

# User Friendly

LACS  
A Computer and  
Technology  
User Group

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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)

## WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 11, **GENERAL MEETING**



The meeting will be on Wednesday, the 11th  
because of the Presidential Debate on Tuesday, the 10th.

**Topic: Internet Privacy and Encryption Software**

**Speaker: Mark Schulman**, APCUG Speakers Bureau  
Member of the Central Florida Computer Society

**Meeting Time: 7:00 to 9:00 PM** — via Zoom

**Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30**

**Internet Privacy.** Are your Internet activities safe from prying eyes just because you turned on your browser's Privacy Mode? Learn what's safe and what's not, and how you can cover your tracks and keep your Internet activities safe and private, especially when using public Wi-Fi hotspots.

**Encryption Software.** Losing a laptop or flash drive may mean you're out of money, but it doesn't have to mean that your private data leaks into the world. Learn how to use encryption software to protect your private data on a PC, laptop, external hard drive, or USB flash drive.

### Meet Our Presenter

**Mark Schulman**, an IT expert, has been a computer instructor, software designer and small business owner. He consulted for major corporations, worked on large software development projects, and taught computer and programming courses. He wrote or co-wrote seven computer books published by Que Corporation. Mark is the IT manager for a group of family practice physicians. He gave us a great program on "**Computers to the Moon**" in May 2023. He presented last April on "**Preserving Digital Photos**" and "**Backups in a Busy World.**"



LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **September 8**.

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 **September 8**. 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 ELECTIONS**

It had been customary to include a short bio of those running for next year's board in the September User Friendly. Time has been getting away from me, and it is now almost September! I saw we did it in the October issues in 2022 and 2023. So, I now plan to do it in October 2024 and make that the new normal. We can then have voting in November.

If you would like to serve on our board **as a new nominee or as an incumbent**, please send me a short bio of about **100** words. We also need a reasonably recent headshot **photo**. The president, vice president, and treasurer are up for reelection for one-year terms. Our secretary position, also for one year, is now vacant. We especially need a secretary if we are to keep our non-profit tax exemption status.

Please send your bios and photos to Leah Clark (Me!) by **September 10**. We can take nominations "from the floor" at our general meeting on **September 11**.

We also have openings for **four directors** for two-year terms.

The secretary takes notes at the **board** meetings on the first Monday of each month, and writes a simple summary of what went on at the meeting, any decisions made, and who was there. The recording can refresh your memory, and you can check with attendees if you are unsure about anything. Please consider it.

The directors come to the board meetings, make suggestions, and vote on any motions made. Remember, the meetings are on Zoom, so you don't need to leave your home. Our meetings are informal, so it will be easy for you to fit in.

Your participation is crucial to the survival of LACS. We need your help to ensure that our organization doesn't dissolve due to a lack of volunteers.

Thank you for your consideration. We want to continue learning with LACS.

**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 and not mark it as spam. That will save us a lot of bother. Thank you.

**LACS LUNCHEON MEETING**

The next LACS lunch meeting will be on Thursday, **September 26, 2024 at 11:30 AM** at the Culver City Sizzler at 5801 Sepulveda Blvd. At the June lunch meeting we had fun, good food, and lots of social and tech talk. It would be nice to have more participants in September. Those who miss our in-person meetings will enjoy getting together at our lunch meetings. It is enjoyable to be together in person. You may invite family and friends. Please RSVP to Stephanie Nordlinger via email or phone before or on Tuesday, **September 24**. Watch your email for updates.

**GRANDPARENTS DAY  
SEPTEMBER 8**

*Happy Day to all  
LACS Grandparents*



## GENERAL MEETING REPORT

August 13, 2024

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Gmail and Google Drive

Rob Truman

**Gmail** does a lot more than just send Email.

Gmail is a webmail that allows users to access their email via a web browser or a mail app. It requires an internet connection. Rob showed a video showing how Gmail works.

In Gmail, a drop-down menu allows you to go to your mail, contacts, and task list. There's a search box to find an important email.

Gmail uses **labels** rather than **folders** to help you to organize your messages. You can apply more than one label to an email and create your own labels. Rob explained the difference between labels and folders.

**Gmail Settings** There are numerous settings with many categories in Gmail. Rob showed a video about the different settings.

**All Mail** is where your emails are at. **Inbox** is actually a label. You can select other labels and sub-labels for each email. **Filters** can be created to look for a specific sender, recipient, subject, or words in the body of an email. Rob explained common Gmail filters and what they are for.

### Tips and Tricks

Rob demonstrated how to do each of these.

