



## September 2015

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Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor

# CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

### **This Week's Schedule**

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

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

Location: Prescott Public Library

**Topics will include a continuation of the Windows 10 presentations on any remaining subjects.**

This week we will continue the focus on Windows 10. We will demonstrate some of the key features of Cortana and will compare the Windows 10 Mail app with the recent changes introduced by Google for its Inbox. We will also demonstrate the use of extensions in browsers. Approximately half the meeting will be used as a Question and Answer session allowing those in attendance to describe issues they have experienced or ways they found to resolve problems.

***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 gift cards 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**

**September 19 - Saturday**

There will be no PCS meeting today.

**September 24 - Thursday - 6:00-8:30 PM**

[Board of Directors](#) meeting - Prescott Public Library; Elsea Room

All PCS members are welcome to attend but you are asked to first [contact Ray Carlson](#) in order to ensure that there will be room available for you.

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

[Special Topics SIG](#) - Leader: JB Burke

Location: Prescott Public Library

This month, JB will delve into topics related to computer hardware, software, the Internet and the World Wide Web. You are sure to find something educational and/or entertaining and/or interesting in this fast-paced enjoyable session. As always, questions and comments will be welcome. After all, JB has to be learning something from these sessions too!

*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**  
**2013-2014**

**Officers:**

President    Ray Carlson  
Vice Pres    Phil Ball  
Secretary    JB Burke  
Treasurer    Edi Taylor-Richards

**General Directors:**

Joan Baum    Murray Smolens  
John Carter    Dick Mason  
Ken Johnson

**Welcome to**  
**NEW MEMBERS**

LaWanna Durbin, Jimmie Powell, Jean Canoose, John VanDorn,  
Ed Parry, Neal Pinson

## How to deal with Tech Support

By Melanie Birnbom, Webmaster, Century Village Computer Club, Florida

March, 2015 - Mid-Month Newsletter

<http://cvccpp.tripod.com/>

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Outsourcing customer service and tech support to other countries is a fact of life these days. While most of these reps speak pretty good English, (for some it's their first language) it's not necessarily the version of English you are used to speaking. Even within your own country, understanding accents from region-to-region can be a challenge. When you're chatting with a fellow in an Indian call center, it can sound to both of you like you are not even speaking the same language. Here are some tips to make the best of the situation.

Number one - and this applies to all situations in life - please be polite. The person on the other end of the line is probably doing their best. I realize that by the time you call for support, you are probably pretty darned frustrated. That's not the fault of the person on the other end of the line.

Try not to use slang. Often times slang just doesn't translate between countries. Years ago, my husband was trying to connect a router and he told the tech support guy that it was "jacked up." The rep thought there was something wrong with a jack and kept saying that the router didn't have a jack.

Do your best to speak slowly and clearly. To the person on the other end of the line, you're the person with the accent. It's not a bad idea to write out a description of the problem to get your thoughts together before you call. Sometimes we tend to get into giving long narratives about the circumstances leading up to the problem instead of getting to the issue at hand.

Actually, all of these tips would work well for dealing with customer support anywhere. You may have read a FB post or seen an e-mail that claims, "Come to find out that every American company using overseas operators must transfer you to an American rep. by saying "I want to speak to a representative in America." (Don't take no for an answer on this.) This was confirmed by the American rep. that they must transfer you after that request. I've tried it on a half a dozen major companies including cable, bank, phone and mortgage companies. It works every time and I

actually get my issues taken care of.

If accents are proving to be a barrier, you might consider switching to e-mail or chat communication to resolve the problem.

You might be tempted to offer an opinion on the outsourcing of jobs to other countries to the person on the other end of the line. But that's not anything a tech support rep in a cubicle has control over and you'll do better if you concentrate on the tech issue at hand. Also, once a tech support rep realizes you're acting like a jerk, they probably aren't going to want to help you. That's just human nature.

Stay calm. Stay polite. Stay on topic.

You may find more of your calls being answered here in the U.S. While the trend has been to send tech support and call center jobs overseas for many years, more and more of those jobs are actually coming back to the United States. However, the catch is that companies are using their tech support reps in the States for what they consider their high-value customers, while still routing what they consider unprofitable customers overseas. Interestingly enough, many of these U.S. call centers are managed by Indian companies.

## A review of The TUG – MOAA Computer User Group meeting featuring social networks

Jim Fromm, Editor of The TUG newsletter. MOAA Computer User Group, Hawai'i February 2015 issue of The TUG newsletter

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We've all, most likely, heard of Facebook, Google +, Twitter, LinkedIn and others. These are the most popular, and populated, sites used by hundreds of millions of people worldwide.

But have you ever heard of Share this, or Pinterest, or SlideShare? If you are not an active social network participant, perhaps you haven't.

