

# User Friendly

LACS  
A Computer and  
Technology  
User Group

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## AUGUST 13, 2024 GENERAL MEETING

**Meeting Time:** 7:00 to 9:00 PM — via Zoom  
**Socializing and Questions & Answers:** 6:30  
**Speaker:** Rob Truman, APCUG Speakers Bureau  
 Computer Booters of Sun Lakes Computer Club, AZ  
**Topic:** Gmail and Google Drive—Some Tips and Tricks

Gmail has a built-in spam filtering system and provides 15GB of free storage. Learn about the variety of time-saving features, letting you automate some emailing tasks, integrate your calendar and contacts, and customize your dashboard to suit your own needs. Our discussion of Gmail will be followed by an overview of Google's cloud storage offering: Google Drive.

### Meet Our Presenter

**Rob Truman** is vice president and web director of the [Computer Booters of Sun Lakes Computer Club](#). He has over 40 years of experience in Information Technology and internet-related fields. He is a retired U.S. Navy Chief Electronics Technician and has worked as a Technical Support professional for Microsoft over the years. Rob holds a Master of Arts degree in Adult Education and a Bachelor of Science degree in Information Technology (BSIT). Rob also volunteers and teaches adult education technology classes through his local community college and their lifelong learning program, [New Adventures in Learning](#).



Sun Lakes, AZ

Watch your email for APCUG workshops and other upcoming events.



**LACS IS A MEMBER OF  
APCUG**

**An International  
Association of Technology  
and Computer User Groups**

[www.apcug2.org](http://www.apcug2.org)  
[www.facebook.com/APCUG](https://www.facebook.com/APCUG)  
[www.X.com/apcug](https://www.X.com/apcug) (Twitter)

LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **August 11**. Just click on it to enter the meeting.

Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at [leahjc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:leahjc@sbcglobal.net) before or on **August 11**. See pages, 8, 9, 10 and 20 for help in using Zoom, or email Leah with questions.

See more information about LACS at [www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org).

**FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR****LACS NEEDS A SECRETARY**

LACS needs a member to be secretary. The secretary attends the board meetings on the first Monday of the month, and takes notes. The meetings are via Zoom, so you don't need to leave your home. The secretary uses the notes and if helpful, the recording of the meeting to write a brief summary or outline of the main items covered at the meetings, and lists the attendees. If you volunteer now, your term will be up at the end of 2024. We will have nominees for the 2025 officers in September. So this will give you time to try out the job.

We need and want **YOU—NOW!**

**LACS ELECTIONS**

In September we will be accepting nominees for the LACS 2025 Board. LACS will survive only if members are willing to be officers. The president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer serve a one year term. We will have openings for four directors who will serve a two year term. Two or three members may volunteer to be a nomination committee to contact members who might be candidates. Present board members will answer your questions and help you along the way. Please let Leah Clark know if you are willing to help LACS stay viable.

**NOTE**

If you receive an email from the Groups.io list that appears to be Spam or is something you're not interested in, please **do not** mark it as spam. That will cause you to be deleted from the list. Just **delete** the message. That will save us a lot of bother. Thank you.

**DUTIES OF LACS OFFICERS**

Here is a summary of the duties of board members as in the LACS Bylaws.  
For more detail see [ByLaws.pdf \(lacs.org\)](#)

**President**

- Be the chief executive officer and be subject to the control of the board of directors
- Preside at meetings

**Vice President**

- In the absence of the president perform the duties of the president
- Be Program chair

**Secretary**

- Keep a book of minutes of all meetings of the officers and directors with the names of those present and what occurred at the meetings

**Treasurer**

- Receive monies due and payable to the corporation and disburse funds as directed by the board
- Keep accounts of properties and business transactions and make reports at the board meetings.

**Directors**

- Supervise all officers to assure their duties are performed properly
- Participate at meetings as required

## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

July 9, 2024

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Typography—The Art and  
Science of Written  
Communication

By Chris Taylor



Chris presented a comprehensive view of the history, art, and selection of fonts for readability and effectiveness. Different fonts can evoke different emotions in the reader. Typography is the art and technique of arranging type to make written language legible, readable, and appealing. Glyphs are letters, numbers, punctuation, etc., that share a common design. Clarity results from legibility and readability.

Chris showed many examples of various fonts to demonstrate their unique characteristics. Different styles of a given typeface are weight, slant, and width. The words “font” and “typeface” are often used interchangeably.



Serif fonts have a small horizontal flourish on the ends of characters. They may make some text easier to read. Sans serif fonts do not have them—they are starker and may stand out more.

Chris showed other typeface categories, and he showed slides to illustrate them. He defined more anatomy examples in type and parts of glyphs and explained why he chose them. These include serifs, ascenders, descenders, counters, apertures, baselines, x-height, cap height, ascender and descender height, leading (line spacing), slant, strokes, and more. His slides showed examples of these.

Chris then spoke about figures. Lining figures are uniform in height and good for tables. Oldstyle figures are nice in running text. He discussed spacing.

1234567890 Lining  
Figures

1234567890 Oldstyle  
Figures

Chris compared true-type fonts with open-type fonts, which support more advanced typesetting features. And he showed some dramatic stylistic sets.

Font size and character width can be somewhat arbitrary; the same number of points can result in different character sizes.

Increased leading or line spacing can help your eye stay on track. Tracking adjusts the spacing between all the letters. Kerning adjusts the space between specific letters to make the volume between letters visually similar. White on black always looks heavier than black on white.

### How To Choose a Typeface

Consider the designer's original intent, the legibility and readability, the effect of the emotion (bold, casual, formal, fun), and the intended use. If using a different typeface for headings and the body, don't make them too similar. Using only one or two is best.

