This Month's Meetings

Photo Editing Workshop
Thursday, November 10 at 1:00 P.M.
At FFG Library Bldg.

Plateau Photography Club
Thursday November 17 at 1:00 P.M.
At FFG Library Bldg.,

General Meeting
Monday, November 21 at 3:00 P.M.
At Christ Lutheran Church FFG
Note Start Time

The November Program at
FFG Christ Lutheran Church

Google Docs, Google Sheets and Google Slides

Google Docs: Are a word processor, a spreadsheet and a presentation program respectively, all part of a free, web-based software office suite offered by Google within its Google Drive service. The suite allows users to create and edit documents online while collaborating with other users in real-time.

The three apps are available as web applications, as Chrome apps that work offline, and as mobile apps for Android and iOS. The apps are compatible with Microsoft Office file formats. The suite is tightly integrated with Google Drive All files created with the apps are by default saved to Google Drive.

Carl Nordeen, PPCUG Past President will review these free Google cloud applications with emphasis on Google Docs as a possible substitute for MS Word.

Note: We do not publish an issue in December, so this will be the last Newsletter for 2016

We wish you all A Happy Holiday Season and a successful New Year

Winter Hours start at **3:00 P.M.** (October though   March
Summer Hours start at 6:00 P.M. (April through September)

Location: Christ Lutheran Church
                481 Snead Drive, Fairfield Glade

Join the Club!

Anyone interested to attend the general meeting or any of the SIG meetings as a guest will be charged $3.00 per person for any or all meetings in that month. Afterwards, you are encouraged to become a member of the Plateau PC Users Group.

Our Club cannot exist without you, the members.

Membership Dues

Our annual dues are now payable July 1st of each year. Annual dues are $24 per single person / $30 per family starting July 1, 2014.with partial years dues as follows:

Due Date	Jul-Sep 2016 Annual Dues	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Apr-Jun 2017
Single:	$24	$18	$12	$6
Families:	$30	$22	$15	$7

Student memberships (21 and under) are $10 annually. Corporate memberships are $30 a year for the first two memberships and $10 a year for each additional membership from the same company.

Contact the PPCUG Treasurer (931) 707-3677 for pro-rated dues of these types of memberships.
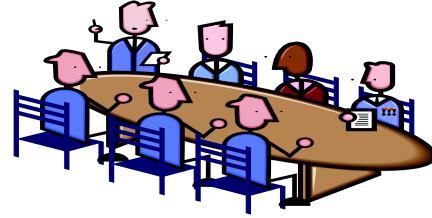
BOARD OF DIRECTORS DISCLAIMER

All members of the Plateau PC Users Group are willing to help one another in the area of advice and tutorial instruction over the phone. If you should require more involved services or instruction, we have a few members who are very knowledgeable in several areas. As a responsible consumer, it is up to you to discuss, before retaining a member, any and ALL charges for repair services and time consuming tutorial activities.

It is not the desire of this Board of Directors to set fees for individuals for services rendered, nor the responsibility to intervene between members who enter into a contract among themselves.

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Photo Editing Workshop	Ed Thornblade	(931) 456-6020
Plateau Photography Club	Jim Mansfield	(931) 484-6920

Up Coming Meeting for January 2017

Note: Winter Hours & Location

**The next General Meeting of the
PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP
Will be on January 16 at 3:00 P.M.
at Christ Lutheran Church
481 Snead Drive FFG
(corner of Snead & Lakeview Drive)**

Classes

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

Cool Tips & Sites

Launch taskbar programs with your keyboard

Many of us—especially users of the Start Menu-less Windows 8—use the Windows taskbar as a quick launch bar, populating it with our day-to-day programs.

Opening those programs is as simple as clicking them, but there's actually a faster way to launch software on your taskbar: Simple keyboard combinations.

Every program to the right of the Start button is assigned its own numerical shortcut, with the first program being "1," the second being "2," and so on, all the way to the 10th taskbar shortcut, which gets "0."

Pressing the *Windows* key, plus the number of the program you want to open, launches it.

