



# PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE



## August 2016

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August 2016

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

Volume 22, Issue 8

### This Month’s Meetings

**Photo Editing Workshop**  
Thursday, August 11 at 1:00 P.M.  
**At FFG Library Bldg.**

**General Meeting**  
Monday, August 15 at 6:00 P.M.  
**At Christ Lutheran Church FFG**

**Plateau Photography Club**  
Thursday August 18 at 1:00 P.M.  
**At FFG Library Bldg..**

### **The August Program at FFG Christ Lutheran Church**

#### **Digital Access to Art Circle Library Services**

The Plateau PC Users Group will feature a presentation by Margo Brown, Adult Services Librarian. She will present a live demonstration of online services, especially the Regional E-book and Audio Download System (R.E.A.D.S.). Both digital audio books and e-book services can be downloaded for Kindle, android and other digital devices.

Digital books can be enjoyed at leisure in your home, your work, or when you travel.

With Tennessee Electronic Library (TEL) you can find articles from magazine, journals, reference books and newspapers.

Digital Access to Art Circle Public Library is free with a library card log-in.

An informational booklet will be given to all attendees at this meeting.



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**Summer Hours** starts at 6:00 P.M. (April through September)

**Location:** Christ Lutheran Church  
481 Snead Drive, Fairfield Glade

## “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.

## 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. 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 July 1, 2014, with partial years dues as follows:

| Due Date         | Jul-Sep<br>2016<br>Annual Dues | Oct-Dec<br>2016 | Jan-Mar<br>2017 | Apr-Jun<br>2017 |
|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <b>Single:</b>   | <b>\$24</b>                    | <b>\$18</b>     | <b>\$12</b>     | <b>\$6</b>      |
| <b>Families:</b> | <b>\$30</b>                    | <b>\$22</b>     | <b>\$15</b>     | <b>\$7</b>      |

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

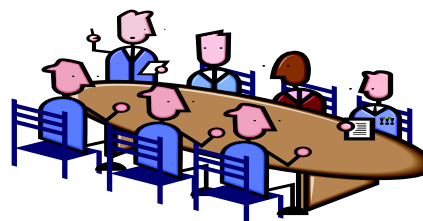
All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible consumer, it is up 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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## 2016-2017 - PPCUG, Inc. Board Members



|                               |  |                  |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------|
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|                               | <b>Director Emeritus<br/>Don Lewis</b> |                  |
|                               | SIG Leaders                            |                  |
| Photo Editing<br>Workshop     | Ed Thornblade                          | (931) 456-6020   |
| Plateau Photography<br>Club   | Jim Mansfield                          | (931) 484-6920   |

**Note: Summer Hours & Location**

The next General Meeting of the  
**PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP**  
Will be on September 19 at **6:00 P.M.**  
at **Christ Lutheran Church**  
**481 Snead Drive FFG**  
**(corner of Snead & Lakeview Drive)**

**Classes**

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

**Cool Tips & Sites**

**Non-Breaking Spaces & Non-Breaking  
Hyphens in MS Word**

The common solution: what most people do to keep text together is move to the beginning of the text and press [Enter] to start a new line. This is fine until any of the text changes and causes breaks in the wrong place. And, this doesn't work well if you have paragraph formatting that adds space between paragraphs.

The right solution: keep text together with special characters. Specifically, replace normal spaces and hyphens with non-breaking spaces or non-breaking hyphens:

- Non-breaking space: [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Spacebar]
- Non-breaking hyphen: [Ctrl] + [Shift] + [Hyphen]

As the name implies, non-breaking characters connect the text together and it will all automatically move to the next line together but only as needed.

To view non-breaking space and hyphen characters in a document, click **Show/Hide** in the **Paragraph** group (Home tab). Word represents non-breaking space characters with a degree symbol (°) and non-breaking hyphen characters with a double-length hyphen (these are a bit harder to distinguish from regular text).

**PPCUG ISP**

**We wish to thank the following for providing  
ISP connections:**

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

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**

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 Photo Club/SIG website**

The 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.

**New PPCUG Website**

Visit our new website at [www.PPCUGinc.com](http://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](mailto:Webmaster@ppcuginc.com) (931) 788-2201

## PPCUG General Meeting Minutes July 18, 2016

### **“Let’s Get Social” presented by: Alan Baker**

This, the fourth meeting of the Plateau PC Users Group to be held at Christ Lutheran Church was attended by 19 members and 7 guests.

The Board approved budget for fiscal year July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016 to June 30, 2017, was presented for comment by Treasurer John Krueger.

