



BELLAGGIO COMPUTER AND TECHNOLOGY CLUB NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2011

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Next general meeting
Open to all residents

February 21

7:00pm

Media Room

Guest speaker:
our own

Herman Natanblut

**LINUX: A FREE
alternative to
Windows**

**Paul's Computer
Proctology SIG starts**
at 6:00PM

The 2011 FACUG Computer Cruise is history. Sixteen Bellaggians sailed, with ten registering for FACUG events. Some of the seminars held were demonstrations of software products, social media options, how to protect your computers from viruses and malware, tips and hints, and seniors and computers. For us Bellaggians the most exciting moments happened at the final event, the prize drawings. The two top prizes; a free cruise and a computer, were drawn first, with the winner's names held till the end. One by one names were called for prizes, thus being eliminated as finalist for the top prize. All registered Bellaggians won a prize, save one. Was he a grand prize winner? The tension mounted. Sadly, the last Bellaggian standing didn't win. Who was that unlucky person? Me! I went home empty handed. Then again, the anticipation of possibly winning the grand prize was more exciting than winning other prizes. Just ask Paul. I tried to include pictures from the cruise, however, because of file size limitations set by the Bellaggio website, I was unable. I will try to send them as another "newsletter" or via our gmail members only account.

At our January meeting we learned the importance of backing up our computers with our guest speaker Gene Barlow. We learned that while backing up our data is important, it might serve us better to back up our entire hard drive using Acronis True Image, which backs up, not only our data, but the entire contents of your hard drive. Restoring a crashed computer should take a few minutes using Acronis, rather than possible days and weeks without it. Our condolences go to Gene and his family as we learned of his mother's death on January 17th.

Tired of Windows problems and paying for costly new versions? Our February 21 guest speaker will be Herman Natanblut, our membership chair. He will be discussing an alternate to Windows; LINUX. Included will be LINUX features, how to obtain it, and its limitations. Are we ready for a different PC Operating System? Come to the meeting on the 21st and find out.

Jeff

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Find Missing Manuals for PCs, Printers, and More Rick Broida, PCWorld

Can't find the manual for your printer? Need instructions for the Dell laptop you picked up off Craigslist? Forget combing manufacturers' labyrinthine support pages--just head to Retrevo. The site offers downloadable manuals for all kinds of electronics, from calculators and cell phones to TVs and remote controls. The only trick? Finding them.

When you first get to the site, you'll see it's positioned as an "electronics marketplace," offering a wealth of product prices and reviews. Scroll down to the bottom, however, and you'll see a small section called Manual by Brands. Click the brand you're after, or, better yet, click All. You can also search for a particular product (say, an iPhone). And once you get anywhere past that home page, you'll see a big Manuals button in the toolbar near the top. Better yet, just bookmark the Search by Category page.

When you find the manual you want, you can download it as a PDF. According to a Retrevo PR rep, the site is home to over 100,000 manuals. I have no way of verifying that sky-high claim, but I will say this: If you're looking for a manual, Retrevo is a great place to start.



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Remember: Member discounts with membership cards

Batteries Plus Lake Worth ... located on the southeast corner of Lantana and Jog Rd., behind the Outback Steakhouse & Jiffy Lube. Save 10% on all purchases.

United States CONTRACT Post Office ... Target Shopping Center (across from Bellaggio) ... a few doors north of Sal's restaurant. 10% discount on non-postal items. When I was there they were selling swimming pool supplies. He hopes to expand, selling greeting cards and other sundry items. Please remember **POST-AL items (stamps & services) NOT INCLUDED.**

Spare Your Hard Drive

Notebook hard drives are designed to work in a fairly motionless environment. That's why when you turn off your computer, it retracts its hard drive head to protect it from damage during transport. If you continually run around with your notebook powered up you increase the chances that your hard drive will incur damage.

Highlight a Word the Easy Way If you have trouble highlighting a word or phrase, here is a quick way to make it easier. You don't have to struggle with dragging your mouse cursor across a word to highlight that word. Instead you can double-click a word to highlight it in any document, e-mail or Web page. A triple-click is a little harder to do, but it will highlight an entire sentence.

Email Safety

Avoid clicking links in unsolicited emails. Malware-laden email attachments and malicious links within emails are frequent bedfellows in spam. Often, bad links are even more insidious than attachments because they can take you to legitimate-looking Web sites where you may be tricked into entering your credit card number or a username and password.

Clean a Dusty PC and a Clogged Port Grime can build up in your desktop PC, and port openings can get dirty. Here is how to clean your PC.

The following article is by Zack Stern, of pcworld.com

Clean a Dusty PC

If you allow your desktop PC's case to get dirty over time, grime can clog the fans that keep the internal parts cool. If airflow is blocked, those parts could overheat.

First, shut everything down, and unplug all the cables besides the power cord. Touch a metal part of the case (such as the PCI-slot cover) and then unplug the power cable; doing so will discharge any potential static externally, instead of damaging electrically sensitive components inside. Wear shoes, and work in an uncarpeted room.

A few more precautions can add further protection. Use a layer of rubber (such as mouse pads) between the PC and your worktable. Wear an antistatic bracelet, and connect it to a metal part of the PC chassis.

Open the PC case. Many cases have side doors held in place by a single Phillips-head screw or thumb-screw; consult your system's manual for specific directions.

Pull out any loose clots of hair, dirt, or other obstructions. Then use a can of compressed air to blast anything else away and out of the PC. Keep the can upright, and press the trigger in a series of short bursts. Use the nozzle straw to direct the flow close to your target.

Blow grime up and out of the case if possible, but focus your attention on clearing clogs at vented areas. Blast through grating, and blow from inside the PC, out through the power supply's fan, until you no longer see any dirt being cleared away.

While you're inside, make sure that the internal cables are clear of the vents. Use cable ties to fix them to the sides. Reclose the case, and reconnect everything.

To slow future dirt accumulation, try to keep your PC off the floor, since that's where much of the grime originates. Repeat this cleaning process annually, especially if you have pets.

