PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, INC GAZETTE

Member of apcug
An International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups

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"JOIN US FOR FUN AND LEARNING AT CROSSVILLE'S COMPUTER CLUB" January 2025 **Volume 31 Issue 1**

This Month's General Meeting

Tuesday, January 14, 2025
will start at 3:00 P.M. @
FFG Christ Lutheran Church

January 14th Presentation @ 3:00 P.M.

Income Tax Program

Bob Willis, a Board Member and our local tax expert, will present his traditional income tax program.

Little has changed for 2024 and likely 2025 tax returns, but there will likely be significant changes during 2025 with or without Congressional action.

Welcome to 2025

Please Note: All Meetings will now be on the second Tuesday of each month. Starting at **3:00 P.M.**
Location: Christ Lutheran Church
481 Snead Drive, Fairfield Glade TN

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. Persons/families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

Join In	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - June
Single	**$24**	$18	$12	$6
Family	**$30**	$22	$15	$7

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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Cool Tips

Verify the Safety of Websites

By Terry Harvey, Program Chair and Newsletter Editor
Wisconsin All-Computer Users Club
https://wauc.apcug.org/
terryharvey (at) wi.rr.com

Verifying the safety and legality of a website is crucial for online security. Here are some steps to follow:

1. Check the website's URL: Ensure it starts with "https://" instead of "http://". The "s" indicates a secure connection.

2. Look for security indicators: A lock symbol or the word "Secure" in the browser's address bar confirms a secure connection. Avoid sites with warnings or certificate errors.

3. Research the website: Search for reviews, ratings, or experiences other users share. Be cautious if there is a lack of information or negative feedback.

4. Check for contact information: Legitimate websites provide valid contact details, including a physical address and phone number. Verify if the information is accurate and reachable.

5. Assess content quality: Poor grammar, excessive ads, or suspicious content can indicate an untrustworthy site.

6. Review privacy policy and terms of service: Ensure they are transparent, well-written, and provide clear information on data collection, storage, and usage.

7. Use website reputation services: Online tools like Google Safe Browsing or Norton Safe Web can check a site's safety rating.

Trust your instincts: If something feels off or too good to be true, it's wise to proceed with caution or avoid the website altogether.

Remember, online safety is an ongoing practice. Stay updated with the latest security measures and use reliable antivirus software for additional protection.

**** Visit the PPCUG *Website* ****

At: www.PPCUGinc.com.Read all about our club activities and scheduled monthly meetings, also current and past issues of the Gazette Newsletter. Links also to the Meeting Handouts on past presentations.
Send your comments and suggestions to the PPCUG Webmaster,
Alan Baker @ **jackal33980@gmail.com** (931) 239-0877

Two-Factor Authorization Fiasco

Greg Skalka, President
Under the Computer Hood Users Group Home (uchug.org)
1editor101 (a) uchug.org

If you are accessing a personal account or app on the web, you should be concerned about that account's security. Bad actors (and I don't mean those who can't get a job in Hollywood) constantly search for our login credentials, hoping to access our accounts and steal money or personal information. The best ways to protect online accounts include using strong passwords and protecting them, resisting attempts by others to gain access to those accounts through scams and phishing communications, and using two-factor authentication on those accounts.

Two-factor authentication, or 2FA, requires at least two identification items of different types to log into an account. It is a subset of multi-factor authentication (MFA). This can be enabled for most online accounts; some account providers now require it. It typically requires providing two or more identifying items from three categories for account access. These categories are something you know (like a password, birthdate, or the answer to a security question), something you have (could be a specific phone, computer, or email account, or a security key, fob, or dongle), and something you are (a biometric like a fingerprint).

To get money from an ATM (assuming you are not trying the big truck with a chain approach), you must provide something you have (an ATM card) and something you know (a PIN). With a 2FA-enabled online account, to gain access, you would typically need something you know (a password) and something you have (either a smartphone or computer that can receive a security code through text message or email). Entering the correct code sent to the device that presumably only you have validates your identity in a second way (in addition to the password).

Your account provider may be using 2FA, and you don't even realize it. Even if you only enter a password for access, the provider may look at the IP address or other identifying information from your device's connection to validate that it is really you (something you have). If you usually log in from one device and then suddenly use another, the account provider may ask for additional verifying information, like the answer to a security question.

It should be evident that trying to make it more difficult for others to access your accounts could also make it more difficult for you. Going through additional steps, like entering a six-digit code you were sent through a text message, takes time and opens up the possibility of being denied access. If you lose your phone, have phone communication problems, have a malfunction in your fingerprint scanner, or lose control of your email account, you may not be able to get timely access to your accounts.