A question was raised by a member who asked why there had been no budget line item expense dedicated to scholarships as had been done in the past.

The answer to this question was stated as simply a matter of lack of funds available, since at current membership levels, the organization is operating at a deficit. This is the second year without a scholarship fund.

Another plea for volunteers to fill the currently vacant Secretary position was made without a response. Please give this opportunity to serve the group consideration. You do not have to be a computer “geek” in order to serve as Secretary. Taking minutes at two meetings a month (1 Board meeting and 1 General meeting) describes the bulk of the duties. Contact President Steve Rosenstein for details. (931) 742-0151.

The presentation of the Social Networking portion of the meeting was delayed for about 20 minutes due to internet connectivity issues but Alan Baker came through with his usual informative and entertaining program style soon afterward.

Alan explained that his program slide show presentation is available on the [www.ppcuginc.com](http://www.ppcuginc.com) website along with a handout sheet of reference material for home use.

Please refer to these documents for further information. The handout of reference material provides a link to 15 of the most popular social networking web sites each of which has a focus on some common interest or purpose. “Social media are computer-mediated tools that allow people, companies and other organizations to create, share, or exchange information, career interests, ideas, and pictures/videos in virtual communities and networks.”

During the Q&A portion of this meeting several people expressed confusion over whether or not they should now convert or upgrade to Windows 10 before the free upgrade deadline July 29.

The answers to this question were as is often the case,,,”depends”. Alan, Carl and Randy did agree that unless you need to upgrade to Windows 10 operating system or if you have decided that you want to make the change in the near future, the July date only is an opportunity to save some money. If you are happy with Windows 7 or one of the other versions of Windows OS which are still being supported (Windows Vista, April 2017, Windows 7, January 2020, Windows 8.1, January 2023) you may just want to keep what you have.

When making the decision to upgrade or not, consideration should be given to the age and importance of any peripheral hardware as well as software which may not be compatible with Windows 10.

Submitted by:

Dick Del Frate

## Plateau PC Users Group, Inc.

### **About our computer club**

The Plateau PC Users Group is located in a key retirement area of the scenic Cumberland Plateau in middle Tennessee. It was founded 21 years ago and was a major contributor of basic PC knowledge and training for retirees over the years, reaching a membership high of some 400 people at its peak. Our membership continues to be primarily retirees.

The group has supported several special interest groups over the years, including Computer Supported Investing, Digital Photography and learning labs in other locations in the County. It also has participated in used equipment donations and refurbishment to support low-income families with children. In addition, we offer scholarships to local high school seniors as funds are available.

Over the last several years, the knowledge needs of new and existing retirees have become much more sophisticated, driven largely by changes in hardware, such as smart phones and tablets as well as the many changes brought about by Microsoft in applications and operating systems.

Today we have about 85 members, a Photography special interest group that holds two meetings a month and a PC lab with free Internet at one local senior center. Our monthly membership meeting features a presentation on a personal computing topic plus an open Q&A session. Our presentations are typically done by members, with occasional help from community and APCUG resources. Our 2016 presentations so far have been on Windows 10, Windows Edge, Computer Security, PC Backups and Tablets and Smart Phones. Our next topic will be on Social Networking.

Our website resources include 3 years of our newsletter, the Gazette, copies of presentation handouts and slide shows, a Tablets / Smart Phones blog and a Windows 10 blog. Our lending library of computer-related media is available at each of our monthly meetings.

Our current challenges probably are not unique among PC Users groups, and include building our membership, getting more members to take an active and contributing role and coming up with good presentation topics.

### **Look forward to the APCUG's 2016 International Technology Conference**



**APCUG's 2016 International Technology Conference  
Palace Station Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas  
October 21, 22 & 23, 2016**

For more information, please go to: [www.apcug2.org](http://www.apcug2.org)



## How to protect your IP address

Posted July 22, 2016 by Sarah Enderby

You might not know it, but every time you go on the Internet, from checking your social media to playing games and chatting with friends, you are identifiable to the rest of the world by a numeric address.

This “address” is your IP address, or Internet Protocol address. It’s a unique combination of numbers that identifies computers or devices from one another to allow them to communicate through the Internet. It might look like this: 173.223.120.165.

Your digital devices work much the same way as your physical address—your device needs an address in order to send information to another device. It seems harmless, but attackers can actually launch attacks against you (or in some cases disguised as you) if they know your IP address.

