Interface

Tuesday February 11, 2014

Back up! Back Up! Back Up your Computer!

Gene Barlow
APCUG

Raffle Items
Logitech mk320 Wireless Keyboard & Mouse
Malwarebytes
Touch Screen Stylus Pen
Book: Windows 8.1 Out of the Box

Coming Programs

March 11: "Free Tech at the Library"; Presented by our own President, Sandee Ruth

April 8: "The Gift of Legacy: Who's Writing Your Story" Presented by Dr. Deborah Abbott

☺ Meeting in Amherst ☺
Meetings are held at
The Amherst Church of the Nazarene
210 Cooper Foster Park Rd. Amherst, OH
Doors will open at 5:30 PM, program starts at 6:30 PM

A Word From Our President

I wrote about identity theft in last month's column. Due to a date mix-up, Skip Gavorski & James Reese, of Parallel Horizons Group, did not give their presentation on Identity Theft at our January meeting.

Instead we discussed a recent article from the Cleveland Plain Dealer, "*After the latest on the Target data breach, here are 39 ways to keep you and your finances safe*". The link to that article by Theresa Dixon Murray is in our blog at http://lccug.blogspot.com/

I would like to add that on the Target store website is a heading near the top: **Important Notice…..** click on **Learn More** and find information about signing up for free credit monitoring for a year at http://creditmonitoring.target.com. Take advantage of this service if you shopped at Target during the holiday season.

The Plain Dealer Consumer Affairs section is a good place to monitor for this kind of information: http://www.cleveland.com/consumeraffairs/ . You will find good reading about online security, online safety, identity theft and the like.

At our February meeting we will have a presentation on the importance of backups. The four most common types of backups will be discussed and their effectiveness and ease of use will be compared.

I recently had a hard drive die and relied on the backup I had created by using Acronis Backup, the software that our presenter advocates. It made restoring my computer to a new drive easy and painless. Acronis will be available for sale at the meeting **for** a discount.

There is a nice opportunity to expand your computer knowledge from your own computer. APCUG will hold a FREE **2014 Winter Virtual Technology Conference** (VTC) on Saturday, February 22, from 1:00 pm – 5:00 pm Eastern time. The sessions are 50 minutes in length and offer attendees the opportunity to ask questions via a chat window.

The sessions to be held that day are described at http://apcug2.org/content/vtc10

Videos from earlier conferences can be found on APCUG's YouTube channel http://www.youtube.com/apcugvideos. You can go there and see what similar sessions are like. Hopefully the ones from February 22 will be available there later.

Huddle up to your computer and keep warm. Hopefully by our next meeting it will be above freezing and feel like a heat wave!

Sandee Ruth

LCCUG Officers For 2014

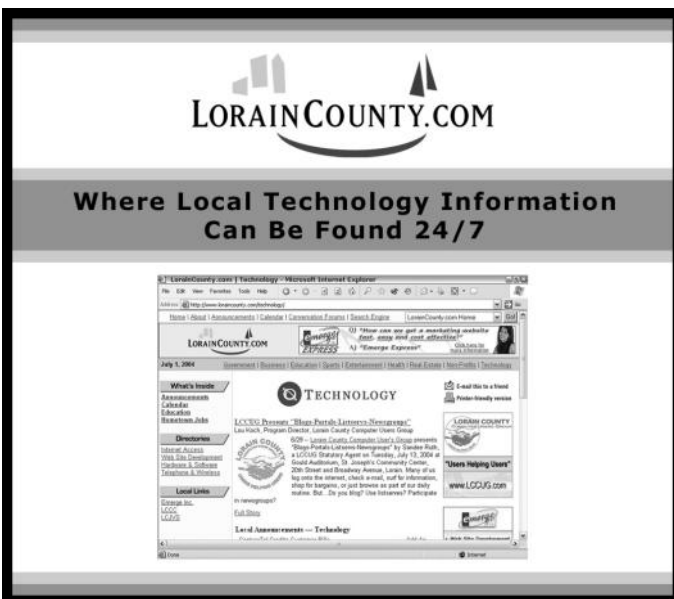| President	Sandee Ruth president@lccug.com
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Back up! Back Up! Back Up your Computer!

Presented by

Gene Barlow

Gene Barlow has worked with computer systems for over 50 years and has specialized in backup technology and hard drive utilities for the past 20 years. He can make a complex topic easy for everyone to understand, yet still provide lots of details that you need to know. He is one of the most popular presenters to user groups and has presented to thousands of user group audiences. You will find his presentation easy to understand and very interesting.

Doing regular backups of your computer is the best possible way to protect your computer and its files. Today, we are inundated with many different ways to do backups that it is difficult to know which approach is best. They do not give you all the same protection, so you may end up surprised when you have a hard drive crash and find out that the backup approach that you picked cannot get your computer running again quickly. In this presentation, we will inspect the five most common backups approaches on the market and tell you the advantages and problems with that backup approach. We will also describe why and where you would want to use each type of backup available. Most important of all, we will tell you why one backup approach is vastly superior to all of the others. This is an important topic on backup technology and one that you will not want to miss. Be sure to attend this session.