News of the Special Interest Groups

The PPCUG sponsors several Special Interest Groups (SIGs) tailored to meet the varied needs of our many members. Each SIG is a small group whose leader prepares material for presentation and encourages open discussion and questions. We urge you to attend the SIGs and hope you will find one or more of interest to you. Ideas for additional groups are welcome, as are volunteers to form and lead new SIGs.

Plateau Photography Clubs

A photo editing workshop is held at 1:00 PM at the Fairfield Glade Library Bldg. on the second Thursday of each month. Members meet to discuss & demonstrate various editing software programs available to enhance their photographs. The SIG leader is Ed Thornblade.

The Photography Club, a PPCUG SIG, meets the Third Thursday of each month at the Fairfield Glade Library Bldg. at 1:00PM. Topics vary each month but we show and discuss member's photos each month. The SIG leader is Jim Mansfield.

The Photo Club/SIG website

The Photo Club/SIG website is now up. Access to it is through the PPCUG website, using the "Photo Club" navigation link at the top of each PPCUG page. I think that this is a big improvement, and could not have been done without the work of Dallas Richards.

PPCUG Website

Visit our website at www.PPCUGinc.com. The Learning Center class schedule and Gazette are all available on our web site.

Send your comments and suggestions to the Webmaster, Alan Baker
Webmaster@ppcuginc.com (931) 788-2201

PPCUG General Meeting Minutes October 17, 2016

Chromebook- presented by Randy Knowles

Today's program by Randy Knowles began with a statement which immediately caught the attention of many of those present. After all, this is the Plateau PC Users Group and Randy's statement was as best I can remember, "most of you don't need a PC." He then further stated accurately that a large percentage of our membership use their computers for such things as email, looking at photos their kids send them, internet browsing, viewing YouTube videos, streaming movies and using apps. All of these can be done on a Chromebook for $150, much less money than many people invest in their computer equipment and with much less vulnerability to virus or malware attack. Basically a Chromebook can be used as an internet connected browser with some additional off line capabilities. Accessories such as larger screen, mouse and keyboard can be used with a Chromebook but printing is done through the internet via Google Cloud Print. Printing through Cloud Print does require a wireless printer. The machines have USB ports that allow use of an external drive for storage if desired they also may have HDMI ports for pairing with a monitor or TV as well as an SD card port.

One aspect of these units to understand is that they work via the web or through the use of apps which work in the "cloud" they are not executed on the device itself. Email programs which can be used on Chromebooks are web based such as Gmail, Yahoo mail or Outlook. You can't use a mail client type program which stores everything on your computer. You couldn't use Thunderbird mail for instance or Windows live mail. You really can't install anything on the machine and that is one of the reasons why they are so resistant to virus and malware since those are usually the result of something being hidden in something that you allow to be downloaded on your machine.

The device does have the ability use the online version of Microsoft Office or another office suite option would be the Google Office suite is a powerful replacement. There is also a growing list of apps available at the Google Web Store for most other uses you might have for a Chromebook. Generally speaking these units do not have high capacity storage on internal drives. Google Drive is an online Cloud app used for storage. Google Docs and Google Sheets can be used much like MS Word or MS Excel. Documents created in these apps are by default stored on Google Drive.

Chromebook's use solid state drives and because these do not require cooling fans the units can be made quite thin, light weight and compact. They also are almost instant on devices and update automatically without interfering with operational access. Battery operation times on a full charge are very good partly due to the lack of the cooling fan.

So with all these fine features, why do we still need a PC or laptop with a Windows or Mac operating system? Well as stated in the beginning, many people may not need anything more. For those who do need more capability off line or for specific software applications or just because they are more comfortable or already have perfectly satisfactory equipment available, the PC or laptop will continue to be the preferred option.

For more information on the Chromebook, Randy has graciously provided a handout with additional insight which can be seen on the http://www.ppcuginc.com/ website. Look for the handout tab and you will find the Chromebook Handout as well as many from previous Club programs.

During the Q and A portion of the meeting one person wanted to know how to turn off "Cortana." The inference here obviously would be that Cortana was now turned on and available to answer that question.
The suggestion was made to ask Cortana, "How do I turn off Cortana?" The solution then is to do what Cortana tells you to do. If this works it might just convince you to turn it back on. Might come in handy for the next time you have a problem!