Clean a Clogged Port

Over time, ports on your electronic equipment can become clogged with dust and other debris. If you're having trouble getting USB or other devices to work with your computer, cleaning any grime from the connecting ports is a good first step.

Turn off the hardware first. If you can see that the port is severely clogged--say, with peanut butter or another thick, child-friendly substance--gently dig the gunk out with toothpicks. But remember: Ethernet, serial, and other jacks rely on fragile pins, so try to move in and out on the same path instead of swirling around the sides.

For less sticky situations, use a can of compressed air (actually pressurized gases) to blast out loose bits. The cans sell for \$5 to \$10 at any computer store. (Keep them away from children: The gases are dangerous to inhale, and they come out extremely cold.) Fire at the target in short bursts.

Finish cleaning with a cotton swab dipped in rubbing alcohol or electronics cleaner. Leave the device turned off for a couple hours to dry.

Taking Care of Your Digital Camera. Here are five basic things you should do to keep your digital camera functioning at its best. By Dave Johnson, PCWorld

Read the Manual

This one should be obvious--so why do so few people read the user guide that comes with their camera? There's nothing wrong with experimenting with your camera and figuring stuff out on our own, but at some point in your first month with the camera, I highly encourage you to read the manual. There's a right way and a wrong way to do that, though, and I daresay most people don't get as much out of the manual as they should. Here's my recommended approach.

Block out some distraction-free time and sit down with a cup of hot chocolate, the camera, a pen, and the user guide. Scan the guide page by page. You don't have to read every word--in fact, reading it too meticulously will put you to sleep. As you start each section, quickly get a sense of whether you know how to use the feature being discussed. If yes, move on. If not, read about it and then immediately pick up the camera and try it out. If you actually try the feature with your own hands, you'll stand a much better chance of understanding it and remembering it when you need it. When you encounter a new feature you didn't know how to use, write notes on the inside cover of the user guide. That's your cheat sheet, so you don't have to scan the whole book to look up how to format a memory card or change the metering pattern. Heck, you might even want to make notes about why you'd use an interesting-but-obscure-sounding feature like "flash compensation." And enjoy your hot chocolate.

Upgrade the Lens

If you are the proud owner of a new digital SLR, I encourage you to think about expanding your lens collection. One of the biggest benefits of using an SLR is the interchangeable lens system that lets you switch focal lengths to suit the situation. I have three lenses: A 105mm macro lens for close-up nature photography, an all-purpose 18-200mm "walking around lens," and a 400mm telephoto for situations in which I need to pull in distant objects.

Take a good look at the lens that came with your SLR, generally known as a "kit lens" (because it comes in the box with your SLR body, as part of a kit). It's probably not a bad lens, but nor is it especially great. You can expand your photographic possibilities by buying a faster lens. Your kit's fastest aperture is probably between f/3.5 and f/5.6, which really limits your options when shooting indoors or in low light. Look for an f/2 lens instead.

Get a Carrying Case

How do you care for your camera? For starters, put it in a carrying case. A padded, appropriately sized case can help you keep the camera clean and protected. It lets you collect various accessories (spare memory cards, AC adapter, USB cable, extra lenses) in a single easy-to-find place. My favorite use for a carrying case: I can easily delegate Sherpa duties to my kids and trust they can carry my camera gear without dropping anything. Keep It Clean and Dry

If you get a case, you're well along the way to keeping your new camera clean and dry. Remember that the vast majority of cameras sold--even if they look like rugged tanks--are not designed to withstand exposure to harsh environments. They definitely, are not waterproof (unless you get one of a handful of water resistant models) so don't even think about taking pictures in the water. Rain counts: Don't expose your camera to a storm. If you want to shoot outdoors in bad weather, get a rain cover for your camera--there are a lot of inexpensive coverings you can find just by searching the Web for "digital camera rain cover."

Don't Use Canned Air

You'll want to keep your camera clean, but resist the urge to pick up a can of canned air at the local camera shop. Canned air can be dangerous to cameras, especially if you are not exceedingly careful. For example, if you shake a can of canned air, you can end up squirting propellant

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all over your camera and lens. Canned air can also force air and dust into parts of the camera that aren't airtight, which can eventually contaminate the sensor. My advice: Get a good lens cloth and brush, and leave the canned air in the store.

Turn It Off

Finally, here's some advice you don't hear very often, but it's good to keep in mind: Turn your camera off before you do anything to it. Changing lenses, swapping memory cards, connecting or disconnecting cables--all of these activities are best done with the camera powered off. If your camera is on and actively writing to the memory card, for example, you can ruin the card by removing it. Likewise, swapping lenses with the camera powered on makes it somewhat more likely that you'll attract dust to the sensor. It's a small and easy thing to do, so get in the habit of turning off the camera when you're about to add or remove anything.

Online dating is not just for kids, seniors say By Kristina Cooke

NEW YORK (Reuters Life!) - Jo Ann Montrose-Eichelberger, 55, never thought she would meet her second husband on an online dating site -- especially not one for seniors.

The stewardess who lives in California said she signed up "as a joke" in March 2009. She had been divorced for about 18 years and was content being single, but an ad for the site sparked her curiosity.

At first she felt uncomfortable about even putting up her photograph. "It felt like I was marketing myself. It was all new to me. At the time, I hadn't even gone on Facebook," she said.

The number of seniors -- classified as anyone over 55 -- using the targeted dating site is growing, according to SeniorPeopleMeet.com, which says they attract 1,000 new members a day.

"The norms are changing for seniors meeting online," said Oakland University professor Terri Orbuch.

"Now technology is becoming more central to our lives it is becoming more acceptable."

The number of seniors using the internet has risen to 17.5 million in November 2009 from 11.3 million in November 2004, according to Nielsen data.

Because she didn't take the idea of online dating seriously, Montrose-Eichelberger said, she made her profile "brutally honest".

People who needed anti-depressants to deal with life shouldn't bother contacting her, she wrote on her profile.

The first people who reached out to Montrose-Eichelberger were terrible, she said, as they were barely able to spell or string sentences together.

Which is why when she came across Brian Eichelberger, 57, she was taken by the fact he was a good writer and that he had held the same job, as a correctional officer, for two decades.

