

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore....

Founded 1984 ARI is the
Official Newsletter of
Computers Are Easy User Group

August 2018

Volume XXXVI Issue 8

Confirmed
meeting dates

:: ::

August 25
Room A

:: ::

September 22
Board Room

::

October 27
Room A

NEW!!! Mailing
address:

CAEUG

P.O. Box 3150

Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

:: ::

Check

www.caeug.net
for confirmed
meeting dates

:: ::

MEETING
PLACE is the
Glenside Public
Library

:: ::

Visitors

Welcome

HOPE TO SEE
YOU THERE!!



August 25, 2018 4th Saturday

Room A

Our President and other members will be discussing their hardware experiences.



Lamp Post 205

August 2018

by John Spizzirri

The brown (grizzly) bears that feed at Brooks Falls are in Katmai National Park, Alaska (1). As of this writing, the feeding frenzy is in full force. The salmon frantically trying to swim up that water fall while the bears are patiently waiting for the salmon to jump into their

mouths - all on live camera feeds.

1) <https://is.gd/5XSkeR>

I received a phone call from 888-479-5333. It began, "Hello Microsoft Windows Customer, Your Microsoft Windows License has expired. You will

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not be able to use the software...". At that point, I hung up. This call is a scam and not worth listening further. The criminals behind this call are collecting data from those people foolish enough to give them any identifying information or financial (credit card) information. Microsoft (MS (1)) does not call anyone unless they are called by that individual first. Windows licenses (currently) do not expire. Updates are not provided in perpetuity, but individuals cannot purchase them (currently). Even if this situation were to change, MS does not have the resources to make phone calls to all the hundreds of millions of customers to extract extra cash from them. This call was automated. Millions of automated calls would cost a great deal of money in equipment and phone charges to make. The human staff to maintain that equipment and do follow up with individual customers would involve astronomical costs (tens of millions of dollars or more). MS is much too cheap to spend that kind of money to do something like that. That is how I know that call is a scam.

1) <https://www.microsoft.com/>

MS grants its high paying users another feature called 'InPrivate Desktop' (1). The Enterprise version of Windows 10 gets this feature. It allows administrator accounts to sandbox any software application so that it will not affect the rest of the system without specific permission to do so. This functionality is available to the rest of us via the program SandboxIE (2) for about \$21. That program used to be free. This type of software is useful for testing suspect software and for day to day usage. Using the computer in a sandbox everyday means that even if a virus or malware attacks your computer, it sees only the sandbox and not the OS or hard drive. I use SandboxIE on one of my Windows PC. It is unfortunate that MS has not seen fit to offer this feature to all of its Windows 10 users. The Enterprise version of Windows 10 costs \$84 per user per year with a 20 user minimum and Office 365 at an extra cost (3).

1) <https://is.gd/bwsGIp>

2) <https://www.sandboxie.com/>

3) <https://is.gd/rj69Cc>

There is something you should be aware of when buying a Windows 10 device (PC, laptop, or tablet). It is called S mode. The MS Surface (1) computer originally came with Windows 10 S. MS has now seen fit to 'offer' Win 10 with 'S mode' on all sorts of PCs. S mode (2) is a means for MS to make a PC into a Chromebook or a MAC. S mode will only allow the PC to run software that comes from the Microsoft Store (3) just like the Chromebook can only run software from the Google Store (4) and the MAC can only run software from the Apple Store (5). All three stores censor software that appear in their stores. If a product competes with a product that mother company produces, that product will not get approved for sale. If a product is better or has more features than the mother company's product, that product will not get approval for sale. Heaven forbid that a product is cheaper than the mother company's product or worse - free, it will never be offered in the store. No matter what MS says, S mode is not your friend unless you like not having any choices, unless you like being told what to do, and like spending money needlessly on products that you may already own (needless monthly or annual renewals). If you have used a Chromebook, you would find it has more functionality than S mode. As of this writing (August 2018) the MS store does not have a wide selection of apps. If you like reading on line from Google, there is no Kindle app. If you have or purchase hardware, do not expect to install its features unless MS has approved them. That generally means you will be waiting a very long time to get the features of your hardware installed if it ever

happens.