Prior to the meeting, a good read starts on page 14, the "Ask Leo`!" article "What's an Incremental Backup?"

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Where Local Technology Information Can Be Found 24/7

MEETING CANCELLATION NOTICE

When a meeting is cancelled, the notification will be on our Websites and emails will be sent out to our members.

Our Websites are: **www.lccug.com**
                              www.lccug.com/members

If you think the weather is too bad to drive in then don't try to come to a meeting that may already be cancelled. Please check your email boxes and our websites.

Thank You

Executive Board Meeting Minutes

JANUARY 7, 2014

Attending were Sandy Ruth Carole Doerr, Don Hall, Micky Knickman, Richard Barnett and Dennis Smith.

The board discussed programs and potential presenters for this upcoming year. The results of the survey taken at the Christmas Party were available to guide the board on what members wanted and enjoy.

Carole made a motion to add $25 to the $50 collected at the Christmas Party for the Church Food Program. Dennis seconded, motion passed.

Micky will summarize the raffle and prizes in 2013 for Dennis.

Prizes for the January 14th and the February 11th meetings were decided. Richard will publish this information.

Sandee will contact Pam with regards to certificates for presenters.

Micky moved, Richard seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Don't forget to check the Members' page for up-to-date information about programs & events:
http://www.lccug.com/members

Association of Personal Computer User Groups

Member of apcug

General Meeting Minutes

JANUARY 14, 2014

President Sandee Ruth called the meeting to order. A motion to accept the minutes as shown in the January issue of the *INTERFACE* was made by Ellen Endrizal, seconded by Pam Rihel. Motion passed.

There were 4 guests attending tonight's meeting.

Sandee advised the members that tonight's meeting presenters from Parallel Horizons Group failed to show up. She then stepped forward and presented an informative and interesting program on IDENTITY THEFT based on an article appearing in *THE CLEVELAND PLAIN DEALER, '39 Steps to thwart ID Thieves'* by Teresa Dixon Murray. The article is available on the LCCUG Blog. Sandee was assisted by Carole Doerr and Micky Knickman along with the many experiences from the audience on identity theft.

Pam Rihel won the rollover raffle. Enio Fernandez won the software/hardware raffle and Dennis Smith won $5 in the attendance raffle.

Carole moved, Micky seconded the meeting be adjourned.

Genealogy

Pam Rihel prihel1947@gmail.com

Dick Eastman *http://www.eogn.com.*

What to Do With Floppy Disks?

Friday, January 10th, 2014

Do you or someone you know have lots of files saved on floppy disks? A lady contacted me recently and asked how she could read her old floppy disks that she had saved from many years ago. It seems her present computer does not have a floppy disk drive in it. I suggested she do something NOW to save the disks. Before long, floppy disks will be about as useful as buggy whips.

Actually, there are **THREE** separate problems:

The first problem is that floppy disks were never designed for long-term storage for years and years. The manufacturers usually stated ten to twenty years life expectancy for floppies if they were stored in ideal conditions. A typical residence isn't ideal.

In addition, floppy disks have always been highly sensitive to dust, condensation and temperature extremes. As with any magnetic storage, it is also vulnerable to magnetic fields. If the disk isn't stored in optimum conditions, the data will disappear because of these vulnerabilities. In many cases, data will disappear from floppies in much less than ten years.

The second problem is the one my correspondent mentioned: she no longer owns a floppy disk drive. In fact, the manufacturers stopped including floppy disk drives on new computers years ago. Luckily, you can still purchase floppy disk drives today although they are becoming rare.

If possible, see if someone you know owns an older computer that includes both a floppy disk drive and some method of copying information from floppy disks to some other media.

Possibilities are to transfer across a network, transfer on the Internet, copy to a flash drive, or maybe to "burn" to a CD-ROM.

If you cannot find an older computer, you can purchase an external USB floppy drive that plugs into the USB port of most any modern Windows XP, Vista, Windows 7, or Windows 8 computer. The drives typically cost $10 to perhaps $30. You can see a selection of USB 3 1/2-inch floppy disk drives for sale today at http://goo.gl/Krtc1.

If you have an even older 5-1/4-inch floppy, your search will be more difficult. Very few of the older disk drives were ever manufactured with a USB connection. However, if you are willing to open the computer and bolt in an internal floppy drive, you might still be able to find a few by beginning at http://goo.gl/re08QM or on eBay.

The third, and possibly the biggest problem of all, is the information stored on the disk. Even if the data has not disappeared, and even if you can copy the files to more modern media, can you find a program today that will read the files created by a program ten or twenty years ago? For instance, if you have files created by Roots 3 (a popular genealogy program of the 1980s), you will have difficulty finding any program today that will read information stored in that old format. To my knowledge, Roots 3 files can only be read by Roots 3 or later versions of the same program. Unfortunately, no program today can read Roots 3 files. The same is true for data saved in old versions of Personal Ancestral File, Family Tree Maker, or genealogy programs that have since disappeared from the marketplace, such as The Family Edge or Generations Grande Suite.

My advice:

1. Copy the files NOW! Whatever is stored on a floppy disk may disappear at any time. Save it while you can. Copy the files to modern media.