Submitted by:

Dick Del Frate
Secretary

Setting Up a New Computer

By Lorrin R. Garson, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
May 2016 issue, PATACS Posts
www.patacs.org
newslettercolumnist (at) patacs.org

Buying a new computer isn't like buying a new car—turn on the engine and go. No! No! This applies to any type of computer, Apple, Windows or Linux. That new computer out of the box is quite vulnerable. Here are some suggestions to protect your new machine and you.

1. Be sure your new system is connected to the Internet.

2. 2. You need to install the latest operating system updates. Depending on how long your new machine sat on the store's shelf this can take just a few or many minutes.

3. Install a second Web browser. Computers come with a browser (Safari for Apple, Internet Explorer or Microsoft Edge for Windows), but you need at least two browsers. Why? If a single browser gets badly corrupted or deleted, how are you going to recover the browser without a browser? Firefox, Chrome and Opera are good choices and there are numerous others.

4. 4. Time to install anti-virus software… or not. For Windows systems, it's essential. Windows Defender comes with new Windows machines, but sometimes PC makers turn it off and install trial ware for a premium security product like Norton or McAfee. Turn on Defender or the trialware and, if you think appropriate, buy the premium package soon. For Apple computers, most home users don't install anti-malware software, but this is a somewhat controversial issue. There is numerous free anti-malware software for Windows, Apple and Linux systems.

5. Clean out the bloatware. This applies to machines from big-name PC makers but not Apple or Linux computers. PC Decrapifier ("…it's like TP for your PC") has good reviews and is available from https://www.pcdecrapifier.com/. CCleaner is another respected tool (see http://www.piriform.com). Be sure to create a restore point before running these program, just in case.

6. 6. If appropriate, transfer your files from the old computer to the new machine. If you have switched operating systems this will be more challenging, although ordinary files (Microsoft Office, pictures, etc.) are generally straightforward to move.

7. Implement backup. Hopefully before purchasing your new machine you decided on a backup plan and acquired the necessary software and an external storage device or two. Remember, disk drives have a significantly higher failure rate the first year than in the next 2-3 years.

1.It can be done, but not easily. See http://bit.ly/1o1I2gt for "How to Get Online Without Using a Browser".

2. If you are moving from one operating system to another, careful planning is essential. Although generally for most applications there will be a functional equivalent on your new machine, the software on   your old computer may not be available on the new. Transferring data from one application to another   can be challenging and sometimes unworkable, even if a different operating system isn't involved.

8. Acquire and install your "must have" software. Hopefully here also you have planned ahead for what you need. Don't forget a password manager.

At this point you should be good to go, but you'll spend the next several weeks fine tuning your new computer environment.

Gargantuan Disk Drives
Perhaps with your new computer you need a lot of storage. Consider buying Seagate's 8 TB hard drive for $385. See http://bit.ly/1Q2AjrO. If that isn't enough you can plunk down an estimated $13,000 for a 13 TB SSD drive from Fixstars. See http://bit.ly/1nnnwXS. Very few people are going to need anything like this capacity, but this shows how storage capacity is growing.

Troubleshooting Wi-Fi
Occasionally we all experience Wi-Fi problems. Frequently just turning off the power to routers and switches, waiting a bit, then turning devices back on solves the problem. But when this doesn't do the trick, OS X on Macs has a nifty diagnostic tool most users don't know about. To access this tool, hold down the "option" key and left-click on the wireless icon ( ) on the Finder menu.

The Windows 10 Anniversary Edition has a Lot to Love

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
www.compukiss.com
sandy (at) compukiss.com

The Windows 10 Anniversary Edition is filled with new features that you will want to check out. Here are just a few of them. If you haven't yet downloaded this new upgrade, check out my article on How to Get the Windows 10 Anniversary Edition.

The Edge Browser

The Edge Browser has come of age. This Anniversary Update has a lot of positive changes for the Edge browser It is finally getting browser extensions, a feature that has been available in other browsers for years. Extensions are small add-on utility programs that allow you to customize your browser giving it additional capabilities. You can find the Edge extensions in the Microsoft Store and can easily add them to the browser. If you use services like LastPass, Pocket, Amazon and others, this will be something you will want to look into.

