

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

www.facebook.com/APCUG

www.X.com/apcug (Twitter)

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12, 2024

GENERAL MEETING

Topic: Encryption Software

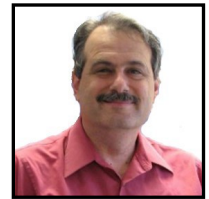
Speaker: Mark Schulman, APCUG Speakers Bureau,
Member of the Central Florida Computer Society

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

Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30

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. This is a continuation of Mark Schulman's September presentation on Internet Security.

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**", and on **Internet Security** in September 2024.



TO JOIN THE LACS MEETING

LACS members on the PC groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **November 10**. Click on it to enter the meeting. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net before or on **November 10**. 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.


FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR


LACS ELECTIONS

Voting will take place at our November general meeting on November 12. **We still have openings for a board secretary and two director positions.** We especially need a secretary to stay in compliance with our 501(c)(3) non-profit status. We can't keep LACS a viable organization without volunteers.

It is not that difficult, and we are ready to help you. Why not give it a try?

LACS NOTICES

LACS Secretary

Our Vice President and Program Chair, Stephanie Nordlinger, has agreed to temporarily take on the duties of secretary. We thank Stephanie, and are hoping someone will volunteer to be our secretary in 2025.

LACS 2025 Dues

Members may start paying their 2025 dues any time now. Early payment will help to prevent a deluge of mail coming in at once. See page 19 for amounts and application, and page 8 for alternate ways to pay.

Fraud Reporting

If you think you are a victim of fraud, report it quickly. See page 17 of the October issue of *User Friendly*. You can report scams to a number of agencies, including:

- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC):** Report fraud, scams, and bad business practices at [ReportFraud.ftc.gov](https://www.ftc.gov)
- **Internet Crime Complaint Center (IC3):** Run by the FBI, this is the central hub for reporting cyber-enabled crime at <https://www.ic3.gov/>.
- **National Elder Fraud Hotline:** Provides services to adults ages 60 and older who may be victims of financial fraud
- **Internal Revenue Service:** Report a tax scam or fraud at <https://www.irs.gov>
- **U.S. Department of Justice:** Report fraud to Criminal.Division@usdoj.gov or call the Criminal Division Citizen Phone Line (202) 353-4641.

If you or someone else is in immediate danger, please call 911 or your local police. If you paid a scammer with a credit or debit card, you should promptly ask the company or bank to reverse the transaction.



*With blessings for all
LACS members, their
families, and friends.*



**THANK YOU, ALL LACS VETERANS,
FOR YOUR SERVICE TO
OUR COUNTRY**



GENERAL MEETING REPORT

October 8, 2024

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Are You Prepared for the Big One?

Mark and Marsha Presky with

Jose Morataya



We don't know when a major earthquake or other disaster will happen. This presentation is about how we deal with no power, utilities, computers, or phones and what that will mean for us.

We know what's happening in the Carolinas and Florida due to category 4 or 5 hurricanes. Many residents are dealing with the loss of their homes, no food or water, no phone service of any kind, no power, and the injuries and deaths of many people.

Are you prepared for a disaster or earthquake? It can hit us at any time without warning. Local building codes do not ensure minimum damage; instead, they ensure you can get out of a building with minimal injury.

We can expect no fire dept., no police, no power, no gas, no phone, no water or food available, or gasoline. The first responders expect us to prepare and care for ourselves, to help each other and our neighbors. We must prepare for at least 1-3 weeks of self-care. Prescription medications will not be available.

Roads will be impassable, clogged with vehicles and people yelling at each other. Power will be out, so signals won't be operating. Chances are there will also be trees, power lines, and other property in the streets. Markets and most stores will be closed. Eventually, some may be opened in a fashion – someone will stand at the door and ask you what you want, and someone else inside will gather it together to sell it to you at exorbitant prices for cash only, exact change. We won't

be allowed inside to shop. There won't be power or internet to run the cash registers.

In 2018, Mark went to a community meeting dedicated to disaster preparedness. He talked to a few people there and looked over the emergency supplies on the table. He met the regional coordinator for CERT – Community Emergency Response Team and told him that he and his wife were interested in the CERT class.

Mark learned that fire stations are supposed to move their equipment and vehicles out of the stations after an earthquake. Then, they have a reconnaissance process in which they will drive up and down neighborhood streets and report on observed damage. They will not respond to requests for help. If your house or building is on fire, they will drive by. If you run out to plead for help for your family member pinned under the roof, they will ignore you. Their job is to report damage to headquarters so they can be sent to help the most people.