2. Attempt to open the files with a modern word processor or genealogy program or even a simple ASCII file viewer, such as Windows Notepad. If you are lucky, you may be able to read the information.

3. If you cannot read the files, post messages

on online forums asking for assistance from anyone who still has an old computer with the old software installed. For instance, if you find someone who still has Roots 3 installed on a computer someplace (and if they also have the optional Roots 3 program that creates GED-COM files), they could import your data and then export it in GEDCOM format. The information then can be read by any modern genealogy program.

For more information about GEDCOM files, see my "GEDCOM Explained" article at http://goo.gl/3eDo6.

Whatever you do, don't get trapped in the obsolescence problems again. Copy your data often to whatever new media has recently become available.

This article is from Eastman's Online Genealogy Newsletter and is copyright by Richard W. Eastman. It is re-published here with the permission of the author. Information about the newsletter is available at http://www.eogn.com.

Genealogy Websites Of Interest

World GenWeb Project
www.worldgenweb.org

National Archives
www.nationalarchives.gov

Web Tracking is Monitoring our Every Move

Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
www.compukiss.com
sandy@compukiss.com

Web tracking has gotten completely out of hand! The government is snooping on everything we do. On top of that, sharing of information between companies for advertising purposes has reached a level of alarming sophistication. Here's my story about what they do and how they do it.

Times have changed quickly in the Internet world. It used to be fun to visit a website and be presented with an ad about some new product or service that I found interesting. I fully realized that they chose what they presented to me by scanning the information that had been gathered about me from my previous Web searches and Web browsing, but it didn't really bother me.

Today, however, was an eye-opener for me. Today I realized just how invasive that Web tracking has become. This morning I looked at a skirt that was on sale at the J Jill website. During my browsing session I looked at the skirt several times.

Here's the eye-opener. That afternoon, when I was doing some research, I was struck by the fact that the same skirt was featured in two prominent J Jill ads. These ads were on the Associated Press website, which had nothing to do with J Jill or with clothing.

In my morning shopping I also looked at some Web services. In the afternoon, I was shown ads for one of the Web services that I had looked at in the morning. Of course, the Website that showed me the ads had nothing to do with Web hosting.

This all has to do with advertising and the sharing of information. When you visit a website, that website knows your IP address. It also has a record of the web browser you used, the time of your visit and what you looked at. All shopping sites do this. Search engines like Google also keep track of this

type of information. In addition, they track everything you search for. They can also see which website you visit when you leave their website. Search engines, including Google, retain this information for some time.

When we are on the Internet, we are constantly being categorized, identified, and targeted. All of the data from multiple visits and multiple searches is congregated to give a pretty good representation of who you are. On top of that this information is shared by all of the search engine or website's advertising, marketing, and tracking partners and affiliates. That is how the skirt that I was looking at showed up on a totally unrelated website.

All of this is done in the name of advertising and it follows the American way of advertising. Remember when television transmissions were totally free, supported only by advertising? Well, although we pay for both the Internet service and the device that we use to access the Internet, many things on the Internet are free. These include programs and services like Internet browsers and search engines.

They offer us free stuff, but they either have direct ads or they have deals with others who are advertisers. They also use small, almost invisible single pixel graphic images called web beacons to scan computer and cookie log files to analyze people and to target purchasers. The information that they gather cannot identify us personally, but it can tell them a lot about our preferences, surfing habits, and purchasing behaviors.

I don't mind direct ads, but unfortunately the advertisers and their partners and affiliates have become more and more invasive. Technology is being used to predict and to affect consumer behavior. A few years ago, when a website said, "Welcome back Sandy", it felt comforting to have the site recognize me. Now, however, the targeting is becoming so accurate that it feels artificial, intrusive, and even a bit eerie.

Add that to the fact that the American government has been gathering the telephone and Internet records of millions of citizens, and you will agree that WE HAVE A REAL PROBLEM!!
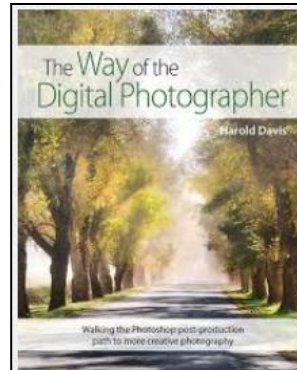
The Way of the Digital Photographer

By Harold Davis
Review by Mark Mattson, Editor, Computer Users of Erie, Pennsylvania
October 2013 issue, Horizons
www.curie.com
bookworm8@verizon.net

Hot off the press comes the latest book from photographer and author Harold Davis dealing with the subject of post-production techniques in the digital photography world.

At first glance, the title may seem to some to indicate that this volume deals with how to improve your digital photography skills. In a way, it might, because Harold keeps impressing on the reader that getting it as right in-camera is important to producing great images. Rather, 'The Way' he presents to you is how to take your already good images and make them the best they can be…or better.

As you travel along the journey this book takes you on, you discover many gems of wisdom Harold has learned over the years, and passes them on to you. For instance, one passage early in the book struck me as something I never thought of before when doing my photography. It starts on page 27 and continues onto 28. Basically what he is telling you is that you are not photographing an object, rather you are photographing the LIGHT that defines the object. The light falling on your subject can make it appear different, depending on the direction and quality the light has at any given moment. You may notice a subject and shoot an image right at that moment. But if you wait a minute or an hour or longer, the light will change and oftentimes make for an even better photo.