- 1) <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/surface>
- 2) <https://www.digitaltrends.com/?p=1415567>
- 3) <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/store/b/home>
- 4) <https://store.google.com/>
- 5) <https://www.apple.com/ios/app-store/>

Electronic recycling and recycling in general is becoming more problematic. I have found a couple of web sites that are helpful no matter where you live. Earth 911 (1) has a guide to recycling computers and other electronic devices. In addition, the site has a look up service by zip code to find places to recycle. Plastics recycling is always a perplexing exercise. What do the numbers in the little triangles mean. Plastics by the numbers (2) has the answers.

- 1) <https://earth911.com/>
- 2) <https://learn.eartheasy.com/?p=545>

This is not computer related, but I think it is something that everyone should be aware of. I recently made a real estate transaction. My attorney sent me the notice of transfer for my records. A few days later I received an official looking letter from "Local Records Office" out of Pekin, Illinois. There was a warning on the outside of the envelope that tampering with the mail was illegal and could result in imprisonment and / or a fine. Inside was a self addressed envelope (no stamp) and legal size (8 1/2 x 11) page detailing the transaction that I had made. The letter then asked for a \$89 processing fee for a 'complete property profile and an additional copy of the only document that identifies you as a property owner'. The letter went on to say that the Local Records Office is not affiliated with the county in which my deed is filed nor any government agencies. The last paragraph on the back of the letter is labeled Disclaimer. The last three sentences read, "This product of service has not been approved, or endorsed by any government agency, and this offer is not being made by agency of government. This is not a bill. This is a solicitation; you are under no obligation to pay the amount stated, unless you accept this offer." I had to reimburse my attorney for payment of the county's transfer taxes (fees). I went to his office to pay him and showed his paralegal the letter. She told me that this is a scam and not to pay them anything. I told her that it smelled like a scam, but i wanted to make sure. Beware of scammers after a real estate transaction.

Between you, me and the LampPost. That's all for now.

Potpourri of Tips

August Meeting Review: Golden Gate Computer Society

September 2017 issue, GGCS Newsletter

www.ggcs.org

editor (at) ggcs.org

Steve Shank led off the panel of GGCS gurus tip-talking during the August 28 General Meeting. Other panelists included Marcelino Nogueiro, James Gafford, and Barbara Hansen.

Password Manager

Steve says, LastPass offers a free version and, for \$24/year/person, a premium version. The two versions are identical when used on computers. The difference is that only the premium version can also be used on mobile devices. In both cases, LastPass offers unlimited password storage and syncing across multiple devices that have LastPass installed, and two-factor authentication. It operates as a browser extension, with support for all major browsers and operating systems.

LastPass Premium adds enhanced password sharing options, storage of desktop-app passwords and support for physical authentication devices. LastPass automatically captures all passwords as you enter them into a website. All passwords are encrypted with your master password before they are stored in the Cloud and are encrypted on your hard drive.

You must create a strong Master Password, which ensures that nobody, even at LastPass, has access to your data.

This password must comprise at least 12 characters, including at least one digit, and a mix of capital and lowercase letters.

Multi-factor authentication requires that, when you log in, you will need a onetime code generated by the app, as well as your Master Password.

Dashland and Roboform are prominent among many other password managers.

Marcelino then offered a house-generated password option where the main part of the password would have at least eight characters, including numbers, upper and lowercase letters and punctuation. Then, for each site, you would add, say, two more characters, to distinguish that site from others. He recommends a minimum overall total of 12 characters.

Snipping tool

Marcelino, assisted by James, explained that the useful Snipping Tool is a free screenshot utility and demonstrated that it permits screen shots of full screen, rectangular areas, or free-form areas using a mouse or a tablet. The image can be saved as JPEG, GIF, or PNG, it can be copied and pasted, and it can be emailed.

Colored pens, eraser, and highlighter allow annotating the image (You cannot make direct changes to the snipped image. An image editing program would have to be used for any edits). It also has a Delay function that allows for timed capture of screenshots.