Now before we get too deep into this, keep in mind finding and utilizing a victim’s IP address in a cyberattack is really only a cog in the attack machine. Therefore, it’s important that all the information provided here represents the worst case scenario. However, knowledge of your personal vulnerabilities and how to secure them is important in every aspect of computer security

### **What can someone do with my IP address?**

There are many reasons why cybercriminals might want your IP address, ranging from just messing with you to future larger-scale, targeted malicious attacks. Three of the main reasons they’re on the hunt for IP addresses are to do the following:

*Download illegal content under your IP address’ identity:* They can download pirated movies, music, and videos—which would get you in trouble with your ISP—even child pornography or content that threatens national security. This puts an unnecessary target on your back for law enforcement to come after you. For example, in 2012, online threats to local police in Indiana were traced back to an IP address. After a SWAT team busted down the door and threw flashbangs into the entry, they realized they had the wrong place.

*Hunt down your location for larger-scale attacks:* When given an IP address, an attacker can use geolocation technology to identify what region, city, or state you’re in. They use this to decide if your area is a worthy target for future attacks. For instance, they may be looking for IP addresses in wealthier locations or less security-literate areas to receive more payoff from an attack or penetrate a system more easily. Combine this with the ability to gather additional information, like in the case of **malvertising being able to fingerprint** a system, and an attacker can determine if you or someone you love is an optimal victim.

*Directly attack your network:* Criminals can not only use your IP address for larger-scale attacks, but also to directly target your network and launch a variety of assaults. One of the most popular is a **DDoS attack** (distributed denial-of-service). This type of cyberattack occurs when bad guys use previously infected machines to generate a high volume of requests to flood the targeted system or server. By doing so, it **creates too much traffic for the server to handle**, resulting in a disruption of services. Basically, it shuts down your Internet, which in turn blocks you from accessing vital resources. While this attack is frequently referenced in being launched against businesses and video game services, it is just as possible to do against an individual, though not as common.

Online gamers are at particularly high risk for this, as their screen is visible while streaming (on which an IP address can be discovered). They accounted for over half of all of the DDoS attacks last year, according to Akamai’s Q3 2015 State of the Internet—Security Report. If someone’s IP address is known by other gamers, they can launch a DDoS attack, kicking them off of the game and Internet. Even worse (and at worst-case

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scenario), it could lead to a **SWATTING** attack, where an attacker pinpoints the location of their victim and deceives authorities enough to dispatch an emergency response team to the victim's house. Imagine them barging through your door unannounced!

### **How do criminals find my IP address?**

Just as they do to find personal info online in order to target users for malware infection, cybercriminals can be awfully crafty to find your IP address. Here are some of the ways attackers drill down to see that magical number.

Attackers can use social engineering to fool you into revealing your IP address. For example, they can find you through Skype and other instant messaging applications, which all use IP addresses to communicate. If you happen to chat with strangers using these apps, it's important to note that they can see your IP address. Attackers can use a tool called **Skype Resolver**, where they can find your IP address when all they know is your username.

In addition, criminals can track down your IP address by simply following your online activity. Any number of online activities can reveal your IP address, from playing video games to commenting on websites and forums.

After finding your IP address, attackers simply go to an IP address tracking website, such as [whatismyipaddress.com](http://whatismyipaddress.com), type it in, and then BAM—they have an idea of your location. With a little elbow grease, hackers can cross reference other **open source data** if they want to validate whether the IP address is associated with you specifically. They can use LinkedIn, Facebook, or other social networks that show where you live, and then see if that matches the area given. If a Facebook stalker utilized a phishing attack against all people with your name to install spying malware, the IP address associated with your system would likely tell the stalker that they got the right person.

### **How can I protect my IP address?**

You are typically assigned a dynamic (changes periodically) IP address by your ISP. However, you can sign up for a static (never changes) address if you wanted to run a web server from your house. There is some debate as to which is safer, though it is arguably more secure to have a dynamic IP address because “there isn't a constant target for the attacker,” says Steven Burn, Lead Malware Intelligence Analyst at Malwarebytes.

It all boils down to the steps you take to secure your IP address. Here's how you can keep your IP address out of the hands of criminals.

*Use a Virtual Private Network (VPN):* This protects your data online by the use of encryption and proxy tunneling. It hides your IP address and redirects your traffic through a separate server, making it much safer for you online. VPN services are without question the best practice for hiding your IP address, says Burn. They can be found online with monthly service charges, however, the price might not be worth it for every home user. There are free VPN services out there, but don't expect them to be fast enough for any streaming or gaming.

