



Computers Are Easy User Group

Abort,
Retry,
Ignore....

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

August 2020
Volume XXXVIII Issue 8

Confirmed
meeting dates

Aug 22
Zoom
meeting
10:00am
:: ::
Check
back for
dates

:: ::

Mailing address:
CAEUG
P.O. Box 3150
Glen Ellyn, IL
60138

:: ::

MEETING
will be
held using
Zoom

:: ::

* * * Our August 22, 2020 * * *
NO LIBRARY MEETING
PER GLENSIDE WEBSITE
LIBRARY PARTIALLY CLOSED FOR Meetings
No food or drink are allowed inside

UPDATE MEETING INFORMATION

Our Aug 22 meeting will be on the 4th Saturday at 10 AM via Zoom.
The Wheaton Park District canceled our picnic permit.
(We will get a full refund of the fee.)

There will be a meeting invitation e-mail Thursday evening
before the Zoom meeting on
Saturday morning at 10:00

Presentation The Dark Web Part 2
and Privacy on the Internet

REMINDER: \$20.00 Membership dues for 2020 are due.
See Kathy, John or Mike at the meeting or
mail dues to CAEUG, P.O. Box 3150, Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

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Stay Home, Stay Safe, Wash your hands!!!!
Stay tuned for updates!!!





Lamp Post 227
August 2020
by John Spizzirri

The brown (grizzly) bears are still feeding on the dwindling sockeye salmon migration at Brooks Falls in Katmai National Park, Alaska (1). The fishing is getting slim. There are only a week or two left before the end of the season. Check out the various camera locations along the river before its too late. The bears feed from dawn (about 9:50 AM CDT) to dusk (about 1:08 AM CDT) although some bears feed at night. The cameras are on at night but do not have a very good picture. The days are starting to get shorter.

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

Some of our members may qualify for reduced fee license plates (1). The Illinois Department of Aging (IDOA (2)) has a web site describing the eligibility requirements (3). As many of our members are over the age of 65, the first requirement has been met. The IDOA web site to get telephone assistance or check on your application is here (4). The on line application is here (5). There is no paper application.

- 1) <https://bit.ly/3azxhMj>
- 2) <https://is.gd/oMX04N>
- 3) <https://is.gd/kDDgWf>
- 4) <https://is.gd/kYUx4d>
- 5) <https://is.gd/Lhg8iX>

John Oliver's Last Week Tonight Show ((1), (2)) came up with a web site to slow the transmission of false or misleading information on the Internet. It consists of five celebrities individually giving one and a half minute video talks about checking the facts before passing on any information you see or hear on the Internet (3).

- 1) <https://is.gd/0vVroV>
- 2) <https://is.gd/AMOTOu>
- 3) <http://thetruetrue truth.com/>

The Prairie State Humanists (1) recorded a presentation on bats on August 2nd (2). The presentation was very informative. It appears that much of the information was gathered from this video (3).

- 1) <https://is.gd/dzcACK/>
- 2) <https://youtu.be/ykm9oZYoCLw>
- 3) <https://youtu.be/iJ2jDPgvbTY>

Bleeping Computer (1) ran an article by Sergiu Gatlan about how the U.S. National Security Agency (NSA (2)) published advice on how to reduce location tracking risks with mobile devices (3). My immediate question was, why would they do that? Would it not make their job much more difficult? Are they passing out bogus information? what gives? Gatlan answers my question at the end of the article saying that the information is intended for NSS/DoD system user (National Security System / Department of Defense System User). That answer engendered another question, couldn't this be handled by an internal memo either paper or electronic? What was this a public document? Are there that many undercover operatives inside this country that must be notified surreptitiously? The author did not comment on those questions. The published document is here (4). Here are the some of the recommendations from the NSA to 'protect your privacy';

- a. disable location services on you devices
- b. disable advertising permissions to the greatest possible extent
- c. disable radios when not actively in use
- d. use Airplane Mode when the device is not in use
- f. disable Blue Tooth and WiFi when in Airplane Mode
- g. Apps should be given as few permissions as possible
- h. turn off apps or settings that allow you find a stolen or misplaced device
- i. minimize web-browsing on the device as much as possible
- j. use a Virtual Private Network (VPN)
- k. do not store data about your location on the device
- l. turn off the device when not needed

- 1) <https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/>
- 2) <https://www.nsa.gov/>
- 3) <https://is.gd/JCvOoh>
- 4) <https://bit.ly/3g53qMZ>