"For the over-50s, attitudes, values and stability are much more important than for 20-somethings," Orbuch said.

Seniors are more likely to have had a long-term, significant relationship in their past, Orbuch said, which affects the way they approach online dating. They'll often know exactly what they are looking for, she added, and put a lot of value on spending time together.

Montrose-Eichelberger said that even when they are in different cities, she and her husband play online Scrabble together. "We make it a date night no matter where we are," she said.

A poll conducted by the dating website found 54 percent of people would rather spend time with their partner than get flowers or jewelry on Valentine's Day -- an 80 percent increase in priority from when they were in their 20s or 30s

Though big, romantic gestures do play their part.

For their first date in the spring of 2009, Eichelberger, who lived in Fresno, California drove 2-1/2 hours to Malibu to take Montrose-Eichelberger out for lunch.

"I was surprised he would drive all that way just to have lunch with me," she said. "I was also a bit nervous. I'd never used a dating site before. So I made him some cookies to show I appreciated the effort."

They married a year later.



Secure your pricey iPad Kim Komando Show - www.komando.com - 1/18/2011



Tablets and other mobile gadgets in general are incredibly popular. And that popularity will only increase this year. There are hundreds of new mobile products being released. They'll soon outsell traditional PCs. That makes mobile gadgets a tempting target for scammers and hackers. It helps them that mobile gadget security is still hit or miss. For the time being, they can get away with a lot.

One of the easiest avenues for hackers is malicious apps. Apps are programs for mobile gadgets. And just like regular computer programs, they can contain malware.

Mobile gadget malware is geared toward stealing user information. This information is transmitted back to the app's creators. And it's very hard to tell this is happening.

Theoretically, you shouldn't have to worry about apps from iTunes. Apple screens those apps before they're posted. However, some recent studies have shown some disturbing things. Many apps from iTunes transmit a worrying amount of personal information. For example, an app might pull your number, name and location. This is then sent to the app developer. The app developer might then forward it to third-party advertisers. This is common with some of the most popular legitimate apps. And there is no easy way to tell if it is happening. That's an unsettling prospect for many users.

Now, a legitimate developer won't actually steal your identity. But data breaches can occur with any company. Your information could be stolen by hackers that way. Plus, an app developer might not be as legitimate as you think. A famous example from the Android world was a popular wallpaper switching app. It seemed harmless but was sending customer information overseas.

Apple has a large team checking and approving apps. So you shouldn't encounter many malicious apps. But some can still get through for a short time.

The best thing to do is purchase popular apps. These will more likely be legitimate apps. And high-profile developers won't want bad publicity. So they are more likely to be careful with your data. You can find many great apps in my App Center.

Android systems are also vulnerable to malicious apps. In fact, they're more vulnerable since there is no single app store. You can find apps at dozens of online sources.

However, Google did implement helpful security features. All apps have to tell you ahead of time what information they access. Learn more about that security feature here.

There are also antivirus apps for Android phones. For example, you might consider installing Lookout. You'll get free antivirus and anti-spyware tools. It can also help you locate a lost or stolen phone. If you upgrade to the paid version, you'll get even more protection.

Apps aren't the only danger on mobile gadgets. You should also be aware of malicious Websites and e-mail. These phishing scams pose the same danger as they do on a PC.

In fact, a recent study says mobile users are at greater risk. They're three times more likely to fall for phishing scams. And iPhone users account for 65 percent of mobile phishing victims.

Follow the same guidelines you do when surfing on a computer. Don't click on links in e-mail or text messages unless you're expecting them. And don't enter personal information on unverified Websites. For Websites that require personal information, enter the address manually. Legitimate-looking e-mail isn't hard to fake.

Surfing can also be dangerous on public Wi-Fi networks. It isn't much different than using a regular laptop. Be sure you know the risks and how to mitigate them.

Malicious apps and Websites aren't the only threat to your information. Mobile gadgets are easily stolen.

Make sure you've taken steps to protect your iPad. Click here to read my column on securing a smart phone. The advice will also help you protect your iPad from theft. It can help you find a stolen iPad. Or you can remotely wipe your data to prevent the thief from reading it.

Security for your mobile gadgets is no laughing matter. You don't want to keep your information safe from hackers. Here are some more ways to stay safe:

Public Wi-Fi is handy for Internet access on the go. But it can open you up to hackers.

Banking on the go is convenient. But it isn't always safe.

Many laptops include Webcams. Make sure hackers aren't spying on you remotely.

Save a File So You Can Find It Later Sandy Berger, CompuKiss



Have you ever received a file as an email attachment and saved it and then were unable to find it again? Or have you even saved a file and not been able to find it where you thought you put it? I have an easy solution to this problem. The best thing to do to keep track of exactly where your files are saved is to use the "Save As" choice the first time you save a file. No matter what program you are using, there will always be a Save As choice. If you normally click on File, then choose Save to save a file, just look a little farther down in the menu choices and choose Save As instead. When you click Save As, you will be presented with a window where you can name the file as well as decide where to put it. That way you know that it will be where you want it. This is especially important when saving email attachments. Windows often keeps attachments in a temporary folder with an unintelligible name and an unusual location. So if you open the attachment and then click on Save, you may never be able to find it again. Click on Save As instead and navigate to the location where you would like to save the file. Remember to give it a name that you can use to identify the file later. After you have named the file properly and saved it in the proper location, when you open and change that file again, you can simply use the Save option and it will be saved with the same name and the same location that you gave it the first time you saved it.

Who is Watching You On Facebook? By Bob Rankin

Government agencies ranging from the IRS to state and county regulators often start investigations into suspected fraud with a Google search on a person of interest. From there, they access social network traces of the subject's activities and statements. "I got a new Porsche!" posted gleefully online may not jibe with the income reported on your tax return. You might as well shout such incriminating statements into the IRS' voicemail system! The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services' agents are under standing orders to try and "friend" applicants for citizenship on social networks, and the applicants' real friends, in hope of eliciting information that will uncover fraudulent citizenship applications. But you haven't done anything wrong, so you have nothing to hide, right? Maybe not... What you put on social networks need only "look bad" to cause you enormous trouble. Insurance fraud investigators - actually, people who are paid to find any excuse to deny a claim or cancel coverage - troll Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other social networks looking for evidence to misconstrue. One woman, allegedly suffering chronic depression, had her insurance canceled because Facebook photos showed her sunning on a beach and dancing. The insurer argued that she couldn't be depressed if she was having a good time. But of course, psychiatrists often prescribe having a good time to alleviate depression. Being seen with aspirin doesn't prove you don't have a headache.