In addition, you could run a proxy, which acts as an additional hub through which Internet requests are processed, all while hiding your IP address. It can determine legitimate over non-legitimate requests.

*Update your router and firewall rules:* Your router forwards data between networks, and your firewall prevents unauthorized access. Make sure you change the administrative password on your router, since default

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passwords are frequently used by attackers to break into your network. Each default password provided by your ISP is the same and can be easily searched online. Also, set your firewall rules to not allow any ping requests from the Internet. This makes sure unauthorized visitors won't get through.

*Change privacy settings on instant messaging applications:* Only allow direct connections from contacts and don't accept calls or messages from people you don't know. Changing your settings to private makes it harder to find your IP address because people who don't know you cannot connect with you.

*Update your antivirus solution and add security layers:* Making sure you are caught up on all of your security software's updates ensures you're protected from threats. Adding additional security on top of your antivirus further protects you. For instance, Malwarebytes Anti-Malware blocks malicious URLs originating from phishing emails in addition to blocking bad sites you might encounter.

Protecting your IP address is one aspect of protecting your identity. Securing it through these steps is one more way to stay safe against the wide variety of attack vectors cybercriminals are using today.

### **Look in the sky! It's a bird, it's a plane...it's a drone!**

Meeting review by Mike Hancock, Newsletter Committee, Golden Gate Computer Society  
January 2016 issue, GGCS newsletter  
www.ggcs.org  
editor (at) ggcs.org

At the November 23, GGCS General Meeting, George Krieger, drone photographer, drone video producer and drone technologist, showed two drone-created videos: one of San Francisco seen from above and around Coit Tower; and one of Highway 1 road improvements in the Bixby Bridge/Big Sur area. Drones, or UAS's (unmanned Aerial Systems), usually have four rotors and are called quadcopters, and they have a camera similar to a GoPro, but gimbal-mounted.

The legal system is working on rules for all drones, except toys, to keep airspace safe, and permits drones to fly no higher than 400 ft. (will soon go to 500 ft.). Operators of delivery drones, of Amazon and Google speculation, will be required by the FAA to obtain a license and will have to fly no higher than 25 meters (83 feet) in the airspace over your property.

Since our airspace has over 100,000 planes and since there is the potential for millions of drones, it is clear that rules must be observed. See <https://www.FA.gov/UAS>.

New versions of drones take only six months to come to market and can broadcast signals from about 1,000 feet from the controller. 3D Robotics, a US-based company, makes roughly 80% of controllers, and DJI, a Chinese company, provides roughly 80% of drones themselves.

3D Robotics used to use open-source software, but this approach is changing; DJI is closed-source.

Drones, depending on the drone model and cost, have remarkable cameras with multi-gimbal stabilization, and dampeners.

The law today permits drones to fly only within eyesight of the operator but, with extras, they can fly up to five miles. Drones have heat sensors, GPS, accelerometers, pressure sensors, and Wi-Fi extenders, and they can take 3-D movies.

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They fly in areas where the sensors can feed data back. They have been used to fly over blowing whales, which are not disturbed by their presence, to gather data. Elephants, on the other hand, are frightened, likely thinking the drones are swarms of bees.

From DJI, starter drones are the Phantoms 1 and 2; the 2 can fly 12 to 14 minutes with its stabilized GoPro and weighs under 5 lbs. All drones are battery operated. The DJI version has a camera, designed by DJI with Adobe support that takes RAW pictures.

The DJI Phantom 3 Professional has a 4K camera with Sony sensor, 94° wide angle f2.8 lens, and 3-axis gimbal stabilization. The camera can take 12MP still pictures. The main controller is the brains of the operation, collecting all data from the system, which includes GPS, inertial measurement, speed controllers, vision positioning, and auto takeoff and landing. It costs about \$1,290.

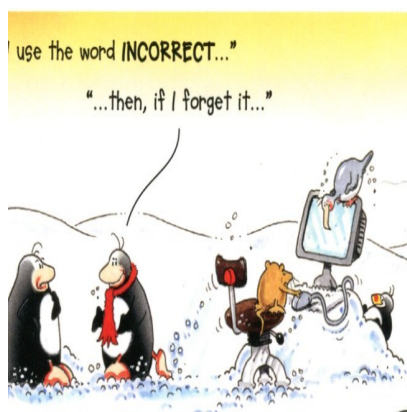
The DJI Inspire is the flagship and can fly 15 miles at 50 mph. It has a Zenmuse 4K camera with a Micro Four-thirds CMOS sensor and a 15 mm f1.7 lens. It has a retractable landing system. The controller has a live map and radar and it has battery charge tracking. Basically, this small drone can do things that a much larger drone can do. The DJI Inspire 1 Pro costs about \$4,500 in basic form. This manufacturer also sells the DJI Cosmos hand-held camera.

