", with a heavy foreign accent from Dell who was very helpful, so this may not be the best way to identify a scam.)

I haven't gotten a call, yet, but I have heard of many recent experiences. If you do get a call from "Microsoft Tech Support", just hang up. If you are having a problem with your computer, call the appropriate Tech Support organization, using a number you are confident is correct (not one that you get from a pop-up window). With the number of people in Sun City Center receiving these calls, this area code may be a prime target for these scams.

I'd like to thank Computer Club Member and Instructor, Matt Batt, for bringing the severity of this scam to my attention. Matt has seen the results of many of these scams and has heard of many computer users experiences with this scam.

Memory Cards

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ
December 2014 issue, BUG Bytes
www.bcug.com
n2nd (at) att.net

USB memory sticks and Secure Data (SD) cards are the most convenient media for transferring data among computers. Both are compact, inexpensive, and rugged and have capacities of up to several Gbytes. Above this, you have little choice but to use a considerably larger, more fragile, and more expensive external hard disk. CDs and DVDs are less expensive, but are larger, more fragile, and have lower capacities; moreover, fewer modern portable PCs have optical media drives than in the past. Finally, writable optical media have reliability issues, especially if they are subjected to high temperatures or humidifies. It's also true that memory sticks and cards experience fatigue in that they will fail after a finite number of write operations. However, the limit is so large that you can ignore them for devices used for the applications we're discussing here, although it is a consideration for internal solid state disks.

For many years, I've carried in my keycase a USB memory stick with two partitions, one with a bootable diagnostic operating system and the other with a FAT32 file system that is available to Linux, OS X, and Windows. Thus, I always have with me a computer toolkit and a means of transferring files. (If you do the same, make the first partition the FAT32 one. While a PC can boot from any partition, once Windows is running it can read only the first partition on a memory stick. Other operating system don't have this limitation.)

We have seen three generations of Universal Serial Bus (USB) devices. USB 1 has a top speed of 12 Mbits/s, which because of protocol overhead results in a practical data transfer rate of about 1 Mbyte/s. Such devices are now obsolete. USB 2 claims a speed of 480 Mbits/s, and protocol overhead reduces this to no more than 35 Mbytes/s, but only the fastest memory sticks can approach this. Finally, USB 3 has a maximum transfer rate of 5 Gbit/s, which could allow transfer rates of over 600 Mbyte/s, but this is faster than what current memory chips and readers can achieve. Actual test results show that, depending on the reader, USB 3 memory sticks are at most twice as fast as USB2 devices, and in some cases the difference is negligible. The good news about USB is that there are few compatibility issues; you will experience reliable data transfers with almost any combination of memory stick and reader.

The Secure Digital Card (SDC) situation is more complex, as it includes four families and three physical sizes. The families are SD (standard capacity), SDHC (high capacity), SDXC (extended capacity), and SDIO (which combines storage and input/output functions, such Bluetooth). There is also an SDXC family that is designed for use in video cameras and uses the proprietary Microsoft exFAT file format. The three sizes are standard (32 x 24 mm), mini (21.5 x 20.0 mm), and micro (11.00 x 15.00 mm). Adapters are available that allow the use of mini and micro cards in standard slots. Early SD cards had an "x" rating, where x was equivalent to 1.2 Mbit/s; for example an 8x rating implied a read speed of $8 \times 1.2 = 9.6$ Mbit/s (about 1.2 Mbyte/s), with write speeds being substantially slower. Modern SD cards have a class rating that implies a minimum read and write speeds.

- Class 2 – 2 Mbyte/s
- Class 4 – 4 Mbyte/s
- Class 6 – 6 Mbyte/s
- Class 10 – 10 Mbyte/s

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- UHS Class 1 (U1) – 10 Mbyte/s
- UHS Class 3 (U3) – 30 Mbyte/s

UHS cards are intended for HD video recording and require slots designed for them.