Jeopardy Champs Take On IBM's Watson Computer

Do the best Jeopardy players in the world have any chance of beating IBM's Watson super computer? We're about to find out. For three nights beginning **Monday, February 14**, Jeopardy champs Ken Jennings and Brad Rutter will face off against Watson in a televised tournament. Jennings has won 74 consecutive games of Jeopardy - more than any other contestant—and Rutter holds the all-time earnings record with \$3,255,102. Check TV listing for time and station.

Visit our website: www.thebctc.com Learn something new today.

It's the small appliances that can waste the most electricity.

Digital picture frames are small, so it's hard to think of them as energy hogs. But if each U.S. household had one of these frames running around the clock, it would take five power plants to run them all, says the Electric Power Research Institute (EPRI), an electricity-focused research and development nonprofit.

Large home appliances like refrigerators and dryers are typical examples of energy-hungry devices, but energy hogs don't necessarily need to be large in size. Small devices are also collectively sucking a lot of energy from the power grid, and as these devices become commonplace their energy consumption rises exponentially. "It's the subtlety of the effect of large numbers of very small consuming devices," says Tom Reddoch, the executive director of energy utilization at EPRI.

Other small energy hogs include mobile phone chargers and laptop power adapters that are always plugged in to electric outlets. These chargers continue to draw energy even when the devices they charge have been disconnected. And "always-on" appliances like printers or speakers are called "energy vampires" because they also suck up power even when they're turned off or in an idle state.

Worse yet, the number of always-on devices is on the rise. Reddoch estimates that the typical U.S. home 30 years ago had about three always-on devices; today that number has climbed to more than 30.

Slaying energy vampires, however, is worthwhile in the long run. While a refrigerator typically accounts for about 8% of the typical household's total annual energy consumption, Reddoch says, vampire devices account for about 4%.

What's the best way to rein in energy hogs and vampires? The simplest answer is to turn off and unplug devices when they're not in use. If unplugging isn't practical or convenient, use a smart power strip to help stop the flow of electricity to an idle current. For instance, some smart strips allow you to set up a lead device like a computer so that when it is turned off, other supporting devices, like printers and speakers, are also turned off.

We don't often bother to change a device's default settings, but we can save energy here too.

For example, you can manually lower the default brightness and intensity settings on a TV.

Knowing how much energy we waste keeping devices on all the time should also motivate us to change our habits. Kyle Tanger, chief executive of green consultancy ClearCarbon, recommends using an electricity monitor like the Kill A Watt, a product that measures the energy efficiency of household appliances, to give you a better sense of their usage cost.

We can also buy energy-efficient products, and this year happens to be a great time to do that.

Consumers are eligible for a rebate from the government when they buy an Energy Star appliance. Check out the U.S. Department of Energy website for more information the rebate program.

"There isn't a secret to what's hogging the energy," says Tanger. "If people pay attention to the little lights or fans in equipment, there is a lot in energy-efficiency gain that isn't just low-hanging fruit -- it's on the ground."

Surprising Home-Energy Hogs

Plasma TVs

Plasma TVs are hot items -- literally. While they are popular, they also consume a lot energy, giving off lots of heat in the process. A typical 27-inch CRT TV uses about 110 to 120 watts and a 42-inch LCD TV uses around 200 watts. Plasmas easily gobble the most: a 42-inch plasma TV uses up to 325 watts.

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Digital Picture Frames

Once a high-end item, digital frames are quickly becoming more affordable, with prices as low as \$20 to \$30. If every home in the U.S. had one of these frames displaying around the clock, though, it would take five power plants alone to power them all, the Electric Power Research Institute estimates.

Videogame Consoles

The high-level graphics processing that creates the visually stunning games on these devices also requires a lot of energy. And a lack of energy-efficiency standards for consoles, like the Xbox 360 and PlayStation 3, doesn't help. The Natural Resources Defense Council estimates that consoles in the U.S. collectively consume around 16 billion kilowatt-hours per year, roughly the same energy usage as the city of San Diego.

Set-Top Boxes

Set-top boxes like cable and converter boxes seem like relatively innocent appliances: They typically only draw about 30 watts of energy. But because these boxes are always on, one box over the course of a year can use up to 265 kilowatt-hours, equivalent to the annual energy consumption of a 28-inch CRT television.

Battery Chargers

Individually chargers for mobile devices like cellphones and PDAs are small energy consumers, only using 7 to 10 watts. But if they are left plugged in to electric outlets even when the charged device is not connected, they continue to draw power. Today most U.S. homes use more than one charger. Add them all up across the country, and they could consume the energy output of several power plants.

The Ultimate Scientific Calculator. From Microsoft. And It's Free. by r.schifreen

Microsoft used to sell a program called Mathematics, which was aimed at students. It was a very capable product, able to solve equations, draw graphs, do calculus, and much more. Ideal for anyone involved with mathematics, science, engineering, physics, and so on.

So why do I say "used to sell"? Have they stopped producing it? No. They've merely stopped selling it, and are now giving it away! There's even a brand new version, 4.0, which was launched only last week.

You can get it from <http://www.microsoft.com/education/products/student/math/default.aspx>. It runs on all versions of Windows from XP onwards, and is available in both 32- and 64-bit flavours. The installer itself is an 18 MB download, although you'll also need .NET Framework 3.5 SP1, which is another 53 MB if you don't already have it.

If you're a student, or you need to do mathematical calculations in your work, then check out Microsoft Mathematics. And if you use Word or OneNote a lot, there's even a version which works as an add-on in those programs too.