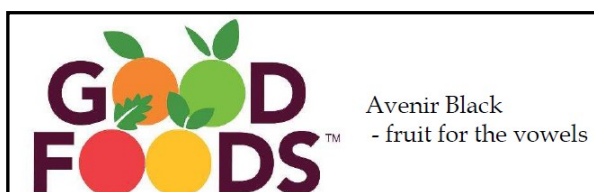
Chris gave details about each of these purpose-built typefaces.

- **Times New Roman:** Designed for Times of London in 1931
- **Frutiger:** Designed for Charles de Gaulle airport for signs in 1970
- **Transport:** Designed for the U.K. Department of Transport in 1957
- **Bell Centennial:** Designed for AT&T to replace Bell Gothic in phone books.
- **Retina:** Designed for the Wall Street Journal in 2000

Of course fonts can be used for purposes different from what they were designed for.

Chris told stories and jokes about Comic Sans. It's essential to use a font appropriate for the message you're trying to convey.

The choice of typeface has a dramatic effect—big and bold, casual or formal, character and feeling. Chris showed wordmarks or logos that used specific fonts to evoke a feeling for the business. He showed a lot of creative ideas.



Chris demonstrated ideas to make headings and subheadings stand out from the text.

### Some Typography Rules

- **Hyphens and Dashes**

Put no space before or after a hyphen or dash. A hyphen joins words, an En dash separates a range (think “through”, and an Em dash is used for a break in a sentence (think comma or parenthesis.)

- **Indents vs. Line Spacing**

A paragraph may have no first-line indent and an extra space between paragraphs. Or the first line of a paragraph may be indented with no additional spacing after the paragraph. Do not do both.

- **Justified vs. Ragged Right**

A special program or a professional typesetter is needed to adjust word spacing appropriately in justified text. So, use ragged rights to avoid weird gaps in the text.

- **Put Only One Space After a Period**

- **Multiplication Symbol**

Don't use the letter “X”. In Word, type **D7**, then press **Alt-x** (or *Alt-0215* in most apps).

- **Division Symbol**

Don't use the keyboard slash. In Word, type 2215, then press **Alt-x** (or *Alt-0247* in most apps).

Chris explained some problems to watch out for when copying, pasting, and sharing documents to ensure the correct font is maintained. He also explained how to embed a font. Then, he showed some ideas from the Ottawa Personal Computer User Group's newsletter.

Chris listed and described many resource books and websites on typography.

There was a lot of Q and A and discussion after the presentation.

LACS members and guests received a .PDF file with all the slides from this excellent presentation and the Zoom recording. There was much content in this presentation that I could not include in this short review. I plan to review the slides for ideas for *User Friendly*. ❖

## APCUG HISTORY

Submitted by **Irv Hershman**, LACS Director

**A**PCUG began after a series of meetings and discussions between representatives from various user groups around the country about improving communications between groups and sharing information. The presidents from three user groups—Boston Computer Society, Capital PC User Group, and Houston Area League of PC Users—organized the First Annual User Group Summit meeting in conjunction with the 1986 Comdex computer expo. After that first Summit meeting and subsequent meetings, the leaders of 15 user groups met in Seattle in October 1987 and proposed the formation of an association for the purpose of fostering communication among users and between user groups. That proposal was presented before 130 representatives from 50 user groups at the Second Annual User Group Summit Meeting in November 1987, and was unanimously approved. ❖

## REALLY, REALLY, DELETING FILES

by **Chris Taylor**, President  
Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada  
Ottawa PC News (September 2023)  
<https://opcug.ca>  
Editor: brigittelord (at) opcug.ca

When you delete a file in Windows, the on-disk data is not removed. The file is usually moved to the Recycle Bin, where it can be easily recovered. Even if you empty the Recycle Bin or bypass the Recycle Bin by holding down the Shift key while deleting files, the data remains on your disk. All that happens is the pointers to the file are removed, making the space available for new files.

### Recovering Deleted Files

Utilities to recover deleted files date back to **Unerase** in the first version of the Norton Utilities in 1982. They continue to this day with dozens of free and commercial programs available for Windows, macOS, Linux, Android, and iOS.

If you are in a high-security situation, please ignore this article. It is intended for the average home or business user whose adversaries are not about to use [magnetic force microscope](#) techniques to recover data. If you are likely to have [CSIS](#) looking for your deleted data, you must go beyond what I recommend here.

### Making Data Unrecoverable

When disposing of a storage device, you should ensure all sensitive data is deleted and unrecoverable. This can be achieved by physically destroying the storage device: a hard disk drive (HDD), solid-state drive (SSD), flash drive, etc., or—if you want the storage device to be reusable—by overwriting the data areas of the disk with random data, obliterating the original data.

Some secure deletion programs boast capabilities such as the [Gutmann algorithm](#), which

overwrites all data with 35 passes. I wouldn't worry beyond a single pass for the average computer user.



There are many programs available, both free and commercial, for secure data removal. The programs I list are not necessarily the best—they are simply programs that have been around quite a while (have stood the test of time), are free, and have been used successfully by me or other members of OPCUG.

Be careful when using secure deletion programs. By their very nature, they do not have an "undo" button! There are several levels of data overwriting: individual files, free space on the drive, and the entire disk.

### Individual Files

If you just want to make a few files unrecoverable, there are programs that can target individual files or folders of files. One example is the free and open-source program File Shredder (<https://www.files shredder.org/>). It is very simple and straightforward to use.

### Free Space

Storage devices eventually end up with data in all locations on the device. The free space has data that was used for files that have since been deleted. You have no way of knowing what recoverable data might be there. Some programs can target free space and they can securely overwrite data there. File Shredder is one program that can wipe free space.



### Entire Disks

If you want to securely delete all data on an entire storage device, HDShredder (<https://www.miray-software.com/products/applications/hdshredder.html>) is available in free and commercial versions. The free version should be sufficient for the vast majority of users. The website details the additional capabilities in the commercial versions.