Facial Recognition (FR) is in the news again. When it's tested in this country, it does not work well. The false positives and false negatives scare the large providers such as Microsoft (MS (1)), Amazon (2), Google (3), and IBM (4) into freezing their sales until legislation is forthcoming to protect them from lawsuits ((5), (6), (7)). On the other hand, Clearview (8), a Chinese startup with nothing to lose, is selling everywhere except where it is expressly prohibited locally (Illinois (9)). The Chicago Police use Clearview. The government is excepted from the Illinois law. The United Kingdom (UK) does not have the law suit problem that the United States (U.S.) has. When the UK does something wrong, it does it to a subject not to a citizen, this is just too bad (for the subject). When the U.S. (or it subdivisions) does something wrong it gets sued, sometimes the citizen or their heirs get justice. These companies understand there is a cost of failure. Our government trusts these systems way beyond their capabilities because they believe the sales hype and they know they have no liability, if things go wrong. Cops never have to pay a victim of a wrongful death. The taxpayers of the city have to pay. The cop

might not even lose his or her job, if the union is successful. A false positive or false negative (10) could be deadly serious. Clearview has shown that privacy (11) is a thing of the past when it comes to Facial Recognition. Frankly, I think law enforcement is just the tip of the ice berg. Once the providers are protected Facial Recognition will be used for many things. For instance, in China where Facial Recognition is wide spread. The Chinese government tracks everyone by face (they don't need cell phones). In China groceries are purchased with a person's money accounts using Facial Recognition. In China no credit cards or debit cards needed and no cash allowed. I can see a time in this country where voting sign in will be done via Facial Recognition possibly from home or by cell phone. This will not by any means stop voter fraud nor will a federal ID card. What it will do is identify who voted for which candidate which will lead to social control. I think that control of this technology has to remain with the individual and not the state or / and corporations.

- 1) <https://www.microsoft.com/>
- 2) <https://www.amazon.com/>
- 3) <https://www.google.com/>
- 4) <https://www.ibm.com/>
- 5) <https://is.gd/JCvOoh>
- 6) <https://is.gd/6KCjD2>
- 7) <https://www.aclu.org/node/96608>
- 8) <https://clearview.ai/>
- 9) <https://is.gd/ICanP7>
- 10) <https://www.eff.org/node/97235>
- 11) <https://is.gd/BAqEOi>

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

Not Another Sunset!
By Greg Skalka, President
Under the Computer Hood User Group
Drive Light Newsletter
www.uchug.org
president (at) uchug.org

I have seen the sun set on a lot of technology. As tech improvements are made and new innovations come to market to brighten our days, the old devices, systems, and ways of doing things often slowly pass over the horizon and out of sight.

In most cases this is a good thing, bringing many benefits, but there are rarely any downsides, however minor. With a lot of innovations, there can still be some advantages to older ways. Young people today don't know what it is like to get up from the couch, walk to the TV and turn a knob to change the channel, yet with all that convenience, the remote control can contribute to a sedentary lifestyle. Another thing many don't remember is having to manually defrost a freezer. Self-defrosting

technology saves labor but uses more energy. Automatic transmissions in automobiles made driving easier for everyone but provided poorer mileage until the technology improved. Now many automatic transmissions are manuals with a computer doing the shifting, and it is hard to find a new vehicle with a true manual transmission. A true manual can still be an advantage, however, since when so few today know how to operate them, they are less likely to be stolen or carjacked. A lot of tech innovations improve our lives in almost all aspects, and there seems little reason to retain the old ways.

Computer technology has improved greatly over 40 years. It would be hard to argue that we would be better off today with no Internet and non-portable devices controlled through a text interface or rows of switches, with large monochrome displays that can't show graphics. All the changes we've seen, from the DOS command line prompt through ten or more versions of Windows, all the versions of Apple products, from the stationary desktop through laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, smartphones, and watches, have meant that a lot of products have seen the sun set on them over the years. In most cases, we run enthusiastically towards the rising sun of new products and capabilities. In a few cases, though, it seems major tech players want to push our still useful and valued technology off a western cliff into the abyss of obscurity before we are willing to part with it, all in the interest of ringing up new sales.

I live in the Wintel (Windows-Intel) world and have seen many products and operating system sunsets. DOS was revolutionary, but Windows graphics and mouse use made leaving it easy. Windows XP was a great OS; I'm writing this on a 15-year-old PC that still runs fine (without an Internet connection), with an early version of Microsoft Word that has all I really need. MS Office is one case where I feel Microsoft has been adding "features" and changing versions primarily to squeeze more money out of users. There have been some nice feature improvements over the years, but a lot of the recent changes have been to the user interface, which I feel was just fine as it was. I'm tired of companies that feel they need to change the look and feel of their software to justify new versions and fees. I especially don't care for the idea of "subscription" software (like Office 365), where I feel I've just become a revenue stream to some company.

I know some will say I should perhaps switch to Linux, or at least to open-source (and free) office productivity software, but I unfortunately still live in a working world, where I must use my employer's MS OS and Office

I prefer not to cloud my sadly-limited mind with having to be fluent in multiple ways of doing things. I have the utmost respect for multi-lingual people, as I have really only ever spoken English, and I often don't feel I've mastered the one language.