I was a little apprehensive about 2FA at first due to concerns about my being denied access due to some problem outside of my control. I don't remember if I started using 2FA because I enabled it or if some account I already had started requiring it. I have used 2FA for several years on most of my critical accounts. Whenever I am asked to enable it, I look to enable it on some accounts (I have found some that did not support it then; I'm starting to think less of those companies). I typically use my phone as the second form (something I have); I need to ensure I have my phone handy when I want account access on my computer. Receiving a code as a text on a phone is supposed to be more secure than receiving it in an email. It may be a little more work, but I have had a few problems with it denying me access when I needed it.

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Recently, however, I have had a few instances of being denied access to accounts through 2FA. My first instance was about a week ago when I was trying to access my Scripps online medical account on my computer to perform an electronic check-in for a medical appointment. Of course, I was in a hurry, trying to do this late at night, just before bed for an appointment the next day, and I would not have time to do it later.

After successfully entering my username and password on the MyScripps web login page, a page was provided to select the method for sending a code: email or text. I have found that my phone usually receives the text in just a few seconds. This time, however, the text did not come right away as expected. I waited maybe 60 seconds (remember, I wanted to finish this and go to bed) and then clicked "Send code again." Again, I waited, this time a little longer. I checked my phone to see that it was on and not in airplane mode or something else that would turn off reception.

After waiting longer than I wanted, I finally selected email to deliver the code. Then, I had to start Thunderbird (my email program) to access my Juno email on my computer. Fortunately, the email with the code was there, and I successfully logged into Scripps and completed my task. At the time, I thought it was strange, but I didn't consider the problems I had any further. The following day, I found that the texts had come in at night.

A few days later, I tried to log into my US Bank online banking account from my computer; I again needed to check my account balance with some urgency. The US Bank 2FA code enter screen comes up right after entering a valid username and password; I may enable only texts to my phone for this. Again, I was used to having the text with the code pop up on my phone immediately, but I waited several minutes without receiving the text message. I now remembered my Scripps incident. There was no email delivery selection on the 2FA code entry screen on the US Bank website, but there was a link to "verify another way." I had hoped it would lead to verification through an email, but instead, it asked me to enter my debit card PIN.

I don't use a debit card for any of my accounts; I may have been sent one by the bank years ago, but I never activated it and had no way to get its PIN. This lack of access to my account was beginning to make me angry.

I canceled out of that screen (the only option) and tried going into the login page to get another code sent, but no code text message came to my phone. Finally, the bank locked me out of online access for too many unsuccessful attempts. I would need to change my password to get access again, and the first step for that was to send me a code that I'd need to enter. Good grief! I searched their website and finally found a number to call for online access support (they don't make things like this very obvious on their site).

While still on their site, I called the number and started my way down their automated phone menu system. Suddenly, while listening to the next set of options, I heard the sound of text messages being received on my phone. I found a bunch of texts from US Bank with 2FA codes that had just come through on my phone. I hung up the call and returned to the web page, but after entering the code from the last text, it said the code had expired, and a new one would be sent. Again, no code text was received. I called the US Bank support number again and found that action again appeared to trigger the receiving of text messages on my phone. Again, I was too late to enter these codes, but I now saw a pattern.

I returned to the bank website and asked for a code to change my password. I then immediately called the US Bank support number, and after a few entries in their audio menu, a text arrived on my phone. I could enter this code in time, change my password, and regain access to my online accounts.

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I finally got the information I needed off the website, but I was concerned about what I had to go through to get it. Why were my texts not coming through right away? It seemed like making the phone call (or pressing phone keys) triggered the reception of texts that appeared stuck somewhere.

This seemed like a problem, so I cycled power on my phone and then tried logging into my US Bank online account. This time, the text message with the 2FA code was received right after my password was accepted, just as it had been.

Something in my phone went awry, and cycling the power fixed it. I try to remember to do that periodically; I need to be better at making that a part of my tech management routine.

I still understand that online security is essential, but I also know how it feels to be locked out due to some malfunction in the system. The lesson in resiliency to take away is not to decrease security to prevent being affected by such a failure. Still, instead, I plan so I'm not doing things at the last minute and making myself vulnerable to problems when something inevitably breaks down.

Recover Your Wi-Fi Password

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician
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dkretch (at) gmail.com

Computer users often seek technical support when they cannot access the Internet via their home wireless system.

First, the technician will usually walk the user through the reset procedure for the router or router/modem (turn them off and on). If that does not fix the problem and it is determined the modem is receiving a good signal, the subsequent conversation often goes something like this:

Technician: What is your password for your router?
User: I don't have a password.
Technician: If your router is not secured (i.e., password protected), you should be able to connect.
User: I don't have a password. I click the Google (or other browser) icon and get online.