CERT has a motto to ***do the greatest good for the most people in the shortest amount of time***. This is exactly what the fire department will do. They will be sent to damaged high-rise buildings, schools, and hospitals that need help. After several days or weeks, they will get around to helping individuals. Mark and Marsha wanted to learn about CERT.

About CERT

Mark showed videos on the history of CERT and about CERT.

During a disaster, such as an earthquake, you and your neighbors will be the first responders in your communities until professional first responders arrive. What you do in the first few hours following a disaster will save lives. The Los Angeles City Fire Department (LAFD) created the CERT training program in 1985. The program teaches community members how to prepare for a

disaster, care for themselves and their families, and safely work as a team to help their neighbors.

This program is now taught in all 50 states and other countries worldwide. The program in each state, county, and city is managed by an official agency such as the Fire Department, Sherriff, or Emergency Management Department. The program typically relies on volunteers to make it work. In LA City, the Battalion and Bureau Coordinators are volunteers who help recruit, put on drills and training, and organize teams.

L.A. City CERT classes are two hours per week for seven weeks and are taught by L.A. city firefighters. In Culver City, Inglewood, Beverly Hills, Santa Monica, etc., you would train at your city fire department. After completing CERT training classes, there are CERT drills and exercises where one learns to put your skills together.

It's amazing how much fumbling goes on at the exercises, drills, and refreshers. At one exercise, it was found that despite having a stretcher or litter to carry a victim who was lying in a doorway, getting it safely under the victim was a challenge, and then even more challenging was getting the victim through the doorway with the victim on it.

Did you know that the most common injury after an earthquake is cut feet from broken windows?

The LAFD puts on refreshers once or twice a year. These are held at local fire stations. Participants in these sessions practice using fire extinguishers, CPR, and search and rescue. One can make mistakes, risking self-injury and injury to other CERT members when in the process of searching a building for victims. Mark discussed various scenarios with pretend victims.

Did you know that only a surgeon can remove a tourniquet? Not even another type of MD can do this. When do you use a tourniquet? How do you apply it? If you learned these

skills more than about five years ago, you need to take a current class because the rules have changed.

Participants learn the basics of using two-way radios. If you like tech, you may get into Amateur Radio.

Participants have fun at these exercises by meeting like-minded people and becoming friends with Red Cross and other aid and first responders. These skills are more likely to be used on your family or neighbors than on strangers.

Neighborhood Team Program (NTP)

Most of you aren't going to go out to take CERT classes. But many of you may want to organize yourselves and your nearby neighbors. Find out where your and your neighbor's gas meters, water shutoffs, and electrical boxes are and how to shut them off and turn them back on. Find out neighbors' skills, e.g., carpentry, medical, therapy, plumbing, etc. Who has what tools, e.g., battery-operated tools such as saws, pry bars, a generator, etc.? After a few days, what local resources might be available for bathing or cleaning up?

Don't expect neighbors to share their supplies (water or food) with you. If they've planned ahead, they've prepared for their own family.

You may not want to become as involved as Mark and Marsha have. You can choose your level of involvement. Most CERT class grads never participate further.

Several CERT members have joined the LA City Fire Department Call-Out Team, which helps the Fire Dept. with brush fires, hydrating firefighters, or with crowd control. For this, they take more courses, including some rather involved Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) first aid courses. They are called out by the Fire Dept. when needed. CERT members are often asked by the police to help with crowd control at various

YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD!

It saddens me when someone uses age as an excuse.

By Leo A. Notenboom

The Best of Ask Leo!

<https://askleo.com>

leo@askleo.com

"I'm old" is a frustratingly common complaint. I talk a little about how that mindset might get in the way of the incredible opportunities technology presents.



Some time ago, I surveyed my readers about their biggest obstacles to using technology.

I heard several variations of the phrase "I'm old." It was both sad and much more than a little depressing.

You're Not Too Old.

Age need not be a barrier to using technology. Tech offers great opportunities regardless of age. The real obstacle is *mindset*, and those willing to learn can benefit immensely. Stay curious, and age can be completely irrelevant.

Age Is Almost Irrelevant.

Technology presents us with tremendous opportunity if we're willing to take advantage of it. It doesn't really matter how old you are. I think technology can play a big role in *staying* young.