- Undo send within a short period after sending or schedule when to send an email.
- Press **Shift+?** while in Gmail for a list of keyboard shortcuts.
- Add another email account to Gmail to send and receive emails from that account in Gmail. Ex: Use a Yahoo account in Gmail.
- Block individual senders.
- Drag and drop emails to a selected label.
- Does not recognize dots or periods in a

user name. If you add a + sign after your user name, Gmail ignores anything after the + sign. Ex: Your [name+pcmag@gmail.com](mailto:name+pcmag@gmail.com) goes to the same place as [Yourname@gmail.com](mailto:Yourname@gmail.com). This is handy for filtering messages, because Gmail filters do see what's after the plus sign.

- Gmail includes **Smart Reply & Compose** for a choice of three short replies based on how you have replied to other emails you received.
- There are six different colored stars and six symbols to help you to organize your email.

The **Gmail Side Panel** on the right side of the screen gives shortcuts to Gmail companion apps. These include Calendar, Keep, Tasks, and Contacts. Rob showed a video on using these tools. They can be accessed from Gmail without opening up another tab.

**Google Account Storage:** Each Google account (Gmail address) gives 15 GB of free storage. This includes Gmail, attachments, Google Drive, and Google Photos. Of course, Google will sell you more.

**Gmail Spam Detection:** Gmail has good spam detection. It uses AI to train spam filters, so mark anything you think is spam as spam. Rob showed this list of resources, then he took questions from the attendees. He will send PDFs of this presentation.

### Resources

- Tutorials
  - [TechBoomers.com](https://techboomers.com)
    - <https://techboomers.com/p/gmail>
  - [GCF Global](https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/gmail/)
    - <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/gmail/>
  - [wikiHow](https://wikihow.com/use-gmail)
    - <https://wikihow.com/use-gmail>
  - [My Website – GeezerTek.us](https://geezertek.us)
    - <https://geezertek.us/?s=howto+gmail>

**Google Drive** is a free service from Google to store files online and access them anywhere using the cloud. It gives access to free

**The Cloud Is Nothing  
More Than a  
“Hard Drive  
Somewhere Else”.**

web-based apps to create documents, spreadsheets, presentations, and more. You can get Google Drive for your mobile devices and for your desktop. Rob showed videos on getting started with Google Drive, creating files, uploading files, sharing and collaborating with others.

Every file you create on Google Drive is saved automatically. You can set up a sync file, so whatever is saved to your desktop is saved to Google Drive. All your files can be accessed from any device. You can edit files created by other apps like Excel, and changes will be saved in the original format. You can also convert files to the Google format.

When he travels, Rob likes to upload photos to Google Drive to share. He puts them into a folder, right-clicks on the folder, and either enters email addresses or creates a link to send to people. You can set it up to collaborate with others to edit a file. Those you share with must have their own Google account, but they don't need a Google account to access and open a link to a file. Rob demonstrated collaborating with others to edit a document.

**Google Forms** works well for taking a survey. You can have all the data people submit go into a spreadsheet.

Instead of sending email attachments, you can just send a link. In that way, you can send files that are too large to send as attachments. Google Drive will automatically send a too-large attachment as a link to it.

**Voice Typing:** Use the built-in speech-to-text system to type using your voice.

**Add-Ons:** Google Drive has many add-ons that can increase the productivity of Google services.

**Google Translate** can easily translate an entire document.

If you don't want a Google account, use your existing email address to get access to Google Drive. Rob showed us how.

## Resources

- Tutorials
  - [Techlifeunity.com](https://www.techlifeunity.com)
    - <https://www.techlifeunity.com/search>
  - **GCF Global**
    - <https://edu.gcfglobal.org/en/googledriveanddocs/>
  - **My Website – GeezerTek.us**
    - <https://geezertek.us/?s=google+drive>

Rob answered questions after this informative presentation. He will share his slides. Attendees and guests received a link to the recording of this detailed presentation which includes the videos Rob showed. There was a lot more information than I could put in this summary. ❖

## NATIONAL CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

By **Leah Clark**, LACS President/Editor

The U.S. President and Congress have declared October as National Cybersecurity Awareness Month. This is an effort between government and industry to ensure every American has the resources they need to stay safer and more secure online.

The LACS September general meeting presentation will be on internet security. The October issue of User Friendly will feature Cybersecurity Awareness.

