



## April 2014

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Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor

# CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

### This Week's Schedule:

**April 12 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**

[General Meeting](#) - Leader: Ray Carlson

Location: Prescott Public Library

#### First Hour: Key Features of Windows 8

Should you try Windows 8.1? We have discussed this question in the past including an excellent presentation last month by JB during which he demonstrated how 8.1 can be made to look and act like Windows 7. But why not stick with Windows 7 rather than get 8 and make it a clone of 7?

At this week's general meeting, Ray Carlson will address that question demonstrating some of the features of 8 that have been cited as reasons for switching as well as characteristics that have been identified as reasons not to change. Members of the audience who have tried Windows 8 will be encouraged to share their positive and negative reactions including problems that might also apply to earlier versions of Windows. Anyone with a question they would like to have addressed could [share it with Ray](#) ahead of time.

**Second Hour:** Phil Ball will present Tips and Tricks with insights into various topics that assist with regular computer activity.

***In addition to the presentations, the following are typical events which take place at our General meetings:***

1) *We hold an informal Flea Market in which you are encouraged to bring in your excess computer equipment or software and make them available for others to enjoy at no charge. Please deposit give-away items on the table in the back marked "Free Stuff." Any items left here at the end of the meeting are subject to disposal.*

2) *If you have items that are just too good to give away, you may set up a separate table and hold your own sale.*

3) *We conduct a raffle of new computer items at the end of the meeting, so make sure to get a pair of tickets from whoever is in charge and place one on the item you'd like to win.*

4) *We will also accept your used ink and toner cartridges for recycling. They are turned in to Think4Inc for credits which PCS uses to purchase office supplies from them.*

## Future Meetings

April 19 - Saturday

There will be no PCS meeting today.



**April 26 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**

Joint meeting with [PMUG](#) (Prescott Mac User Group) - Leader: John Carter

Location: Prescott Public Library

Topic to be announced.

*Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.  
Up to date information can be found on our website, [www.pcs4me.com](http://www.pcs4me.com)*

*Unless otherwise noted, our meetings are usually held in the  
Founder's Suite at the Prescott Public Library.*

**Prescott Computer Society**  
**Officers & Board of Directors**  
**2012-2013**

<b>Officers:</b>	<b>General Directors:</b>
President     Ray Carlson	Joan Baum     Murray Smolens
Vice Pres     Phil Ball	John Carter     Joan Fullmore
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## Backups and Disk Cloning

Recap of October 2013 Meeting by Anne Moss,  
Secretary, Northern Neck Computer Users'  
Group, NJ

October 2013 issue, The Computer Link

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Brian Riley, Vice President of the NNCUG, gave a Membership Meeting presentation on computer backups and cloning of hard drives. Most of his presentation centered on what you can do to get your computer working quickly after a virus infestation or hard drive failure.

He explained that while backing up is necessary, the problem is that you have to have a working operating system and backup software to restore the backup you made. This may entail having to reinstall the operating system and backup software before you can even start to get your computer back.

He then explained the difference between cloning a disk and making a disk image. With cloning a disk, you get an exact copy of the disk, that if inserted into your machine, will allow you to resume work from the point the clone was made. Disk imaging on the other hand, which is how backups work, makes a copy of the contents of the disk in some kind of compressed format (zipped), which then has to be restored by a program that can read that format.

Usually this is done with a "restore" disk, which is a bootable CD or DVD that contains enough of an operating system to run the backup software that can restore your drive, but requires you to make that disk ahead of time. If you haven't done that (and most backup software, including what comes with Windows 7, has utilities to make one of those disks), you need to restore from the original Operating System Install disks. This is a time consuming process!

Brian showed us what he called a "toaster" drive, which is a USB or ESATA device that allows you to put a regular 3 ½" (desktop hard drive) or 2 ½" (laptop drive) in a slot, and run your backup or clone to it.