Link shorteners

Steve demonstrated a link shortener, in this case www.bit.ly by pasting a long web link URL into its webpage and the page generated a shortened version in the format www.bit.ly/xxxxx. When the shortened link is clicked, the user is redirected to the full web link.

For example, you could shorten a 500-character, three-line link to say 12 characters. Bit.ly will shorten any link given to it even if you don't have an account.

However, with an account (free), you can have some degree of customization of the shortened result. (It also offers an enterprise version with more customization.) The shortened link is then owned by you and cannot be changed by others.

System tray

The system tray at the bottom right side of the computer screen and the icons in the tray are for programs that run all or part of the time and show current status of systems, Marcelino said. Some icons may be hidden, but can be selected by left clicking the up-facing arrow and dragged onto the bar, if required.

The system tray shows the date and time as well as the status of the various icons in the tray. At the extreme right side is the Notification icon which, when clicked, shows an Action center, and with a left-click, the status of all your Windows settings, and network and internet settings.

Right-clicking an icon, such as the Speaker icon, gives choices as to how to make changes. Marcelino suggested it would be a good idea to have Windows Defender on the system tray. Marcelino also recommend adding the Snipping tool to the Taskbar. Note that the Taskbar is the set of icons to the right of the Start button and to the left of the System tray.

Alexa

Alexa Dot and its big sibling, Echo, are well-known personal assistants, Marcelino said, and now have a multitude of voice-activated capabilities, including playing music, playing radio, giving reminders, setting timers, setting lamps, telling jokes, giving weather reports, etc.; additional control of lamps and other electrical systems are available by using modules like the Insteon Hub. Both the Echo and Dot can interface with home automation systems enabling voice activated commands. It acts as a hub for other Dot or Echo units in the house.

Barbara Hansen has the (free) Alexa app on her iPhone and uses it to ask Alexa for the current time and for news briefings from, say, the BBC, WSJ, NPR, The Economist, etc.

Barbara also uses Alexa to add to her calendar, and to advise her of calendar activities and their date/time. She also asks Alexa to read to her from a Kindle book.

Amazon Echo/Alexa can be set up to control lights and appliances around your home using an Insteon Hub controller and corresponding control switches, as was done at the meeting, and explained by Marcelino (see diagram, Fig. 1).

Additional information can be found at <https://www.smarthome.com/insteon.html>. Microsoft's Cortana, and Google's Home offer similar services.