At this point, the Technician explains to the User that the password is stored on the User's computer and that a few steps are required to access that password. The technician might guide the user through the process of recovering the password using the following procedure:

If the computer connects to the Wi-Fi, it automatically.

Microsoft has buried the Wi-Fi password on a computer more deeply with the latest version of Windows 10 and 11 than with prior versions. It is the same procedure for both 10 and 11. You can still find your Wi-Fi password using the following steps (note … where I use the term "click," I mean a single click on the left mouse button or a single tap on a touchscreen.):

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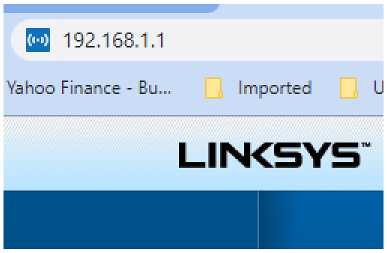
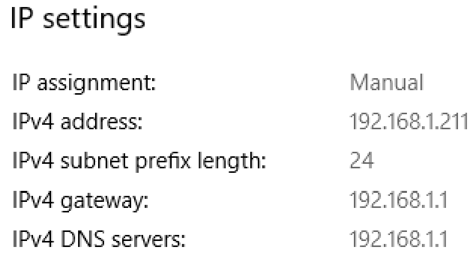
Find your way to the "Wireless Properties."

Open your Control Panel (Type "Control Panel" into the search box to the right of the Windows button on your Taskbar and Enter). Click on Network and Internet. Click on Network and Sharing Center, then click on the name of your network, which appears in blue. In the Wi-Fi window that opens, click on Wireless Properties. In the new window that opens, click on the Security tab, then check the box on Show Characters.

If you only own a smartphone/tablet or have a PC that has not stored the Wi-Fi password



Log in to your router as an administrator. You can access your router by entering its IP address into your browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. You can research the default IP address of your router by Googling "IP address [brand name of your router]. Every router I've dealt with had an address of "192.168.X.X". The most common value for X is the number 1 (for both Xs). If that does not work, try substituting the numbers 0 or 2 for one or both of the Xs. After you log in, you should be able to find the Wi-Fi settings on the Administrative pages of your router. There, you can look up your password.



IP settings

IP assignment:	Manual
IPv4 address:	192.168.1.211
IPv4 subnet prefix length:	24
IPv4 gateway:	192.168.1.1
IPv4 DNS servers:	192.168.1.1

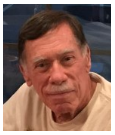
Ed. Note. On Windows 10/11, you don't have to guess. You can find the internal IP address of your network router by going to Settings > Network and Internet > Status and, under the name of your Wi-Fi (or Ethernet) connection, clicking Properties. A screen will display; near the bottom are the IP settings. The IPv4 gateway IP address is the internal address of your router.

If you are like many people

The Wi-Fi password is often written on a sticker on the back of your router. This is how I usually set up home routers, and it might be a good thing to do after you have recovered your Wi-Fi password.

This is a simple but effective strategy since it is easy to find.

A burglar would have to break into your home to steal your password, and they probably would focus on more tangible items.