Another popular program for securely erasing all data on storage devices is the free and open-source DBAN (<https://sourceforge.net/projects/dban/>).

DBAN was acquired by [Blancco](#) in 2012 and is no longer in development but remains popular. I recently had occasion to use DBAN to help a friend dispose of an old laptop, and it was quite easy to use DBAN to ensure the entire hard drive was securely wiped.

DBAN comes as a disk image (.ISO file), so you will need a program to create a bootable flash drive, CD, or DVD using the DBAN ISO file. Free options are available, such as Rufus (<https://rufus.ie/en/>), NCH Software's Express Burn (<https://www.nch.com.au/burn/index.html>), and Ashampoo Burning Studio Free (<https://www.ashampoo.com/en-us/burning-studio-free>).

### Solid State Drives

Due to the architecture of the technology, SSDs cannot be securely wiped in the same manner as HDDs. If you want to delete data from SSDs securely, check that the software you are using specifies that it works on SSDs. EaseUS has a free version of Partition Manager (<https://www.easeus.com/partition-manager-software/securely-erase-ssd-hdd.html>) that can securely erase SSDs.

Some SSD manufacturers provide special utilities to wipe their devices securely, such as Samsung's Magician (<https://semiconductor.samsung.com/consumer-storage/magician/>) or Crucial's

Storage Executive (<https://www.crucial.com/support/storage-executive>). Personally, if the manufacturer of your SSD has a special utility for securely erasing their branded SSDs, I would choose that option.

### Final Words

Rather than destroying or securely wiping old storage devices, you might want to re-purpose them for your own use. Inexpensive drive enclosures are available: you can install your old storage device in one and then plug it into a USB port to use it as an external drive.

While this article details effective means of securely removing data, if you can't be sure you have completely removed all sensitive files from your device, you might be better off destroying the device rather than disposing of it. ❖

## THE NSA IS WARNING YOU TO RESTART YOUR PHONE EVERY WEEK: HERE'S WHY

From [How-To Geek](#), July 15, 2024  
[howtogeek.com](https://howtogeek.com)

✦ The National Security Administration (NSA) is asking you to reboot your phone once a week to remove potential malicious code.

✦ Rebooting helps stop malicious code from executing and clears temporary files.

You should also follow mobile security best practices to prevent cyberattacks and reduce potential damage.

Outside the occasional software update, you probably don't reboot your phone very often unless you regularly run out of battery. Here's why the National Security Agency (NSA), which is responsible for protecting the U.S.'s communications and cybersecurity, says you should make a habit of it.

## What Did the NSA Say, and Should You Be Worried?

In short, the NSA is asking you to reboot your mobile devices once a week.

[iPhone](#) and [Android](#) phones (and iPads/tablets) should be regularly rebooted to wipe any malicious code that may have made its way onto the system.

This announcement shouldn't be a cause for concern: no new specific threat has been identified, but fully rebooting your devices by turning them off and back on is part of good digital hygiene. It is one of the 13 mobile device best practices— <https://s3.documentcloud.org/documents/21018353/nsa-mobile-device-best-practices.pdf>— being promoted by the NSA to help protect you from phishing, malicious apps, and other attacks.

### Other Mobile Security Best Practices the NSA is Suggesting You Follow Include:

- Keeping your apps and software up to date to protect against known exploits.
- Only installing apps from official app stores to protect against malicious apps.
- Avoiding connecting to public Wi-Fi networks (like in hotels) that could intercept your data.
- Not clicking links or opening attachments in emails to prevent viruses.
- Keeping your devices locked with biometrics, PINs, and passwords to prevent a lost device from being used to get access to your accounts.

### How Restarting Your Android and iOS Devices Regularly Improves Security

Modern mobile operating systems include measures that protect the core system from being modified by malicious code. However, this doesn't stop malicious code from actually being executed, either by user action (opening a virus-infected email attachment, for

example) or without it (in the case of zero-click attacks). Restarting your device means that any malicious code that is potentially running is stopped. As it (hopefully) wasn't able to modify the operating system on your device, it will not start again when the device boots.

Malware that records or interferes with your activity can also be stored in temporary files, which are usually cleared during a reboot. Regularly turning your device off and on again may also improve its performance, as buggy applications that may be using increasing amounts of memory will be forced to release those resources and restart.

### Staying Secure In An Increasingly Threatening Mobile World

We all rely on our mobile devices in our day-to-day lives, so giving them up is out of the question. So, how do you stop worrying and learn to love our connected present and future? The best you can do is follow best practices and stay vigilant at home, at work, and even on holiday. [How to Keep Your Devices and Data Secure While Traveling \(howtogeek.com\)](#). Most attacks and scams happen because of user negligence, not due to sophisticated technical attacks like the ones in spy movies (unless you happen to be a spy).

If you do fall victim to a cybersecurity attack (and, realistically, most of us will at some stage, through our own fault or not), you can take comfort that you did your best to avoid it and maybe even lessen the damage done.



## LACS INFORMATION

### HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS has an active general email list: [PC@LACS.Groups.IO](mailto:PC@LACS.Groups.IO) which goes to all members on the list. Members will receive meeting notices and Zoom links via this list. You can also ask questions, offer suggestions, and help others.

New LACS members should receive an invitation to join our list with two weeks to accept. Other LACS members who want to join the list should send an email to Stephanie Nordlinger, our Groups.IO Coordinator. (See your roster for contact info.) and she will send you an invitation to join. If you have any problems or questions about joining, please contact Stephanie.

### USING PAYPAL OR ZELLE

**To pay LACS by PayPal**, go to this link: [www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024](http://www.paypal.com/paypalme/00001024) and then click on **Send**. Log in to your PayPal account or sign up for an account so that PayPal will know where to get the money to send. Follow the prompts. Enter the amount to pay, then click on **Add a note**. Say what the payment is for. If is for dues, add any updated information: physical and email addresses, phone number, and your dues type (regular, electronic, etc.) and if you don't want your contact information to be in our roster.