Tiger Direct has a listing of toaster drives here (NewEgg and Amazon have them also)

[http://www.tigerdirect.com/applications/category/category\\_slc.asp?MfrId=0&CatId=2785](http://www.tigerdirect.com/applications/category/category_slc.asp?MfrId=0&CatId=2785)

He then explained that if you have chosen a computer that has your C: accessible from the outside of the machine, you can take that disk and easily and quickly replace the damaged or infected drive with it.

Brian explained he had made a clone of the laptop drive he was giving the presentation on the night before, he simulated the computer becoming infected with a virus, shut it down, replaced the hard drive, and rebooted continuing the demonstration, all within three minutes.

He pointed out making a clone is not the complete answer to backups: clones do not do versioning of your files for example, and it is still important to do a regular backup.

There are two key questions you have to ask yourself in choosing a backup method:

- How important is my data? Is merely having a second copy of it enough, or does it have to survive a catastrophic event like a fire? If it is the latter, you must have an offsite backup, if it isn't then just a backup copy will do.

How much important data do I generate in what period of time? If you spend all day working on a project, then you probably want a backup on a daily basis. If redoing everything you have done for a week isn't a problem, then a weekly one will do. If all you do is play games on your computer and answer e-mails on line, then you probably don't need more than a clone – your data isn't changing.

Things that cause data loss come in many forms: from "happy clicking", where you accidentally overwrite something you have been working on all day with an inappropriate up-date; virus infestation that makes your machine unusable and may scramble the contents of your hard drive; hard drive failure (sooner or later they all fail); or catastrophic event such as a fire or burglary.

Even if you are using anti-virus software, your machine can become infected by a virus that was built to get around that software. Often the first thing these viruses will do if they manage to get a foothold on your machine is turn off your anti-virus software.

Brian suggested a simple step: since many viruses work on the account level, you should always create a second account on your machine with administrative privileges.

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This may allow you to log in as that other user and run your anti-virus software that has been disabled under your main account.

He also suggested you should hover over any link with your mouse to see where it is sending you. Depending on the application, the address the link is sending you to will be displayed in a tool-tip or on the bottom of the screen. If that address goes somewhere unexpected, don't click on it!

What backup software should you use?

Windows 7 ships with backup software, and allows you to make a restore disk. It doesn't do cloning, it isn't easy to tell what it is backing up, and the backup requires a disk larger, sometimes double the size, of the drive you are using as your C: In other words you would need a one terabyte drive to back up a 500 gigabyte one.

It was suggested using Macrium Reflect, which is available as either free or paid software. The major difference for the home user between the two is the free version can't do incremental backups (that is, only backup the files that have changed since your last full backup). You can read more about it on their website: [www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx](http://www.macrium.com/reflectfree.aspx)

Along with the free version, the Standard version costs \$49.99, and the Pro version costs \$58.99.

There is cloning and backup software available from other vendors also.

Acronis is another backup/cloning program. Brian and Rob stated it is much more bloated but not as user friendly as Macrium.

If you are interested, reviews of 10 of the top contenders for 2013 can be found here:

<http://data-backup-software-review.toptenreviews.com/>

Brian emphasized that if your concern is getting your computer up and operating as quickly as possible from a simple hard drive failure or virus infestation, then cloning is the way to go.

He also made the point that one does NOT have a backup UNTIL it is confirmed that the data can be RE-STORED from the backup!

## **Chromecast –Watch On-line entertainment on your big screen TV**

By Phil Sorrentino, Past President, Sarasota PCUG, Florida

December 2013 issue, PC Monitor

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Chromecast is a new device from Google, aimed at getting your on-line entertainment on to your living room TV (or any TV with an HDMI input). For video streaming, Chromecast may be similar to AppleTV and Roku devices, though I haven't used either of these. Chromecast is an exciting device for both consumers and developers alike, because it offers a new, inexpensive (\$35) and simple way to stream entertainment from a Website or a computer to your living room big screen HDTV. (By the way, a less elegant way to accomplish this is to connect your TV directly to your computer, via HDMI, and then go directly to the websites with the computer. This is not usually convenient because of the locations of the computer and TV and the cables and wires needed to set this up.) Chromecast is small and it plugs directly into the back of your TV, keeping it completely out of sight.