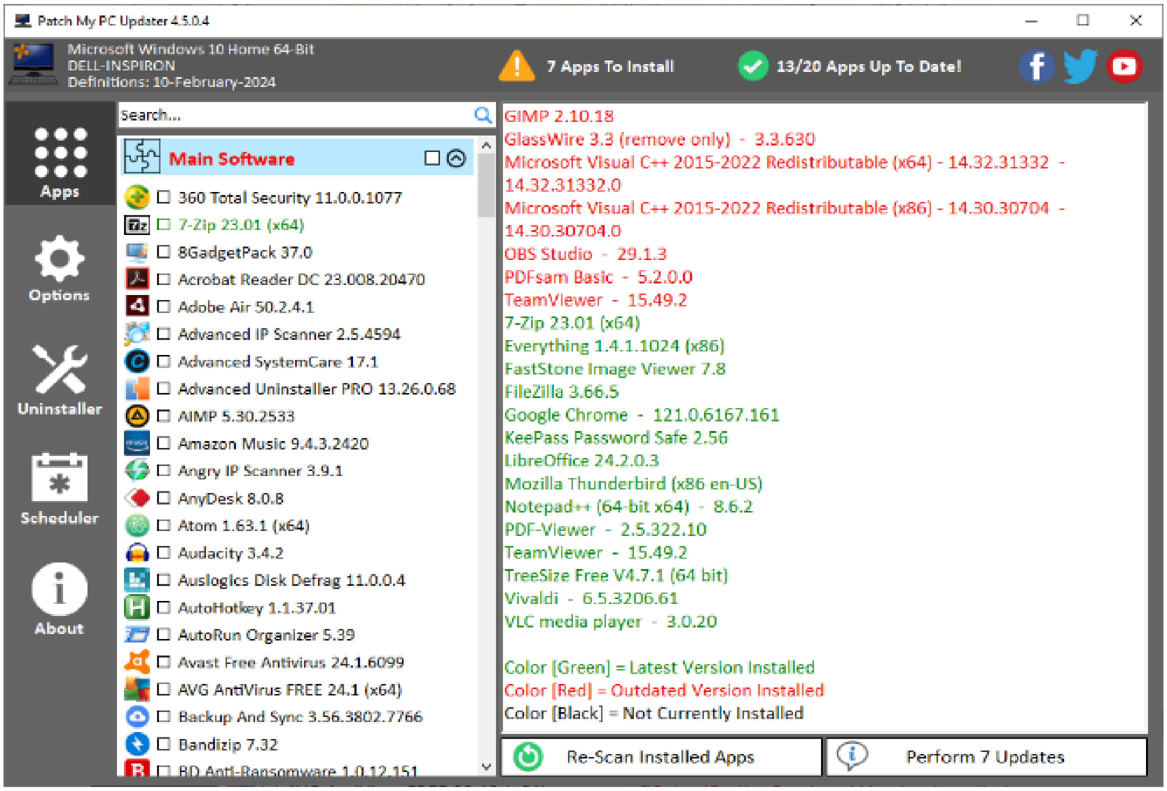


Patching My PC with Patch My PC

by Alan German, Treasurer
Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada
https://opcug.ca
Editor: brigittelord (at) opcug.ca

With the demise of both Secunia's Personal Security Inspector (PSI) and Software Update Monitor (SUMo), I have been looking for an alternative vulnerability scanner or at least an update manager to help keep my applications up to date. My preferred option is open-source software or freeware; however, almost all the relevant scanners are commercial products. One program I tried recently is Patch My PC Home Updater, the freeware version of a commercial offering. While the free package is somewhat limited regarding the specific applications that are supported, many of the programs I frequently use are included in the list.

Patch My PC can be downloaded from the developer's website using the file PatchMyPC.exe. It's portable software, and no installation is required. So, it's sufficient to run the executable, which then scans the computer's system drive and reports on the status of the supported applications that it finds.



Microsoft Windows 10 Home 64-Bit
DELL-INSPIRON
Definitions: 10-February-2024

7 Apps To Install

13/20 Apps Up To Date!

Main Software ☐

- ☐ 360 Total Security 11.0.0.1077
- ☐ 7-Zip 23.01 (x64)
- ☐ 8GadgetPack 37.0
- ☐ Acrobat Reader DC 23.008.20470
- ☐ Adobe Air 50.2.4.1
- ☐ Advanced IP Scanner 2.5.4594
- ☐ Advanced SystemCare 17.1
- ☐ Advanced Uninstaller PRO 13.26.0.68
- ☐ AIMP 5.30.2533
- ☐ Amazon Music 9.4.3.2420
- ☐ Angry IP Scanner 3.9.1
- ☐ AnyDesk 8.0.8
- ☐ Atom 1.63.1 (x64)
- ☐ Audacity 3.4.2
- ☐ Auslogics Disk Defrag 11.0.0.4
- ☐ AutoHotkey 1.1.37.01
- ☐ AutoRun Organizer 5.39
- ☐ Avast Free Antivirus 24.1.6099
- ☐ AVG AntiVirus FREE 24.1 (x64)
- ☐ Backup And Sync 3.56.3802.7766
- ☐ Bandizip 7.32
- ☐ BD Anti-Ransomware 1.0.12.151

```
GIMP 2.10.18
GlassWire 3.3 (remove only)  -  3.3.630
Microsoft Visual C++ 2015-2022 Redistributable (x64) - 14.32.31332  -
14.32.31332.0
Microsoft Visual C++ 2015-2022 Redistributable (x86) - 14.30.30704  -
14.30.30704.0
OBS Studio  -  29.1.3
PDFsam Basic  -  5.2.0.0
TeamViewer  -  15.49.2
7-Zip 23.01 (x64)
Everything 1.4.1.1024 (x86)
FastStone Image Viewer 7.8
FileZilla 3.66.5
Google Chrome  -  121.0.6167.161
KeePass Password Safe 2.56
LibreOffice 24.2.0.3
Mozilla Thunderbird (x86 en-US)
Notepad++ (64-bit x64)  -  8.6.2
PDF-Viewer  -  2.5.322.10
TeamViewer  -  15.49.2
TreeSize Free V4.7.1 (64 bit)
Vivaldi  -  6.5.3206.61
VLC media player  -  3.0.20

Color [Green] = Latest Version Installed
Color [Red] = Outdated Version Installed
Color [Black] = Not Currently Installed
```