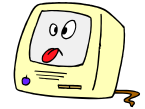
**To pay LACS by Zelle**, log into your bank with your username and password.

Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is: [lacomputersociety@gmail.com](mailto:lacomputersociety@gmail.com).

The wording may be a little different on your bank's site.

Email questions to Gavin Faught. See our roster for contact info.

### FIX YOUR PC FOR FREE?



LACS member and presenter, **Jim McKnight**, has an open offer to LACS members to diagnose, repair, disinfect, or upgrade members' PC's for free. There are certain limitations to Jim's offer, so see the details by clicking the "Fix my PC for Free?" link at [www.jimopi.net](http://www.jimopi.net).

Non-members can wisely invest in a one-year **new regular** LACS membership (\$40.00), and Jim will fix your PC problem, too. Contact Jim for specific considerations.

### HOW TO CHANGE YOUR CONTACT INFORMATION

Go to [www.lacspc.org](http://www.lacspc.org). Click on **Member Forms** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update**, select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out, and email it with your changes to [Membership@lacspc.org](mailto:Membership@lacspc.org) or snail-mail it to  
Los Angeles Computer Society  
11664 National Blvd. #343  
Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802.

### ATTENDING A ZOOM MEETING

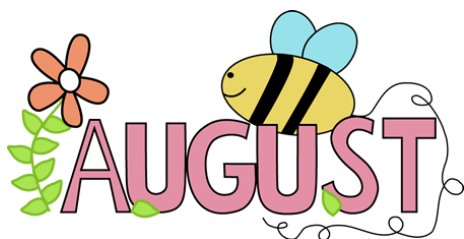
LACS members who are on our PC email list will receive a link, meeting ID, Passcode, and instructions to attend the LACS general meetings a couple of days before the meeting. **Please let Leah Clark know by the morning of the meeting if you don't have it or have a problem.**

**You can put an icon to the link on your desktop so it's handy at meeting time.**

1. Right-click a blank spot on your desktop.
2. Select **New** from the drop-down menu.
3. Select **Shortcut**.
4. Type or copy and paste the link in the box that says "Type the location of the item."
5. Click **Next**.
6. Type a name for the shortcut.



## LACS CALENDAR



### LACS Board Meeting, Monday, August 5

**Time:** 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

### LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, August 13

**Time:** 7:00 P.M. (Open from 6:30 P.M.)

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

Please log in early so we can start on time. Allow time to be sure you have the link, to get or update your Zoom software if you have not used it before or recently, or to solve other issues before the meeting starts.

### AUGUST'S FULL MOON

From *Almanac*, July 2024

<https://www.almanac.com/>

August's full Moon will appear on the afternoon of **Monday, August 19**. That evening, look toward the southeast after sunset to catch a glimpse of the Sturgeon Moon rising. It's the first Supermoon of the year, which means that it will appear bigger and brighter than the full Moons we have seen thus far!

A supermoon is **a new or full moon that occurs when the Moon is near perigee**—the point in the Moon's orbit where it is closest to Earth.

### VISIT OTHER APCUG COMPUTER USER GROUPS AND SEE THEIR NEWSLETTERS

LACS heartily welcomes visitors from other user groups, and we are welcome to join other groups' meetings.

Go to [www.APCUG2.org](http://www.APCUG2.org). Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**.

## UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

**August 13:** Gmail and Google Drive, Rob Truman

**September 10:** Internet Privacy & Encryption Software, Mark Schulman

**October 8:** TBA

Please watch your email and *User Friendly* for changes and updates.

### ZOOM MEETINGS

Members on our PC email list will receive, via email, an invitation to join LACS Zoom general meetings. Click on the URL in the invitation before the meeting and follow the prompts.

If you have any questions or if you don't receive the link by the morning of the meeting day, contact Leah Clark at [leahjc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:leahjc@sbcglobal.net)

### ZOOM RECORDINGS

**LACS members and meeting guests will receive links to the recordings of Zoom meetings via email.**

### HYPERLINKS

Underlined text (blue in the color edition) in *User Friendly* usually means it's a hyperlink to a website. Click on the link in the online version to see the referenced place. You can also copy and paste it into your browser's search or address bar.

### USER FRIENDLY BACK ISSUES AND INDEXES

To see back issues of *User Friendly*, go to <http://www.lacspc.org/category/user-friendly/>.

For indexes to past issues, go to <https://www.lacspc.org/category/uf-index/>

To find a specific article or topic, use the search box on the top right.



**MEMBERS HELPING MEMBERS**

LACS members volunteer to help other members solve hardware and software problems by telephone or during the hours listed below. Select the topic from the list and then contact a person whose number is listed next to it.

**Find a helper's email address and phone number on your roster.** If you don't have your roster, call 424-261-6251. Only members in good standing may receive a roster. We hope you find this LACS free service useful.

**If you are experienced using a particular program or hardware, please volunteer to be a consultant. You don't have to be an expert.** To volunteer for this list or to make corrections, please email Leah Clark at [leahjc@sbcglobal.net](mailto:leahjc@sbcglobal.net) or call her at 424-261-6251.