NCSA Champions represent those dedicated to promoting a safer, more secure, and trusted internet. **LACS is a Champion.** ❖

## HOW YOUR IPHONE CAN MAKE YOUR DRIVING EXPERIENCE BETTER

From **How-To Geek, August 2024**

By [Hannah Brostrom](#)

### Parked Car Tracking

When visiting a busy area, like a grocery store, mall, or concert, it can be a pain to remember where you parked your car. Instead of running up and down rows of cars or frantically clicking your key fob to try and follow the beep, [your iPhone has you covered](#).

If you have ever connected your phone to your car using Bluetooth or CarPlay, it can help you find your vehicle. To search for it, simply enter "Parked Car" into the Apple Maps search bar. From here, you can view your car on the map, as well as get directions to it.

If you have an Apple Watch, your parked car should also appear as a blip on the radar in the Compass app!

### Apple CarPlay

One of the best ways to take advantage of both your iPhone and car is with [Apple CarPlay](#). The service is packed with features to improve your driving experience, including on-screen maps, an excellent phone call interface, automatic message dictation, and more. With a host of [CarPlay-compatible](#) apps to tailor your CarPlay configuration to your needs, it's a great way to stay informed without causing a massive distraction.

It is now easier than ever to [add CarPlay to your car](#) if you don't already have it, and it's definitely worth checking out if you're looking to level up your connected driving.

### Phone as a Key

As cars continue to become more technologically advanced, many have come out with dedicated cell phone apps that can do anything from temperature control to location tracking.

One recent trend in car-phone connectivity is [Phone as a Key](#), technology included with some newer cars that allows you to unlock and start your car with only your phone. Going beyond remote-start features that have been around, this technology means you don't have to carry your keys with you to drive.

Many cars that allow you to forego keys and use your phone instead come with safeguards should your phone die, generally in the form of numerical key codes to unlock doors and start the car. Anyone with a car able to take advantage of this technology definitely should, as unlocking and starting your car with a single tap can save plenty of time and hassle.

### Locate the Best Fuel Prices and EV Chargers

Your iPhone is a direct gateway to an incredible amount of information, plenty of which can come in handy while you're on the road. Whether your car takes gas, electricity, or both, your iPhone can help you keep your car going.

There are plenty of excellent apps that can help you find the [best gas station prices in your area](#). Apps like [GasBuddy](#) keep track of local gas station pricing so you always know you're getting the best deal. If you drive an electric car, there are plenty of [charging apps](#) you can take advantage of.

Though car charging stations are becoming increasingly common, finding one in certain areas can still be challenging. Apps like [PlugShare](#) allow you to enter your car details, so that it only suggests compatible chargers, with tons of filters so you only find what you're looking for. These apps are a must-have if you're taking your EV somewhere unfamiliar, and they give you all the info you need to get back on the road.

### Siri Hands-Free

With distracted driving more of a problem now than ever before, your iPhone can help you stay connected without taking your eyes off the road (or your hands off the steering wheel). Siri has been steadily improving since its release on iPhones in 2011 and can perform many different tasks without requiring you to touch your phone.



To set up [hands-free Siri activation](#), open the Settings app on your iPhone, navigate to the Siri accessibility section, and toggle on "Always Listen for Siri".

With this setting turned on, you can access Siri simply by saying "Siri" or "Hey, Siri". While driving, you can ask Siri to read or answer your messages, make phone calls, check your calendar, add reminders, play music or podcasts, and more.

Are you driving through an unfamiliar area? Say, "Siri, where am I?" and the assistant will give you a rough location.

As both cars and iPhones evolve, their ability to work together and improve your experience will only continue. Taking advantage of all the tech currently available for use on your car and your iPhone can transform the way you drive.

**Editor's Note:** Similar features Including *Gas Buddy*, are available on Android phones.

In this article, blue, underlined text are links to websites for more detailed information. Click on the links in the online version. ❖



## SAVE YOUR APPLE WATCH BATTERY

Courtesy: Apple Inc.

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor

Central Kentucky Computer Society

<https://newsite.ckcs.org/>

lextown2 (at) gmail.com

Got an Apple Watch? Tom's Guide recommends you start by using a setting engineered by Apple to make its smartwatch batteries last longer. It's called **Optimized Charging** and helps keep your Apple Watch battery healthy. Plenty of us are overcharging the batteries by leaving the watch plugged in after the batteries are fully charged.

You can switch to Optimized Charging to protect your Apple Watch battery on all models running watchOS 7 and later. On a new Apple Watch, Optimized Charging is automatically turned on. But if you have an older Apple Watch or it's turned off, here's how to activate it, according to Tom's Guide:

- Open Settings
- Open the battery settings menu
- Select battery health
- Use the green slider to turn on Optimized Battery Charging. With an Apple Watch Ultra, you can use *Optimized Charge Limit* instead, which stops, instead of pauses, the charging of your watch.