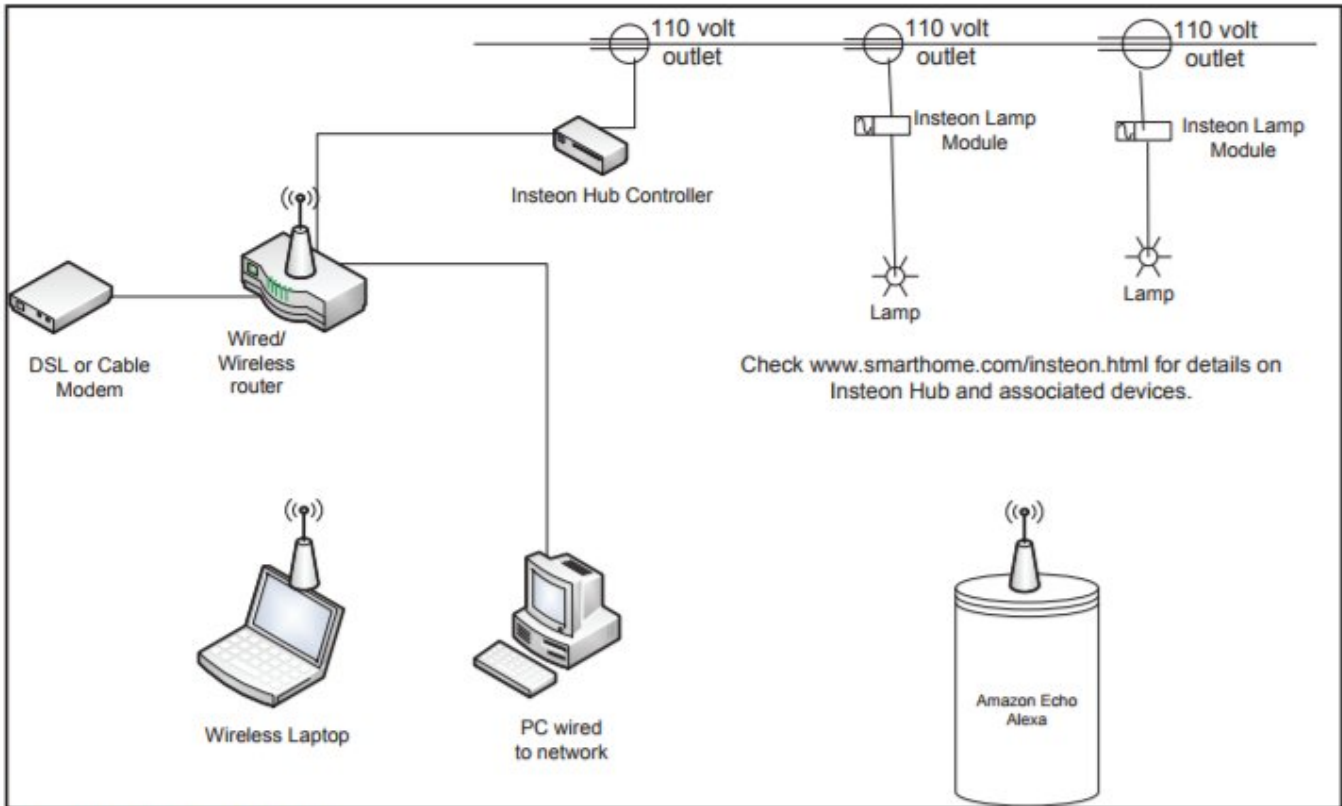


Fig. 1. How Alexa works.

Google Forms

Steve demonstrated how, with Google Forms, he created a survey voting form for members of his wine club to register their individual scores for various wines that had been tasted at a meeting.

Once the form has been created, the link is sent to others. Google Forms has a simple user interface and powerful editor, and works together with Google Sheets spreadsheets. Results can be listed or presented automatically as a graph. It is an easy-to-use form builder with a spreadsheet backend, with only nine question types and basic color plus photo themes, and it can be customized. Google Forms is free with a Google account, but you don't need a Google account to respond to Google Forms.

MS Word with pictures

James showed us how to construct an annotated album in MS Word, using photos from his wedding and honeymoon in Scotland, last year. His first step was to create a blank page with a texture and color; and a watermark. Then James added all the text associated with the wedding.

His next step was to select a picture, which, once in Word, will have a boundary that permits resizing the picture to the required size. The picture is then treated like a character in the text and can then be inserted, by positioning it with its associated "anchor," at the start of a paragraph. James next added captions to the pictures.

As a final step, James added some graphic art to pictures, using images.google.com and saving as a transparent PNG file, which was then "floated" into position in the picture.

QCS Review: Scams, Fraud & ID Theft, Part II

presented by Cpl. Hank Jacobsen, Davenport Police Department Crime Prevention Unit

By Joe Durham, Editor, QCS QBits

Quad Cities Computer Society, IA

Joseph895_us (at) yahoo.com



by Joe Durham

At our August meeting, Cpl. Hank Jacobsen presented Part II of his guidance for living in the 21st century and protecting ourselves from criminals out there who now use technology to advance their nefarious schemes.

In recent months, the story of crimes has become a bit more prominent on TV. Hank described the rash of car thefts that have occurred in our area. These thefts have been committed by kids 12 – 15 years of age.

The three pillars of crime were observed by these kids:

- 1) Desire
- 2) Ability
- 3) Opportunity

We don't have control of points 1 & 2, but we do have control of point 3. It is required of us to always lock our cars. The responsibility is on us. He reminded us not to leave any important items in view in our cars: our smart phones, our key fobs, our purses, our laptops or our garage door openers.