I had a good run with Windows 7 and was sad to have to plan last year for its January 2020 security sunset. A year ago, my wife and I were running three Win7 computers (a desktop and two laptops), three Chrome OS devices (two Chromebooks

and a Chromebit), a Win10 computer I hardly used, a couple of tablets, an Android Smartphone and an iPhone. I'm still transitioning to Windows 10; while my wife is happy on her new Win10 desktop, I'm still setting up the new Win10 laptop I bought myself. I try to be good and use my old Win10 computer, but like an unmotivated dieter, I still briefly cheat from time to time and reconnect the network cable on my old Win7 laptop.

I've come to terms with Windows 10, having had to use it at work extensively. The Win7 security end-of-life deadline turned out to be a boon for Microsoft and computer makers, as least in regards to my family, It caused me to buy two new desktops (I bought my mom one as well) and a laptop I might not otherwise have been in the market for. It is nice to have new, faster and better equipment, but I resent being forced into things by the deadlines of others.

While I grudgingly use Microsoft's products, I also chose devices running Google's Chrome OS to add to my tech stable. I bought my first Chromebook, an Acer Chromebook 11, in 2015. The following year, I bought an Acer Chromebit stick computer. Chrome computers are inexpensive (at least the ones I buy are), quick booting, and very portable. They are great for going on the web and for reading and light writing tasks but are too underpowered for much else. I found my Chromebook was great for web browsing, reading the newspaper, and a wonderful travel accessory. I bought a second Chromebook, a Samsung XE501-C13, in a 2018 Black Friday sale simply because I loved my first one so much I wanted to have a spare.



Photo 1: Acer and Samsung Chromebooks

Google started out of the gate with what Microsoft only went to with Windows 10 -forcing automatic OS updates on the user. Google's Chrome OS updates are small and quick, so you hardly notice they have happened. They have seldom changed the look or features, sticking mostly to security, and I don't recall hearing of anything breaking as the result of an update. Microsoft of course earned disdain from early Win10 users with forced OS updates happening at inopportune times, taking a long

time and breaking existing capabilities.

I use my Chromebooks every day, but myChromebit has seen little use. It is plugged into an HDMI port on the back of our smartTV. I bought it a Bluetooth keyboard and mouse and thought I could surf the web with it like my Chromebooks, but my old eyes have problems with the small text at normal TV viewing distances. It is good for watching YouTube videos, but we don't do a lot of that. Since COVID, we have been using it every Sunday morning, as our church now broadcasts services on YouTube.

It was on one of these Sunday morning Chromebit viewing sessions that I noticed it had an odd notification: "Updates end November 2020"! With dismay, I started to research this issue. It appears Google has set up a security sunset date for each model of Chrome OS device. This was not well advertised, so users often only find out near the end of their device's security lifetime.



Photo 2: Acer Chromebit stick computer

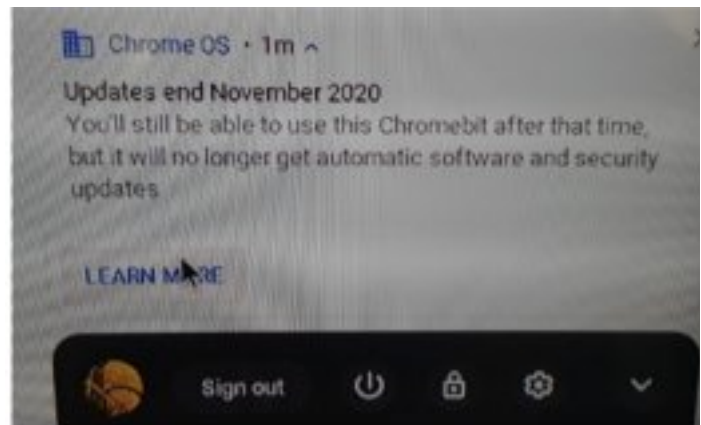


Photo 3: Google Sunset Notice

It turns out all Chrome OS devices have a set date beyond which no more updates will be provided, the Auto Update Expiration (AUE) date. The auto part of AUE doesn't mean much, as I didn't find any evidence you could manually update the OS after that date either. Google provides information on this at www.google.com/chromebook/older. It is not clear if the manufacturers have any input into this date, but Google certainly appears to, as there is evidence they can change it.

Google emphasizes that this does not prevent the use of the Chrome OS device after the AUE date, but the device will stop receiving Chrome OS and browser updates. These updates include:

- "Security updates, bug fixes, and new features for Chromebooks. Existing features may stop working."
- "Support for certain apps and extensions that require specific Chrome OS or browser versions."

