



January 2018

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Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor



CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group



This Week's Schedule

January 13 - Saturday - 1:10-2:50 PM

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

Location: Prescott Public Library; Founders Suite A & B

First Hour: What's New AND Worthwhile

For the January General Meeting, Ray Carlson will review innovative hardware and software that is presented at the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas or in online reviews. He will focus on items that seem unusually worthwhile at a modest or no cost. We are listing this program now to encourage our members to add their own suggestions.

If you know of computer hardware or software announced or promoted in the last few months that you think our members should know about, [send Ray an email](#) describing the item and a link for more information on that item. He will try to include as many such suggestions as time allows.

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 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:

January 16 - Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 AM

Technology Help Hour - Leader: PCS Staff

Location: Prescott Public Library Training Lab; Third Floor

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Future Meetings, continued:

Ask a technology question and get help from members of the Prescott Computer Society. Bring your own laptop or mobile device or use a library laptop. This is a weekly drop-in service and registration is not required.

January 20 - Saturday - 1:10-2:50 PM

[Special Topics SIG](#) and/or [Smartphone SIG](#) - Leaders: JB Burke and/or Murray Smolens

JB Burke and/or Murray Smolens will discuss interesting topics related to general computing and/or smartphones.

January 23 - Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 AM

Technology Help Hour - Leader: PCS Staff

Location: Prescott Public Library Training Lab; Third Floor

January 27 - Saturday

No PCS meeting is scheduled.

January 30 - Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 AM

Technology Help Hour - Leader: PCS Staff

Location: Prescott Public Library Training Lab; Third Floor

Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.

It's time to renew your dues
if you haven't already done so.
The good news: **again this year, dues are only \$24.** Please make checks payable to "PCS" and present them to any Board member (gold nametag) or mail your check to:
Treasurer Prescott Computer Society

Prescott Computer Society
Current Officers & Board of Directors

Officers:		General Directors:	
President	Ray Carlson	Joan Baum	Murray Smolens
Vice Pres	Phil Ball	Jim Hamm	Dick Mason
Secretary	JB Burke	Ken Johnson	
Treasurer	Edi Taylor-Richards		

Picture Management – Something we all need.

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, Florida

<http://sccccomputerclub.org> / [Phil-sorr.wordpress.com](http://Philsorr.wordpress.com)

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

With the advent of the smartphone, a camera is always only an arm's length away, because your smartphone is probably in your pocket or your handbag. And having the camera so available means we take, and hence have, many more pictures (and maybe even videos). With this increased number of pictures comes the problem of organizing or managing them so we can access them when they are needed. The picture may not seem so valuable if you can't find it when you want to show it to someone.

I think it was very innovative and forward thinking of Steve Jobs at Apple to include a camera in the original iPhone. Today, the camera is probably the second most important reason why you have a smartphone (the first being the fact that the smartphone can make phone calls). The cameras, built into smartphones, have really improved in the short time that smartphones have been in use. Originally the cameras might have only been a mega pixel or so in picture size (the original iPhone had a 2-mega pixel camera); now the cameras have as many pixels as some professional cameras (the iPhone 7 has a 12-mega pixel camera). And, though the quality of the pictures from the earlier smartphones may have been only acceptable, the quality of the pictures from many of today's cameras is only surpassed by pictures from very expensive professional cameras.

So, with all these pictures, we naturally look for help to organize them, and fortunately help comes in the form of digital picture management software. Photoshop Elements is a possible solution with a price tag of around \$80.

Picasa has been a very popular, free, picture editor and management software application. Unfortunately, Picasa which was available from Google

since July 2004, was discontinued February 2016.

Google is recommending its cloud-based "Google Photos" be used in place of Picasa.

"Google Photos" is not the same as "Photos" that you will find on a Windows 10 computer in the "All Apps" list. The Windows 10 Photos App is a photo viewer that provides minimal picture management. Google Photos is a cloud-based App that encourages you to upload your pictures from all of your devices to the cloud, where the photos are stored and managed. Then, using the Google Photos App, you can view all of your photos from any device with an internet connection.

Google gives you 15GB of storage space (you can purchase more if needed), and then (with a setting) gives you a choice of "High Quality (free unlimited storage)", or "Original quality (full resolution that counts against your 15GB quota)". The "High Quality" selection produces "Great visual quality at reduced file size", as stated on the website. (This 15GB of storage appears to be separate from your "Google Drive", if you have one, because there is a setting to "Show Google Drive photos and videos in your Photos library".)

The photos.google.com website states "the photos are automatically organized and searchable", and "the photos can be organized by people, places, or things". The website tutorial also indicates that you can "Easily edit and share" your photos. So, it seems like once your photos are uploaded to the cloud, they can be organized by your needs, and any photo can easily be accessed.