You might have no interest in this item, but you might know someone who does. Forward the link to them.



www.microsoft.com/education

VISIT OUR WEBSITE ... WWW.OURBCTC.COM

Laptops can be stolen. Here are some tips on protecting them. Lincoln Spector,

PCWorld

You want to prevent thieves from stealing your laptop. But if it's stolen despite your best measures, you still want to protect the data--both in the sense that you don't want to lose it and you don't want the thieves to access confidential information. Finally, you want to increase the odds of getting it back.

Let's start with preventing the theft in the first place:

When traveling, keep the laptop in a case that protects it physically but doesn't look like a laptop case. A backpack should do the trick, but some type of bag I haven't mentioned in PC World would probably be better.

Keep it either in your line of sight or in physical contact at all times. Put it in your lap or between your legs when sitting down and not using it.

When you're at home, secure it with a lock and cable. Most laptops have a security slot that a specially-made lock can clamp onto, and those locks come attached to cables you can put around tables and other unmovable objects. Both Kensington and SecurityKit.com offer selections of cables and locks.

When you're staying at a hotel, bring the laptop with you wherever you go. Or, if there's a safe in your room, put it in there. If neither of these solutions work, bring it to the front desk and ask if it can be put in the hotel's safe. And if that's not an option, use the lock and cable.

Protecting What's On It

Even the most carefully-protected laptop may be stolen, so you need to protect your data. Most of your files will be of little use to criminals, but if there's something you'd rather they not get a hold of (bank statements, corporate secrets, letters of transit), encrypt it. You may not want to give criminals access to your data, but neither do you want to lose it yourself. Keep an up-to-date backup--and a backup to your internal hard drive doesn't count. If you backup to an external hard drive, don't pack that drive in the same bag as your laptop. In fact, when you're on the road, leave the backup drive at home, and carry copies of the files you'll need on this trip on a flash drive that you carry with you. Or backup online with a service like Mozy.

If your laptop is stolen, there's a good chance you'll never see it again. But writing down your model and serial numbers (they're probably on a plate or sticker on the bottom of the notebook) increases the odds that you will. Both Absolute Software and Tometa Software offer software/service combinations that may increase the odds even more. The hidden software they install onto your PC will report the laptop's physical location (or at least its IP address) when the laptop accesses the Internet. This information can help you track down your stolen computer.



www.tometasoftware.com



www.absolute.com

Free manuals for Microsoft Office

Mouse Training in the UK has released their training manuals free for all comers plus some Quick Reference Guides.

The Training Manuals are for Office 2007, Office 2003, Office XP (2002) and Office 2000. They cover Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Outlook, Access, Project and Visio. There are also 'Quick Reference Guides' for Office 2007 and Office 2010 applications.

All documents are in PDF format and available from



www.mousetraining.co.uk

Senior Texting Code

Since more and more Seniors are texting and tweeting there appears to be a need for a STC (Senior Texting Code). If you qualify for Senior Discounts this is the code for you.

- ATD: At The Doctor's
- BFF: Best Friend Farted
- BTW: Bring The Wheelchair
- BYOT: Bring Your Own Teeth
- CBM: Covered By Medicare
- CUATSC: See You At The Senior Center
- DWI: Driving While Incontinent
- FWB: Friend With Beta Blockers
- FWIW: Forgot Where I Was
- FYI: Found Your Insulin
- GGPBL: Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low!
- GHA: Got Heartburn Again
- HGBM: Had Good Bowel Movement
- IMHO: Is My Hearing-Aid On?
- LMDO: Laughing My Dentures Out
- LOL: Living On Lipitor
- LWO: Lawrence Welk's On
- OMMR: On My Massage Recliner
- OMSG: Oh My! Sorry, Gas.
- ROFL... CGU: Rolling On The Floor Laughing... And Can't Get Up
- SGGP: Sorry, Gotta Go Poop
- TTYL: Talk To You Louder
- WAITT: Who Am I Talking To?
- WTFA: Wet The Furniture Again
- WTP: Where's The Prunes?
- WWNO: Walker Wheels Need Oil



"Sorry, we're not serving food today. Our computer crashed, and we can't make soup, salad or sandwiches without it."

Thousands of odd, eclectic, amazing (advertising, educational, industrial, and amateur) films - free online A must see! (my opinion)

We've known about Prelinger Archives—which were founded in New York City in 1983 and acquired by the Library of Congress in 2002—for some time now. But we never quite realized that the collection had made so many of its films available online. As of this writing, anyone can watch—and download—2,000-plus titles, and hundreds more are on the way.

The holdings include promotional, industrial, and instructional films, wartime propaganda reels, advertisements, and home movies. All are in the public domain, and a few are totally priceless. A 2001 primer, "This Is Prelinger Archives," is an obvious place to start. But you can also search by subject ("Beverage Industry"; "Blindness"; "Bohemianism") and keyword, or simply click away at random: You never know what you'll stumble across, and much of the fun lies in following the connections that link each film to at least a few of the others. (We stumbled across "Desert Venture"—a 1948 film about Saudi Arabia, produced by Standard Oil—and followed it up with "Something for Nothing," in which Rube Goldberg himself explains the inner workings of an internal-combustion engine.)



www.archive.org/details/prelinger

Free vs. Fee: Free and Paid Antivirus Programs Compared

Can free antivirus software protect you? Or is it worth paying for a full-blown A/V app? We look at the benefits--and pitfalls--of free and paid antivirus products. By Nick Mediati PCWorld

Depending on whom you ask, paying for antivirus software is either a good investment or a total ripoff. In reality, neither viewpoint is accurate. You can find plenty of good reasons to choose a paid antivirus product, and plenty of good reasons to go with a freebie.

We teamed up with security testing company AV-Test, to find out what you get--or don't get--with free antivirus, and when it makes sense to subscribe annually to a fee-based program.

Four basic levels of antivirus products exist: free, paid antivirus, suites, and "premium" suites.

As you move up the ladder from free antivirus to premium suites, you typically get more features, such as identity theft protection, firewalls, parental controls, and system performance tools.