The user interface is pretty easy to understand. By default, the Apps icon in the left sidebar is enabled, and the list of applications is displayed. The left window lists all the supported applications. If an application is installed, the color of the listing indicates its status. For example, 7-Zip Version 23.01 has been installed, and this is the current release of this utility. The right window displays any issues that have been identified. The applications listed in red are outdated and should be updated, while no action is required for those listed in green, which are currently available.

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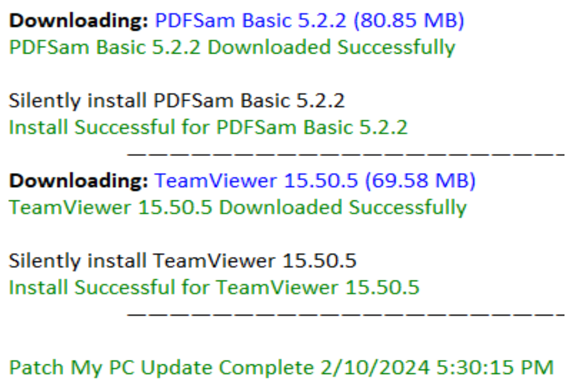
Note that PatchMyPC only looks at version numbers and determines if any package has a newer version available. So, it is not a vulnerability scanner. Some of the software updates may well include patches for vulnerabilities, while others may be just feature updates. Nevertheless, bringing all the listed applications up to date will ensure that at least these packages will receive any available vulnerability patches.



```
Downloading: PDFSam Basic 5.2.2 (80.85 MB)
PDFSam Basic 5.2.2 Downloaded Successfully

Silently install PDFSam Basic 5.2.2
Install Successful for PDFSam Basic 5.2.2
                ------------------------
Downloading: TeamViewer 15.50.5 (69.58 MB)
TeamViewer 15.50.5 Downloaded Successfully

Silently install TeamViewer 15.50.5
Install Successful for TeamViewer 15.50.5
                ------------------------

Patch My PC Update Complete 2/10/2024 5:30:15 PM
```

You can start updating the listed applications in red by simply pressing the button labeled *Perform 7 Updates*. PatchMyPC then downloads and "silently" installs the updated software. A progress report indicating successful downloads and installations is displayed in the right window.

A log file named PatchMyPC.log, stored in the folder where the PatchMyPC program is located, provides more details of the update process.

Interestingly, following the updates to my system, the header row in PatchMyPC indicated *19/20 Apps Up to Date*. The log entry showed the reason as "*Skipping install for GlassWire 3.3.664 based on user input not to close GlassWire.exe.*" I imagine this was a result of the "silent" update where I was not prompted to close GlassWire so that the update could proceed.

PatchMyPC has many customization features based on the categories listed as icons down the left sidebar. The Options tab includes customization for downloading software, changing the display, and managing the update process and the log file. The Uninstaller tab allows installed programs to be removed, while the Scheduler tab allows specification of the timing and frequency for running PatchMyPC automatically. It's also worth noting that, under the Apps tab, clicking the checkbox for any application in the list in the left window causes this application to be marked for installation the next time the software is updated.

So, PatchMyPC isn't an actual vulnerability scanner but a handy tool for keeping various installed applications up to date and making this process extremely easy.

Bottom Line

PATCH MY PC

Patch My PC Home Updater
Patch My PC, LLC
https://patchmypc.com/home-updater

YouTube, an Online Video Sharing Service, Parts 1 and 2

By Ron Sherwood, Member, East-Central Ohio Technology Users Club
https://ecotu.club/
newsletter (at) ecotu.club

YouTube is an online video-sharing service currently owned by Google. According to the Wikipedia entry for YouTube, it is second only to Google Search as the most visited website. According to wyzow, *YouTube Stats: Everything You Need to Know In 2023!* "An average of 2,500 new videos are uploaded to YouTube every minute," so there is plenty to watch. Content covers the gamut from humor to science; my favorite is the how-to videos. Access is free; anyone with an account (any Google account will work) can have their own "channel" and upload content. As you might expect, this "anyone can upload" policy means the accuracy of the content varies from excellent to what I consider just plain junk. As you should with any Internet content, use caution and common sense when judging the accuracy of YouTube content.