These kids operate in groups and go down the street trying cars. If it is locked they just move on. It is a waste of time. They look for the one car that is unlocked and go from there. Once they find that car they can open your garage door if the door opener is there, or steal your laptop if it is on the seat. Once in the garage they have access to everything there, and usually have access to the home from the garage via the unlocked access door and they continue their way of theft. So, it is a simple act: lock your cars, and take away item 3, opportunity.

In the electronic world how do you deny criminals the way of opportunity? First do not share any unsolicited personal information with anyone. This means emails, over the phone, at your door.

Hank mentioned that are times when you do submit personal information: apply for a mortgage, medical insurance, opening a bank account. In these instances, you are submitting the information not the other way around.

He described that much of our personal lives are discoverable on the internet: our names, and our mailing address. However, thieves are looking for that key that will unlock your funds. And this key is your social security and Medicare number.

So, do not carry these cards with you at any time. If organizations and institutions need this data they now usually will ask you verbally for the last four digits of your number.

Another item not to carry with you: personal checks. Thieves will often work together. One person will distract you while another will take just one check from your checkbook. Once they have that they have your account number and bank routing number. It is now easy for them to go to a bank drive-up, make a small cash deposit with this access. Banks usually don't ask for an ID on deposits. Next the thieves will "spontaneously" note that they need some cash for something and then make a large withdrawal with that same information.

Hank noted that now telemarketers will spoof local area code numbers to make you think that a call is local. If you don't recognize the number don't answer it. If it is someone you know, or a party that is legitimately inquiring, they can leave a message on your answering machine. Like locking a car. Just don't answer. Please hang up. The thieves are fishing for that one person to accept their call and give you the information.

If you do lose your credit card, call your credit card company right away, you are only liable for \$50 if reported promptly. The credit card company will gladly issue you a new card and freeze your old one.

Hank did not recommend the use of debit cards. These cards are essentially cash from your account. If something goes amiss you are out that money and cannot get it returned.

As he described the safe use of credit cards, Hank mentioned that in our area and across the country there are credit card "skimmers" that are placed, usually on unattended ATM machines.

These skimmers will capture your credit card information and contain a camera to record your password access. Once the bad guys have this information they can do whatever they wish.

His advice, in this case, was to frequent places that monitor their ATM use: your bank for example. If you do have to use an unattended ATM machine, gently but physically tug at the ATM entry box. If a skimmer is attached it will often come loose and you can stop right there before you do further damage to your personal finances.

The state of Iowa requires that a seal be affixed to ATM entry points. If you see a broken or loose seal, that is an indication that something is amiss. Don't use it.

Do not use a simple easy to remember password: like 1234, your pet's name, etc. Hank mentioned that you can Google commonly used passwords and you can be sure that the bad guys do to. If you use a common one your account is compromised.

He recommends that you use a password safe program that has one main password that you remember and then it creates complex passwords for each online site you visit.

Additionally, you can protect your online Identity by requesting a free credit report from the three major credit reporting agencies. He advises that you use a different request from one every four months. The firms are Equifax, TransUnion, and Experian. Here is the government website to accomplish this goal:
<https://www.usa.gov/credit-reports>

For your personal effects and electronic devices, you can additionally protect yourself by making a list of all the serial numbers. Hank mentioned that all pawn shops are required to submit serial numbers of items committed to their stores each day to the police department.

The QCS would like to thank Hank for his fine presentation. By using a bit of common sense, to stop and think before responding, and apply his practical tips we can prevent ourselves from becoming another victim of crime.

Be Prepared
Addendum to Cpl. Hank Jacobsen's Remarks
Submitted by Jim Buche, QCS Director at Large

Place the contents of your wallet on a photocopy machine, do both sides of each license, credit card, etc.

You will know what you had in your wallet and all the account numbers and phone numbers to call and cancel. Keep the photocopy in a safe place.