- |   |                              |                  |
|---|------------------------------|------------------|
| Adobe Creative Suite: PDF, InDesign, Photoshop, etc. - 10 | Hardware - 7                 | PDF - 8          |
| Android Smartphones - 8                                   | Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7 | Photoshop - 10   |
| Apple devices - 11  | Mozilla Firefox - 7          | Quicken - 8, 12  |
| Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8                            | MS Excel - 8, 11, 12         | Thunderbird - 7  |
| Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3                             | MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12        | Utilities - 7, 8 |
| Genealogy - 8   | MS Outlook - 1, 8, 10        | Windows - 7, 8   |
| Groups.IO - 8   | MS PowerPoint - 8, 11        | WordPerfect - 8  |
|   | MS Publisher - 2             | Zoom - 2, 9      |

Preferred Time for Phone Calls			
Number	Name	From	To
1	Beckman, Loling	10:00 AM	6:00 PM
2	Clark, Leah	7:00 AM	5:00 PM
3	Hershman, Irv	11:00 AM	11:00 PM
7	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
8	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
9	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
10	Rozek, E. J.	Noon	8:00 PM
11	Van Berkomp, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
12	Wilder, Joan	9:00 AM	9:00 PM

**Note:** Times are Pacific Times

**OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS**

TITLE	NAME	TERM
President	Leah Clark	2024
Vice President	Stephanie Nordlinger	2024
Secretary	<b>Open</b>	2024
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2024
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Benton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Irv Hershman	2024
Director	E. J. Rozek	2024
Director	Annette Tossounian	2024
Director	Paula Van Berkomp	2024
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Email Lists	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Newsletter Editor	Leah Clark	
Program Chair	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Publicity – Press	Mark Presky	
Publicity – Online Media	Open	
Quick Consultants	Leah Clark	
Webmaster	Paula Van Berkomp	

**Mailing Address:** 11664 National Blvd., #343, Los Angeles, CA 90064-3802

**Website:** <https://lacspc.org>

**Contact the President/Editor at 424-261-6251.** Follow the prompts. This is a Google Voice number.

Please use your LACS roster for email addresses and phone numbers to contact any officer, board member or other member. If necessary, you may leave a message at the above number. **Only LACS members may receive a roster.**

**Please note:** The 2024 roster was in the middle pages of the May User Friendly. It was mailed to all LACS members, including those who usually receive only the electronic version. The roster will not be sent to anyone electronically. Be sure to keep it where you can find it when you need it.

## LIBREOFFICE BASIC PROGRAMMING USING CHATGPT

By **Alan German**, Treasurer  
Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada  
Published in Ottawa PC News (August 2023)  
<https://opcug.ca>  
briggittelord (at) opcug.ca

ChatGPT is an artificial intelligence (AI) tool that, amongst other things, can create text based on a request from an end user. So, I thought I would use it to write an article for the newsletter by entering "Write an article for OPCUG's newsletter on LibreOffice Basic Programming." Had I gone ahead with this, you would now be reading the following:

*"LibreOffice is a free and open-source productivity suite that provides several applications, including Writer, Calc, Impress, and Base. These applications are designed to provide a comprehensive set of tools to meet the needs of any user. LibreOffice also comes with a built-in programming language called LibreOffice Basic, which allows users to automate tasks and create custom solutions to enhance the functionality of the suite."*

But first, let me explain the scenario. I have a LibreOffice document (ODT file) that contains the lists of topics that have been covered over the past three years in our weekly online Q&A sessions. Each week, I build an agenda for the upcoming session as a simple text file (TXT) that lists the titles of the topics to be discussed next. This text file is used for various purposes, including manually adding the list of new topics to the main ODT index file. I wanted to automate this latter process by developing a macro that would read the topics from the text file and add them to the end of the ODT file.

I don't know all that much about object-oriented programming, so when I want to create a macro for a document in LibreOffice Writer, my practice is to use Google to

search for code extracts that I can then modify and string together to produce the final product. And this is precisely what I did to build the required macro in this case.

But then I saw a YouTube video of an individual using ChatGPT to create computer code in a number of programming languages by simply telling the AI bot what was required. Now, perhaps LibreOffice Basic is a bit of a backwater item in terms of mainstream programming, but I figured that it would be worth a shot to see if I could use ChatGPT to develop the code for my macro.


I know how to read and write lines of text from an ASCII file. My problem is that the ODT file isn't a simple text file. The ODT format is a special type of ZIP file containing several XML and other components. So, the trick is to have the macro open the ODT file, identify the component that contains the body text of the document, add the desired lines at the end, and close the file.


At present, it's possible to use ChatGPT at no cost. All that is required is to create an account on the system or login using an established Google account. Once logged in, one enters a request as a string into a text box. My request was *"Write a program in LibreOffice Basic to add a string to the end of an odt file."*

The result was amazing – as shown, in part, by the screenshot on page 13.

ChatGPT effectively produces a custom tutorial on building the macro. Each required step in the process is explained, and the relevant code extract is displayed. Finally, all the code that has been developed for the requested macro is shown as a complete block. (See page 13.)


In essence, this code segment is very close to the macro code that I had produced over some considerable time, having had to research several web postings to identify the required techniques. Clearly, it is a very

 Write a program in LibreOffice Basic to add a string to the end of an odt file

 Certainly! Here is an example of how you can do this in LibreOffice Basic: 👍 🗨


1. Open the odt file that you want to modify using the `Load` method of the `Desktop` object.

```
Dim oDoc As Object
oDoc = ThisComponent.Load("/path/to/file.odt")
```

 Copy code

2. Retrieve the document's text object using the `getText` method of the `oDoc` object.

```
Dim oText As Object
oText = oDoc.getText
```

 Copy code

```
Sub AddStringToODTFile

    Dim oDoc As Object
    Dim oText As Object
    Dim oEnd As Object

    ' Open the document
    oDoc = ThisComponent.Load("/path/to/file.odt")

    ' Retrieve the text object
    oText = oDoc.getText

    ' Insert the string at the end of the document
    oEnd = oText.getEnd
    oText.insertString(oEnd, "This is the string that will
be
    added to the end of the file.", False)

    ' Save the modified document
    oDoc.store

End Sub
```

generic code and only covers part of what is required for the final macro. However, it is evident from this simple test that the AI bot is fully capable of generating "modules" of code that can readily be adapted for the desired purpose and that such modules could be quickly consolidated into a fully functional macro.