Apple explains Optimized Battery Charging: "When the feature is turned on, your watch delays charging past 80% in certain situations. The watch's battery level remains between 75% and 80% in these situations.

Your watch uses on-device machine learning to learn your daily charging routine, so Optimized Battery Charging activates only when your watch predicts it will be connected to a charger for an extended period of time. The algorithm aims to ensure that your Apple Watch is still fully charged when you remove it from the charger. ❖

## BACKUP TOOLS AND PROCEDURES

By **Tom Burt**, Vice President

Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

<https://www.scsccl.com>

tomburt89134 (at) cox.net

It's been a few years since I've written about tools and procedures for backing up your computer. With the growing popularity of smartphones and tablets, the need for backup has expanded to include those devices and traditional Windows, Macintosh, and Linux PCs. I can't stress enough how important it is to make regular backup copies of your data files and of your computer's entire hard drive. The backup landscape has changed somewhat, so it seemed a good time for an update.

### What is Backing Up?

Backing up means accurately copying some or all of the data and software stored on your computer's storage drive. The copy is commonly stored on an external device that is not generally connected to your computer. The external device may be a USB hard drive or flash drive, a removable rack-mount hard drive, a folder or partition on another computer on your in-house network, or a server elsewhere on the Internet such as Dropbox, MS OneDrive, or Google Drive. A personal backup solution may include some or all of the above.

### Why Back Up?

The reason to make backups is that (putting it politely) **BAD STUFF HAPPENS!** Computer equipment is highly reliable and may run for years without failing, but sooner or later, storage devices fail. More commonly, accidents (drops and spills, turning off the PC's power, power failures and power surges, and so forth) happen, causing a storage device or other device component to fail. A vast array of malicious software waits for any opportunity to attack, damage, or lock up saved data. There's also a fundamental human error – accidentally deleting a file or a folder.

Without a safe backup copy, data saved on your computer may be irretrievably lost. For example, consider digital photos, videos, music, and financial / tax records. Also, if you had to start over with a new, blank hard drive, it would be relatively easy to reinstall Windows, Linux, or MacOS, but what about all the other programs, settings, and all your data?

### Full Disk Backup – Cloning and Imaging

A **clone** of a hard drive is a complete copy to another hard drive. All information needed to boot and run the computer and all the programs, settings, and data are written on the backup hard drive. A clone fills up the backup hard drive; only ONE clone can be written to the backup drive. To **restore** after the computer's internal hard drive has failed or been corrupted, one can either clone from the backup drive to the computer's (possibly new) internal drive or remove the failed drive and install the backup drive in its place. Cloning back should be the first choice on a laptop or all-in-one computer, provided the internal drive hasn't failed. Removing and replacing a laptop's internal drive is a challenging task.

An **Image** of a hard drive is a complete copy written to a single compressed file on another storage device. The compressed image file doesn't typically use as much space as the original data; only the actual space is backed up. Keeping several image files on a single external storage device is usually possible. As with a clone, the image file contains all the information needed to boot and run the PC, along with all the programs and data. However, the image file is not itself bootable.

To restore a clone or an image file, a bootable recovery disk (CD or DVD) or flash drive is required. All primary backup tools include a tool for creating bootable recovery media.

*Continued on page 15*

## 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.) 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.

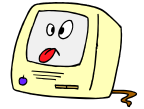
**To pay LACS by Zelle**, log into your bank with your username and password.

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.

### CHANGE 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 Leah Clark, LACS president. See the LACS roster for her contact information.

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, September 2

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

**Place:** Wherever you are via Zoom

### LACS General Meeting: Wednesday, September 11

**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.

<p><b>September 2:</b> Labor Day</p> <p><b>September 8:</b> Grandparents' Day</p> <p><b>September 11:</b> Patriots' Day</p> <p><b>September 22:</b> Autumn begins</p>
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## 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