I regularly hear from folks in their 70s, 80s, and 90s who are having a *great* time with technology. They use it to do things their children or grandchildren never imagined coming from Grandma or Grandpa; digital photos, messaging, social media, video calls, and more.

They're doing these fun things to connect,

share, and communicate.

In many ways, that's what a lot of the internet and technology is all about: connecting. You know the adage, "You're as young as you feel"? The 70-, 80-, and 90-year-olds I hear from who are having fun with technology stay young *on the inside*. They're enjoying this. They're using it as an opportunity to learn and connect.

Age Isn't As Important As You Think.

The number of years you happen to have been on the planet seems pretty irrelevant.

I run into folks in their 30s and 40s or even younger who are *ancient* on the inside. They're afraid of their technology. They just aren't interested in overcoming that fear and taking advantage of what's right in front of them. *That's* being old.

Many things can get in the way of technology working, but it has nothing to do with your age. More often than not, it's the technology itself. That's where I come in.

But you can do this. I know you can because I see it all the time. I see it from people who are convinced they can't, and then, 99 times out of 100, after making an effort, they prove themselves *absolutely wrong*. They can. If they give themselves a chance, they have a great time with it and reap the benefits.

The Stories I Hear

I often hear from people who make the leap, and it's pretty rewarding. It's one reason I do what I do, and it makes what I do a lot of fun.

The most touching emails I've received have been from folks in their 80s and 90s who have said, "Yep, you made a difference. You helped me connect; you helped me solve a problem."

That's just wonderful. That really, really makes what I do worthwhile.

I hope my body lasts a long time and is around for many years to come, but what I really hope is that on the inside, I'll be a kid forever. Being amazed and in wonder at all the technology around us, that's me — a kid in the candy store. I'm really having fun with technology.

I feel it every day! It's stuff I want to share with you, and I want you to share in that amazement and wonder as well.

It's Not Your Fault.

That's why answers to your tech questions can help move so much. *It's not your fault.* I think technology should be easier for everyone regardless of their age. I want *everyone* to be able to participate in everything technology has brought to us. It can add a tremendous amount to your life.

Imagine the amount of connectedness you can have with other people when you've got the technology in front of you. I regularly connect with people on the other side of the planet — something we never would have imagined some years ago.

People connect with their far-away families. Shut-ins are less shut in because they have this window to the world sitting on their desk. We saw it during the pandemic.

There are so many opportunities that I get distressed when people think they're too old to take advantage of it all.

We All Have Limitations.

I don't want to make it seem like everyone should feel like they should be able to do everything all the time. We all have our strengths and weaknesses when it comes to... well, just about anything!

Some people "get it" faster than others. Some just aren't interested. Sometimes it's simply about attitude, sometimes it's confidence, sometimes it's familiarity, and sometimes it's downright fear.

But it's not related to age at all.

Breaking Through Limitations

In fact, if you've reached an advanced age and some issues prevent you from participating more fully in life, guess what? The laptop on your desk, the desktop computer, the tablet, whatever, is a window into a larger world that I really want you to partake in.

So, that's my lesson today: *please* don't think of yourself as too old. You're not.

Whenever I talk about age and age-related issues regarding technology, I always envision somebody at the other end saying, "Well, you just wait until *you* get older."

On the outside, I will get older. As I update this, I'm 67— older than some folks I hear from who play the "I'm too old" card on themselves.

On the inside, though, I hope to stay young. I have this inner wonder and interest, this ability to say, "You know what, let's learn something new today." That mindset not only keeps me interested and keeps things fun, but it helps to *keep me young and vibrant* on the inside, no matter what happens to this shell on the outside.

Do this.

Stop using age as an excuse. It's nothing to hide behind; if you do, you're missing out on yet another exciting aspect of life. For the record, this applies to much more than just technology, but I'll stay in my lane for now.

Do you know what else you can do?

[Subscribe to Confident Computing!](#) Less frustration and more **confidence**, solutions, answers, and tips in your inbox every week.