Biometric Identification

If you hate passwords, we are getting one step closer to getting rid of them with this version of Windows 10. Windows Hello which is built into Windows 10, will now allow you use facial, iris and fingerprint recognition to login to the computer and/or purchase apps and games in the Windows Store. You can also use your biometric identity to log into services like Dropbox and iHeartRadio. Windows Hello will also work in the Microsoft Edge browser, so websites and online shopping stores will soon be able to use face, fingerprint and iris recognition, too. USAA banking is one of the first to support this, but many more apps and services are sure to use this as time goes on.

You will need a fingerprint reader and/or special camera on your computer or a computer with the proper hardware support to use Windows Hello, but if you hate passwords, this may be a good investment. There are not too many of these in the marketplace yet, but they are coming.

Ink with a Touch Screen

With this Anniversary Edition, Microsoft has also released a new feature called "Ink". This will make using a digital pen on a touch-screen much easier and will also make it more fun.

Link to Your Android Phone

If you have an Android phone you will now be able to install an app for Microsoft's Cortana on your phone. This will give you the ability to get your phone's notifications and text message alerts on your Windows 10 PC. You will even be able to respond to text messages that were sent to your phone right from your PC. With this addition and other changes, the little-used Windows 10 Action Center (Notifications) will become much more useful. It is even more accessible since it has been moved to the bottom of the screen. Just click the badge to the right of the clock to see it. Hopefully this is coming soon to the iPhone too.

Cortana

Cortana, Microsoft's digital voice assistant has gained a lot of power. You can now ask Cortana questions, have her play music and set reminders right from the Lock Screen before you even log into the computer. Once you log in you can have her launch programs and apps, dictate email, and much more.

This and a whole lot more!! Be sure to check it out and let me know what you think!

Virtual Reality & Augmented Reality Explained

By Sandy Berger, Compu-KISS
www.compukiss.com
Sandy (at) compukiss.com

If you want to be up-to-date in the high tech world you need to understand the terms VR and AR. They are both amazing technologies that are quickly moving into our everyday world.

Preface

It has always been a joy to be transported to a different time and place. The Greeks, Romans, and American Indians did this for their listeners by telling wonderful stories. These story tellers transported their listeners to alternative realities. With radio we were immersed in tales like Fibber McGee and Molly where we could listen and vividly imagine being right in the McGee's home. Then came movies, television, and gaming devices. These devices totally immersed us in their stories.

Now we have moved on even farther into other realities and amplified realities with two newer technologies: Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR).

Virtual Reality Explained

Virtual Reality replicates an environment that lets you see and feel like you are in another world. This is generally done by wearing goggles which put a screen in front of your eyes to show you that new world. Some of these VR devices have built-in audio and vibrations and other haptic feedback that help to make the new world feel quite real.

Many have immersive 360 degree visual capabilities so you are completely surrounded by the new world. Often you can interact with that new world as when you might play a VR game. This new storytelling technique is totally immersive since you are completely pulled into the world inside the headset.

Dedicated VR devices started reaching the market in 2016. Samsung and Oculus have recently released their first everyday consumer product, the Samsung Gear VR headset. At $99 it is well-priced, but must be paired with a newer Samsung Galaxy smartphone to make it work. Other VR devices like the Oculus Rift and the HTC Vive and start at $599 and require a powerful PC to work. Sony will soon release their PlayStation VR at $399.

Augmented Reality

Augmented Reality is another way to look at a different world. Instead of replacing the current reality with an alternate reality as VR does, AR adds to our current reality. So with AR, you can still see the real world around you, but certain things in your world are augmented. With AR, information about the real environment and its objects is overlaid on the real world. For instance, a nurse wearing a pair of AR glasses would be able to see everything in the room exactly as it really is. However, when he or she is ready to insert an IV into your arm, the veins in your arms would be totally visible.

AR technology is sometimes accomplished with goggles, like VR, but there are also AR applications that use lightweight glasses or partial glasses. There are also small handheld AR displays, digital AR projectors, and even contact lenses that project AR information. Several companies, including Google, are working on lasers that send information directly to the eyes.

Microsoft is working on a HoloLens AR headset that will work with Windows 10. Google is still working on their Google Glass project which will now focus on the workplace.