### September 11: (Note Wednesday date!)

Internet Privacy & Encryption Software, Mark Schulman

**October 8:** Are You Prepared for the Big One?, Mark and Marsha Presky and Jose Morataya

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<br>Android Smartphones - 8<br>Apple devices - 11<br>Anti Malware and Backup - 7, 8<br>Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3<br>Genealogy - 8<br>Groups.IO - 8 | Hardware - 7<br>Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 7<br>Mozilla Firefox - 7<br>MS Excel - 8, 11, 12<br>MS Word - 1, 3, 8, 12<br>MS Outlook - 1, 8, 10<br>MS PowerPoint - 8, 11<br>MS Publisher - 2 | PDF - 8<br>Photoshop - 10<br>Quicken - 8, 12<br>Thunderbird - 7<br>Utilities - 7, 8<br>Windows - 7, 8<br>WordPerfect - 8<br>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 Berkom	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 Berkom	

**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.

## SNIPPING TOOL

### At Last – a Reason to Upgrade to Windows 11!

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

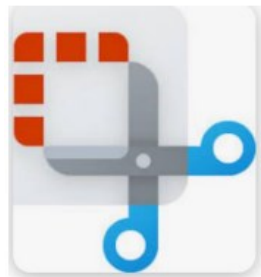


Microsoft needed a win after its confusing efforts to replace Windows 7 with Windows 8 and Windows 8.1. Windows 10, introduced in 2015, is a great operating system that picked up and continued to develop the sorely needed improvements in security that were incorporated into Windows after Windows 7. Windows 10 also managed to recapture some of the intuitive comfort that many users came to enjoy in Windows 7.

In 2021, Microsoft introduced Windows 11.

Many felt it was more in keeping with Microsoft's apparent six-year Operating System (OS) cycle rather than any real need for a new OS. Windows 11 is certainly "prettier" than prior Windows OSs, with rounded corners and a more symmetrical (like Apple?) look, but for most users it was a big meh. Those of us who bothered to read the End User License Agreement (EULA) for Windows 10 and 11 confirmed that Microsoft was moving more and more toward a subscription-based service. You thought you owned your OS!

Finally, in early 2024 Microsoft quietly made improvements to the Windows 11 OS that were worth the price of admission: the new **Snipping Tool**. In Windows 10 this tool was renamed **Snip & Sketch** and let you take a snapshot of any area that appeared on your monitor. This was a vast improvement over the "Print Screen" key that allowed users to take a snapshot of **everything** that appeared on the monitor. Many Windows users, includ-



ing me, have found the Snipping Tool in all its iterations to be an asset—that is how I obtain all the graphics used in my articles.

Now, in the Windows 11 Snipping Tool, you can capture any video and sound that you can get through your computer. There has always been third-party software available, some even "free" (for those of us who still believe there is such a thing as a free lunch), but never has Microsoft incorporated such a powerful recording tool into an OS.

Users wanting to build their private video libraries now can do this without introducing any third-party software, and possible tag-along malware and data sharing, into their systems. Those concerned with Digital Rights Management will note that users are not downloading files, merely copying the digital representations that appear via their computers. Naturally these files are just for the personal use of the individual making the copies, since any distribution, especially for commercial purposes, would still be illegal.

#### Available in Windows 10?

I have come across several articles on the internet discussing the availability of video recording in the Snipping Tool in Windows 10, but I have personally not found this to be true. I have three computers running Windows 10, and on none of these was I able to load the Snipping Tool with video recording, either from a Windows update or from the Microsoft Store. The new Snipping Tool was introduced as an update to Windows 11, so if video recording is not available on your Windows 11 computer, you might be behind on your system updates.

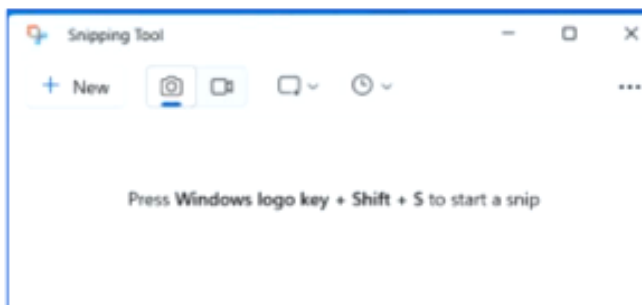
**You can now capture any video and sound that you can get through your computer.**

## Using Snipping Tool

The Snipping Tool has a simple-to-use interface, making it easy for users regardless of their technical knowledge. It is perfect for taking screenshots, creating how-to videos, capturing web presentations, producing instructional presentations, and more. In the following, “Click” means a left mouse click.

Click on the **Start Button**, then click on **All Apps** in the upper right-hand corner of that window. All installed applications and programs are listed in alphabetical order. Click on the Snipping Tool icon to launch it.

Click the camera or video icon on the toolbar, then click the **New** button. You can then select the portion of the screen that you want to capture, then click the **Start** button on the toolbar. Hit the **Pause** button to stop the recording, then resume when you are ready. Recording has some built-in start delays so the initiation of the recording will not override anything on the screen you want to record.