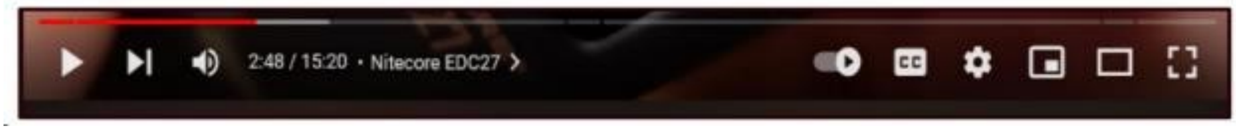
To access YouTube, type YouTube.com into your browser's address box. The opening page shows a variety of videos available for viewing. Keep scrolling down for more and even more possibilities. To narrow the video choices, use the search box at the top of the page. I often search for "how to" videos. For example, I just replaced the weather strip around some doors. I've done this before, but I thought I'd see if I could find any "secrets" of the pros to simplify the job. I viewed several videos, and the creators generally agreed on what to do. Some said to start at the top; others started with the sides, but otherwise, there was agreement.

One tip I picked up was mitering the corners for a better seal. I also learned when and where to install foam wedges.

Want to learn how to cook a particular dish? Type the name into the search box, and you will likely get hundreds of videos to view.

Some content creators post new videos as often as daily. Other channels change infrequently. If you find a channel you want to follow, click the "subscribe" button to begin a list of channels for easy access. This is similar to "favorites" in other applications. You will need to sign in with a Google address to create a subscription list.

Part 2 – The YouTube Video Player YouTube content: is it treasure or trash? You make that decision. But, if you view YouTube videos, here is an introduction to some basic controls that you may find helpful. Let's start with the primary playback menu at the video's bottom.



At the far left is the play-pause control. This image appears as an arrow or triangle on its side because the video is paused. Click on the arrow, and the video starts playing. The arrow changes to two parallel bars. These symbols should look familiar since they are used on most audio and video playback devices.

Tapping the space bar, clicking on the video, or pressing the letter "k" will also stop and start playback. The next icon, the arrow with a vertical bar, another icon used on most playback devices, jumps to the end of the current playback and starts a new video.

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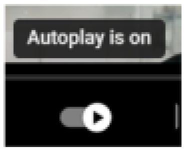
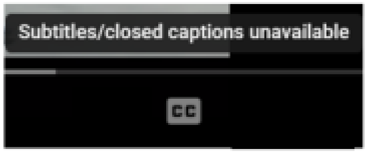
Next on the control bar is the volume control. Again, the symbol may be similar to other audio-video devices.

Placing the cursor over the "speaker" image brings up a slider control used to increase (slide to the right) or decrease (slide to the left) playback volume. This control differs from the Windows volume control, which affects the entire system. To quickly mute a video, click on the speaker or slide the control left. An "X" will appear over the speaker when playback is muted.

The numbers to the speaker's right indicate the current playback position in minutes and seconds and the total time for the video. For example, this video is at the 2-minute 48-second position of a 15-minute 20-second video. "Nitecore EDC27 is the title of this presentation. The greater than character (>) opens a list of chapters if the video is set up with them.

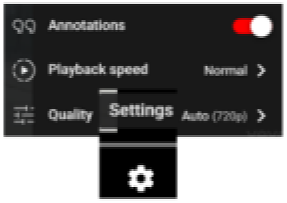
Skipping to the right, the following control turns Autoplay on or off. In the image above, with the button to the right, Autoplay is on. Moving the slider to the left turns off Autoplay. With Autoplay on, playback will go to a new video and start playing it when the current selection ends.

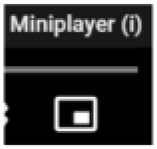


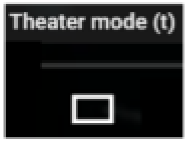


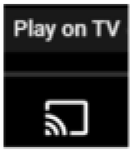
Moving to the right, the CC icon turns closed, captioning on and off. Generally, it works well, but I have seen some strange words pop up in the caption dialog. Tapping "c" also opens captioning. Not all videos have the closed caption option.

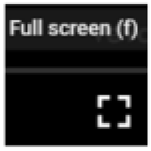
The Settings gear lets you choose Annotations, Playback speed, and Video Quality.











Next, click on the open square of the screen. YouTube calls this "Miniplayer." Again, we have a one-key shortcut. This time, it's the "I" key. The shortcut key is a toggle: opening the picture-in-picture with a press, then reverting to the standard view with another touch of the "I" key.

The next icon, an open rectangle, controls "theater" mode. The standard view lists additional videos to the right of the one playing. Theater view toggles this list on and off. The shortcut key "t" does the same.