3D Robotics offers the Solo Quadcopter with 3-axis gimbal for an advanced GoPro camera. It employs a 1 GH2 Linux computer at the drone and at the controller. It can be automated for filming and has a touchscreen controller. The battery provides 15 minutes flying time. The cost, including the GoPro camera, is about \$1,900.

Another US manufactured drone is the Yuneec Typhoon 4K Q500, with handheld CGO gimbal steadygrip. Drones use photography for stills, panoramas, videos, mapping, and 360° Virtual Reality with GoPros. George showed us a drone video of mapping the Carmel Mission for an event setup, and felt that mapping will be the most lucrative use of drones in three to five years. He also showed us a video of a totally circular rainbow and a para-jumpers tracked by a drone. They are now also being used for photogrammetry and for providing aerial video of events. Drones may operate no closer than five miles to airports. Much of the technology derives from military applications.

George then demonstrated a DJI multi-gimbal 15-pound drone in the meeting room. This drone had a barometric pressure sensor to set altitude. Liability insurance is required for drone operators; Aerial Pack insurance costs \$1,400/year. IDs are not yet required for drones. Control of drones is by 'packet' technology, thus if it loses signal, or if the battery gets low, it comes home.

### New Password Logon



## Stepping up your Internet privacy and security

Meeting review by Mike Hancock, Newsletter Committee, Golden Gate Computer Society  
October 2015 issue, GGCS newsletter  
ww.ggcs.org  
editor (at) ggcs.org

Noah Swartz, a technologist with the nonprofit Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF.org), explained that EFF is involved in Impact Litigation and projects like HTTPS Everywhere, Let's Encrypt, Panopticlick, and Privacy Badger.

Privacy Badger 1.0, created by EFF, is a free open-source (GPLv3) web browser extension for Google Chrome and Mozilla Firefox, for both PC and Mac. Its purpose is to block advertisements and third-party tracking cookies that do not respect the new Do Not Track (DNT) policy setting in a user's web browser. Although some of the code for Privacy Badger is based on Adblock Plus, it only blocks those ads that come with trackers embedded.

As you browse the Web, Privacy Badger (PB) looks at any third party trackers that are loaded on a given site and determines whether they appear to be tracking you (e.g. by setting cookies that could be used for tracking or fingerprinting your browser).

If the same third party domain appears to be tracking you on three or more different websites, PB will conclude that the third party domain is a tracker and block future connections to it. Tracking is most common with DoubleClick (Google), Axicom, AddThis, Facebook, Spokeo, and ScorecardResearch.

For certain websites, if PB were to block an embedded domain entirely, it would break the site's core functionality, in which case it blocks the domain from setting or receiving any cookies or 'referrer' headers, but it allows the embedded content to load. Some advertisers, such as Google Maps and YouTube, cannot be blocked, but PB can adjust what is blocked, and social widgets can be replaced.

Advertising companies that engage in nonprofit consensual tracking of your Web browsing habits are widespread. They propose an opt-out that is, in reality, more of a "pretend not to track." The new DNT policy flag, enabled by EFF, Disconnect, Medium, Mixpanel, Adblock, and DuckDuckGo, is a signal that the user wants to opt-out of online tracking and opt-in to DNT.

Ad blockers only block ads, not tracking, and are not always trustworthy. Incognito mode browsing is vulnerable and only untraceable between sessions. Targeted ads have no obligation to anonymity and you have no control over them; data can be stolen or sold, and these ads can be misused.

DoubleClick is a subsidiary of Google that develops and provides Internet ad serving services. Its clients include agencies, marketers, and publishers. DoubleClick is often linked with the controversy over spyware because browser HTTPS cookies are set to track users as they travel from website to website and record which commercial advertisements they view and select while browsing.

DoubleClick has been criticized for misleading users by offering an opt-out option that is insufficiently effective.

The National Security Agency (NSA) uses Google cookies to pinpoint targets for hacking, and piggy-backs on third-party cookies. The Diffie-Hellmann Key Exchange Protocol establishes a shared cryptographic "key" between two computers that makes it difficult for a third party, such as NSA, to spy on a conversation; however, it has its weaknesses.