By default, the Snipping Tool records sounds from your microphone and the video itself, but it also picks up background sounds from Windows or your other apps. You can disable the audio recording entirely or enable it to record only microphone or system sounds. Also, by default, videos are saved to your system Videos folder. Once a video is created, it can be automatically opened in video editing software for any tweaks you like. The only supported format currently is MP4.

*Graphics from Google Images ❖*

## HOW ACCURATE ARE ZILLOW'S FREE HOME APPRAISALS?

By **Bob Rankin**

[www.askbobrankibn.com](http://www.askbobrankibn.com)



Whether you are buying or selling a home, it's important to seek independent opinions of the property's value. Historically, buyers and sellers have relied on real estate agents, “the neighborhood professionals” who have years of experience with local markets. But today, online real estate price estimators such as Zillow are considered by many to be more objective and honest than the appraisals of real estate agents. But who is right? Read on to learn why computerized home valuations are not always on the mark.

### Are Online Home Price Estimates Reliable?

The thinking by some is that a real estate agent has a conflict of interest. He or she wants to close a deal and earn a commission, and that generally means persuading a buyer to bid more and a seller to ask less. It's just common sense that a disinterested party will come up with a fairer market valuation. But “disinterested” does not always mean “fully informed.”

[Zillow](https://www.zillow.com) has become “the Google of real estate” by promoting that rationale. Founded in 2006, the company receives millions of online queries. The site allows users to enter an address or zip code to retrieve listings of homes that are on the market with asking prices. It also provides “Zestimates” of the market value of listed homes and surrounding homes that are not on the market. Key details are included, such as square footage, lot size, number of bedrooms and baths, photos, taxes, school district, etc.

Sellers and shoppers rely heavily on Zestimates, which makes life difficult for real estate agents. Zestimates “are the bane of my existence,” said one anonymous agent on an industry blog. People tend to take Zestimates as gospel and argue with the real estate agent’s valuation of a property. Such disputes are killing many deals, say some agents.

Zestimates “are a good starting point,” according to Zillow CEO Richard Barton. Zestimates have “median error rates” ranging from 2.4% to 7.49% depending on your locale.

For major metropolitan areas See [What is a Zestimate? Zillow's Zestimate Accuracy | Zillow](#).

On a typical San Francisco home worth \$1,379,000, that could be as much as a \$102,613 disparity—not exactly chump change, but perhaps not a deal killer in a pricey seller's market.

#### **A Real Estate Distortion Field?**

Apple is so good at marketing its products that some people have joked that it uses a “reality distortion field” to persuade consumers that there is no alternative to their brand. In a similar fashion, the popularity of Zillow may be creating a real estate distortion field.

Real estate brokers all over the country have done their own studies comparing Zestimates to actual sale prices. One real estate agent found Zillow underestimated the final selling price up to 70% of the time, by as much as \$70,000. In 25% of sales, the Zestimate was higher than the contract price. (So 5% of the time, Zillow got it right.) In another ZIP code, Zestimates were off 100% of the time, by as much as \$190,000.

On the flip side, Zillow's home price estimates seem to reflect reality pretty well in my town. That could be because it's a very active real estate market, so there's a lot of current data (actual sales prices) on which to base estimates. If you want to estimate what a home is worth right now, you need to look at recent

sales of comparable nearby homes. That is what real estate agents do every day.

Zillow does provide an interactive map that shows nearby homes that are sold or listed for sale. But it's very difficult for a computer program to understand which of those homes are truly comparable to yours or the one in which you are interested. Matching up homes with similar square footage, number of bedrooms, etc., may not take into account the fact that one home had a recent kitchen remodel, a new roof, or other important factors in determining the value.

#### **The Moral Is That Zillow Estimates Should Be Just One Factor in Determining the Value of a Home.**

Zillow does let you login and claim your home, so you can update any information that's not correct. I did just that when preparing to sell my home 7 years ago. Zillow had the number of bedrooms and square footage wrong, so when I changed those numbers, the Zestimate jumped up accordingly. You can also list your home as “for sale by owner,” upload photos, and set a price you think is fair, given current market conditions. I'm certain that helped me get a top-dollar offer in just days without needing a real estate agent.

#### **Other Home Value Estimators**

There are other online real estate price estimators, including [Eppraisal](#), [Redfin](#), and the [Chase Home Value Estimator](#). They all rely on data pulled from local government records, which are often outdated, incomplete, or inaccurate.