With AR you can interact with it through gaze, voice, and/or hand motions. If you saw the movie Minority Report and remember Tom Cruise moving information around in the air you have seen an accurate depiction of an augmented reality device.

When Minority Report came out in 2002, it was very futuristic. Now that future is already here.

Voice Control: HEY CORTANA, OK GOOGLE, SIRI & ALEXA

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, Florida
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philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Remember Dragon Naturally Speaking? It was, and still is, Voice Recognition software mostly used to control the operation of a word processor like Word. Certain words were used for very specific manipulation of the cursor and the text. Naturally Speaking came on the scene and became useful sometime around 1999 to 2003, depending on how much you needed to transcribe documents into the computer. Early versions had to be "trained" by the user to recognize their individual voice, and the speed and accuracy were sometimes acceptable, and sometimes not so much. Things have really improved since then; now the manufacturer, Nuance, claims in its advertising that "Dragon is 3x faster than typing and it's 99% accurate". So, Voice Recognition software has really come a long way.

(For those of you, who are not familiar with Naturally Speaking, it has three primary areas of functionality: dictation, text-to-speech, and command input. The user is able to dictate and have their speech transcribed as written text, or they can have a document synthesized as an audio stream, or they can issue commands that are recognized by the program.)

Naturally Speaking is an example of a local computer application or App. All the computing needed for it to operate is on the computer that runs it. Naturally Speaking doesn't take advantage of Client-Server technology. If you attended one of our classes, you will recall that when an application is implemented with Client-Server technology, the heavy lifting (computer processing) is not done locally, but rather at a Server that is very powerful and very fast, but remote from the Client. The remote Server is connected to the Client by the internet, which allows rapid movement of data between the Client and the Server. So the Client App runs on the local computer and is connected to the Server Software, running in the cloud, via the internet. This combination provides the total Voice Recognition & Control System. The client collects input from the user and sends it to the Server where all the really complex computing is accomplished. The Server analyses the input and develops the responses and sends them to the Client where the results are presented to the user in audio and/or display formats.

Naturally Speaking is certainly a useful product, but the voice recognition and control that has really gotten the attention of the public lately, are the intelligent personal assistants that are provided by some of the leading computer companies, Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Amazon. Apple was first on the scene with "Siri", followed by Google's "Ok Google", then, with Windows 10, came Microsoft's "Hey Cortana", and finally Amazon's "Alexa".

All of these are Client-Server implementations. The Servers are somewhere in the cloud and the Client resides on your smartphone, in the case of Siri and "OK Google", or on your laptop (or desktop, or tablet) in the case of "Hey Cortana", or on a special device that is placed centrally located in your home, in the case of "Alexa".

All of these assistants use a Natural Language User Interface to answer questions. You'll need a microphone on your device to take advantage of this capability. The Client app, on the device, uses the microphone to listen for a "Wake Phrase". After this phrase is recognized, the following intercepted speech is then sent to the Server where it is analyzed via speech recognition software, and converted to commands. The Server then uses these commands to gather answers to the original spoken inquiry. All of these assistants can make recommendations and perform various actions via their Server capabilities. (For example, a verbal request for the "weather" might yield various audible statements about the weather in your location. Or, a request for "traffic" might yield audible indications of the traffic in your location, or possibly maps indicating traffic problems. Or, a request for the

best restaurant might yield a list of restaurants near your location. Or, if you have things set up, the statement "Add eggs to my shopping list" will yield an updated shopping list including eggs.)

Here are some descriptions (and advertisements) found for each of these Voice Recognition & Control Apps.