Free antivirus software usually provides a bare minimum level of protection. It will scan for malware, and often can perform automatic scans, too. Some free apps may have additional protection tools such as a browser add-on that checks for bad links--and Comodo's free Internet Security Premium has a firewall. But such features are usually limited to paid antivirus products.

Some free apps offer behavioral malware detection, which finds malware based on how it acts on your PC--a good way of detecting brand-new malware outbreaks. (Behavioral detection is standard on paid products.)

Paid antivirus straddles a middle ground between the basic freebies and the feature-packed security suites: They typically offer more comprehensive security tools (such as parental controls and identity theft protection) and more flexibility than a free antivirus package, but they have fewer additional features than suites, which are intended to be one-stop security shops.

One of the biggest drawbacks to going with a free product is the lack of technical support. While most companies offer some sort of phone support for paying customers, free antivirus users usually must fend for themselves. Avast does offer e-mail support for its free customers; most others provide only a knowledge base or forum where users can go for help.

Another tradeoff is that free antivirus products often have some sort of advertisement for the company's paid product. Avast Free Antivirus has an upgrade link in the upper-right corner of the main window, and Avira AntiVir Personal will display an ad for Avira's paid antivirus software.

How about malware signature updates? The security software companies I spoke to tell me that they treat their free and paid products the same as far as signature updates are concerned, although there may be some under-the-hood differences between their free and paid products (as is the case with Panda's software, for example). And one company, Avast, says that its free product is intended for average users, and that its paid antivirus is for more advanced users.

On the other hand, free products do give you some flexibility. You can augment a free tool's basic security with countless security utilities. For instance, you can start with Avast Free Antivirus, add PCTools's Threatfire Free (which does a good job at bolstering malware detection), toss in one of the many firewalls available and a link-scanning utility to create your own custom security setup. This approach does require you to do your homework, though, and may be more complicated in the long run.

Interface

User interfaces are typically as good (or as bad) in free products as they are in their paid counterparts. Avira and Avast, for example, use the same basic interface for their free and paid versions; they just include or leave out certain features and toggles as needed. Panda Cloud Antivirus (a freebie) is not a scaled-down version of the paid Panda Antivirus Pro, but rather a completely different product with a different interface and different internals.

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Detection

Most of the free products we tested put up identical or nearly identical malware detection scores to the paid varieties put out by the same company. But we did see some subtle differences. One notable example is Panda Cloud Antivirus: The free Cloud Antivirus and Panda's for-pay Antivirus Pro 2011 performed about the same on the signature-based malware detection tests, but Antivirus Pro did a better job in "real world" malware detection tests that help determine how well a product can block brand-new threats.

We found that, on the whole, paid antivirus products did a slightly better job at detecting malware than their freebie counterparts. In traditional signature-based detection tests, paid antivirus software that we tested found 96.2 percent of the malware samples overall. By comparison, free products' scores were ever-so-slightly worse, detecting 95.7 percent of samples.

In real-world detection tests, free products missed 15.2 percent of samples, while paid products missed 10.2 percent of samples. When it came time to remove malware infections, again, the results were close, but paid antivirus software held a slight advantage.

All the products we tested--both paid and free--detected all the test infections we threw their way, but paid products did a slightly better job overall at removing the active components of an infection, scoring a 74 percent success rate on average. The same held true when we tested how well the products removed all active and inactive components of an infection: Paid products achieved a 44 percent removal rate in this test, while free products averaged a full removal rate of 34 percent.

Speed

Although you lose some effectiveness against malware with free antivirus, you do gain a little speed. The free products we looked at were faster on average than the paid products in 9 of the 12 speed tests we take into account. Again, the difference was slight--the largest speed difference was around 10 percent. Both free and paid antivirus increased system startup times: A test PC with no antivirus software installed booted up in 40.1 seconds on average. With free antivirus installed, the test system started up in 44.1 seconds on average; and with paid antivirus installed, startup times increased to 46 seconds. It's hard to pin down the exact reason for this difference, but again, the difference is slight enough that it's basically statistically insignificant.

Scan speeds, however, are a mixed bag. In our on-demand scan tests, paid antivirus programs edged out the freebies, scanning 4.5GB worth of files in an average of 2 minutes, 25 seconds. Free products, by comparison, completed the same test in an average of 2 minutes, 44 seconds.

Free and paid products were nearly neck and neck in the on-access scan tests, which show how quickly the software can scan files for malware when they're opened or saved to disk. Using the same 4.5GB of files, free products completed the on-access scan test in an average time of 4 minutes, 50 seconds. Their paid counterparts completed the test 8 seconds later.

Top Picks

Given how close the two classes of products are in terms of speed and effectiveness, the two biggest factors are features and customer support. With some exceptions, you get better customer support and more comprehensive security features with a paid product, but if you're willing to forgo these, it's definitely worth considering going free.

Which free and paid antivirus products are best for you?

Avast Free Antivirus comes out tops among free products thanks to its all-around strong malware-detection scores, good design, and low system drag. **Avira AntiVir Personal** takes second place: It put up solid malware-detection scores, but its interface is kludgy.

Norton Antivirus leads the paid-software pack owing to its excellent malware detection, very good interface design, and comprehensive feature set that includes file-reputation analysis, a

cloud-based scanner (which can help identify new malware more quickly), and system performance analysis tools. **BitDefender Antivirus Pro 2011** is a close second thanks to strong malware detection; but slow scan speeds and some interface issues prevented it from taking first. Check out our lists of the top five free and top five paid antivirus products. Our summary reviews of the top two free and paid antivirus programs are below.

Top Free Antivirus: Avast

Avast Free Antivirus couples good all-around malware detection with a speedy, well-designed package. We liked its easy installation process, smooth interface design, and minimal impact on system performance.

In traditional signature-based malware tests, Avast Free Antivirus detected 94.8 percent of samples, which is neither particularly good nor bad. It also did a decent, though not outstanding, job at detecting malware in our real-world malware detection tests: It completely blocked 76 percent of attacks (which is right about average), and partially blocked 4 percent of attacks.