However, they must also use other factors because if you query each one, you'll get different estimates for any given property. The good news is that most of them allow you to log in, claim your home, and update the details if they're not correct. ❖



## Backup Tools and Procedures

*Continued from page 7*

### Popular Full Disk Backup Tools for Desktop Computers

There are several well-known software tools for backing up the hard drives of both desktop PCs and Macs.

#### Acronis Cyber Protect Home (2023)

- <https://www.acronis.com/en-us/> or <https://ugr7.com/>
- Integrated suite of backup, anti-virus, and ransomware protection.
- Excellent for backing up entire hard drives or partitions.
- Makes both "clones" and "images."
- Can "mount" a backup image as a logical drive.
- Can make bootable "Rescue Media" for both backup and restore.
- Can back up individual files and folders.
- Single PC essential subscription lists at \$50 / year, family pack of 3 about \$80 / year. There are premium offerings, including cloud storage.
- User Group Relations (Gene Barlow) prices are 50% lower. <https://ugr7.com/>



#### CASPER by Future Systems Software

- <https://www.fssdev.com/products/casper/>
- Makes "images".
- Features bootable images.
- The single system price is about \$60; a family pack of 5 for \$80.
- Has a 30-day free trial.



#### Macrium Reflect 8 Home

<https://www.macrium.com/products/home>



- The free version has been discontinued but continues to work on Windows 10 and 11. You can subscribe to the "Home" edition for an annual fee of \$49.99 or buy a one-year license for \$70 (no support after the first year). They offer a 30-day free trial.
- Can back up an entire hard drive or partitions.
- Makes both "clones" or "images."
- Can "mount" a backup image as a logical drive.
- Can make bootable "Rescue Media" for both backup and restore.

#### EaseUS ToDo Backup FREE

- <https://www.easeus.com/backup-software/tb-free.html>
- See feature comparison
- Makes "images". You can "boot" from an image.
- You can upgrade to a fuller-featured "Home" edition for \$39.99 annually, a one-year free upgrade, or a "Lifetime Upgrades" edition for \$79.95.



I tried using EaseUS ToDo Backup to back up my C: drive to a USB 3 external 7200 RPM hard drive. It required 52 minutes to back up 300 GB of data. The resultant image size was 184.5 GB. Many MP4 files on the C: drive had already been compressed.

#### Windows 11 Backup (Windows 7) FREE (built-in to Windows 10 and 11)

- This backup tool is reached via: Control Panel > All Control Panel Items > Backup and Restore (Windows 7)
- You can use it to back up key library folders or "Create a system image." Once



there, you can add additional drives or partitions to the basic C: drive partition set.

- I set it up and let it run to make an image of my C: drive (300 GB of data). It ran for 92 minutes. The final image file size was 300 GB; there was NO compression.

Macrium Reflect Free Edition has been my favorite of the above offerings. It's fast, easy to use, and does everything I need for a whole disk backup. And the price was right! However, I'm presently evaluating free and paid alternatives. Here's a link to a good article listing some free backup software tools:

<https://www.techradar.com/best/best-free-backup-software>.

I'm disenchanted with the built-in Windows 7 backup. It's too slow, and the images aren't compressed. I'm also disenchanted that Acronis and Macrium will use an annual subscription model. EaseUS ToDo Backup Free edition looks promising as a replacement for the Macrium Reflect 8 Free edition.

### File Backup Tools

Full disk backups are great, but users don't typically run them daily because they take time, and the backup drive has to be retrieved and connected to the computer. This creates a risk that data files that change may not be accurately reflected in the backup. Consider your saved email and contacts, financial and accounting files, and other documents and spreadsheets you may be working on.

### Windows File History or MacOS Time Machine

One approach is to use an automated file backup tool that scans a designated set of folders at some specified time interval (say every hour). It makes a copy of any new or changed files to a backup storage device such as a flash drive, external hard drive, or a shared folder on another computer. I use File History, checking once an hour, to supple-

ment full disk backups for specific key file folders.

### Windows File Explorer or MacOS File Manager / Finder

For easy one-shot backups, you can still use the built-in file manager programs to select a set of files and copy them to an external flash drive, hard drive, or network-shared folder.

### Cloud Backup Tools

There are many free and paid cloud backup services. Most of these include an automatic sync tool that copies files from your computer to your private space on the cloud server.

Here are some of the free ones.