- Siri (Speech Interpretation and Recognition Interface) is a computer program that works as an "intelligent personal assistant" and "knowledge navigator", according to Wikipedia. "The software adapts to the user's individual language usage and individual searches with continuing use, and returns results that are individualized", also from Wikipedia. "Hey Siri" is the wake phrase, which can be turned on or off.
- OK Google lets you do things like search, get directions, and create reminders. For example "OK Google do I need an umbrella" to see if there is rain in the weather forecast. To use "OK Google", make sure you have the latest Google Search App and turn on "OK Google detection" in settings.
- Cortana is an App with which you can use your voice to make a call, send a text message, search the web, or open another App. Cortana can help you: schedule a meeting, set a reminder, get up-to-date weather or traffic. (Note: you need a Microsoft account to use Cortana.) "Hey Cortana" seems to be tied to the "Notebook", and thus is setup in the Notebook-Settings, which may not be obvious. (You get to the Notebook-Settings by clicking in the search bar on the Taskbar, then selecting Notebook [the square icon under the home icon], and finally Settings.)
- . Alexa is the name of Amazon's assistant that comes with the Amazon Echo. Echo is a wireless speaker and voice command device. The device consists of a 9.25-inch tall cylinder speaker with a seven-piece microphone array. "Alexa", the "wake word" is always on and can be changed by the user to either "Amazon" or "Echo". The device is capable of voice interaction, music playback, making to-do lists, setting alarms, streaming podcasts, playing audio books, and providing weather, traffic and other real time information. It can also control several smart devices. Echo requires a Wi-Fi internet connection in order to work. The Echo must be plugged in to operate since it has no internal battery.

If these personal digital assistants are successful, many more may show up. I just read that the company that brought us the SoundHound App also has a personal assistant called Hound that they hope to embed in other applications so that those Apps can be voice controlled. Imagine setting up an Uber ride by voice. (If you will recall, SoundHound is like the Shazam App, just hum a tune and it will tell you the tune's name.) With all these personal assistants around, we certainly will never have to feel lonely.

Using Bluetooth on Your Smartphone and Tablet

By Julie Mahaffey, ICON (Interactive Computer Owners Network) Member
March 2016 issue, The ICON-Newsletter of the Interactive Computer Owners Network
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The international symbol for Bluetooth.

Bluetooth is wireless and a way for devices to communicate with each other over a small distance. Created in 1994 Bluetooth® technology is a wireless alternative to data cables. Data is shared through radio waves rather than hooking a cable to a device.
Bluetooth connects the Internet of Things (IoT), machine to machine, Ex. smartphones, tablets, headphones, speakers, etc. A Bluetooth product, like a headset or watch, contains a tiny computer chip with a Bluetooth radio and software that makes it easy to connect.

See more at: https://www.bluetooth.com/what-is-bluetooth-technology/bluetooth#sthash.BvuWBzJz.dpuf

Bluetooth Facts:
- Bluetooth is everywhere – Smartphones, tablets, headphones, speakers, TVs, computers, cars, medical devices, etc.
- Bluetooth is low power – Runs off of small button batteries.
- Bluetooth is easy to use – When two Bluetooth devices want to talk to each other, they need to pair.
- Go to settings, turn on Bluetooth on both devices, hit the pairing button and wait for Bluetooth to connect.
- Bluetooth is low cost – Today Bluetooth is included in most devices but it can be added for a small cost.

Bluetooth Devices:
- Headsets – fits over your ear to make phone calls or listen to music
- Speakers – connect to tablet or smartphone for music listening
- Home Deadbolt Door Lock – lock or unlock a deadbolt lock with a smartphone
- Smart Pen for iPad – write and draw
- Weight Scales – connects to smartphone
- Armband Sensor – sends pulse rate to smartphone
- Keyboard – connect to computer or tablet
- Bluetooth Car Kit – hands-free phone call

Works Cited:
"Bluetooth Technology Basics," *Bluetooth*. Bluetooth SIG, February 19, 2016.
https://www.bluetooth.com/what-is-bluetooth-technology/bluetooth- technology-basics

Software Review:
Alarm ++

By Marshall K. DuBois, Webmaster, Sarasota Technology User Group, FL
April 2016 issue, STUG Monitor
www.thestug.org
webmaster (at) thestug.org

This is a great reminder program which will help you remember many things you usually forget.

Every day I rely on this little gem. Think of something in your home that you value, is small and generally goes unnoticed until you discover its absence. I am really glad when I'm reminded of a family member or friend's birthday by a reminder popping up. I used to feel bad when I overlooked someone, especially a youngster.

The software is perpetual in that you can have reminders (alarms) appear when scheduled for as long as you wish. An alarm will appear and launch a program on a specified date/time. For example, I have an alarm for the STUG TNT (Tips 'N Tricks) page.