The other consideration is that the current version of ChatGPT is at an early stage in the development of AI tools. As such applications become more sophisticated and the computer systems running them become more powerful, it is highly likely that their use in computer programming will become ubiquitous.

Even now, ChatGPT is perfectly capable of developing useful code in a number of popular programming languages. For example, in addition to producing macros for LibreOffice Basic, it is just as easy to create Python scripts. So, ChatGPT is a useful tool for anyone seriously developing programs, macros, and scripts, and it is a really interesting option for those who wish to learn the techniques.

### Bottom Line

ChatGPT (Proprietary, web-based system)

OpenAI

<https://openai.com>



## THE ASK BOB RANKIN GEEKLY UPDATE

<https://askbobrankin.com> June and July 2024

**K**aspersky Lab, the maker of Kaspersky anti-virus products, has announced it will shut down its operations in the United States following a ban by the U.S. Department of Commerce. [Kaspersky's software was deemed a national security risk](#) due to concerns about potential ties to the Russian government. As of July 20, 2024, Kaspersky will no longer be able to sell its products in the U.S. Existing users can continue to use Kaspersky products. Still, they are advised to switch to alternative security solutions to avoid potential risks from unpatched software. The company will provide updates and security patches only through September 29th. If you're looking for an Internet security product made in the USA, [check out PC Matic](#).

**A** PCWorld article says Microsoft has activated a feature in Windows 11 without notifying users. This feature, related to OneDrive, automatically backs up documents, pictures, and desktop folders to the cloud. Many users discovered the change when they noticed that their [files were being uploaded to OneDrive without their consent](#), leading to concerns about privacy and data usage. The automatic backup can be disabled through OneDrive settings, but Microsoft's lack of prior notification has frustrated many users.

**J**apanese scientists have developed [a robot with a "living" skin made from human cells](#), capable of mimicking realistic facial expressions, including smiles. This advancement aims to create more human-like androids and improve understanding of facial expression physiology. The skin, created using a cell-laden gel, can be attached to complex surfaces and is inspired by human skin ligaments. While the goal is to achieve self-healing capabilities, the technology is not yet at that stage.

**G**oogle is enhancing its security features by [making it easier for users to check if their personal information is on the dark web](#). This new "Dark Web Report" feature allows users to run a dark web scan to see if their name, address, phone number, email, username, or passwords have been compromised. If any information is found, Google provides steps on how to secure accounts and protect data. This initiative aims to improve user awareness and security in the face of increasing online threats.

**T**he [Solar Hyperion](#) is a new electric scooter that can reach speeds "up to a thrilling 65 mph," with a range of 70 miles per charge. The company says the \$3300 scooter's screen will protect your phone, so "no more messy wires or phone holders." What about the mess that happens when you lose control and hit the asphalt at 65 mph?

**M**erlin Bird ID is a nifty app that helps you identify the birds you see or hear. I love that it can listen to the birds around me and accurately tell who's singing. You can also take a photo of a bird, and then the app will offer a list of possible matches. Both features work entirely offline. Bird ID is available for birds in the US, Canada, and Europe, with some common birds from Central and South America and India.

**A** faulty software update from cybersecurity firm *CrowdStrike* [caused a massive IT blackout](#), affecting banks, airlines, and media companies around the world. The problem led to system failures and widespread "blue screen of death" errors on affected Microsoft computers.

**M**icrosoft recommended [rebooting your computer 15 times](#) to fix the Blue Screen Of Death problem. Here's something you can do

while the IT guys try to figure out what's going on.

This BBC video explains [why scientists are making Moon dust](#) (regolith) here on earth. It turns out there's lots of oxygen on our Moon.

In other space news, NASA has announced that they will pay SpaceX \$843 million to develop [the U.S. Deorbit Vehicle](#), to safely bring down the International Space Station after it reaches the end of its operational life in 2030.

[Cadillac's Sollei](#) is an extra-long, extra-yellow electric vehicle with a fridge in the back seat. The concept car derived from Cadillac's ultra-luxury Celestiq line has a 55-inch infotainment screen and biodegradable mushroom-based mycelium seats.

If you've been dreaming of running Windows XP on your Apple iPad, then [UTM SE is your dream come true](#). UTM SE is an Apple-approved app that enables your iPad (or iPhone) to emulate PC hardware and run Windows or other computer desktop operating systems (poorly).

An article on TechNewsWorld cautions that [Windows 10 End-of-Life Could Flood Landfills With E-Waste](#). Microsoft will stop supporting Windows 10 in October 2025, leaving about 200 million PCs unable to meet the hardware requirements of Windows 11. At that time, users running Windows 10 will face the choice of continuing without security patches (unsafe), switching to Linux (untenable for most), or ditching their older machines in favor of new hardware. Do you remember when Microsoft said "Windows 10 will be the last version of Windows"?

The New York State Department of Motor Vehicles has introduced [Mobile ID](#), a digital version of state-issued driver's licenses, learner permits, or IDs accessible via smartphones. This Mobile ID can be utilized at various air-

ports nationwide and at any establishment that opts to accept it. Why does this make me want to run away fast?

If your recoil at the thought of Microsoft's upcoming Windows 11 Recall feature, which saves screenshots of everything you do, you should know that your Windows 10 or 11 computer already has an activity tracker that keeps tabs on what apps, services, files, and websites you interact with. [This article shows the steps to turn off the "Activity history" feature](#), and clear your activity history.

Sadly, a growing number of [young Americans are getting their news from TikTok](#). Why is that sad? According to TheVerge, "the news users see on TikTok is just as likely to

## CAN TWO FILES HAVE THE SAME NAME?

By **Jim Cerny**, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President  
Sarasota Technology Users Group  
<https://thestug.org/>  
JimCerny (at) gmail.com



It was the usual family gathering.