Reading this passage made me stop and really think about how I've been looking at photography all these years. It made me wonder if I had it wrong, and that was what holds me back from making even better images. It's now part of my thinking when I pick up the camera… and something I need to explore further.

Study your subject…see how the light shapes and defines it. Move around, change positions and see how it changes the scene. Unless you're shooting fast-paced action such as sports, time is your friend to making great images. Be patient.

The book runs 192 pages. It is divided into three main sections, with chapters falling under those sections detailing further the subject at hand. The main sections are:

- Digital Photography is Painting
- Multi-RAW and Hand-HDR Processing
- Enhancement to Glory

Also present is a short Resources section, and a detailed Index to all topics covered in the book.

The volume is filled with both color and black and white photos taken by author Davis to Illustrate the concepts he is presenting to you. Being a volume on Photoshop post-processing techniques, there are also many screen captures of his system illustrating how the concept being discussed is performed, so you may apply them to your own images.

Two of the chapters were of particular interest to me, the one dealing with Multi-RAW processing and that dealing with the LAB color space. MultiRAW processing is another way of making an image with a high contrast range, similar to HDR processing. However, it is accomplished using a single RAW file that is processed twice.

There are many of what Harold calls 'Meditations' interspersed throughout the book, intended to make you think about and understand the topic being covered. They give you an exercise to make the topic clearer to you. Be sure to read through them as well when working through the volume.

The LAB color space is a different mode in Photoshop used to adjust color in your image; some prefer it as it gives more precise results in certain circumstances than using the RGB adjustments.

The Way of the Digital Photographer is published by Peachpit Press, and is available now. The ISBN number is 978-0321943071

You may purchase the title direct from the publisher, and use your UG discount code for a discount. It is also available for purchase on Amazon for $23.03 (list price is $34.99).

Photography is an art form that can be frustrating, satisfying, creative, and any number of other forms and feelings, depending on how you view it. Experience comes with time, as well as with guidance from those that have gone before. It can be a long and winding path, but with an author such as Harold Davis to show you the way, it can be satisfying and rewarding as well.

ScamBusters.org

Red Flags Signal Possible Investing Scams

Crooks can be quite discerning when it comes to investing scams -- they head for the best targets. And who are the best targets?

They're male. They're smart. And, of course, they're relatively wealthy.

That's the word from a new study produced by FINRA, the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority.

That's not to say they're the only targets, but men are more inclined to take risks than women, says the report, and, for some reason, people with more money to invest seem to be less cautious about where they put it.

The study, Financial Fraud and Fraud Susceptibility in the United States, says many Americans don't know how to spot risky or fraudulent investments.

"For example, many lack an understanding of reasonable returns on investments, leaving them vulnerable to fraudulent pitches promising unrealistic or guaranteed returns," says FINRA.

"In fact, over 4 in 10 respondents found an annual return of 110% for an investment appealing..."

Some victims were attracted by unrealistic schemes promising a daily return of 2%, which, as FINRA points out, would turn $10,000 into $1.4 million in just a year!

More Details

Other findings from the study included:

- 80% of all respondents surveyed admitted they had been offered a potentially fraudulent investment.
- Older respondents were 34% more likely than those in their 40s to lose money on bogus

deals.

- Though not strictly an investment, the most common fraudulent offer was the well-known Nigerian or 419 scam, in which victims are asked to pay a large sum to get their hands on a share of an inheritance or other stash of cash.
- A close runner-up was the supposed "educational" investment meeting that's really a sales pitch.
More people actually fall for this one than any other scam.
- One in six respondents said they'd lost money as a result of being taken advantage of by a family member.
The same proportion had lost money through being taken advantage of by a friend of a friend.
- One third of all victims had been introduced to a scammer by a friend, often well-meaning.
- Victims are reluctant to admit they've been scammed, meaning the actual figures are probably under-reported.

"It is a more pervasive phenomenon than previous research has suggested," the study adds.

"In the age of the Internet, the costs of entry for fraudulent enterprises are significantly lower and, at the same time, the ability to reach millions of potential victims quickly is significantly higher."

By overlooking the possible pitfalls of many investments, investors, especially the high risk takers, stand to lose substantial amounts of money to fraud.

Latest research suggests fraud costs Americans around $50 billion a year.

What Can You Do?

So what's the solution?

Well, tackling fraud at its roots is obviously a start but it's important to help people recognize the red flags, says FINRA.

That's what we're all about here at Scambusters, of course.

So, for a start, you could check out some of our earlier reports that tackle these issues: Investing Safely and 7 Deadly Sins: Investment Scams Promise Shortcut to Economic Recovery.

We also profiled FINRA in an earlier issue, including a way of testing your susceptibility to scams: Investment Watchdog FINRA Fights Financial Scams.

You can also sharpen your lookout for "red flag" warning signs.