For related links, videos, and comments visit [You're Never Too Old!](#) on [Ask Leo!](#) ❖

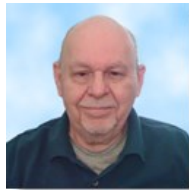


ONLINE GROCERY SHOPPING

By **Tom Burt**, Vice President
Sun City Summerlin Computer
Club, Las Vegas, NV

<https://www.scsccl.com>

tomburt891334 (at) cox.net



One of my weekly activities is provisioning my larder with sufficient food to sustain me for all the activities of retiree life here in Sun City. My weekly meal planning tool, which I wrote in October 2022, is part of this process. You can find that article at: ([https://www.scsccl.com/Gigabyte Archives/gg_2022-10Oct.pdf](https://www.scsccl.com/Gigabyte%20Archives/gg_2022-10Oct.pdf)).

Once the week's meal plan and shopping list are set up and the available specials and coupons (from the stores' online flyers) have been noted, I order the groceries

Here in Las Vegas, I have paid annual subscriptions for free delivery and various perks with Albertson's (Fresh Pass) and Walmart (Walmart+). With both, I place my order online via my web browser or with their phone apps. The store's shoppers do the shopping and bagging, and then a delivery service brings the groceries to my front door. I must order at least \$30 at Albertson's and \$35 at Walmart for free delivery. Both minimums pose a pretty low bar at today's prices. I have been shopping at Walmart for most staples and Albertson's for fresh meat.

One great feature of online grocery shopping is that the stores remember and show you what you've ordered, along with current prices and (for Albertson's) any applicable store coupons. You can reorder things you previously liked or needed.

This can be a helpful reminder if you've forgotten to put something on your shopping list. After a few weeks of shopping, most of your recurring items will be in the "Reorder" or "Buy again" list.

As part of my weekly meal planning cycle, the day before I shop, I check my pantry, freezer,

and refrigerator to see if I'm out of anything and to know what items (especially perishables like fresh fruits and vegetables) are already in stock. I don't want to stock up on things I can't use up before they spoil. As a solo senior who eats most meals at home, I must be mindful of the quantities on hand. Once my inventory is done, I update my shopping list of things I need to get.

Next, I check the online food pages or websites for specials and coupons. I may adjust my meal plan and shopping list based on those findings. I also note savings opportunities where I can buy things for future use (like a super value pack of NY steaks that I can break up and freeze or canned soup at half off). Finally, I decided which store (Albertson's or Walmart) best suits my needs for next week. I rarely shop at both stores in the same week.

Walmart doesn't seem to have store coupons. Prices tend to be the same week-in - week-out, with some food items on sale now and then.

Albertson's *Fresh Pass* has an elaborate system of rewards and store coupons that must be reviewed and selected weekly. However, even after choosing the reward or coupon, you must remember to *order* the item. Selecting the coupon does not automatically add that item to your cart.

The shopping itself is simple. Find an item you want, click the "Add" button, and adjust the quantity if you want more than 1. You can move through your "reorder" list and then return to your shopping list. For anything new, you can use the search window at the top or browse the online store by category or department. Searches can be broad (frozen foods) or narrow (Great Value canned kidney beans).

As you add items, your shopping cart gradually gets fuller. You can view your cart any time to see what you've selected and how

Continued on page 16

LACS INFORMATION

HOW TO JOIN LACS'S MAIL LIST

LACS has an active general email list: 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 Larry McDavid, our Groups.IO Coordinator. (See your roster for contact info.) He will send you an invitation to join. If you have any problems or questions about joining, please contact Larry.

USING PAYPAL OR ZELLE

To pay LACS by PayPal, go to this link: 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.

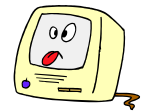
To pay LACS by Zelle, log into your bank with your username and password.

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.

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.

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. Click on **Join LACS** in the bar under the picture. Under **Membership Update**, select **Click Here** to select either the DOC or PDF form. Fill it out; email it with your changes to Leah Clark. See the LACS roster or pages 9 or 10 of UF.

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 few 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.
7. Click **Finish**.

LACS CALENDAR

November

LACS Board Meeting, Monday, November 4

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, November 12

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

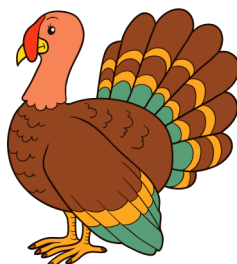
Please log in early so we can start on time. Allow time to be sure you have the link, to get or update your Zoom software if you have not used it before or recently, or to solve any issues before the meeting starts.

November 3: Daylight Time Ends

November 5: Election Day

November 11: Veteran's Day

November 28: Thanksgiving Day



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 . Click on **Member Benefits**, then on **Groups Sharing Meetings** or on **Newsletters Online**.

UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS

November 12: Encryption, Mark Schulman

December: Holiday Luncheon Party

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

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 or call her at 424-261-6251.

Android Smartphones - 5	Mozilla Firefox - 7	Photoshop - 10, 2
Apple devices - 7	MS Excel - 5, 7, 8	Quicken - 5, 8
Anti-Malware and Backup - 4, 5	MS Word - 1, 3, 5, 8	Thunderbird - 4
Dragon Naturally Speaking - 3	MS Outlook - 1, 5	Utilities - 4, 5
Genealogy - 5	MS PowerPoint - 5, 7	Windows - 4, 5
Groups.IO - 5	MS Publisher - 2	WordPerfect - 5
Hardware - 4	PDF - 8	Zoom - 2, 6
Lotus Word Pro, Approach - 4		

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
4	McKnight, Jim	8:00 AM	7:00 PM
5	Nordlinger, Stephanie	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
6	Presky, Mark	Any	Any
7	Van Berkomp, Paula	9:00 AM	5:00 PM
8	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	Open	2024
Treasurer	Gavin Faught	2024
Director	Loling Beckman	2025
Director	Donna Benton	2025
Director	Mark Presky	2025
Director	Irv Hershman	2024
Director	Open	2024
Director	Open	2024
Director	Paula Van Berkom	2024
APCUG Representative	Leah Clark	
Corporate Counsel	Stephanie Nordlinger	
Database Manager	Loling Beckman	
Groups.IO Email Lists	Larry McDavid	
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.

YES, YOU DO NEED A DISPOSABLE EMAIL ADDRESS

By **Bob Rankin**

bob@askbobrankin.com

Here's Why You Need a Disposable Email Address

Have you encountered a website that demanded your email address to make a purchase, create an account, play a game, or gain access to information? I'm sure you have, and in some cases, you've probably done so hesitantly, thinking that you might be subjecting your inbox to a flood of spam. Disposable email addresses can help you tell who the untrustworthy contacts are and protect you from unwanted "sharing" of your contacts.

A disposable email address is a temporary or anonymous email address that can forward messages to your permanent address. Ideally, any replies you send are relayed back through the disposable email address to the original sender, who never learns your permanent address. If unwanted emails suddenly start arriving through the disposable email address, you can stop it by deleting or filtering that address.

You can have one disposable email address for every entity that requires an email address, if you like. Then if spam starts coming from a given disposable email address, you can be pretty sure who's responsible.

It's possible that a spammer just randomly generated an email address that matched one of your disposable email addresses. Still, it's MUCH more likely that the entity to which you gave the disposable email address shared it willingly, by carelessness, or by theft. Data breaches are responsible for a lot of this. Having narrowed down the security leak to one entity, you can investigate and decide whether to give that entity another disposable email address or steer clear of it.

Make Your Own Disposable Email Address with Plus Addressing

There are several ways to create disposable email addresses on your own. Some are free, and some are more work than others. **My favorite is "plus addressing" with Gmail**, which lets me make up a disposable email address on the spot for whoever wants it. Here is how plus addressing works, as well as some limitations of this technique.

Let's say your email address is `whatever@gmail.com`.

Add a "+" sign and any string of characters between "whatever" and the @ symbol, for example,

`whatever + ChaseBank@gmail.com`.

Now, give that address to your online Chase Bank account. Repeat the process for Facebook, newsletter subscriptions, online stores, Craigslist transactions, or any websites with "squeeze pages" that make you supply an address to continue. Of course, give it to that hipster artisanal cheese seller at the farmer's market.

All mail sent to your plus addresses will go to your `whatever@gmail.com` inbox.

If you start getting unwanted emails at the plus address, just create a Gmail filter to send them to the Trash.

For extra points, create a filter to funnel the mail from each plus address to its own Gmail folder. Just keep in mind that this trick works well for automated systems that send to you, but can be defeated by humans who are clever enough to remove the "plus" portion of the address. Also, when you reply to a message sent to one of your plus addresses, the From line will be your standard Gmail reply address, not the plus address. Not all websites will accept a Gmail address with a plus sign, but it usually works.

The Dot Option

Gmail also allows you to insert "." characters in your email address, and effectively ignores them. So if your address is johnsmith@gmail.com, you can use john.smith@gmail.com or even j.o.h.n.s.m.i.t.h@gmail.com and the email sent to those dotted addresses will all go to the "johnsmith" inbox.