And, as usual, Uncle Backup and Aunt Fowler were arguing. They both use Windows computers, and both save files into folders. Uncle Backup said, "NO, of course not; you cannot have two files with the same name; Windows won't allow it!"

"Oh, don't be silly," said Aunt Fowler. Of course, you can. I do it myself whenever I copy a file—it copies it with the same name!"

Well, dear reader, who's right? This is a great trick question to bring up over beverages whenever you are in a tech discussion with friends.

The answer? Well, the answer is they are both right! Well, sort of. Fortunately, their

argument was overheard by the good doctor, Doc Ewewmint.

“May I help you?” interrupted the good doctor, “Yes, you CAN have two files with the same name if they are in different folders! Let me explain. If you copy a file to a different folder, it can have the same name. But now you must remember carefully which folder you put it in. If you change one of the files but not the other, even if they have the same name, they will now be different.”

“Oh, that could cause trouble,” said Aunt Fowler, “so when I copy my files to back them up on a different device, I name the folder “Backup” and the date or something. That way, I know they are not the ones I actively use and change daily. I am thankful that Windows keeps track of the date of each file.”

It happens that Aunt Fowler’s husband also overheard the discussion. “Well,” he said, “that’s all true, of course, but you can have two files that appear to have the same name in the same folder—but they would be of different file types! You could have a word processing document file created in Word, for example, and another with the same name created by Word Pad. They would have different file types—“.docx” (or “.doc” for Word) or “.rtf” (for WordPad)—but other than that, they could have the same name.”

“That’s because the file type is part of the name!” said Aunt Fowler. “My husband is so right about that.”

“Yes,” said the good doctor, “and the computer keeps all this straight. The computer recognizes the folder path to get to the file you want because you can have the same file name (even with the same file type or extension) in different folders. You could say that the “path” of the folders to get to the file is also part of the file name. Thus, **you can never have two files with the same name!**”

Well, I’m glad we all settled that and agreed! Now, should I use “Save” or “Save as”? ❖

## RECOVER YOUR WI-FI PASSWORD

By **David Kretchmar**, Hardware Technician  
Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV

<https://www.scsccl.com>  
dkretch (at) gmail.com



Computer users often seek technical support when they cannot access the Internet via their home wireless system.

First, the technician will usually walk the user through the reset procedure for the router or router/modem (turn them off and on). If that does not fix the problem and it is determined the modem is receiving a good signal, the subsequent conversation often goes something like this:

**Technician:** What is the password for your router?

**User:** I don’t have a password.

**Technician:** If your router is not secured (i.e., password protected), you should be able to connect.

**User:** I don’t have a password. I click the Google (or other browser) icon and get online.

At this point, the Technician explains to the User that the password is stored on the User’s computer and that a few steps are required to access that password. The technician might guide the user through the process of recovering the password using the following procedure:

### If the Computer Connects Automatically to the Wi-Fi

Microsoft has buried the Wi-Fi password on a computer more deeply with the latest version of Windows 10 and 11 than with prior versions. It is the same procedure for both 10 and 11. You can still find your Wi-Fi password using the following steps (Note: Where I use the term “click,” I mean a single click on the left mouse button or a single tap on a touchscreen.)

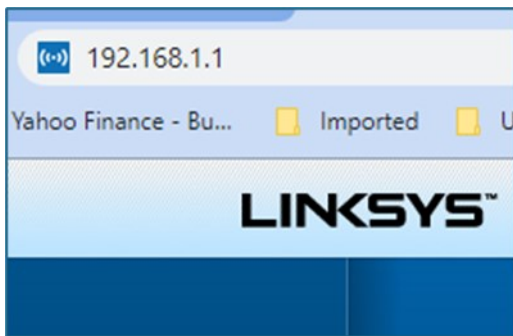


### Find Your Way to the “Wireless Properties.”

Open your Control Panel (Type “Control Panel” into the search box to the right of the Windows button on your Taskbar and Enter). Click on Network and Internet. Click on Network and Sharing Center, then click on the name of your network, which appears in blue. In the Wi-Fi window that opens, click on Wireless Properties. In the new window that opens, click on the Security tab, then check the box on Show Characters.

### If You Only Own a Smartphone/Tablet or Have a PC That Has Not Stored the Wi-Fi Password

Log in to your router as an administrator. You



can access your router by entering its IP address into your browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. You can research the default IP address of your router by Googling “IP address [brand name of your router]. Every router I’ve dealt with had an address of “192.168.X.X”. The most common value for X is the number 1 (for both Xs). If that does not work, try substituting the numbers 0 or 2 for one or both of the Xs. After you log in, you should be able to find the Wi-Fi settings on the Administrative pages of your router. There, you can look up your password.

On Windows 10/11, you don’t have to guess. You can find the internal IP address of your network router by going to Settings > Network and Internet > Status and, under the name of your Wi-Fi (or Ethernet) connection, clicking Properties. A screen will display; near the

bottom are the IP settings. The IPv4 gateway IP address is the internal address of your router.

IP settings	
IP assignment:	Manual
IPv4 address:	192.168.1.211
IPv4 subnet prefix length:	24
IPv4 gateway:	192.168.1.1
IPv4 DNS servers:	192.168.1.1

### If you Are Like Many People

The Wi-Fi password is often written on a sticker on the back of your router. I usually set up home routers this way, and it might be a good idea to do the same after you have recovered your Wi-Fi password.

This is a simple but effective strategy since it is easy to find.

A burglar would have to break into your home to steal your password, and they probably would focus on more tangible items. ❖

### THIS CLEVER TIP ALERTS YOU WHEN APPS ARE ADDED TO STARTUP IN WINDOWS 11

From <https://APCUG2.org>

The Startup page in Windows 11’s Settings helps toggle which apps auto-start when you boot the system. But the more apps you have enabled in Startup, the longer it takes for Windows to be entirely usable after re-starting. That’s why checking the Startup page occasionally and disabling unwanted apps is good.