In this latest report, FINRA highlights the most appealing red flags as investments that supposedly:

- Outperform the stock market (Dow Jones Industrial Average).
- Offer an annual return of at least 50% and more likely over 100%.
- Claim there's no way you could lose; the investment is "fully guaranteed."
- Involve a company with excellent management and in a high growth industry (though, of course, this might also be true of genuine investment opportunities).
- Has already made hundreds of people extremely wealthy.
- Represent a ground floor opportunity to back a new kind of technology.

The bottom line is that any type of investment, even those that look safe and offer only a modest return, should be regarded cautiously.

And any investment that involves large sums of money and/or big returns should only be entered into after taking advice from a trusted professional advisor.

Our experience, based on reports here at Scambusters and echoed by this report, is that you should be especially wary of exceptional deals recommended to you by friends or family.

Oftentimes, they are innocently opening the way for you to join them as victims of an investing scam.

NEED HELP?—
Here's Who to Contact:

Neil Higgins

    440-967-9061 - higgins.neil@gmail.com
    Evenings 6 p.m. -10 p.m. + Weekends
    Hardware, Linux & Windows Operating Systems,
    Tweaking your system

Micky Knickman

    440-967-3118 - micky@knickman.com
    Evenings 5 p.m. – 7 p.m. + Weekends
    General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation,
    Basic to Advanced Windows

Lou Koch

    lkkoch@centurytel.net
    Microsoft Office: Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Publisher, Ac-
    cess, & Outlook, Basic to Advanced Windows

Richard Barnett

    440-365-9442 - Richard216@aol.com
    Evenings & Weekends
    General Software Configuration, Hardware Installation,
    Basic to Advanced Windows & Web Page Design

Sandee Ruth

    440-984-2692 - sandee29@gmail.com
    Basic Word Processing, Windows, & Web Design
    Advanced Internet

Pam Casper Rihel

    440-277-6076
    6:00 p.m. to 10:00 pm Monday thru Thursday
    Genealogy help
    prihel1947@gmail.com

If any of our members are interested in helping other users with what programs you are adept at, please contact any of our officers with you name, what program or programs you would be willing to give help with, you email address and or phone number and when you would like to have them call you. Thanks

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Newsletter Editor: Pam Rihel using Microsoft Publisher, Corel Paint Shop Pro X3, CreataCard 8.

This Month's contributors: Micky Knickman, Sandra Ruth, Pam Rihel, Carole Doerr**,** Don Hall, Leo Notenboom, Dick Eastman, Sandy Berger, Harold Davis, Bill Crowe, WorldStart, Scambusters, APCUG, Microsoft Office art online,
Newsletter is now
Online at
lccug.com/newsletters or **lccug.com**

LCCUG ONGOING CLASSES AND WORKSHOPS
ALL ARE FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

Problem Solving Workshop

Date: Tuesday - February 18, 2104
Time: 5:30 - 8 pm **Instructor:** Micky Knickman, et al.
Place: Amherst Church of the Nazarene
        210 Cooper Foster Park Rd.,44001

    Learn how to repair or update your computer by changing hard drives, memory, CD ROMs, etc.

    Members are encouraged to bring their computers anytime before 7:30 pm for assistance from Micky, Neil or other knowledgeable members.

Computer Club News
Don't Forget to Bring in Your Used Ink Cartridges

LCCUG is collecting empty ink cartridges.

Our Club is recycling used ink cartridges and using the rewards we earn to buy more prizes for the club raffle.

If you have empty ink cartridges laying around, please bring them to our meetings and any officer will gladly take them off your hands.

Recycle & Help Our Club, Too!

MEMBERSHIP WITH LCCUG:

Yearly dues are $25.00 For more information, contact:

Dennis Smith
Director of Membership,
membership@lccug.com.

Directions to Meetings:
A map and directions to our meetings can be found on our Members' web page:

www.lccug.com/members. Just click on the link "Meeting Locations & Directions"

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www.glasbergen.com

"I found a solution to your spam problem. I've set up your e-mail to automatically delete any message with a vowel in it."

Mystery IQ Test

Monday, February 3rd, 2014 by Amanda | Filed Under: Cool Sites

Whenever I get addicted to something I love to pass it on to all of you! Well that's exactly what today's site is! I am super addicted to this Mystery IQ Test game.

It's so addicting that my roommate often ends up behind my chair watching my progress through the levels. The premise is that your character wakes up in a strange room, reads a note, and discovers that there are 30 puzzle rooms he has to make it through in order to get back home. You don't know where you are, who put you there, or why they are testing your IQ.

Navigating the game uses the arrow keys, space bar, mouse, and keyboard.

Once you get to the site press play, and then read the note in the room, after that you'll have to pick the level of difficulty you want to play the game on. The difficulty levels are Safe, Casual, and Challenging. I'm working through the Challenging level. The levels are the same, the difficulty is just increased for taking hints or getting a solution.

If you absolutely get stuck, and don't want to lose points for a taking a hint or solution, you can always check out the walk-through video below the game. It's almost eight minutes long, but walks you through the entire run of Casual difficulty. I noticed when watching it through after beating it, that some boards (mainly the ones with tiles you walk on) have multiple solutions.