Wikipedia adds: "Chromecast is a digital media streaming adapter developed by Google. The device, a 2.83 inch dongle, plays audio/video content on a high-definition television by streaming it via Wi-Fi from the Internet or local network. Users select the media to play on their television from the Google Chrome web browser on a personal computer or from a supported App on their mobile device."

Chromecast's basic features are as follows:

1080p output video resolution

Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n

USB powered

Compatible with Android and iOS devices

The minimum system requirements needed to take advantage of Chromecast are as follows:

HDTV with HDMI input

Wi-Fi 802.11b/g/n network

For use with a Tablet or Smartphone:

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Android OS 2.3 and higher

Apple OS iOS 6 and higher

For use with a computer:

Windows 7 and higher

Mac OS 10.7 and higher

Chromecast works with devices you already own, including Android and Apple tablets and smartphones. It also works with the Chrome Browser for Windows and Mac. A Browser, with the Chromecast extension, allows you to send the contents of a "Browser Tab" to your HDTV allowing you to experience photos, videos, and music on your HDTV. It turns any TV with an HDMI input into a smart TV, albeit only as smart as the Chromecast device

Chromecast allows you to view on-line entertainment on your living room HDTV; however, currently it seems to be limited to Netflix, Hulu plus (not Hulu), YouTube, Google Play TV & Movies, and Google Music. Indications are that many others such as Pandora, HBO Go, Vimeo, and Redbox, are in the pipeline. You will need an account with any of the pay services, such as Netflix or Hulu plus (YouTube is free, so far).

Chromecast is packaged in a very neat, compact box. Included in the box are the Chromecast device (it looks like a flash memory device with an HDMI connector), an HDMI extension cable (for hard to reach HDMI connections), a micro-USB to USB cable (to supply power to the device), a power supply adapter (if a convenient USB port is not available), and a tiny 14 page product information pamphlet. The "Getting Started" directions are printed on the inside of a swing-out cover and are clear and simple. Chromecast plugs into your TV's HDMI port, while the power is supplied by connecting the devices micro-USB port to a USB port, on the TV (if available), or to the external power supply that plugs into ac power (recommended). Because Chromecast accomplishes its magic using your Local Area Network, aka Wi-Fi, you will need to enter the password to your Wi-Fi network during the setup process. The Setup, in a nutshell, is simply, Plug the device into your TV, Connect it to your Wi-Fi, and let it do its thing. The setup is really easy to do and it took only a few minutes, although the TV screen did go dark for a few tense moments while the Chromecast was rebooting leaving an uneasy feeling until the "ready to cast" screen appeared. Once Chromecast was "ready to cast", streaming from an Android tablet or the Chrome

browser was easily accomplished.

(Note: It is a good idea to follow Google's directions to download the Setup App on it first. With this done, setup on your mobile device was very easy.)

Google's uses the term "cast" to indicate streaming. The "cast" icon appears in the tablet App or in the Chrome browser in order to enable "casting" to the Chromecast device. The "cast" icon is a rectangle with a symbol in the lower left corner that looks like a Wi-Fi symbol.

Using a tablet, the Chromecast App is used in conjunction with YouTube (or other Chromecast enabled App, such as Netflix). After you start YouTube (or Netflix) on the tablet, touch the "cast" icon towards the top of the screen. A window will open to allow selection of the tablet display or the Chromecast device (that has been discovered). Select the Chromecast device and the YouTube video will be shown on the HDTV hosting the Chromecast device. The tablet acts as a controller to direct the video/audio from the source to the Chromecast device for use on the TV. Could it be any easier? (Return to this window to return YouTube back to the tablet display.)