The four corner brackets that form an "open square" is the "full screen" icon. Click it to enlarge the current video to full screen. Pressing Escape returns to the standard view. The "f" key is a toggle for full screen and returns to the standard view.

We touched on the basic controls for viewing YouTube videos, but the site has many other features, such as sharing, clipping, saving, and transcripts. I encourage you to explore these features if you are a YouTube regular or just an occasional user.

My Smartphone, My Friend

Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group
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I got my first smartphone, a low-cost ($150) Samsung Galaxy J3, in 2017. It was not that powerful and I was a bit apprehensive about this new device, so I used it mostly for phone calls, texts and select apps. I saved web browsing and email for my computers and laptops as the phone screen seemed too small. As I warmed up to the smartphone I found it essential for navigation (with Google Maps). Having a camera handy, as poor as it was compared to my Panasonic Lumix digital camera, became another feature I used constantly. As time passed, I added more apps but was selective about what I chose to install. I had no time for games and no use for social media, but I used several smart home apps to control the various devices I bought. I refused to do banking or conduct any financial transactions on the phone, preferring the relative security of a computer for any online banking or shopping.

Every business seemed to have a smartphone app to promote, but I only installed a few that I thought were safe and offered compelling benefits worth the risks. One of the riskiest apps I use is Google Maps, as I have found over the years that it has been tracking me, even when the app is not running.

However, its benefits are so compelling that I've made that bargain with the Google devil and accept being tracked in exchange for its navigation capabilities. Having every store and sandwich shop app seems like a foolish risk that is usually not worth it. I don't want Google to also know what I'm going to do in the future and whom I associate with, so I refuse to use a calendar app on my phone or computer.

One app I do accept is the Southwest Airlines app, as it is so much handier than checking in for flights online with a computer. The Southwest app finally drove me in 2022 to buy a new smartphone, as their app developer stopped supporting my old phone. I bought a Samsung Galaxy S22 and am hopefully spending real money ($700) to buy more performance and tech longevity.

As with my first Samsung, I bought myself a very rugged case for my S22 to allay my fears of damaging the phone. With the belt clip front, the phone is fully enclosed when I carry it. I use magnetic USB adapters and charging cables to protect the phone's USB type C connector from excessive wear. I mostly charge my phone from a battery pack in a fast-charge mode and now use settings in the phone to limit charging to 85% of capacity most of the time, to extend battery life.

Over time I've found my use of the phone has only increased. With a higher resolution camera in my S22, I find I'm using it much more and my dedicated digital cameras much less often. Last fall the number of prescription drugs I needed to take increased and some came with restrictions I had to follow; I found the smart phone to be very useful in medication management. One medication required it be taken at least two hours after eating and at least one hour before eating; I found the best time to take it was immediately upon waking (I don't believe I do any sleep-eating). The problem is that I normally get up early and leave the house for work in less than an hour; this meant I often had to wait around a bit before eating breakfast and going to work.

I found my smartphone could be very useful in helping me manage this. The first thing I do when I get up is take this particular medication. I then immediately note the time on my phone and write that time into a document on the phone (for reference, should I get confused). I then set an alarm on the phone to melodically go off in an hour, indicating when I may eat breakfast. I often have to wait a little, but even though

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the time I get up can vary, this system keeps me from eating too soon after the meds. I have another medication I must take with food at dinner; another alarm set for a nominal dinner time each day helps remind me. I also take another medication once a week on a specific day, so another alarm on my phone reminds me of that.

The breakfast alarm could also be done using Alexa, but my talking to set it could be more disturbing to my sleeping wife. The other alarms on my phone can remind me even if I have gone out for dinner.

I used to wake up to a plug-in, battery-backed-up alarm clock at my bedside. It is more a wake-up alarm of last resort, as I typically wake up before it goes off. I always kept my phone in another room at night as I didn't want to be awakened by late-night spam calls. When we remodeled our bathroom last fall, we had to temporarily move into our guest bedroom. I didn't want to change my alarm clock, so I just used my smartphone alarm (which I do when I travel). I got used to it, and since there were no overnight spam calls, I've kept using my phone as my alarm clock since moving back into our bedroom.

My phone is also a convenient memory aid; I keep many lists on it in the Samsung Notes app. In addition to shopping lists, it has many pieces of information that I don't want to have to keep looking up. Printer cartridge part numbers, oil filters, and oil types for cars are easy to look up on my phone when I'm in the store.

Sometimes, when I get an idea for a newsletter column, I write down a few notes on my phone. I can keep an inventory of my mom's supplies on my phone, which can be easily updated when I visit her assisted living facility, and then needed items can be ordered when I get home.

Text messages are also a convenient way to keep track of information and events that can be referenced later.