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The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) is a U.S. copyright law that criminalizes production and dissemination of technology, devices, or services intended to circumvent measures (commonly known as digital rights management or DRM) that control access to copyrighted works. This act, unfortunately, is sometimes “interpreted” to sue innocent acts, such as the DMCA vs. Baby case.

Panopticlick is a free online tool by EFF that tests your browser with one click to see how unique it is based on the information it will share with sites it visits, and therefore how easily it can be identified by the owners of the websites you visit online.

Noah recommends we use the latest versions of our operating systems and recommended Tor as a (free) browser that enables anonymous communication. If you use Tor, you will not also need Privacy Badger. Always enter data on an encrypted website.

EFF relies on subscriptions and donations. For more information and to join the Electronic Frontier Foundation, go to EFF.org.

### **Looking Back to See Forward**

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA  
February 2016 issue, Drive Light  
www.uchug.org  
president (at) uchug.org

With 2015 in the rear view mirror, one starts to wonder what kind of year 2016 will be for computers and technology. We had better figure that out quickly, as almost 1/4 of the year is gone already, and before we know it Christmas decorations will be appearing in the aisles of Home Depot once again. I now prefer to avoid making New Year’s predictions. A lot of interesting things happened with technology in 2015, and I’m now so good at guessing. Perhaps by considering the events, milestones and trends of last year, some useful conclusions can be made about what is likely to happen to our tech items in 2016 and further into the future. A lot of tech topics were in the news in 2015; looking back at them now may provide insight into what we will face going forward.

**Automobiles.** Quickly name the most powerful computing device you own. For most of us, it is probably our car. Most new cars have more than 40 embedded processors, running everything from the emissions to the entertainment system. Luxury cars may have 100 processors each. Car makers are now packing 200 lbs. of electronics in a new vehicle; though they try to shave weight from the vehicles to increase fuel mileage, the added electronics typically saves fuel by replacing heavier mechanisms. Today’s cars are safer (air bags, electronic traction control and braking, tire pressure sensors, backup cameras, collision avoidance), more efficient (electronic engine control) and more capable (GPS navigation, cruise control, self-parking, Wi-Fi hub), due in a large part to electronics.

Along with all those processors come 100 million or more lines of code. That software can do great things for an automaker, or it can be their undoing. The VW diesel emissions scandal that was revealed last year, in which they admitted configuring software to cheat on emissions testing, hurt VW sales and its stock value and resulted in fines, lawsuits and recalls. There were, in fact, a record 51 million vehicles recalled in 2015, many resulting from the other major auto scandal and the problem of airbag inflators made by Takata firing shards of metal at car occupants when they inflate. In general, however, more complex vehicles and short design schedules will lead to more design problems and more recalls.

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Autonomous or self-driving cars are being developed by most major automakers, including Tesla, as well as Google, Uber, Lyft and Apple. Unfortunately, the state and federal regulations to deal with this new vehicle paradigm are also still under development. Meanwhile, many automakers are introducing semiautonomous driving features incrementally. Vehicles with automatic braking and steering for collision avoidance, as well as self-parking capabilities are already available. Will the automakers get a self-driving car in the public's hands (or under their behinds) first by adding autonomous features piecemeal, or will Google and the government regulators get their vehicles and laws completed first?

Though 2015 set a record for auto sales, low fuel prices sent sales of electric cars down 17% from 2014. While new plug-in electric and hybrid models continue to be introduced, consumers are reluctant to pay the \$8K to \$10K premium for these vehicles with gas prices so low. Only 400,000 out of the 1 million electric vehicle sales goal set by the Obama administration by 2015 had been achieved.

Going forward, consumers can expect more electronics in their cars and trucks and more electric cars in general, especially if oil prices increase sharply. If fuel prices stay low, auto makers will be conflicted, having to choose between selling bigger vehicles that consumers want and smaller, high mileage gas and electric cars that allow them to meet the much tougher 2025 average fuel economy standards. Though adding electronics tends to increase reliability, look for more recalls as the complexity of the products increases. Autonomous vehicle development has become "too big to fail"; with so many players in the market, the cars could be available in just a few years, and then the regulations will have to be resolved. This will be great for the disabled and inebriated, but devastating for bus, taxi and truck drivers.

**Drones.** The FAA (Federal Aviation Administration) finally released some regulations for small unmanned aircraft or drones in 2015, requiring registration for some and specifying flight rules. As with their wheeled autonomous cousins, regulations have not kept up with the technology and popularity of personal drones. Aerial firefighting efforts for wildfires last summer were interfered with by drones in a number of cases. A number of new laws relating to drones were proposed in California but none were enacted. Meanwhile, small quadcopters continue to drop in price and become more available. Fry's has several aisles devoted to drones and their accessories.