But here's some critical information to limit the damage in case this happens to you or someone you know. As everyone always advises, cancel your credit cards immediately, but the key is having the toll-free numbers and your card numbers handy so you know whom to call. Keep those where you can find them easily. Immediately file a police report in the jurisdiction where it was stolen, this proves to credit providers you were diligent, and is a first step toward an investigation (if there ever is one).

But here's what is perhaps most important: (I never ever thought to do this)

Call the three national credit reporting organizations immediately to place a fraud alert on your name and SS#. I had never heard of doing that until advised by a bank that called to tell me an application for credit that was made over the Internet in my name. The alert means any company that checks your credit knows your information was stolen.

Two tips from the Los Angeles Police Department: If the theft is not in your local police department's jurisdiction, file another report with your PD when you get home.

Also, create a script of exactly what happened so when you call / e-mail to report the theft to various organizations, you don't forget something critical and the reports are all the same. Judy Tylour

Interesting Internet Finds
Steve Costello, Boca Raton Computer Society
editor (at) brcs.org <http://ctublog.sefcug.com/>

While going through the 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 during the month of November 2017.

Why I Switched From Chrome to Firefox Quantum

<https://www.howtogeek.com/333393/why-i-switched-from-chrome-to-firefox-quantum/>

Firefox Quantum was recently released. This post explains the reasons the author has for switching back to Firefox from Chrome. I know a lot of you that have never left Firefox, and/or are not satisfied with Chrome. I have experimented with Quantum a little, but think you should read this post and decide for yourself.

Word, Excel And PowerPoint Viewers Are Being Retired

<https://www.ghacks.net/2017/11/20/word-excel-and-powerpoint-viewers-are-being-retired/#>

If you are still using these viewers, you need to read this post. This post also lists several alternatives to the viewers, if you don't already know of any. (Note: It has been years since I have used any of these viewers because I use LibreOffice which can read these types of files.)

The 50 Cool Uses For Live CDs

<http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/download-50-cool-uses-for-live-cds/>

I only knew 7 of the uses for live CDs, which surprised me a little. Check this post for yourself, and I am sure you will find a few that you have never thought of.

Why Traditional Antivirus Is Doomed

<https://davescomputertips.com/why-traditional-antivirus-is-doomed/>

This is a short opinion piece, to which I mostly agree. Also, it seems to advocate the use of sandboxing as an alternative to traditional antivirus software. My only problem with this is that the average computer user will not know enough to work without the traditional antivirus software effectively.

What Is Google Play Services? Why Do You Need It?

<https://fossbytes.com/google-play-services-necessity/>

If you have an android device (KitKat) you have probably seen Google Play Services. If you are wondering what it does, or whether you really need it, this post explains it all.

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

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

The posts are under Creative Commons licensing.

August 2018 DVD of the Month

ARI - Monthly newsletter

AudioBook - Free audio book

BeefText - Text editor

Chromium - Updated Web browser (not Google Chrome)

CPUEater - Tests system responsiveness

DVDDOMlists - Contents of CDs and DVDs of the Month

ExodusBitCoinWallet - Bit Coin Wallet

KasperskySystemChecker - Updated Virus checker

KeyLock - Locks PC with USB

MemberContributions - Things members send me

OfflineRegistryView - View the registry off line

OldTimeRadio - Old radio audio files

Open Shell - Open source classic shell menu

Opera - Updated Web Browser

OutlookAddressBookView - View Outlook address book off line

Rufus - Updated Create bootable USB media

SSDBenchmark - Check SSD performance

YawCam - Control the web cam

Meeting Location and Special Accommodations

The Glenside Public Library address is at 25 E Fullerton Avenue, Glendale Heights, Illinois. Please park away from the building. Thank you. The meeting(s) are not library sponsored and all inquiries should be directed to Mike Goldberg at

. Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this program and who require certain accommodations in order to observe and / or participate in the program are requested to contact CAEUG president, Mike Goldberg at

at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made.

NEW!!! Mailing address:

CAEUG

P.O. Box 3150

Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

Members Helpline

Any member with a specific expertise can volunteer to be on the Members Helpline.

Hardware problems, Win 7, Win 10, Linux and Virus Removal

- John Spizzirri

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