But on the plus side, Avast Free Antivirus didn't falsely identify a single "safe" file as a piece of malware, the only free product we looked at that achieved this. Avast Free Antivirus also did a good job at disinfecting a PC; it removed all active components of malware infections 80 percent of the time, which set the pace among the free products we looked at.

Scan speeds are also very good. Its on-demand scan speed of 90 seconds was a close second to Avira AntiVir Personal, which completed the test in 87 seconds. And Avast Free Antivirus completed the on-access scan speed tests in 3 minutes, 40 seconds, tops among the products we tested.

Top Paid Antivirus: Norton Antivirus 2011

Norton Antivirus 2011 (\$40 for a one-year, single-PC license as of 10/26/2010) leads the pack of 2011 paid antivirus products. It does a very good job at detecting and removing malware, and has a smooth interface, although its speed is decidedly average.

Installing Norton Antivirus 2011 is a breeze: The well-designed installer only requires you to click through two screens before it begins installing. Norton Antivirus has a smooth, polished interface: The main screen shows on-off toggles for its various protection features, as well as a map showing the global cybercrime activity over the last 24 hours.

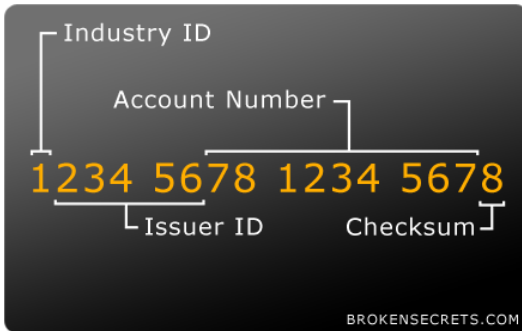
When it came to malware detection and removal, Norton Antivirus put out strong all-around scores. Norton Antivirus detected 98.7 percent of malware samples using traditional signature-based malware detection. This is an above average score, but it trails Panda Antivirus Pro 2011, which detected 99.8 percent of samples.

Norton also put up excellent scores in the blocking of real-world malware attacks: Norton completely blocked 24 of the 25 samples we threw at it, but it did miss one sample completely. Norton also detected all active infections in our tests; it removed the active components of an infection 80 percent of the time, and was able to completely remove the infections 60 percent of the time--both above-average scores.

Norton put up good scores in our speed testing, but not top-notch results. It completed an on-access scan of 4.5GB of files in 4 minutes, 32 seconds. This puts it ahead of the average of 4 minutes, 59 seconds, but behind the top-performing product, which completed this test in 3 minutes, 35 seconds. Its on-demand scan speed of 2 minutes, one second is also above average, but again, it trails the top performing program by a good 30 seconds.

The Meaning of the Digits on Your Credit Card Chad Upton | Editor Broken Secrets

There are thousands of different credit cards from the major issuers, but all of them have one thing in common: the meaning of the numbers on the card. Most major cards have 16 digits on them and each number has a specific meaning.



Digit 1 (Industry ID)

- 1 and 2 are Airline cards
- 3 – Travel and Entertainment ex. Amex
- 4, 5 – Banking and Financial ex. Visa, Mastercard
- 6 – Merchandising and Banking ex. Discover, Diners Club
- 7 – Petroleum
- 8 – Telecom
- 9 – Misc.

Digits 2-6 (Issuer ID)

Although all Visa cards start with the number 4, the following 5 digits indicate which bank that issued the Visa card. Mastercards start with 5, Discover starts with 6. You'll notice that some websites don't ask you what type of card you have — they obviously know what the digits on the card mean.

Digits 7-15 (Account ID)

The unique number that identifies your account.

Digit 16 (Checksum)

This single digit is one of the most important ones on the card. Much like the last digit of a barcode, the sole purpose of this digit is to allow validation of the rest of the number. In other words, there is a mathematical relationship between the numbers on the card, so if the number is entered incorrectly, the card validator system can indicate the card number was entered incorrectly.

You can validate a card number on your own too. Double every other number, starting with the first number. Add the result of those multiplications to all of the other digits on the card, treating all numbers as individual digits, including double digit results from the doubling operation. If the sum of all these numbers is divisible by ten, the number is valid according to the ISO standard. However, a valid card number doesn't necessarily mean the number is an active account or that charges can be made with it.

In the early days of credit cards, they didn't actually check this before imprinting a card for small purchases and larger purchases were verified with a phone call. Today, it's usually done electronically. When your card is swiped, the number is validated by the point of sale system (using the method above) and if the card number is valid then an electronic request is sent to verify the charge will be accepted by the card issuer.

Some retail stores will ask to see your card so they can manually type in the last four digits on the card. This verifies that the number embossed in the card is the same number that is programmed to the magnet stripe on the back; this is one way retailers can catch counterfeit or re-programmed cards before the goods leave the store.

I wonder how many of you reached into your wallet to check out your cards...

The Pitfalls of E-Book Buying: What to Look Out for Before You Purchase

Easy downloads and convenient storage are the chief lures of a virtual library, but ownership has some irritating downsides that require your attention before you hit the e-book purchase button. By Melissa J. Perenson, PCWorld



Buying e-books sounds so easy, and using them seems so effortless. The books are a breeze to purchase, and you can easily store great numbers of them, especially if your e-reader has a removable storage card.

Not surprisingly, e-book sales are jumping. In fact, a report by Forrester Research predicts that sales of digital titles (and readers) will top \$1 billion in 2011. And the New York Times this week started adding e-books to its weekly Best Sellers list.

As your collection grows, though, so does your need to manage the resulting virtual library. IF you aren't careful, you'll find yourself with books purchased on Amazon.com that are readable only on an Amazon Kindle e-reader device or app, books purchased at Barnes & Noble that require a Nook e-reader device or app, books purchased through Apple that are viewable only on the Apple iBooks app, and so on.

The issue of incompatible formats and the difficulty of organizing books that you buy from different e-book sellers are two things that you should consider before committing to a specific e-book platform.

Book Management

In the days of physical bookshelves filled with physical books, most people tended to organize their libraries haphazardly--perhaps by subject, perhaps alphabetically, perhaps by what size of books a particular shelf could accommodate. But with a little effort you could (probably) quickly scan your collection and walk away with the title you wished to read in short order.