Personal drones usually have a lot of autonomous flight capabilities, but most still require some human control, as with a radio-controlled plane. A new product to be released this summer called Lily promises to make drone photography easy for everyone ([www.lily.camera](http://www.lily.camera)). This quadcopter with built-in camera is very easy to use; it is launched by simply throwing it in the air. It tracks and follows you via a small tracking device and takes video and stills. It is in pre-sales online for \$800. This kind of device could be the next Go-Pro Hero of action cameras. If the price could come down further, it could be a big hit.

**Computers.** Sales of laptop and desktop computers fell slightly in 2015, continuing a trend started in 2012 when tablets began to compete with them. Tablet sales rose for several years, but were flat last year, probably because by then almost everyone that wanted a tablet had finally gotten one. Microsoft's release of the Windows 10 operating system was supposed to spur sales of new computers, but by the end of 2015, it had only a 10% market share (less than Windows 8.1 at 10.3%, XP at 11% and Windows 7 at 56%). This was in spite of Microsoft offering it for free to existing Windows 7 and 8 users. For tablets, 57% used the Android OS at the end of 2015, while iOS had 35% of the market.

The main competition for computers and tablets at this point is the smart phone. While computers (desktops and notebooks combined) had around 300,000 shipped in 2015, and tablets an additional 300,000 units, nearly 2 million mobile phones were shipped worldwide. While smart phones and tablets may be great for web surfing and emails, most file creation work is still best done on a conventional PC, with a larger screen and full keyboard.

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Tax return filing season is here, and while a few may file using a tablet, I would guess the majority of filers will do so on a desktop or laptop PC (with practically none on a smart phone). I can't see editing spreadsheets or writing large documents on a smart phone. Even online shopping is more difficult on a smart phone's small screen. Thus I feel computers will continue to hold their percentage of market share for quite a few years into the future. It will also take a few years for Windows 10 to become the most used computer OS, but it will get there.

**Smart Phones.** Smart phone sales may have peaked simply because it is getting harder to find anyone that does not already have one. There are some that own no computing devices other than a smart phone, but those people are primarily content consumers, not creators. In the smart phone arena, Android is the king of the OS with 83% of the market; Apple's iOS only had 14% in 2015.

What started out as mobile device that could only make voice calls has turned into a mobile computer, web browser and instant (text) messenger. An interesting phone prediction says that one quarter of phone users won't make a single voice call in any given week this year. I would guess that trend will continue. Almost everyone will have a smart phone, but fewer people will use it as a phone.

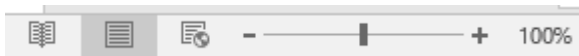
**Wearables.** Activity trackers like Fitbit have been growing in popularity, with Fitbit alone selling 4.5 million units in the 3rd quarter of 2015. The Apple Watch was not far behind in sales. Still, I see the activity tracker as a useful device, while the Watch seems little more than an extension for the iPhone's ability to call. The Watch display seems far too small to be useful for reading texts.

I thought Google Glass was a clever device, though expensive. I read recently that Google may be reintroducing it or a similar product. A wearable computer like that would be useful; it just needs the right user interface. We will probably see more medical-related wearables introduced in the future.

**Social Networks.** Facebook is still the top social network spot on the web, with 45% of users in 2015. You Tube is the next most popular destination at 22%. All the others are in low single digits each, including Twitter, Reddit, Pinterest, Tumblr, LinkedIn and Instagram. These sites will remain popular, and though it will continue to have new competitors, Facebook will probably remain on top for some time. Tastes can change quickly in this category, however. Who remembers Myspace?

## 7 Quick Tips for Windows and Office

By Nancy DeMarte, 1st Vice President, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL  
March 2016 issue, Sarasota Technology Monitor  
www.thestug.org  
ndemarte (at) verizon.net



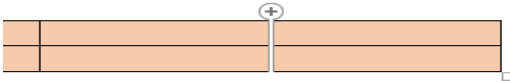
1. Most of us use the **Print Layout** view when composing multi-page documents in Word because it lets us see all four edges of the virtual piece of paper. But every now and then, the top and bottom edges lose their space and look glued together. Although this view won't affect the printed copy, you can return the space between the pages simply by double clicking the line between any two of them.