Because of their wide ranges of performance, there are significant compatibility issues with SD cards, and this is made worse by the shoddy quality of many low-cost readers, including some incorporated into laptops. Before purchasing an SD card, check the requirements of the device that will use it. New cards may have greater capacities than older devices can address. Version 2 of the SD spec changed the interface, with the result that new cards may not work in old devices, and old cards may not work in new devices. Finally, you should avoid SDX and UHS cards unless you are using hardware and software that specifically requires them.

I prefer USB memory sticks to SD cards for transferring data among PCs.

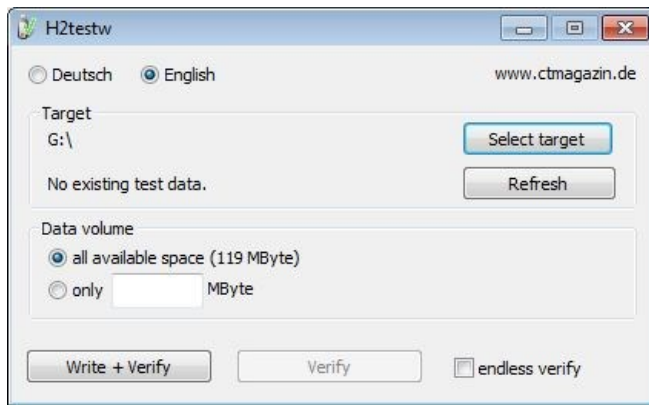
- On USB sticks the connector pins are protected, while on SD cards they are external where they can become dirty and can allow static electricity to damage the card.
- Most USB sticks have a mounting point that allows them to be carried in a key case or on a key ring; SD cards do not.
- Every modern computer has USB connectors, but most desktops lack one for SDCs. I have seen claims that after-market SD readers for desktops and those included on many laptops are not reliable, and some have damaged cards.
- The small size and black color of SD cards makes them easy to lose.
- USB sticks are thicker and appear to be more rugged than thin, plastic SD cards.
- There are fewer compatibility issues with USB memory sticks than with SD cards.

However, SD cards are the standard removable storage element for cell phones and digital cameras.

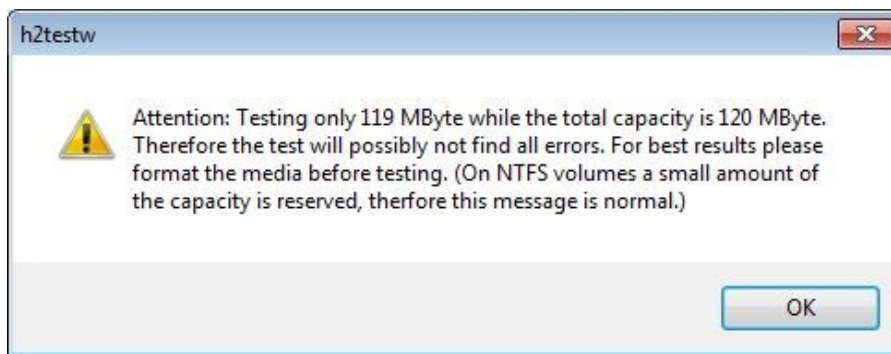
All the above assumes that you buy name-brand devices from established and reputable dealers. There is a lot of counterfeit merchandise floating around, USB 1 devices with USB 3 labels, low-speed SDCs with high-speed labels, and low capacity ones with high-capacity labels. Some of the latter, will lie about their capacities to your file manager; a claimed capacity of 16 Gbytes doesn't mean it can actually store that amount. If you find a really low price, it may be a bargain, but the only thing you know for sure is that it's cheap.

You can use the Windows program H2testw, available at <http://www.heise.de/download/h2testw.html>, to test any SD memory card or USB storage device to find its capacity and data transfer rate. (The Web site is in German, but you can run the program in English.) Just download the zip archive, unpack the program and its German and English readme files into the directory it creates. (The program is self-contained and runs from its directory; you don't install it.) Click the "English" button to obtain the first screen; then click the "Select target" button and choose the device to test. (I used an old, tiny USB stick for this demo, because although slow, its 120-Mbyte capacity means it's quick to test.) The process will destroy any data the device holds, so save anything important first. Start the test by clicking the "Write + Verify" button.