The alarm appears on screen and in the background it opens the "Interesting Internet Finds" in my web browser which eliminates the need to hunt for a URL each week.

I could go on and on. Below is a short list of my favorite alarms. I have been using this product since 2001.

STUG Board	Thumb Backup
Take a walk!	TMobile-Marshall
11pm News	Auto Insurance
Noon News	Online Checking
AM Meds	FPL Bill
6PM News	Verizon
Mid-day Meds	RainX
Download STUG Web	Jeff's Birthday

Alarm++
Shareware $19
Supports Windows XP – 10
http://12noon.com/?page_id=27

Device Transparency (DT)

By Eric Moore, President, Computer Users' Group of Greeley, CO
May 2016 newsletter, Random Access
www.cugg.org
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As computer users increasingly have multiple devices—laptops, desktop computers, tablets, smartphones—on which they keep important data, being able to seamlessly access a file from any location or device becomes a challenge. Say if you are on a business trip with your laptop and smartphone, but realize you forgot to copy a report from your desktop computer to one of your mobile devices, you may find it a challenge to get what you need. Remote control software such as LogMeIn can allow you to remotely connect to the computer to download the file you need. Dropbox provides a means of sharing files with yourself and others through a cloud-based storage. VPNs and collaboration services such as Microsoft SharePoint are other possibilities for getting access to a file you need while away from home or the office.

"Device transparency" (DT) is a concept which could provide a seamless means of managing your files from any of your devices. Whether you need to transfer a photo from a smartphone to your laptop, play a music file residing on a Mac PowerBook on your Android device, or access a Word document from home on your tablet computer, device transparency would make this all possible. In a paper published at http://www.brynosaurus.com/pub/net/devtransp.pdf, researchers with MIT and the Max Planck Institute for Software Systems describe how such an ideal service would function. (At the time of the paper's writing, there was no service they were aware of that provided all of these features they propose.)

To summarize, the service would provide a means by which "metadata"—information about your files—would be shared between your devices. Such information would include the file types, names, and on which devices

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the files are stored. Without you needing to be consciously aware of where a particular file is located, you would be able to download the file from the device on which it is stored and open it on any other device you are using (provided it has sufficient storage space). The only requirement is that the device that has the file you need is "linked" into the file sharing service, is powered on, and has an active Internet connection.

Adobe DC to some extent has such features, although it is geared toward working with PDF documents. Services such as Dropbox are available for multiple devices and operating systems, so they can to some extent meet such needs, provided you carefully configure the software on each device to share the files you need. One downside to sharing your files through Dropbox is that they must be uploaded to the "cloud"—which is simply a server that the vendor provides for storing your files. This may be a privacy concern, depending on the contents of the files, and could be costly in terms of the amount of storage space required (especially if you have a large music or photo collection). DT would mitigate this issue, as the files would not be stored in the cloud. It would also alleviate the need of every one of your devices synchronizing copies of all your files. Instead, the sharing of metadata would enable every device to be "aware" of your complete collection of files, so you can download what you need when you need it. Although the metadata may require many megabytes of storage, it would not be nearly so great as the storage space for the files themselves—especially high-fidelity photos, movies, and music files—which could require hundreds or thousands of megabytes of storage.

Device transparency is an interesting concept which could revolutionize how we work without our multiple computing devices. I am interested in seeing if such a service is developed sometime in the future. Depending how well-designed (easy-to-use) it is, and what measures are taken to protect users' privacy, I might consider using such a service for my laptop, desktop PC, and tablet computer.

Open Source Software of the Month

By Geof Goodrum, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
May 2016 Issue, PATACS Posts
www.patacs.org
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FreeBASIC – v1.05.0. http://www.freebasic.net/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows® and GNU/Linux® by The FreeBASIC Development Team. Open-source, free, multi-platform BASIC compiler, with syntax similar to MS-QuickBASIC (including the GFX statements), that adds new features such as pointers, unsigned data types, inline assembly, a pre-processor and many others.