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There are hundreds, if not, thousands of open and closed social networks available on the internet. For an extensive list of them, you can go to [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_social\\_networking\\_websites](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_social_networking_websites)

With the prevalent and rather large 'bad actor' community on the Internet, Bear Maher, Program Co-chair, gave attendees a primer on steps to take to ensure their on-line safety.

1. Never use your actual name when setting up your profile.
2. Use an alias.
3. Teach your children and grand-children to not enter into on-line conversations with strangers.
4. Never post your home address or telephone number.
5. Use STRONG passwords to access your account.
6. Don't post a picture of yourself or your family. If you must, limit access to the people you trust.
7. Don't be a narcissist and see how many 'friends' you can accumulate. In this case, there is danger in large numbers. See #9.
8. Don't click on links unless they are from a trustworthy source.
9. All networks let you restrict access to what it is you have posted. Others have to be given permission, by you, in order to view your thoughts, pictures and travel plans. Use this feature.

These networks can be very useful for folks who are house-bound; stationed overseas and want to talk and see (via Skype or Facetime) their loved ones back home; communicate with realtors when moving to a new geographical location or to just wish Grandma and/or Grandpa a Happy Birthday or Happy Anniversary; or to hit them up for a loan -- it happens you know. Or if you just want to make some idle chatter with a close friend.

There have been reports of social networks being used to help in emergencies.

Someone posts their intent to commit suicide, someone sees it and alerts the authorities in the location of the distressed person and they get there just in time to save them.

There is literally unlimited uses for social networking. But, alas, along with the good comes the bad.

Protect yourself with strong passwords and up-to-date and enabled virus protection. In this day and age there is absolutely NO EXCUSE to let your guard down when on-line.

If you do, and get nailed with a virus or serious malware, you only have yourself to blame.

Here's the link to see all the social network icons and brief descriptions that were used at the presentation:

<http://tinyurl.com/kx7vtye>

### **The Times they are A-Chargin'**

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA

February 2015 issue, Drive Light

[www.uchug.org](http://www.uchug.org)

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I just want to say one word to you. Batteries.

In the 1967 movie "The Graduate", Dustin Hoffman's character was advised that plastics would be the future hot field. Today, I think the hot field to go into may be batteries. Modern technology is dominated by mobile and cordless electronics, which need batteries to supply their power. Cameras, smart phones, tablets, laptops, quadcopters, cordless tools and electric cars all depend on batteries for their primary power source. We probably don't realize, until the batteries go dead, how many of the products we use every day depend on batteries to run. That television on your wall (try using it for any length of time without a remote control), noise-canceling headphones on your head, wireless mouse in your hand, electronic safe in your closet, electronic safety light on your bike and Fitbit on your wrist all need batteries to run. So many other products, like your alarm clock, electronic thermostat and sprinkler timer, require batteries for backing up settings and timekeeping. We are awash in battery-powered products. Keeping all these batteries charged or changed presents a big challenge. And like plastics, they have the potential for harming our environment if not handled and disposed of properly.

Before we mastered electricity, our devices had to be human, animal, water or combustion-powered.

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Batteries actually predate the electrical grid; Alessandro Volta invented the first true battery in 1800. Early electrical innovations like the telegraph and electric lights were initially powered by batteries. It wasn't until the early 1900's that widespread commercial electrical power generation and distribution displaced batteries in most uses for electricity. Now with our thirst for mobile electronic devices and need for better energy storage, batteries are making a big comeback.

Battery technology has changed and improved over the years. Volta's zinc-copper voltaic pile has spawned zinc-carbon and alkaline single-use battery technologies, as well as many rechargeable battery types. New materials have increased the energy density and battery lifetimes for rechargeables. Nickel-cadmium (NiCd), nickel-metal hydride (NiMH), lithium, lithium ion (Li-ion) and lithium ion polymer batteries have allowed our portable devices to shrink in size and increase in capabilities. Batteries now come in many shapes and sizes, from tiny watch batteries to huge electric car battery packs. The standard AAA, AA, C, D and 9V cells have been supplemented with a multitude of custom sizes to suit new product applications, from large, high-capacity removable laptop batteries to super-thin, non-removable smart phone batteries.

Battery charging has become an important part of the life of every technology user. How long it takes dictates the time you and your cell phone must remain tethered to a wall outlet and determines when you may continue your electric car road trip. Higher capacity and the ability to swap batteries can help users, but eventually everyone must recharge. The most popular place in the airport terminal has become the seating next to the wall outlets. Unfortunately, every new electronic device adds another charging cable to your collection. The 5V USB socket has become the new charging standard for many devices. New upscale homes come with USB charging sockets built into the kitchen outlets; plug-in versions, like the Vivitar Home Charging Station, are also available.