Well are you ready to test your IQ in the Mystery IQ Test? Who has abducted you and why are they testing your puzzle solving skills? Find out by beating the game!

http://www.yepi.com/en/mystery-iq-test.html

~Amanda

Tags: **flash games**, **free flash games**, **Free Games**, **IQ, mystery**, **puzzle**

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New Job Scams, Car Theft and Facebook Tricks

Despite repeated warnings and work offers that are just too good to be true, hundreds, maybe thousands, of people still fall victim to job scams every week.

And sometimes it's the simplest of scams that pull in the most money and victims.

Pyramid schemes are perhaps the best known. They work on the premise that each person has to bring in at least two more paying participants, who in turn must bring in two more -- and so on until the whole thing collapses.

The lure is always that you can make a lot of money, fast -- but that's usually only true for the perpetrator of the scheme.

In one recent case, at least 65,000 people, mainly stay-at-home moms, were lured into a scam promoted in parenting magazine ads.

It was as simple as having to pay an upfront fee of $30 to $50 for a stack of postcards that victims had to mail out to people they knew, inviting them in, in turn, to sign up (and pay $50) to join the scheme.

If they signed up, the sender earned a payment of just $2, though fake testimonials claimed they could earn thousands.

Happily, this scam has been shut down by postal inspectors, but not before it pulled in an estimated $1 million for the alleged perpetrators.

Action: The message is clear -- don't pay to get a job, especially a work from home job, or one that promises easy big money.

More tips on avoiding work-at-home scams can be found in our article, Work At Home Jobs: How to Avoid Getting Scammed.

Truckers Targeted

Another new job scam has a different purpose than just stealing cash -- stealing victims' identities.

The targets this time are truck drivers, and they're usually picked off at rest stops, though they're also hunted on the classified ads site Craigslist.

The lure is either a new trucking job or a freight-load for

delivery. In both cases, victims are asked to fax personal details including a copy of their drivers license and Social Security card, which are then used for the ID theft.

Action: As always, you should never fax personal information to people you don't know.

And, if you know any truck drivers, please pass this alert to them.

Is It Locked?

Staying with rest stops, or at least parking lots in general, police are expressing concern about two new car theft techniques in which crooks intercept signals from remote locking devices.

In the first instance, seen mainly in Canada and the UK so far, thieves use a cheap device, bought on the Internet, to block the signal from a remote.

So, when the remote locking device is clicked, the lock doesn't engage and the alarm is not armed. Once the driver is out of sight, the thief can simply then open the door and either steal the vehicle or its contents.

Action: After using your remote, check the vehicle is actually locked -- or lock it with your key.

More worrying, in the US, is the growing use of devices which actually intercept and record the remote signal to keyless locks, which can then be duplicated.

So the car may be locked at first but the crook is subsequently able to unlock it by replicating the signal.

Action: Keyless-lock cars have a button inside the vehicle, which ensures it locks when you get out. Use that, rather than the remote.

Beware of Duplicate Facebook Friends

Now, a new Facebook scam to be on the lookout for.

In this trick, you get a "friend" request from someone who's already a friend.

Their page looks like the real thing, with a genuine photo and often a list of other friends you already know -- others who have been fooled into following the same imposter.

It's not clear what the motives are for this trick but it could be an attempt to find out more about you or your friends, for the purposes of ID theft, or to set you up for an emergency or distress scam -- you know, the phone

call or message from a supposed friend or relative in urgent need of money.

Or the imposter may just want to spam them.

Action: Don't accept a duplicate friend request. Message your friend using their original listing to check if it's them.

And once you've confirmed it's a fake, tell Facebook about it and let your other online friends know.

Check out our latest report on Facebook scams, The Highs and Lows of a Facebook Scam.

Don't Open It

Finally, if you own an Xbox One, beware of forum postings and emails currently doing the rounds that claim if you open the device and make some changes, you can make it backwards compatible with Xbox software for earlier versions.

The messages may include instructions on how to do this, but according to the maker, Microsoft, the claim is not true.

If you mess around with the innards of the machine, you're more likely to render it inoperable -- so don't do it!

Whoever is doing this is just out to cause trouble, as surely as the job scam that offers you big money for doing next to nothing!

The Affordable Care Website from a Programmer's Perspective

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We have heard the word "glitch" over and over again in reference to the government's new health care website, Healthcare.gov. As a person who has personally coded thousands of lines of code and run several websites, I can assure you that what we are seeing with this website is not a bunch of small glitches. It is a fundamental failure. Read on for my take on it all.

How did we get here? First of all, with any web project, especially one as large as this, clarity of purpose is essential. The first thing you do in such a project is to decide definitive objectives and plot out a program of how to get to those desired results.

At 1900 pages, the size of H.R. 3962, the Affordable Health Care for America Act, is overwhelming. It crashed my computer several times before I was able to download the PDF. Add that to the fact that no one in Washington knew exactly what it contained when it was passed and you can understand why there was no clarity of purpose in developing the website.

Also consider the fact that outdated procurement and bidding processes for governmental work have become so overwhelming that only those companies who know how to manipulate the system can be successful in gaining these government contracts. The people who get the contracts are not necessarily the best and the brightest, but rather, those who can play the political game the best.