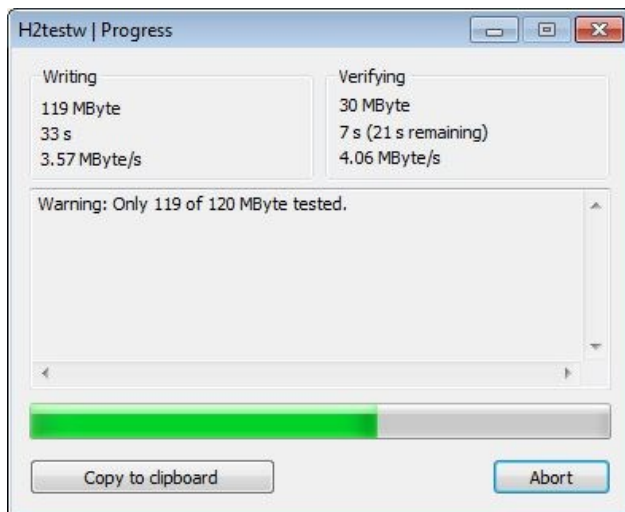
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You may see the warning shown below, which appeared in this case on a device that was formatted to FAT32. If this is the only such message the test produces, you can ignore it.



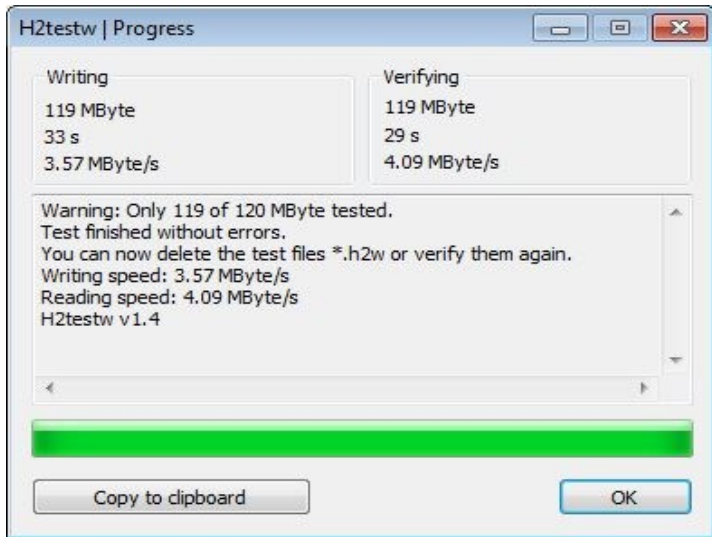
The following screen shows the test in process.



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Here are the complete results, showing the actual device capacity and its read and write rates. Note that you have the option of copying them to the clipboard.



After you click OK, you'll see the following screen. Note that the “Write + Verify” button is grayed out. The device is now full of test files and you can run only the read test. As message in the previous screen says, you will have to delete these to rerun the write test.



With this software you can verify the capacity and ensure that it works well. The speed measured however depends on both the stick or card and the host device. The tiny capacity of the device in this example resulted in a test time of about a minute; expect much longer times for modern multi-Gbyte devices. Nevertheless, it's worth taking the time to check a new SD card before trying to use it in your camera on a trip to Europe.

Dick Maybach

Technology Trends for 2015 from CES

Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
Sberger (at) compukiss.com
www.compukiss.com

Every year at CES, which many know as the Consumer Electronics Show, thousands of new products are exhibited and major trends start to appear. This year was no different. Here are just a few of the trends that you can expect to see affecting your life soon.