Google has set up a website at <https://support.google.com/chromecast/> for product information and it includes some very good directions for using Chromecast. This site is a very good Help resource for getting started with, using, or just learning about Comcast's capabilities.

Google has indicated that YouTube, Netflix, and Hulu Plus are just the beginning. Many others have voiced their support, and many independent developers have started to develop Apps for this new device. It's only a matter of time before Chromecast has many new uses.

Winston Churchill once said, "To improve is to

### Windows 8.1, iOS7 and Other Updates

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS

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change; to be perfect is to change often." It seems that this is the mantra of today's high tech world. The quest for perfection brings almost constant change. If you use Windows 8 or

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an Apple mobile device, you will want to read about the changes you need to make.

You get up in the morning and find that your Gmail looks different than it did yesterday. You get an announcement that there is an update to another program that you use every day. Get used to it. Change in the high tech world is inevitable. Most of the time the upgrades and updates bring added security, so you don't want to stay with the old. You must move on.

This is what many people found with two recent updates. Apple updated their mobile operating system to iOS 7 and Microsoft updated Windows 8 to 8.1. Both of these updates are free for users who owned previous versions. Both add excellent features and increased security. However, both require the users to learn about how to use the new functionality. And, as usual, the user is given no instructions on how to upgrade or how to manage the new programs.

With previous upgrades of Windows, Microsoft performed the update for you if your computer was set to receive automatic updates. Windows 8.1 is different. You must visit the Microsoft Store to initiate the update. Just look for the green Store tile in your Start Screen. Then click on the Windows 8.1 banner in the Store.

Allow at least an hour for the update. When the installation is complete, you will be presented with the familiar color tile Start screen, but there are many subtle differences. First, if you want to search for something, you simply start typing what you want to search for. The search window automatically appears. What is different is that now Windows will search everywhere for you. You no longer have to tell it to search apps, files, etc. Windows will even search the Internet for you and present you with the results in one window.

Another change in Windows 8.1 gives you the ability to boot directly to the Desktop instead of the colorful Windows Start screen. Unfortunately, this option is fairly hidden. To turn it on you will have to go to the Desktop and right-click on the toolbar on the bottom. Choose the Navigation option where you will see the choice to go to the Desktop instead of Start on sign in. You will also see other new choices in this area. They can be turned on and off at will, so feel free to play with them, if you like.

Several apps have also changed with Windows 8.1. One important change is that if you install a new app, it won't automatically show up on the Start screen. You will have to go to the All Apps page, right-click on

the app and choose "Pin to Start" to have it show up there.

Apple's new operating system also brings many changes. If you are using a newer iPhone or iPad and you see a small red circle with a number in it above the Settings icon, this is the indication that there is an update available for your operating system. Tap on Settings, then General, then look for the update and give your permission to download and install it.

If this is the update for iOS 7, once complete you will notice that the icons and screens look quite different. This is a good thing since they have improved the clarity of the text and icons. Again, however, there are a few things to learn. In previous versions of iOS, you quit apps by double-clicking the Home button and holding down icons until they jiggled. Now when you double-click Home, you will be presented with all of the running apps as rectangular "cards". To stop an app, just put your finger on the card and flick it off the screen with an upward motion.

The Search on these Apple devices has also changed dramatically. You used to search by moving to the page to the left of the home screen, but that page is gone in iOS7. In order to start a search on your iPhone or iPad with iOS7, put your finger in the middle of the screen and swipe in a downward motion. This will bring up the Search screen and keyboard where you can enter your search terms.

Actually all of these changes are good. Just keep repeating that to yourself as you encounter frustrations at the new way of doing things. Remember change is good and you are on the path to perfection!

## Welcome to NEW MEMBERS

Jeff Stillman

Terry Hill

Rod Riggerbach

Carl Schulak

Dave Hartke

Bob Parsons

Kevin Kempton