2. Everyone knows that holding down the **Shift key** while pressing a letter on the keyboard will make it upper case. But the Shift key has other important functions. To select (highlight) a large group of contiguous text, click at the beginning of the group, hold down Shift, and click at the end of the group. This same process works for selecting a long list of items, like emails or photo thumbnails. Do you have noncontiguous items to select? Press the Control (Ctrl) key instead and click the desired items in the group.

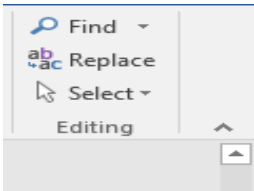


3. A few other popular **keystroke combos** can save a lot of time and aggravation. Hold down the Control key (bottom left on the keyboard) while you press the A key (Ctrl+A) to select the whole document. Use (Ctrl+Z) when you need to undo your last change. In Windows 8.1 and 10, the Windows key between the Function (Fn) and Alternate (Alt) keys will open the Start screen or menu. (Ctrl+P) is handy when you need to print from a place like the Internet, and no Print button is visible.

4. **Arrow keys** can be helpful, too. They provide the best way to move around in a document without changing anything. Let's say you want to add a word which begins at the left margin of a document. It can be difficult to click between the margin and the word. You can click a short distance inside the margin and press the left arrow on the keyboard to move the insertion point back to the margin without disturbing the text. In Power-Point, if you have trouble dragging an object on a slide, try holding down the Ctrl key while pressing one or more of the arrow keys a few times to nudge the object slowly to the exact spot you want it.



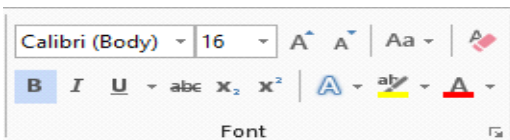
5. New tricks with **Tables**: In Word 2013 and 2016, if you have added a table to a document and want to add a column between existing columns, position your mouse pointer over the line between the columns until it becomes two lines with a bulb on top. Click and a column will appear in that spot. Do the same for adding rows. Or, if you need more rows at the bottom of a table, click in the bottom right cell and press the Tab key to get another row.



6. Windows has added a tool "**ribbon**" across the top of most Windows application windows now. Convenient as it is, some people complain that it covers too much of the work space. Fortunately, Office 2013 and 2016 make it easy to hide the ribbon. To hide the ribbon but leave the tabs visible, click the tiny caret in the top right corner of the screen directly above the scroll bar. This works with any tab selected.



If you change your mind, click the Ribbon Display options box near the right end of the title bar which has an upward-pointing arrow inside. Here you can choose to Auto-hide the ribbon, show just the Tabs above the ribbon, or show both Tabs and Commands.



7. One of the new and overdue tools in Word 2013 and 2016 is the **Clear All Formatting** tool located in the top right corner of the Home Tab – Font group. It lets you remove the bold, italics, glow, shadow, and all the other effects that you can apply to text. Select the portion of the document where you want to remove the formatting or press Ctrl+A to select a whole document, then click the icon to return the text to the default font and font size with no special formatting. I use it when I'm combining multiple documents into one or when a word gets stuck with certain formatting and needs to be unformatted.


**Snipping Tool Update:** For Windows 10 users, here is an addendum to my article in December about the Snipping Tool. I mentioned that it had been upgraded in Windows 10. Here is how: If you want to capture a screen shot of a menu or other temporarily visible item, you can save time by using the new Delay feature. Open the Snipping tool, then click Delay and choose a number of seconds from 1 – 5. Then click New, which makes the Snipping tool disappear. Open the menu or item you want to snip. When the time is up, the Snipping tool reappears so you can complete the snip.





# September 2016



| <u>Sun</u> | <u>Mon</u>   | <u>Tue</u> | <u>Wed</u> | <u>Thu</u>   | <u>Fri</u> | <u>Sat</u> |
|------------|--|------------|------------|--|------------|------------|
|            |  |            |            | 1  | 2          | 3          |
| 4          | 5<br><b>LABOR DAY</b><br> | 6          | 7          | 8 1:00 P.M.<br>Photo Editing<br>Workshop Mtg.      | 9          | 10         |
| 11         | 12   | 13         | 14         | 15 1:00 P.M.<br>Plateau Photog-<br>raphy Club Mtg. | 16         | 17         |
| 18         | 19 6:00 P.M.<br>General Mtg.<br>Presentation<br>Followed by<br>Q & A Session                               | 20         | 21         | 22   | 23         | 24         |
| 25         | 26   | 27         | 28         | 29   | 30         |            |

**Note:** Please see page #15 for the Plateau PC Users Group, Inc. [Application for Membership form.](#)