The plus sign trick also works with Outlook.com (formerly Hotmail), but Yahoo uses minus signs, which makes the process a bit more difficult. See this page on [Disposable Addresses in Yahoo](#) to learn how it works.

Another option if you have your own domain and receive email there, is to **create email aliases**. That's outside the scope of this article, but your web host or domain registrar can provide details on whether that feature is offered, and how to set it up.

Disposable Email Address Services

Yes, it is a lot of work to set up and maintain disposable addresses for all the entities you communicate with via email. Fortunately, numerous disposable email address services handle most of the heavy lifting for you. Here are some of the established and reputable disposable email address service providers:

[Sneakemail](#) bills itself as "The Original Disposable Email Address Company" and offers to hide your address from spammers and others you'd rather not deal with. If someone wants your email address and you have qualms about providing it, log in to Sneakemail and create a new address. If mail is sent to your Sneakemail address, it will be forwarded to your real address. Sneakemail also creates an alias for the sender of your incoming messages, so if you reply, only your Sneakemail address will be exposed to the recipient. Sneakemail costs \$3/month.

SNEAKEMAIL
since 2000

[Trashmail](#) receives emails and forwards them to your permanent address. When you set up a disposable email address on Trashmail, you can limit the number of emails that can be received or the number of days that may pass before the disposable email address expires. Your disposable email address can be a username of your choosing on trashmail.com, or 10 other domain names (trashmail.me, trashmail.at, etc.). An optional Chrome browser add-on makes the service more convenient. Basic service is free, but if you want more than 25 addresses, unlimited forwarding, or a permanent address, Trashmail Plus can be purchased for \$21/year.



At [Guerrilla Mail](#), you can choose a username and one of ten domain names for your free temporary email address. (My favorite is sharklasers.com) Messages are public and are held for one hour before they are deleted. One nice feature is that you can scramble your email address, to make it harder to guess. GuerrillaMail also lets you reply to incoming messages. There's also a free Guerrilla Mail app on the Google Play store for mobile phones. GuerrillaMail has processed over 17 billion messages!

GUERRILLAMAIL.COM

[10minutemail](#): Load up this site, and you immediately get a free random email address that vanishes after 10 minutes. You can get a 10-minute extension if you need it. Just refresh the page to see any incoming messages for your temporary address. View, delete, or reply to any new messages that appear. ❖



HOW LONG DO SD CARDS LAST?

By **Sydney Butler**

HowToGeek.com

<https://www.howtogeek.com/887545/how-long-do-sd-cards-lastKey>

Takeaway: An SD card built to the specification should last around ten years, but the actual lifespan depends on many factors. The card's quality, usage frequency, and environmental conditions can all significantly impact how long the card lasts.

SD cards are everywhere, and you probably have photos, saved games, or other documents on them that exist nowhere else. So, how long do they last? Can you trust them to keep your data safe, or are you playing with fire?

Understanding SD Card Technology

To get a feeling for the lifespan of SD cards, it's essential to understand the technology behind them. SD cards use flash memory, a non-volatile memory type that retains data even when the power is off, making it ideal for portable storage devices. Flash memory operates through a matrix of memory cells that can be electrically programmed and erased. Each memory cell holds one or more data bits stored as electrical charges. Over time, these electric charges can become unstable, leading to data loss or corruption on the SD card, which limits how long you can keep SD cards in "cold" storage.

Factors That Affect the Lifespan of SD Cards

Various factors can significantly impact your SD card's lifespan. These include:

- Usage frequency, as regular use can cause the card to wear out faster.

- Environmental factors like heat, humidity, and exposure to other elements can also adversely affect the card's lifespan.
- SD card quality plays a crucial role in determining its longevity. Lower-quality cards may not last as long as higher-quality ones due to subpar components used in their construction.
- The amount of data written on the card can influence its lifespan, with more data storage leading to quicker wear.

How long will an SD Card Last?

So how long will an SD card that's not plugged in and left in storage retain its data before the charge that represents ones and zeroes leaks out and erases the information? That's not an easy question to answer. However, according to flash memory standards, the memory chips in devices like SD cards, SSDs, and USB flash drives have different retention standards at specific temperatures.

For example, according to the JEDEC JESD47 specification, flash memory must retain data for at least ten years at a temperature of 55 degrees Celsius. If you lower the temperature, the expected lifespan goes up to some extent. Since SD cards aren't designed to be left in cold storage as a form of data backup, it's unclear exactly how long they'll retain their charge.