Unfortunately, the lack of a universal bookshelf is a huge issue in the e-book world. Buy a book, and if you want to read it again three years down the line, you'll have to remember where and how you bought it.

A Google search reveals various software programs designed to "convert" e-books. But generally, such programs entail converting what you have into a PDFfile--and most types of e-reader software and hardware do a crummy job with handling PDFs.

Ultimately, what consumers need is e-books that they can buy and read anywhere, using any software they choose on any device they have at hand, whether it be a phone, a tablet, a laptop, or a PC. No muss, no fuss. This issue is critical to library management and to the future success of e-books.

The concept of buy-anywhere content will drive the digital publishing industry, according to a new study from ABI Research. The flexibility of the multiplatform world established by Amazon, Barnes & Noble, and Kobo has its good points, but consumers need more.

In the study--"Digital Publishing for Portable Devices"--ABI notes that digital sales of books, newspapers, and magazines are expected to grow to nearly \$16.5 billion worldwide in 2016. That figure is more than five times greater the corresponding number for 2010, and it approaches half the total for the publishing industry as a whole. We wouldn't be surprised if the rise in digital sales were even more rapid if the current barriers among types of software and devices broke down entirely.

The E-Book Format Morass

Today, the e-books you buy are closely tied by digital rights management technology to a particular seller or reading device. This state of affairs dates back to when Amazon launched its first Kindle e-reader (and Kindle e-book format) in 2007.

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Amazon remains the only bookseller to require customers to use a proprietary format (albeit one based on the Mobi book format) in its e-book readers, be they hardware devices or software apps; even public-domain books purchased via Amazon use Amazon Kindle formatting. As a result, none of these titles are readable on other, non-Amazon e-book app readers or hardware devices. To see why this is a problem, just look at how many entries Wikipedia has for e-book formats. (PCWorld rates the top e-readers.)



The digital rights management issue remains a point of distinction between Amazon and its competitors. Sony and Kobo, which sell e-book readers as well as e-books, are quick to point out that they, unlike Amazon, use the industry standard ePub format; Apple does, too.

But ePub support alone isn't synonymous with cross-platform support. Applying DRM to an ePub file can make the ePub book incompatible with other e-readers (be they software or hardware). For example, Adobe Digital Editions eBooks that carry DRM can be read by other software or devices (like Sony's Digital Reader series of e-readers) that support Adobe Digital Editions. But if you use Adobe's PC-based library manager, you'll have to jump through the hoop of entering an Adobe ID.

Barnes & Noble's e-book shopping experience can be even more confusing: The company has voiced support for ePub, and it offers ePub-formatted books; but when you buy a book, you have no way of knowing whether it has DRM protected. If it is, it's locked to Barnes & Noble's system. Furthermore, if you want to redownload an e-book you bought from Barnes & Noble, you'll have to provide the credit card number that you used to buy it originally.

The E-Book Apps Trap

It's easy to assume that if you buy a Kindle, you'll shop at Amazon. Nevertheless, the concept of "buy once, read anywhere" is flourishing. Though Amazon, B&N, and Kobo sell their own hardware, they make Android, BlackBerry, iOS, and PC apps available as well. Effectively this means that you can read books, magazines, or newspapers that you purchase at one of these stores on most devices you're likely to have in the future--if you use the appropriate platform's app.



Effectively, this means that the e-books you buy are trapped in an association with a single software reader. If you buy wherever an e-book happens to be priced lowest, or if you use a gift card to buy books from a particular store, those books will be tied to the store where you bought them. The idea of maintaining a single digital bookshelf where you can search for all of your e-books vanishes. You can use the free open-source Calibre software to convert files from one platform to another, but the translations can be rough, and the reflow and pagination may not be work properly.)

The appeal of buy-anywhere is twofold. First, consumers need the freedom to shop freely at different e-bookstores, just as they can shop for Blu-ray movie discs at any of a number of retailers, online or otherwise. Second, consumers need to be able to view the contents of their purchased libraries in a unified fashion. The more books we collect, the greater will be our need to be able to organize our collection. The on-board e-reader organizational tools are fine for a handful of books, but for dozens or hundreds of books accumulated over the years, they're inadequate.

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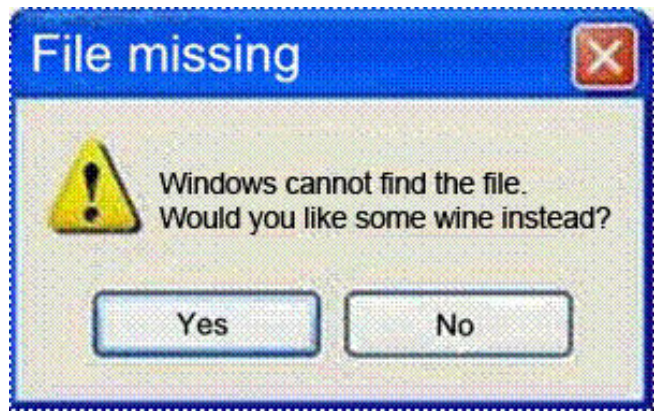
Please bring completed form to a ticket fair, a meeting, or mail to either: Morty Gellen, Treasurer, BCTC 6275 Via Primo St. Lake Worth, FL 33467 OR Jeff Robins 9980 Mantova Dr. Lake Worth, FL 33467

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MEETINGS START AT 7:00PM ON THE THIRD MONDAY OF THE MONTH. ANNOUNCED SIGS BEGIN AT 6:00pm.

MEETING DATES ARE: SEPT. 20, 2010 - OCT. 18 - NOV. 15 - DEC. 20 - JAN. 17, 2011 - FEB. 21 - MAR. 21 - APR. 18 - MAY 16 - JUNE 20

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If you want to know how weak or strong your passwords are, click on the link below and you will be directed to the site, "How Secure Is My Password?" The objective of this site is to point out that if you use words typically found in the dictionary, you will eventually become a victim where your account (or accounts) will be compromised. In all of my years of computing, this is TRUE!; especially if your accounts are internet based.



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