#### Google Cloud (Google Drive) - *FREE*

- <https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/my-drive>
- Requires a Google / Gmail account
- 15-17 GB of free cloud storage
- Install Google Backup and Sync app (Windows)
- Use Settings to specify a set of folders to be monitored and backed up to the Google Cloud whenever a change is detected (similar to Windows File History)



#### Microsoft OneDrive - *FREE*

- <https://onedrive.live.com/about/en-us/>
- Requires a Microsoft Account
- 5 GB free (more if you've had a Microsoft ID for a long time). If you're subscribed to Microsoft 365 (the Office suite), you get 1 TB per license user, up to 6 TB in total.
- Syncs from a OneDrive folder on your PC or device to your OneDrive cloud storage.





### Apple iCloud – FREE

- [www.apple.com/icloud](http://www.apple.com/icloud)
- Requires an Apple ID (Account)
- 5 GB free; can add more space for a fee
- Built into all Apple devices, can install an App for Windows
- Syncs across all your devices



#### What About My Smart Phone or Tablet?

Many computer users now rely on a mobile device as their primary computer for communication, news, and entertainment, taking photos and video clips, and recording sound. What are the options for backing up mobile devices?

#### Android Phones and Tablets

If you have a Google account and have configured your device to link to it, you get quite a lot of files automatically backed up to your Google Drive cloud space. When this happens, you will want to be connected to a WiFi router, or your Android device may use up a lot of your monthly data allotment.



You can also connect your Android device via a USB cable to your desktop computer and use the Windows File Manager or MacOS Finder to copy files from the mobile device to a folder on the desktop computer. You can also copy files from the desktop computer to the Android mobile device.

To fully back up all your Android device's data, you can purchase and install third-party backup Apps. Try a web search for **Android Full Backup** to see what's available.

#### Apple Phones and Tablets

If you have an Apple ID, all your devices, including iPhone, iPad, Mac, and Apple Watch, already



have built-in iCloud support and will back up data files to your iCloud private storage space on Apple's servers. If you have several Apple devices, a concern is using up your free 5GB allocation; you may have to buy extra space to cover backups from all your devices.

You can connect your iPhone or iPad to your PC or Mac via a USB cable and then use Apple's iTunes program to synchronize various file types between your mobile device and your desktop computer. This isn't quite as general as what Android offers, but it takes care of many file types. iTunes also provides an easy way to fully back up all the data on your Apple mobile device into a file on your desktop computer.

Having the iCloud backup enabled on your mobile device is a good idea. This takes care of frequently changing files. Use the iTunes full backup occasionally to ensure ALL your devices' files are backed up.

With these backups in place, if your phone or tablet is damaged, goes up in flames, or gets lost, you can replace the phone or tablet with relative ease, restore all your saved data files, and be back in business. ❖

### COMPUTER TRIVIA

From **Chat GPT**

- Did you know that the first computer virus, known as the "Creeper virus," was created in 1971 by Bob Thomas? It was designed as an experimental self-replicating program that infected DEC PDP-10 computers running the TENEX operating system. The virus displayed the message, "I'M THE CREEPER: CATCH ME IF YOU CAN."
- The first 1GB hard drive, introduced by IBM in 1980, weighed over 500 pounds and cost around \$40,000! ❖

**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**.  
Code for eBooks: **DIGITALCOMMUNITY**
- 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****Tale of the Printer That Wouldn't Print**

Once upon a time in an office not so far away, there was a printer named Percy. Percy was a reliable printer, always ready to churn out documents at a moment's notice. But one day, Percy decided he had had enough. No matter how many times people pressed the print button, Percy would just sit there, silently judging them.

The IT department was called in. They tried everything: restarting Percy, checking the paper tray, even giving Percy a stern talking-to. But Percy remained stubbornly silent. Finally, one of the IT guys, let's call him Dave, had an idea. He opened up the printer settings and discovered that Percy had been set to "Offline" mode.

With a simple click, Percy sprang back to life, printing out all the documents that had been queued up. The office cheered, and Percy went back to being the reliable printer everyone knew and loved.

The moral of the story? Sometimes, even technology just needs a little nudge in the right direction.

**Tech Support:** Right-click on the desktop.

**Customer:** Okay.

**Tech Support:** Did you get a pop-up menu?

**Customer:** No.

**Tech Support:** Okay, right-click again. Do you see a pop-up menu?

**Customer:** No.

**Tech Support:** Okay, can you tell me what you have done up until this point?

**Customer:** Sure, you told me to write click and I wrote click.

**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
- Contributor - \$50.00     Supporter- \$75.00     Benefactor - \$100.00     Other

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

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## 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.