My siblings have a text chain that we have used over the last few years to disseminate information about our elderly parents. It is easy to look in that text chain to see the events significant to my dad's passing, when my mom had medical issues, and how things have changed over time. Now that I'm overseeing my mom's care, my text reports to my siblings are a good record to keep.

Communication is a primary function of the smartphone, though how well it works often depends on the capabilities at the other end of the link. My mom has a "senior-oriented" smartphone but only uses it for phone calls. She can't send or receive text messages or photos connected to them. My other siblings live out of the area, limiting.

My wife found a great gift for my mom this last Christmas. It is a photo frame with an added capability. Its display cycles through the photos in its memory, but its Wi-Fi connection can add pictures to the frame. My siblings and other relatives can send photos to the frame from anywhere using a smartphone app. My brother even wrote a short note, took a picture of it, and sent it as a kind of text message.

I'm constantly finding new ways to use my smartphone. With new ways to use it being developed all the time, it continues to become a closer friend.

Firefox Browser, What is new and improved

By Jasmine Blue D'Katz

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During a Zoom meeting with one of my Milwaukee computer clubs and Senior Planet "Lunch and Learn," there was a discussion about the Firefox web browser. I do not personally use Firefox as my primary browser, but I decided to give it a quick look to see what is new.

Firefox constantly receives updates with new features and improvements, so some new features might depend on which version you are using. Here are some noteworthy features recently added to Firefox:

ENHANCED PRIVACY

- **Copy Link Without Site Tracking:** This feature ensures that copied links no longer contain tracking information attached by websites. This is a handy tool for preventing your browsing activity from being monitored across different platforms.
- **Global Privacy Control:** This opt-in feature allows you to inform websites that you do not want your data shared or sold. It is enabled by default in private browsing mode and helps you take control of your online privacy.
- **Enhanced Canvas Fingerprinting Protection:** Firefox's private windows and ETP-Strict privacy configuration now includes improved protection against canvas fingerprinting, a technique used to track users based on their unique browser configurations.
- **Cookie Banner Blocker:** This feature automatically blocks cookie banners and refuses cookies for supported websites in private browsing mode. It is currently being rolled out for users in Germany and might become available in other regions soon.
- **URL Tracking Protection:** This feature removes unnecessary tracking parameters from URLs, making it harder for websites to track your browsing activity across different platforms. It is enabled by default in private windows for all users in Germany and might be expanded to other regions later.

IMPROVED PERFORMANCE AND FUNCTIONALITY

- **Hardware decoding support for AV1 video codec:** This feature enables smoother layback of AV1 videos by utilizing your computer's graphics hardware. It requires the Microsoft AV1 Video Extension on Windows systems.
- **Voice Control commands on macOS**: Mac users can now control Firefox using voice commands, making browsing more convenient and hands-free.
- **Wayland compositor on Linux:** Firefox on Linux now defaults to the Wayland compositor when available, leading to improved touchpad and touchscreen gestures, swipe-to-navigate functionality, better graphics performance, and more.
- **Larger and clearer focus indicator**: The focus indicator highlighting the currently active element in Firefox has been improved with increased size, contrast, and a white box shadow for better visibility.

These are just some of the recent new features in Firefox. The browser is constantly evolving, so be sure to keep an eye out for future updates that might bring even more exciting improvements and privacy protections.

I hope this gives you a good overview of some of the cool new things you can find in Firefox! Let me know if you have any questions.

Revised January 2025

Plateau PC Users Group, Inc.

Application for Membership for 2025-2026

------- New Member ------ Renewing Member

Return this application with a check for annual dues payable to “PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP”
Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to
“Plateau PC Users Group 207 Highland Sq. PMB Box #501 Crossville TN 38555”

Our annual dues are now payable July 1st. of each fiscal year.

Persons// families joining during the fiscal year have dues payable as follows:

Join In	July - Sept	Oct - Dec	Jan - Mar	Apr - June
Single	**$24**	$18	$12	$6
Family	**$30**	$22	$15	$7

Date: ________ Amount Paid: $ ________ by Cash ___ , or Check (# ________)

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Last Name *First Name* *Family Member (if family membership)*

Address:

-------------------------------------- -------- --------------- (______) ______________

City *State* *Zip Code* *Phone Number*

E-Mail address: --

Please Print

I have belonged to a Computer Club before: Yes _____ No _____

I have used PC’s since (year): ________

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

February 2025

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						1
2	3	4	5 10:00 A.M. PPCUG Board Meeting	6	7	8
9	10	11 3:00 P.M. General Mtg. Presentation. Followed by Q&A Session	12	13	14 	15
16	17 	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	