Another free application is Photo Gallery, which photo management was available from Microsoft but unfortunately had its support ended January 10, 2017. If you have a copy of Photo Gallery you will see that it can organize your pictures, but it also has a few neat features. One of these features is "Panorama". Photo Gallery allows you to create panoramas from (overlapping) pictures that were sequentially taken of a wide scene. The picture interfaces are stitched together, resulting in a wide panorama of the orig-

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inal scene. If the lighting was consistent and the overlap was easy for the software to find the edges, with a little cropping the results were quite good. Panorama stitching is not that unusual a feature, but Photo Gallery also has a feature called "Photo Fuse". This feature allows you to correct many unwanted things in a picture. To use this, you have to take multiple pictures of a scene that has some unwanted movements, like people moving in the background, or children turning their heads at inconvenient times. Once you have a number of images (maybe 5 or 6) of basically the same scene, you're ready to use Photo Fuse. Photo Fuse lets you choose which picture will be used for a given selectable rectangular area. If there is a person in the background in picture 1 but not in picture 4, then you can use picture 4 for the rectangle that shows the unwanted person. Similarly, you can customize many rectangles with sections from other pictures. When you are finished, all the unwanted people or unwanted movements may be eliminated. This type of feature is typically only found in some very expensive software packages. It reminds me of "Layers" in Photoshop Elements, but "Photo Fuse" is not nearly as powerful. Photo Gallery may still be available from the Microsoft Download site, but without support from Microsoft it may not be something you want to be dependent on. But if you have a copy, Photo Gallery certainly has a lot of really great features, and is fairly easy to use.

There still are a few free Photo Editing and Management applications available. A quick check finds Zoner Photo Studio Free, StudioLine Photo Basic Free 3, Jet Photo Studio 5, XNView MP, Faststone Image Viewer, and DigiKam, but I haven't tried any of them yet. A quick look at the features makes me wonder if there will be a replacement for Photo Gallery. If you are willing to spend a few dollars, there are a few possibilities that may be a good replacement. Photoshop Elements, Magix Photo Manager, and Acd-see come to mind.

Keep in mind that Picture Management software typically does not re-arrange or move your picture files or folders. Picture Management software just

a lens of your picture collection, this may take a big effort and a firm commitment to create, organize and maintain the folders. But whatever method or software you decide on, viewing all the pictures in the picture folders that you let it use, usually with an "Include folders" setting. So, in my opinion, the only way to really manage your photos is to create a hierarchical arrangement of folders using File Explorer and then manage that set of folders yourself, again using File Explorer. And then let your Photo Management software use all of those folders. Depending on the size do it quickly, because your picture collection is probably increasing, even as we speak.Ω

How to Destroy Your Computer in Just Minutes

Why You Should Avoid Installing PUPS (Potentially Unwanted Programs)

By David Kretchmar, Computer Hardware Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer

There are plenty of new computers being used that are performing much more slowly than they should. One of the quickest ways to turn a fast, new computer into a slow system crippled by malware is to start downloading software from the wrong sites. Or by downloading the wrong software from what appears to be the right site.

Newer computers being slowed by unwanted programs is a bother, but the damage done by PUPs can be much more serious; PUPs can be responsible for programs that make it impossible to access any of your files, or otherwise ruin your system.

Every time you download anything from the Internet you first issue permissions that enable the opening of a conduit or vector between the Internet and your computer. The series of complex events is mostly invisible to you, except for your clicking on that virtual button that starts the whole process.

Bing and Google searches often can take you where you don't want to go. When searching for popular software, sponsored search results (which result in unwanted programs) often appear at the top of the search results page, along with links from the actual software source sites. Often those ad links try to install software on your computer that you do not want. It could be anything; it could be a fake driver update program or a scam system cleaning program. Note that my Bing search for VLC media player (left) first showed 4 sites NOT associated with

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VLC – bad sites.

Testing Misleading Advertisement links:

How bad is it? To find out, I installed a fresh Windows 10, plus all Windows updates, on a freshly formatted hard drive. I downloaded and installed the free version of Avast! Antivirus software that brought a hitchhiker of its own - Google Chrome. OK, I wanted Chrome, but not every user would, so I considered this an invasive act by a program I downloaded for protection.

I used Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome and started using Google and Bing search engines to start searching for popular free programs. The programs I sought are often the first programs that get installed on a PC; Firefox, Google Chrome, OpenOffice, iTunes, Adobe Flash, Java, Adobe Acrobat, VLC, and WinZip. Then, I carelessly clicked on ad results, which appeared above or on the same first page as “real” search results. These paid ads were identified by notes and highlighted in a very pale color to differentiate them (slightly) from the actual search links that appeared nearby.