Connected Home

We now have the knowledge to connect just about everything to the Internet and we saw a wide variety of ways to do that. While I personally, might not be ready to put Internet-connected door locks (Kwikset, Schlage, and others) on my home, I would love to have some of Lowes' Iris home connectivity devices, especially the one that turns the water off when a leak is detected. I personally am not much interested in an Internet-connected toothbrush (Kolibree), but I think it is a great tool for teaching kids to brush their teeth properly. I loved the TempTraq band-aid for babies and children that monitors their temperature and sends it to your cell phone. I was also pretty impressed with the light bulbs that play stereo music (Sengled).

Wearable Tech & Health

Watches, pins, and wristbands that count your steps, and monitor your sleep were everywhere at CES this year. Many of these devices even coach you to achieve your goals. Expect to see more and more of this technology this year.

Drones

There were over a hundred different types of Drones. Everyone is looking for uses for these flying wonders that fit into our everyday world.

3-D Printing

They continue to find uses and new materials that can be used with these printers. Specialized filaments let you print in materials that look and feel like bamboo, copper, and brass. Whether you want to print a shower head or a cup for your tea, you can do it with a 3-D printer.

4K Ultra TVs

Do you really need a TV that gives you more resolution and better color than your current HDTV? No, you probably don't need one, but when you see them you will want one. Even though prices have already plummeted, standards are still being set and there are several competing technologies, so you may want to hold off until much later in the year before you take the plunge.

Automated Vehicles

Cars were everywhere at CES this year. They have plenty of connectivity and helpful additions like parking assist. The Volkswagen Golf Touch has three display screens that you can control by moving your hand in the air. It can also park itself right on its charging pad and it's available now for about \$35,000.

This year more of the devices we saw at the show were already available or will be on the market soon. So expect the electronic stores to be filled to the brim with new devices in the next year.

New Concept in Free Security Software from SecureAPlus

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://www.secureapplus.com>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gV5cRk4SWWg>

<http://www.pcadvisor.co.uk/downloads/3329389/secureapplus-2017/>

<http://www.thewindowsclub.com/secureage-secureapplusa-review-download>

<http://www.ghacks.net/2013/08/13/secureapplus-application-whitelisting-for-additional-security/>

<http://www.tecoreviews.com/reviews/secureapplus-antivirus-review/>

<http://malwaretips.com/threads/secureapplus-test-by-av-gurus.41748/>

I am always on the lookout for interesting new security software, and recently came across an interesting new security concept. The name of this fairly new anti-virus, anti-malware product is SecureAPlus, which is currently available as a free download with a one year license. What is unusual about SecureAPlus is that it utilizes a cloud based malware scan utilizing up to a dozen different scan engines, rather than the single cloud based scanners used by its major competitors. SecureAPlus claims that by simultaneously scanning files in the cloud with a dozen different, continuously updated scan engines, that it can detect malware threats, including the newest threats, better than any of its competitors. According to the SecureAPlus website, the 12 cloud based antivirus scan engines used are Emsisoft, Avira, Sophos, McAfee, Microsoft Security Essentials, ESET, Bitdefender, AVG, Norman, Quick Heal, Total Defense, and Clamwin.

SecureAPlus offers a trilateral method detecting malware that may either already be on the computer, and to prevent new malware from infecting the machine. When first installed, the software will scan all of the program files currently on the computer, checking them against the multiple cloud based scan engines; this one-time process may take several minutes to a few hours to complete, depending on the amount of software on the computer and the internet connection speed, but appears to be very thorough. The second method of protecting the computer from malware is what is called in the industry "Application Whitelisting", which only allows known proven and trusted programs to run on the protected computer, sending any unknown or untrusted programs to the cloud to be scanned by the multiple scanners. An "Offline Antivirus" function scans only document files and freshly installed software on the computer, checking the newly installed software against the known whitelist of safe programs.