So we wound up with several contractors, led by CGI – the largest tech company in Canada. Although I have nothing against Canadians, it seems to me that something that we Americans will rely on so heavily would be better served by an American company. After all, we still have a very high standing in the technology world. What ever happen to "Made in the USA?"

And, as you know, cost overruns are rampant. The initial CGI contract was awarded at $93.7 million and their work has already raised the bill to almost $300 million. Would Apple, Amazon, or others allow such outrageous cost overruns when such lack of results have been

shown?

I would like to also take a moment here to suggest that the US government be honest with the American people. When I look at the statistics for my CompuKISS.com website, I can tell you exactly how many visitors we've had, where they are located, how many signup up for each form, what browsers they are using and a wealth of other information. Anyone who deals with websites knows these statistics are available. So for them not be able to tell us how many people have signed up is simply more political posturing. This is not a Republican or a Democratic issue. It is a political issue. Didn't we learn from Watergate that the cover up is usually worse than the original act?

And, unfortunately, it is obvious in this case that politics have driven the technology rather than the technology being driven by the customer. The user interface is terrible. A wealth of problems seem to have occurred because the government insisted on customer verification against IRS rolls instead of simply allowing the user to see the programs and costs before they signed in with personal information. While I can't be sure without actually seeing the code, I suspect that other last minute changes and political posturing also led to many of the current problems.

With everyone asking if, and when this can be fixed, I will add my take as an "old programmer" who worked on several large financial team programs and who also worked to make sure that several banks were ready for Y2K. As a programmer, I can tell you that finding all the "glitches" in 5 billion lines of code is not an easy job. And translating the data to be able to communicate with state agencies as well as hundreds of insurance companies is a monumental job. Add that to the fact that hardware issues, server capacity, load balancing, and other highly technical issues have to be taken into consideration.

While some modules of code for this new website may be able to be rescued and reused, the best situation is to start over again with a plain clear plan and no political maneuvering.

There is one main reason that I suggest this. A nest of system problems like those found in this website, ALWAYS translates into security issues. Poor programming leaves loopholes that hackers can expedite to perpetrate identity fraud, phishing, and other vicious plots. Bogus websites with names similar to healthcare.gov have already popped up ready to steal your personal information as you enter it.

Anti-virus software maker Trend Micro also reports that hackers and scammers are also already trying to capitalize on the health care confusion because you can not only sign up at healthcare.gov, but also at several state and third-party sites. They write, "When a person starts looking through sites to find one, at this time, they're faced with the challenge that there's no official marking or labeling that they can look at on a site to know that it's an officially sanctioned site …a survey of state and third-party sites also shows that official sites aren't required to provide the ability to verify the site using SSL (a security verification system): many of them don't provide it for site verification at all, though the Federal site does." It seems that many things were overlooked when this system was created and at least some of those will also cause security problems for end users.

With this new health care system, we are trusting the government with much of our personal and private information. Patching the current system is almost certain to be tried for political expediency. Making it useable may solve the immediate problems, but is sure to cause security problems in the future. This point not being made in most of the media, although for me, it is a major concern. And it should be for you, as well.

What's an Incremental Backup?

Backing up is important, but terms like "full", "incremental" and even "differential" can easily confuse. We'll look at what these terms mean.

Q. I have a mental 'block' on backing up which unnerves my approach to it. I have managed one full backup (32 GB) on an external hard drive. I have just read your article on maintenance but do not understand what is meant by incremental backup. Does it simply 'update' or overwrite the existing backup or does it create something else that only contains whatever is new since the previous backup? I think the latter is what I would prefer.

There are actually typically three different types of backups: full, incremental, and differential. Understanding which is which, and how they should be used it pretty important to making sure you're appropriately backed up while not simultaneously eating up disk space at an exorbitant rate.

A full backup is just that: full. It's a backup of everything. A "full backup of C:" for example would be a backup of all the files folders and contents of the C: drive. A full backup of "your system" might include the entire contents of all the

What's an Incremental Backup?

drives connected to your system.

The important thing is that a full backup stands alone; it's a snapshot of your machine at a particular point in time. You might choose to restore files from that snapshot, or even restore the entire machine to the exact state it was in at the time that snapshot was taken.

Pro: a full backup stands alone; it has everything.

Con: a full backup can be big; it has everything.

An incremental backup includes only those things that have changed since the previous backup and saves those things into a separate, additional, backup file or location. By definition, the first incremental backup is a full backup; it backs up everything since there's no "previous backup" to compare to. The second incremental backup backs up only those files that have changed since the previous backup was taken.

Since the vast majority of files on your machine actually never or rarely change, an incremental backup can result in a much smaller backup. On my machine, a full backup is about 50 gigabytes, but the incrementals vary from as little as 2.5 gigabytes to around 10, depending on how much happened on the machine that day.

The cost of using incremental backups is one of management. Since each incremental backup relies on the backup that preceded it, in order to restore a machine to an arbitrary point in time all the incremental backups must be available to perform the restore. For example, I perform a monthly full backup and then a daily incremental. If I want to restore my machine to a point in time 10 days into that month, then I need the initial full backup plus the 10 incremental backups to reach that day. Each incremental backup must be restored "on top of" the backup prior until the 10th has been processed.