For some types of flash memory, that time period can be quite short. Enterprise-class SSDs, for example, might only be rated to keep data when powered off for a few months! This is admittedly not a very satisfying or concrete answer, but anecdotally, you'll find plenty of people reporting that they've plugged in SD cards that have been in a drawer for years, and all the data seems fine. At the same time, the SD card you're actively using in a device might spontaneously lose all its data.

Given all of this, the most sensible thing to do is avoid using SD cards as any form of backup media. Any important information you have should never only exist on an SD card because so many variables can dramatically shorten how long it remains readable.

It's a convenient format for mobile devices like cameras, but you absolutely should offload your photos, sound recordings, etc., as soon as you get back home. Of course, cloud backups of your photos or other data are essential for smartphones that still use SD cards.

How SD Card Endurance and Durability Measured SD card endurance is all about terabytes written (TBW) — the total data volume that can be written to the card before it fails. Endurance varies based on the memory type and card quality, similar to SSDs and USB thumb drives, which also use flash memory.

For example, SD cards with Single-Level Cell (SLC) memory have the highest endurance, reaching up to 100,000 TBW. Multi-Level Cell (MLC) memory cards have lower endurance, ranging from 3,000 to 30,000 TBW; triple-Level Cell (TLC) memory cards have the lowest endurance, from 300 to 1,500 TBW.

Durability is another critical factor affecting SD card lifespan. While designed to withstand physical wear like bending and dropping, SD cards are not indestructible. Mishandling or extreme conditions can still cause damage. Not to mention that they are so easy to lose!

How to Extend the Life span of Your SD Card

There's no guaranteed method to extend an SD card's lifespan, but adhering to a few best practices can help prolong it.

First, invest in a high-quality SD card from a reputable manufacturer. Although pricier initially, they're less likely to fail prematurely, preventing data loss headaches.

Another effective way to prolong your SD card's lifespan is to avoid filling it to capacity.

Leaving some free space on the card helps prevent rapid wear, distributing usage over an extended period.

Safely eject the SD card from your device before removal to avoid data corruption.

Store the card in a cool, dry location, away from direct sunlight and heat sources.

Signs of a Failing SD Card

- Despite their impressive durability, SD cards can fail. If you observe any of the following signs, your SD card might be starting to fail: • Data corruption is a significant red flag indicating potential SD card trouble. If files on your SD card become corrupted or inaccessible, it's a clear sign something is amiss.
- Slow performance is another sign of failure. If the card takes longer than usual to read or write data, investigate further, as this could be an early warning sign.
- Error messages when trying to read or write data to the SD card could indicate that it's beginning to fail.
- Visible physical damage, such as cracks or wear and tear on the card, could also signal that it is nearing its end.

If you notice these warning signs, consider replacing your SD card to avoid losing your valuable data. Having multiple independent backups of any important data is always a good idea.

If your SD card does seem to be failing and you can no longer read data from it, you can try using specialized data recovery software, some of which have SD-card-specific features. Failing that, you can also take it to a data recovery specialist. However, the data has to be truly valuable to justify the cost of professional data recovery, and there's no guarantee of success! ❖



Online Grocery Shopping

Continued from page 7

much you've spent. You can remove items or adjust quantities.

When everything you want has been ordered and double-checked for correctness, including quantities and prices, and the order total is more than the minimum for free delivery, you're ready to checkout. Click the "Continue to Checkout" button.

On the Checkout screen, you choose a preferred delivery date and time from a selection list. These can be a day or two in the future. If ordering early in the day, you may be able to get same-day delivery. You can also pick up the groceries at the store's pickup depot.

Before placing the order, take the time to go through the cart and designate substitutions for the items in your cart. This ensures that the substitution will be to your liking if an item you picked is out of stock when the shopper pulls your order. If you leave it to the store, the substitution will likely be more expensive (and you pay the difference). However, the stores remember previous substitution choices when repeating purchases of the same things. So, after a few cycles, most of the substitutions are already on file. You can choose "don't substitute" for any item in your cart. If an item is out of stock, that cost is removed from your invoice total.

Neither Walmart nor Albertson's will deliver alcoholic beverages. However, you can order them for free pickup at the store's pickup station, subject to the same order minimums.