I looked up the AUE dates for my three Chrome OS devices. To find the AUE, go to settings, then at the very bottom of the left panel, select "About Chrome OS." Select "Additional details," and in the "Update schedule" section the AUE will be shown. I found mine were:

Asus Chromebit - November 2020

Acer Chromebook - September 2021

Samsung Chromebook - June 2022

This means I'll lose updates on the Chromebit in about 6 months, and I have only a year or two left on my Chromebooks. Now I'm getting that same sinking feeling I get with Microsoft.

I found out a bit more about the AUE from some articles on Chrome enthusiast websites (chromecomputing.com and chromeunboxed.com). According to these articles, Google originally set the AUE dates based on an assumed five-year device life expectancy. The supposed goals were to keep the Chrome OS from having to maintain compatibility with older hardware, keep its reputation as a fast and reliable OS intact and incentivize hardware manufacturers to continue to create new Chrome OS products. They said Google changed to 8+ years of update support for products, starting with those released in 2020. Additionally, Google may be extending the AUE date for recent products to match their new assumed lifespan, so it is possible to find the prior AUE for a product extended.

If Google sticks with the five-year plan for my products, I will be disappointed, as that will make them more restrictive than even Microsoft. I bought the three Win7-installed computers I just retired from use between 2010 and 2012, meaning Microsoft allowed me 8-10 of operation with that OS before "forcing" me to change. I don't know if I'm careful or just lucky, but I've yet to have a computer fail; they always get retired (mostly unwillingly) first.

I guess I'll be looking for a new Chromebook come the Black Friday sales this year. And now every time I see my Chromebooks, in my mind I'll be hearing Elton John singing "Don't Let the Sun Go Down on Me."

Interesting Internet Finds April 2020
By Steve Costello
scostello AT sefcug.com

In the course of 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 March 2020.

Are VPNs Legal Or Illegal? Everything You Need To Know

<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/are-vpns-legal-illegal/>

If you use a VPN and travel, be sure to read this MakeUseOf post.

Call The Geek Squad? (Yes Or No)

https://askbobrankin.com/call_the_geek_squad_yes_or_no.html

No matter the skill level of computer user group members, this question often crops up. Check this post out and then print it out to hand out when someone asks the question in your group.

Why Do Routers Have USB Ports?

<https://www.maketecheasier.com/why-do-routers-have-usb-port/>

Before reading this post, I never really thought about this. Now, I have connected a 1TB external HDD to my router as another place to back up the data I am working on. It works well.

DIY Hand Sanitizer Recipe

<https://coastalanglermag.com/how-to-make-your-own-hand-sanitizer/>

This is not really technology related but, in these times it is very useful. If you can find the ingredients, making your own sanitizer is easy and inexpensive compared to finding commercial sanitizer. (Note: I fish frequently and go through a lot of hand sanitizer.)

What Is DHCP? How Does It Work?

<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/dhcp>

This is another one of those things most people don't think about because it usually just works. I read this post because, when I see something about technology that I haven't really thought about, I like to check it out.

10 Easy Ways To Boost Your Router's Performance While Working At Home

<https://www.techhive.com/article/3533465/how-to-boost-your-router-performance-while-working-at-home.html>

With everyone working from home, and students in online classes, you may find that you're router's performance is not that good anymore. If you find that to be true, check out this post for some ways to boost the router's performance.

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August 2020
DVD of the Month

ARI - Monthly newsletter
AudioBook - Free audio book

Balabolka - Text to speech software
Brave - Updated web browser

Chromium - Updated web browser
CustomFolder - Cutomize folders with colors and symbols

DebloatWin10 - Rid Win 10 of superfluous files
DVDOMIists - Contents of CDs and DVDs of the Month

Gramps - Genealogy Software

IconConfigurationUtility - Remember desktop
icon locations
ImageMagick - Convert, Edit, or Compose
Bitmap Images

KasperskyVirusRemovalTool - Updated virus
removal tool

MajorGeeksWinTweaks - 172 hidden Win tweaks
McAfeeRemovalTool - Updated tool to remove
McAfee software

MemberContributions - Things members send me
MicrosoftEdgeStable - Updated web browser
MicrosoftSafetyScanner - Updated MS safety scanner
MP3CutterandEditor - MP3 editor

OldTimeRadio - Old radio audio files
Opera - Updated web browser

RestoreWindowsPhotoViewer - Registry edit to restore
Win Photo Viewer
Rocrail - Model railroad control system

ShowWin10VersionandBuildNumber - Shows
Win 10 version on desktop
SSDscope - Clone tool for Transcend SSDs

Wordpress55 - Software for Wordpress web site
creation and maintenance

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.

Mailing address:

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P.O. Box 3150
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138

Members Helpline

Any member can volunteer to be
on the Members Helpline.

Hardware problems, Win 7, Win
10, Linux and Virus Removal
- John Spizzirri

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