Read more at [How to get alerts when new apps are added to Startup in Windows 11 | PCWorld](#) ❖

**FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS**

Go to <https://www.apcug2.org> for all aspects of computing and operating systems.

**SPECIAL OFFERS**

Go to the APCUG website at <https://apcug2.org/discounts-special-offers-for-user-groups/> for discounts and special offers for Members of User Groups. Avast Anti-virus and Acronis True Image, and several book, media and training sites offer discounts including the two mentioned below.

- Members can save at the **Pearson Technology** websites: InformIT, Cisco Press, Pearson IT Certification, Que Publishing, Adobe Press, and Peachpit Press.  
[Informit.com/user\\_groups/index.aspx](http://Informit.com/user_groups/index.aspx)  
Code for print books: **ITCOMMUNITY**.  
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- See books on digital imaging and photography, gaming, animation, film and video, post-production, audio, music technology, broadcast and theatre at [Routledge](http://Routledge.com) | [Focal Press](http://Focal Press.com) today! They offer discounts to User Group members.

**TECHBOOMERS.COM**

For learning how to use internet-based websites and applications for free.

- <https://TechBoomers.com>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O2-bwYIYu1I>

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**LAUGHING OUT LOUD**

“Fortunately, this is a problem that can be solved by throwing money at it.”

Reprinted from the UCLA PC Users Group Newsletter, March 1987

**\*How does a computer get drunk?**

It takes screenshots!

**\*Why was the cell phone wearing glasses?**

Because it lost its contacts.

**\*Why was the computer tired when it got home?**

Because it had a hard drive!

**\*What do you call a computer superhero?**

A Screen Saver!

**\*Why did the computer cross the road?**

To get to the other site!

**\*What do you get when you cross a computer and a life guard?**

A screen Saver!

*Jokes from Chat GPT*

**NOTICE**

The columns, reviews and other expressions of opinion in *User Friendly* are the opinions of the writers and not necessarily those of the Los Angeles Computer Society. LACS became a California non-profit corporation on July 17, 1991. Its predecessor was the UCLA PC Users Group.

**MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION and BENEFITS of MEMBERSHIP**

**Annual Membership Dues:**

Regular New and Renewal,	
Printed Newsletter	\$ 40
Electronic Newsletter	30
Family-Associate	12
Students	18
Contributor	50
Supporter	75
Benefactor	100
Gift Membership	20

A subscription to *User Friendly* is included with membership.

**Associate members** use the same mailing as a regular member; they do not receive their own subscriptions to *User Friendly*, but may read it on the LACS website. **Students** must prove full-time status. A member may give a 1-year, 1-time gift to a non-member.

**Monthly general meetings are via Zoom.**

In-person or hybrid meetings may take place in the future.

**Members also enjoy these special benefits:**

- **Monthly Newsletter** *User Friendly*. We publish your article submissions or free classified ads to buy or sell your computer items.
- **Get FREE help** by phone or email (See your roster) from knowledgeable members who are Quick Consultants listed in *User Friendly*.
- **Get help by email** by using our group email list. Send your questions to [PC@LACS.Groups.IO](mailto:PC@LACS.Groups.IO)

- **Receive important news** and announcements via *User Friendly* and LACS's email list.
- **Free APCUG** (International Association of Technology and Computer User Groups) **Webinars, virtual conferences, programs, and technical information.** Check *User Friendly* and your email to see what's offered.
- Occasional **free software and computer books**, if you review them for *User Friendly*.
- **Annual Holiday Party**
- **Social Interacting** with others who have like interests in computers and technology.
- **Special Interest Groups** (SIGs) on various topics may be created by members.

All renewals are due in January. New members will pay the annual amount when they join.

Check # \_\_\_\_\_ **LACS** New or Renewal Membership Application

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Dues may be paid by PayPal, Zelle, or check. If paying by check, make the check out to "Los Angeles Computer Society", and mail it with this form to:  
 Los Angeles Computer Society, 11664 NATIONAL BLVD. #343, LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802

- Please PRINT Clearly**       New       Renewal
- New / Renewal with printed newsletter - \$40.00     Associate - \$12.00     Student - \$18.00
- New / Renewal with electronic, no paper, newsletter - \$30.00     Gift Membership - \$20.00
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Name: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Associate: First \_\_\_\_\_ Last \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Same address as a primary member)

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip + 4 \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail of Associate \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Info in Roster  Yes     No      Preferred Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Publish \_\_\_\_\_

Did a member of LACS invite you to join? If so, who? If not, how did you hear about LACS? \_\_\_\_\_

# First Class Mail

Editor..... Leah Clark  
Indexer .....Leah Clark  
Proofreaders .....Irv Hershman,  
Jim McKnight, Stephanie Nordlinger,  
and Charlotte Semple

*User Friendly* is published by the Los Angeles Computer Society.  
11664 NATIONAL BLVD, #343 LOS ANGELES CA 90064-3802  
Voice-mail: 424-261-6251. Web site: <https://www.lacspc.org>

## Los Angeles Computer Society

### **GENERAL MEETINGS ARE ON ZOOM.**

Before each meeting, members and invited guests will receive an email with the URL link to the meeting. **Just click on the link.** If you haven't received it by the morning of the meeting, let Leah Clark know. When you click on the link, you will enter a waiting room. Then the host or a co-host will admit you to the meeting.

Please try to arrive at least a few minutes before the meeting start-time so you don't interrupt the meeting and any technical problems can be solved. If you need to take a break during a meeting, do not click on Leave or End. If you do, the meeting will be interrupted for someone to re-admit you from the waiting room. You may turn off your video when you are gone.