The ads didn't appear after every search and the ones that appeared varied among searches and were different for different browsers. Sometimes, the first paid ad link actually took me to the software's true source site (i.e. searching for Google offered www.google.com first). Often Avast would block a download it recognized as harmful, but Avast did not catch many problems.

For all of the searched for programs, I was able to bring up more questionable sponsored search results within seconds of repeated searching. Misleading results showed up in all search engines and I could not determine that any browser offered better or worse protection than others.

For each ad link, I clicked through and installed the respective programs via the link or button provided. Instead of delivering just the application I was looking for, all of the paid links attempted to tack on unwanted programs. In some cases, if I was careful to read all of the fine print and uncheck boxes, I could get the files I was looking for without a bunch of extra "added

value" software, but it was very difficult.

For the purposes of this article, I acted as an inexperienced user (or an experienced user who's not paying attention), and clicked my way through ads and dialogue boxes that looked like the End User License Agreement (EULA) we're used to seeing through when installing software.

And ... They Got Me!

After installing just a few programs this way, I started accumulating browser toolbars (Bing, Yahoo, and Google), and noticed my search engine and home page had been hijacked to something unwanted. As I continued the process, Windows started slowing down to a crawl.

After installing all of the programs on my list, I opened Windows 10's Programs and Features and each browser's extensions and add-ons and counted 39 items that had been installed in addition to the programs I intended to get.

On rebooting, three new programs launched popup windows at startup, including two that started running virus/registry scans as soon as they launched, and a couple that flashed warnings windows and offered fixes if I registered and/or upgraded to the full paid version.

Remember this was originally a clean install of Windows 10 that needed nothing.

Within a few minutes my computer became noticeably slower, plagued by numerous popups, and was becoming essentially unusable.

All of these were nasty, but if even a small fraction of them were, I would be in real trouble.

Conclusions and Recommendations:

Most of us will have to download some third-party (non-Microsoft) software from the Internet. This does not have to be dangerous if you pay attention that the software is being offered from the true home site of that product. NEVER download software from any sponsored link, unless the desired software creator is the sponsor.

Do not depend on your anti-malware program to protect you. It will catch some issues, but not all.

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Interesting Internet Finds

By Steve Costello, President / Editor, Boca Raton
Computer Society

<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>
[editor \(at\) brcs.org](mailto:editor@brcs.org)

In the course of going through more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things that I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some items I found interesting:

Detect and Remove Malware from USB Drives

<http://www.nirmaltv.com/2017/02/01/detect-and-remove-malware-from-usb-drives/>

This post talks about a freeware to detect and remove malware from USB drives. I use my desktop anti-malware to check my USB drives, but will be adding this to my USB tools too.

How to Upgrade Firefox 32 to 64-Bit Without Reinstall

<http://www.intowindows.com/how-to-upgrade-firefox-32-to-64-bit-without-reinstall/>

If you use Firefox on a 64 bit PC, you should be using the 64 bit Firefox. This post gives instructions on how to do that without having to uninstall the 32 bit version, and reinstalling with the 64 bit one. (I used this on my PC, and it worked well.)

What You Need to Know About Keeping Your Data Safe With Home Cloud Storage.

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/keep-data-safe-home-cloud-storage/>

I am happy using Dropbox, Box.com, Google Drive, Microsoft OneDrive, and other online cloud storage services. But, I know there are some that are not comfortable trusting security to them. Check out this post to learn how to get your own home cloud storage.

Should You Buy a Chromebook?

<https://www.howtogeek.com/179009/htg-explains-should-you-buy-a-chromebook/>

I hear about chromebooks all the time, and have decided that one will be my next non-desktop computer. Check out this post to see if you should too.

How to Choose The Best VPN Services For Your Needs

<http://www.geekersmagazine.com/choose-best-vpn-services-needs/>

VPNs (Virtual Private Networks) are being recommended for public wi-fi, and rightfully so. Check out this post to learn which to choose, depending on your needs.

Smartphone Users Should Stay Safe from QRishing Scams

<http://www.thewindowsclub.com/grishing-scams-qr-code-smartphone>

I stopped using QR code apps on my smartphone. This post shows I was right to do so.

Most Fridays, more interesting finds will be posted on the *Computers, Technology, and User Groups Blog*:

<http://ctublog.sefcug.com/tag/interesting-internet-finds/>

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**Welcome to
NEW
MEMBER**

John Sampley