No battery lasts forever. After many charge and discharge cycles, every rechargeable battery begins to lose its ability to hold a charge. Eventually it can hold so little energy that it is useless and must be replaced. For many products, battery replacement is very easy. Laptops and digital cam-

eras have batteries that are easy to remove, and replacements are usually easy to find on the Internet. For other devices like tablets, smart phones and electric razors, changing the battery is much more difficult. Opening the device to get to the battery may be difficult and require special tools, and the battery is sometimes soldered in. Special knowledge is usually required to open the device without damaging it. Sometimes the product can continue to be operated by using it with power cord (like my electric razor), or with an external battery (like my wife's iPhone with a Patriot Memory Fuel+ portable charger). Eventually it may get to the point where either the battery or the device must be replaced.

Fortunately, the Internet comes to the rescue again, not only to help locate a replacement battery, but also to provide the knowledge required to make the change. Lots of step by step instructions and how-to videos are available on YouTube and other sites to help disassemble almost any battery-powered device. Replacing the battery saves the consumer money, avoiding the purchase of a new product, while continued use of the device keeps it out of our landfills.

I recently had the batteries in two of my electronic devices go bad, requiring a change to continue using them. By doing some research on the web and spending around \$20 total on replacement batteries, I gave new life to these items while postponing having to spend the approximately \$120 in total to replace them.

An uninterruptible power supply, or UPS, is an almost essential accessory for a desktop computer. While a laptop's data is protected by a charged battery should line power fail while running with the ac adapter, you can lose data and risk hard drive corruption if a blackout occurs when using a desktop computer. A UPS contains a battery which is charged off the wall output and allows the computer and anything else plugged into it to run for a time if the ac is interrupted. The UPS typically monitors the battery's health and emits a loud tone when the battery is failing. My desktop computer's UPS recently sounded its battery's death-call, so I shut it down and plugged the

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computer into a power so I could still run it while working on the UPS. I'd changed the battery before, and planned ahead by placing a label with the battery part number on the outside of the case. I found a replacement battery on Amazon for \$12; a new UPS of this capacity would cost \$40 to \$50. Once I'd received the new battery, I removed a couple screws on the back to release the cover and reveal the battery. The battery is connectorized, so changing it is easy, as long as you observe the polarity of the battery connections. Once it was reassembled, it worked as good as new.

My second battery change was a bit more difficult. My Braun Oral-B electric toothbrush had been having charging difficulties for quite some time. The internal battery had developed a memory from going through repeated short charge-discharge cycles, and no longer held much of a charge. Fully discharging it and recharging helped for a time, but it was finally getting to the point where it was essentially unusable. Since it charges inductively from its wall unit, there was no way to use it in a "corded" manner.

I searched the web and found [www.fixit1stop.com](http://www.fixit1stop.com) had a repair video for my toothbrush. It showed how to disassemble the toothbrush and change the battery. This was considerably more involved than the UPS. The case had to be opened to expose the plastic frame containing the motor, circuit board, battery and inductive charging coil. The NiCd battery was soldered to the internal circuit board. Fortunately, I am an electrical engineer and have the skills and tools to perform the transplant. For those that don't, this web site not only sells replacement batteries (\$10 for my model's) but also provides a repair service (\$25 for mine). I couldn't find the correct battery anywhere else, so ordered it from this site. When it arrived, I performed the replacement per their web instructions and, after a night of charging, the toothbrush worked great.

Batteries contain hazardous materials and must be recycled or disposed of properly. In many places it may be illegal to send old batteries to the landfill. Once again the Internet can provide information on battery recycling in your area. It turns out rechargeable batteries are accepted for recycling for free at many Best Buy stores, including the ones near me. They have a bin just inside the entrance, where I was able to deposit my two old batteries. There were a lot of recycling options for rechargeable batteries in San Diego, but I didn't find any place that accepted single-use batteries without a fee.

Batteries will continue to be an important part of our technology. To save money and the environment, consider changing the batteries in your electronic devices when they fail, rather than toss out the whole thing, and be sure to dispose of the old batteries properly.

### Get Help from Others

Sandy Berger, CompuKiss

[www.compukiss.com](http://www.compukiss.com)

sandy (at) compukiss.com

Need help with your computer, tablet, or phone? There are actually several places that you can go to get help.

A great place to go is to online communities. These online groups can be very helpful in getting questions answered and learning from others. If you don't know where to look for them, just Google your questions and you will get links to several places that might give you an answer and that you might want to revisit later.

Friends and family are also great resources. If you have the same type of phone or tablet as others you know, start sharing the little tips and how-tos that you discover and they are sure to reciprocate by showing you what they know.

When you are looking for apps for your smartphone, tablet, or computer, you can also take advantage of the opinions of others. The Apple iTunes store, the Google Play store, and the Kindle app store all allow users to rate apps. This is extremely useful for finding new apps. And if you haven't yet played with apps, please start now. They provide a whole new world for you to experience.

### Need Help With Computers?

Did you know that the Prescott Public Library has a program of Computer mentoring on a one-on-one basis? They have several experienced volunteers who will work with you using one of the Library computers.

All you need to do is make an appointment with either the "Ask a Librarian" personnel or go to <http://www.prescottlibrary.info/>.