According to the SecureAPlus website, its software offers several advantages over its competitors, including what it calls "Absolute 360° Protection", which provides full time 24/7 protection from malware. It also claims to save the user time, in that it does not adversely impact or slow down the boot process, allowing the user faster access to the freshly booted computer. Like many of the other layered security utilities, SecureAPlus claims to be "Software Friendly" in that its software methods of whitelisting safe programs works well and on top of the security software which may be already installed on the computer. This software also claims that unlike many of its competitors, it is very light on the use of resources (CPU cycles and memory), as it uses the cloud to do much of its continuous analysis, rather than having the computer's CPU doing the same work, thus freeing up resources, improving the execution and performance of other applications.

In order to both speed up the malware detection process and to protect the privacy of the user, entire program files are generally not uploaded to the cloud, but instead a unique "hash" or digital fingerprint of the most

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common file types is generated and sent to the cloud. These file types, which are also the most common types to harbor malware, are files with types ending with ".exe, .dll, and .msi" as well as script files. Again, to protect the privacy and personal security of the user, no data files (such as .doc, .xls, .psd, .pdf, etc.) are uploaded to the cloud, but can instead be scanned locally using the SecureAPlus Offline AV utility

While the initial year of protection, including all updates is completely free for all users, including commercial and organizational users, the revenue model of SecureAPlus currently offers two renewal options after the first year of service. The first renewal option is a paid one, with a \$22.50 annual subscription, with substantial discounts of up to 40% offered for longer subscription periods up to three years. This paid plan is the SecureAPlus "Premium" plan, which it refers to as "Our Complete Solution". In addition to the free services already mentioned, this paid "Premium" subscription includes multiple machine management, email and on-screen security alerts about detected threats, and email based support.

The second renewal option is what the publisher calls "Freemium", which is free, but requires the user to earn points good toward renewals by following SecureAPlus on the major social media services (Facebook, Twitter, Google+), sharing information about the product, and by completing surveys and publishing reviews, or by sending "referrals" to friends and family. For the record, despite the stated offer on its referral page, I am not submitting this published review to SecureAPlus in order to get up to a thousand points for publishing a review. The annual renewals based on the "Freemium" process only allow for the management of a single machine, unlike the paid "Premium" service, and only provides on-screen security alerts.

There have been several published reviews of SecureAPlus by a diverse group of print and web based sources, and the reviews have generally been favorable, but also disclosed some shortcomings with the product. First users must be aware that SecureAPlus, in its current form, is a powerful and effective antivirus and antimalware product, but it is not a comprehensive security suite. While SecureAPlus by itself offers significant protection from viruses and malware, it is not a substitute for a traditional security suite, as it offers virtually no protection from phishing or many of the web based malware threats, and does not include a firewall, anti-spam, and the other protections commonly offered in the more comprehensive security suites. If SecureAPlus is run as a type of layered security on top of a security suite, then the security suite will still offer the user its own level of protection, and SecureAPlus will provide the layered defense of another barrier to malware.

I downloaded the SecureAPlus installation file, which was a 1.8MB download. The first step in the installation process was to optionally select the offline component, which many of the published reviews claim is the open source freeware "Clam AV", which generally has a good reputation as an antivirus utility. The installer then downloaded SecureAPlus version 3.3.2, which took a few minutes to download. Once installed, the scanner took over an hour to scan my files and create its whitelist of safe programs. SecureAPlus did not appear to interfere with my already installed security suite (Trend Micro Maximum Security 2015), and did not noticeably cause any deterioration in system performance.

SecureAPlus may be a worthwhile adjunct to a security suite by adding an additional layer of security to the computer, with the understanding that it only provides effective protection from viruses and malware, and not from phishing and many of the common web based security threats. The list of cloud based scan engines utilized by the software, including Emsisoft (one of the most powerful malware scanners in the industry), Sophos, McAfee, ESET, Bitdefender, AVG, and several others is impressive, and gives SecureAPlus a scanning capacity superior to most others on the market. I like the concept that for the first year the software is

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totally free for anyone to use, including corporate, academic, and institutional use, and the renewal fee of less than \$2 per month is not unreasonable. I am not a big fan of the "Freemium" model of earning renewals through a system of following SecureAPlus in the social media, writing reviews in order to score renewal points (this is not one of those), and getting renewal points by getting friends and family to download the product.