Final Thoughts

For those of us who are getting on in years or have difficulty getting out to the stores, the online grocery shopping and delivery services from Walmart, Albertson's, Smith's, and other grocery chains are a great convenience. Their "free delivery" services pay for themselves in about ten weeks (actually sooner

because you get additional benefits like rewards points or a free subscription to Paramount + streaming). My experience is that they also save me money because I'm much less likely to buy something I don't need. ❖

To see the screen shots that went with this article, go to

[The Gigabyte https://www.scscclab/Gigabyte/gg_2024-05May.pdf](https://www.scscclab/Gigabyte/gg_2024-05May.pdf) Gazette ❖

PRIVATE BROWSING: IS IT ALL IT'S CRACKED UP TO BE?

By **Chris Taylor**, President

Ottawa PC Users' Group, Ontario, Canada

<https://opcug.ca>

Published in Ottawa PC News (Nov. 2023)

For well over 10 years, web browsers have offered **private browsing**, designed to keep your browsing—well—private.



Google Chrome calls it an **Incognito window**; Firefox, Opera & Brave call it a **Private window**, and Microsoft Edge calls it an **InPrivate window**. The easiest way to get there is to

right-click the browser's icon on the taskbar and choose the appropriate **New...** item from the pop-up context menu.

When in a private browsing window, browsing history, cookies & site data (such as images and contents of webpages), and information entered in forms are not saved to your computer. Other users on your computer will not be able to see your web browsing activities. When browsing, web servers won't automatically recognize you as a returning user, and you won't be automatically signed into websites.

When you close a private browsing window, the browser discards site data and cookies created during that session. Note that you

need to close the private browsing window to remove traces. Until you do, a simple click on the back button will return you to the previous page visited in that window.

Private browsing deactivates extensions. You can enable extensions in private browsing windows if you need them. For example, in Google Chrome, click the kebab menu (3 vertical dots) at the top-right of the window.

Choose **Settings**. Find the extension you want to allow in Incognito windows and click **Details** under that extension. Toggle on **Allow in Incognito**.

Private browsing is not a panacea

It does not prevent all tracking. While websites do not have the luxury of using cookies to track you, there are many other means of tracking. For example, a web server can know your operating system, browser version, extensions you have loaded, screen resolution, IP address, and more. These data items can be used to fingerprint and track you.

Private browsing does not prevent ads. It does not prevent malware. It does not hide where you are browsing from your ISP or employer.

As Gizmodo reported in October 2022, ***Even Google's Own Staff Thinks 'Incognito Mode' Isn't All It's Cracked Up to Be.***

<https://gizmodo.com/google-incognito-mode-google-chrome-1849648071>

Where is private browsing useful?

If you are using a computer at a public kiosk, it will prevent the next person using the computer from easily seeing where and what you browsed.

If you use multiple accounts on a single website, a private browsing window can help you keep things separate.

If you are using another person's computer, it can be helpful in making it less likely you leave traces behind.

Strangely, I have encountered shopping sites that required private browsing for the checkout process to work properly. I guess they didn't want to sell things to me all that badly.

VERIFY THE SAFETY OF WEBSITES

By **Terry Harvey**, Program Chair and Newsletter Editor

Wisconsin All-Computer Users Club

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Verifying the safety and legality of a website is crucial for online security. Here are some steps to follow:

1. Check the website's URL: Ensure it starts with "https://" instead of "http://"
2. A lock symbol or the word "Secure" in the browser's address bar confirms a secure connection. Avoid sites with warnings or certificate errors.
3. Research the website: Search for reviews, ratings, or experiences other users share. Be cautious if there is a lack of information or negative feedback.
4. Check for contact information: Legitimate websites provide valid contact details, including a physical address and phone number. Verify if the information is accurate and reachable.
5. Assess content quality: Poor grammar, excessive ads, or suspicious content can indicate an untrustworthy site.
6. Review privacy policy and terms of service: Ensure they are transparent, well-written, and provide clear information on data collection, storage, and usage.
7. Use website reputation services: Online tools like Google Safe Browsing or Norton Safe Web can check a site's safety rating.

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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
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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Verify the safety of Websites

Continued from page 17

Trust your instincts: If something feels off or too good to be true, it's wise to proceed with caution or avoid the website altogether.

Remember, online safety is an ongoing practice. Stay updated with the latest security measures and use reliable antivirus software for additional protection. ❖

LAUGHING OUT LOUD

From *Pikes Peak Computer Application Society*, Colorado Springs, CO

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

- **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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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.