The good news is that most backup software actually makes this very easy, almost transparent. Typically, you point the software at the collection of backups - both full and incremental - and tell it "I want to restore to this date" and the complexity is managed for you.

Pro: significantly less disk space used compared to an equivalent set of full backups.

Con: the baseline full backup and all the incremental backups must be preserved and available in order to restore.

Differential backups are a kind of hybrid. In reality they're just incremental backups, but with a fixed starting point. Rather than backing up only the changes from the previous day, each differential backup includes all the changes from the baseline full backup. So day 2's backup would include changes from day 1 to day 2. Day 3's backup would include changes from *day 1* to day 3.

Pro: Each day can be restored from only two backups, the initial full plus that day's differential.

Con: Differentials only to grow in size from day to day.

Let's compare backing up a "C:" drive. This table shows what each type of backup would include on a series of successive days:

Day	Full	Incremental	Differential
1	Entire Drive	Entire Drive	Entire Drive
2	Entire Drive	Changes since day 1	Changes since day 1
3	Entire Drive	Changes since day 2	Changes since day 1
4	Entire Drive	Changes since day 3	Changes since day 1
5	Entire Drive	Changes since day 4	Changes since day 1
…	Entire Drive	Changes since the day before	Changes since day 1

Now let's look at restoring data. This tables shows which of the backups above must be available in order to restore to a specific day:

Restore to Day	Full	Incremental	Differential
1	Full backup from day 1	Full backup from day 1	Full backup from day 1
2	Full backup from day 2	Full backup from day 1 + day 2 incremental	Full backup from day 1 + day 2 differential
3	Full backup from day 3	Full backup from day 1 + day 2 incremental + day 3 incremental	Full backup from day 1 + day 3 differential
4	Full backup from day 4	Full backup from day 1 + day 2 incremental + day 3 incremental + day 4 incremental	Full backup from day 1 + day 4 differential
5	Full backup from day 5	Full backup from day 1 + day 2 incremental + day 3 incremental + day 4 incremental + day 5 incremental	Full backup from day 1 + day 5 differential
…	Full backup from day ...	Full backup from day 1 + all incrementals today ...	Full backup from day 1 + day ... differential

The choice of what kind of backup to use can seem somewhat daunting. Daily full backup seem like the simplest, and yet you'll quickly find yourself running out of disk space. Incremental's seem like a great alternative, but you could find yourself in backup management hell as you try to keep track of which files you need to keep for how long. And differentials seem like an interesting idea, but then are they really all *that* different than incremental's?

Here's my suggestion:

- **Periodic full backups.** I do a full backup once a month. I actually save these full backups for "a while", so that if I need to find something from, say, three months ago, I might be able to recover it from an old backup.

- **More frequent incremental backups.** I do a nightly incremental backup. As the month goes on, I accumulate a collection of incremental backups in addition to that monthly full that will allow me to revert or recover from any day in the month. Once a month I "clean the slate" as a new full backup is taken.

Why not just do a nightly full backup and allow it to overwrite the previous day's backup? You could, but ... you're assuming that you'll always detect a problem or a missing file within a day, before the backup containing it is overwritten. Experience shows that things don't work that cleanly. It's not at all uncommon to wonder days, sometimes months later, "Where did that file go"? Being able to search your daily backups for a file that might have disappeared can often be a real lifesaver.

Finally, don't let all this intimidate you into not backing up at all. Most backup programs make these choices fairly easy, and will do a good job of managing the backup files for you. In my case, for example, after configuring Macrium Reflect.

Other than that, everything's completely automated.

Google Translate

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Google Translate is a simple mobile translation tool that supports more than 60 languages, and even speaks some of your translations aloud. With its dead-simple interface and variety of input options, it's perfect for pumping out translations in a pinch. To use Google Translate, select your input and output languages, then choose a method for entering your text. You can type text using your mobile device's keyboard or say the words aloud. The translation will appear quickly and in some cases it will speak the words in the translated language. The only drawback for this iPad/iPhone application, at this time, is that you must have an internet connection to use it.

What Do I Do With a Flash Drive?

I really didn't know if I had to put in a tip like this, but once in a while we have to go back to basics just in case there are a few of us out there who are newbies, or just confused.

A USB flash drive is sometimes called a jump drive or memory stick. (A thumb drive is slightly different because they have a write-protect feature). In either case the drive is simply a data storage device just like a floppy disk, or even a hard drive. Unlike a hard drive it has no moving parts. It draws power from the USB port on your computer. There are other USB drives that are actually spinning hard drives and sometimes include external power plugs. USB ports can be located in the front or back or even both on a desktop, and usually on the sides of a laptop or all-in-one.

Once you put the drive into the port, the computer will recognize it as a removable drive and assign it a drive letter. Now you can copy or move items to the drive, the way you would copy to a floppy or transfer to another file or folder. You can add new folders to the drive and do practically any other action that you can do with a regular drive.

It is a good idea to click the Safely Remove Hardware and Eject Media icon in your system tray to avoid any possible loss of data. This is not too important with the solid state flash drives, but is important with any USB drives that are spinning.

Besides having the ability to hold a lot of data, USB drives can also be used for creating a bootable USB drive and even putting many apps on it to keep some data from having to be installed on your computer.