For those who would like the peace of mind that a free standing antivirus and antimalware product can provide (understanding its limitations), or by adding another layer of security on top of an existing security suite, SecureAPlus may be worthy of a try.

Can You Believe - A Good Computer for \$200?

Dave Berger

Remember when a good computer cost about two thousand dollars? Well, you can now purchase a new computer one tenth of that. And the \$200 computers that are becoming available at that price are ultimately more powerful than those expensive computer of old.

Wow! A good computer for \$200?? How is that possible now? Well, not only have hardware prices tumbled, but Microsoft is coming to the aid of the average computer buyer. They are trying very hard to compete with the current sales of Chromebooks, which have recently picked up in popularity.

Microsoft is helping computer manufacturers and purchasers by lowering, and in some cases, eliminating, the cost of the Windows operating system. This is being done to combat Chromebooks which have recently picked up in popularity. Chromebooks are laptops that run on the free Google Chrome operating system rather than on the Windows operating system. Many of them are selling in the \$200 range.

So Microsoft is offering Windows 8.1 with its Bing search engine as the OS for these cheaper PCs. Although this is a special version of the operating system, the only change is that Bing is the default search engine in Internet Explorer. Other than that it is the same as the latest version of Windows 8.1.

Microsoft is trying to stem the tide of defections from Windows and to bolster the use of its Bing search engine and OneDrive cloud storage. In some cases a limited subscription to Microsoft's Office 365 subscription service may be included to entice people to continue paying that yearly subscription fee and to use Microsoft's cloud storage.

Hewlett-Packard, Dell and Lenovo are all announcing these Windows 8.1 with Bing laptops for around \$200. Rumors are that a 7" or 8" HP Stream laptop may be available for the holiday season selling at closer to \$100. Although the manufacturer will determine the type of device this cheaper OS will be used on, it is expected that most will be laptops rather than tablets or desktops. Most of the Windows laptops that are currently offered under this program have 1366 x 768 pixel resolution screens, good hard drive storage, either Intel or AMD processors, and HDMI ports. You may not want to use them for extensive video edition or CAD programs, but they should be adequate for email, Web surfing, basic computing and, light gaming.

One drawback of many of these laptops is poor battery life. Although most have a battery life of about four hours, this is only half of what some high-end laptops offer. Also, if you purchase one, try to get one with 4GB of memory rather than 2 GB.

The prices on these computer may or may not be permanent, but they are sure to keep the prices moving in the right direction for consumers.

Plateau PC Users Group, Inc. Application for Membership

_____ New Member _____ Renewing Member

Return this application, with check for annual dues payable to "PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP." Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to PPCUG Treasurer, P.O. Box 3787, Crossville, TN 38557. Our annual dues are now payable no later than July 1 of each year. Annual dues are \$24.00 per single person / \$30.00 per family starting July 1, 2014. with partial dues as follows.

Join Date	1st.Qtr. 2015	2nd. Qtr. 2015	3rd. Qtr. 2015	4th. Qtr. 2015
Single:	\$12	\$6	\$24	\$18
Families:	\$15	\$7	\$30	\$22

Date

Last Name First Name Family Members (if family
Membership)

Address:

City State Zip Code Phone Number

E-Mail address

I have used PCs since (year): _____ I have belonged to a Computer Club before. Yes ___ No ___

I have knowledge in the following areas that I would be willing to share with club members:

I would like more information about the following areas:

12/10/2014

May 2015

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10 	11	12	13 2:00 P.M. Board Mtg.	14 1:00 P.M. Photo Editing Workshop Mtg.	15	16
17	18 6:00 P.M. Q & A Session Followed by General Mtg.	19	20	21 1:00 P.M. Plateau Pho- tography Club Mtg.	22	23
24	25 	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Note: Please see page #15 for the Plateau PC Users Group, Inc. Application for Membership form.