FreeCol – v0.11.6. http://www.freecol.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Stian Grenborgen, Michael Pope, Pedro Rodrigues, Michael Vehrs et al. FreeCol is a turn-based strategy game based on the old game Colonization, and similar to Civilization. The objective of the game is to create an independent nation. You start with only a few colonists defying the stormy seas in their search for new land. Will you guide them on the Colonization of a New World?
[Screenshots at http://www.freecol.org/screenshots.html]

Kernel Source – v4.5. http://www.kernel.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

Snappy Driver Installer – vR439. https://sdi-tool.org/. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable for Microsoft® Windows® by BadPointer. Snappy Driver Installer is an application for installing/updating drivers on PCs running Microsoft Windows using driverpacks or included folders with drivers. It can

be used to install drivers on newly assembled PCs at places where Internet access isn't available. Users can also use the software to keep their drivers up to date.
[Screenshot at https://a.fsdn.com/con/app/proj/snappy-driver-installer/screenshots/SDI_R323.PNG]

SportsTracker – v7.2.0. http://www.saring.de/sportstracker/index.html. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X® and GNU/Linux® by Stefan Saring. SportsTracker is an application for people who want to track their sporting activities. It is not bound to a specific kind of sport; the user can create categories for all sport types such as cycling, running, swimming or tennis.

The main advantage is a good overview of your exercises. You can easily create diagrams and statistics for specific date ranges and sport types. In the calendar you can also track your body weight or create note entries, e.g. the training plan or upcoming sport events.

All the application data is stored in XML files so it is very easy to access them with other tools or to write importers and exporters for other applications.

If you are using a heartrate monitor with a computer interface you can display the recorded exercise files and evaluate the diagrams with the integrated ExerciseViewer application. You can organize them by attaching the recorded files to the exercise entries. When adding new exercises you can import the data from the recorded exercise files. ExerciseViewer supports Polar, CicloSport, Garmin, Timex, Suunto, Oregon, HOLUX and Kalenji heart rate monitors.
[Screenshot at https://a.fsdn.com/con/app/proj/sportstracker/screenshots/st-editing-7.0.0-mac_10.10.png]

Google Virtual Tours

By Geof Goodrum, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society
May 2016 Issue, PATACS Posts
www.patacs.org
Director1(at)patacs.org

Explore and plan travel with Google Street View!
https://www.google.com/maps/streetview/

Google Data Center, Lenoir, NC
Google provides a guided video tour and Street View virtual access to its data center in Lenoir, North Carolina.
https://www.google.com/about/datacenters/inside/streetview/

McMurdo Station, Antarctica
Take a walk inside the Crary Science Center.
https://www.google.com/maps/streetview/#antarctica/crary-science-center

Yosemite National Park
Hike the steep and well-named Mist Trail.
https://www.google.com/maps/streetview/#us-national-parks-and-historic-sites/yosemite-national-park-mist-trail

The Bluebird Cafe, Nashville, TN
Famed local venue for Nashville's songwriters and musicians.
https://goo.gl/maps/a7u7yE36RKK2

PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP, Inc.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP

___ **New Member**   ____ **Renewing Member**

Return this application, with check for annual dues payable to "PLATEAU PC USERS GROUP." Return to the club Treasurer during our meeting or mail to PPCUG Treasurer. P.O. Box 3787, Crossville, TN 38557. Our annual dues are now payable on July 1st of each year. Annual dues are $24 per single person / $30 per family starting 7/1/2014 with partial years' dues as follows:

Due Date	Jul-Sep 2016	Oct-Dec 2016	Jan-Mar 2017	Apr-Jun 2017
Single:	**$24**	**$18**	**$12**	$6
Families:	**$30**	**$22**	**$15**	$7

Date: _____   Amount Paid: $ ____ :.00, by Cash ___ , or   Check (#_____)

_____   _____   _____

Last Name   First Name   Family Members (if family membership)

_____

Address:

_____   _____   _____   _____

City   State   Zip Code   Phone Number

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

E-Mail address: _____

l have used PCs since (year): _____

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

_____

_____

July 2016

January 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12 **1:00 P.M.** Photo Editing Workshop Mtg.	13	14
15	16 **3:00 P.M.** General Mtg. Presentation Followed by Q & A Session	17	18	19 **1:00 P.M.** Plateau Photography Club Mtg.	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

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