

User Friendly

LACS
A Computer and
Technology
User Group

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LACS WEBSITE

<https://www.lacspsc.org>

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, FEBRUARY 11, 2025

GENERAL MEETING

Topic: The Wonders of Cell Phones

Speaker: Bill James, APCUG Speakers Bureau,
Member of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City

Meeting Time: 7:00-9:00 PM – via Zoom

Socializing and Questions & Answers: 6:30 PM

Cell phones have become indispensable tools, offering a remarkable array of functionalities that cater to diverse aspects of daily life. They enable seamless communication through voice calls, text messages, and video conferencing, bridging distances and fostering connections worldwide. With GPS and mapping applications, phones ensure users can easily find their way or plan trips. Health and fitness tracking is made possible with apps and sensors that monitor activity levels, heart rate, and sleep patterns. Phones provide quick access to information for reading news, shopping online, or researching a topic. They can be carried hands-free with various accessories. Setting up a phone involves choosing the right model and operating system, such as iOS or Android, configuring connectivity options like Wi-Fi and mobile data, and implementing security measures like passwords, biometrics, and antivirus software.

Meet Our Presenter

Bill James has been an officer of the Computer Club of Oklahoma City and an APCUG Regional Advisor and otherwise active in APCUG for a long time. He worked for the Federal Aviation Administration's Logistics Center in Oklahoma City, OK for 38 years.



TO JOIN THE LACS GENERAL MEETING

LACS members on the PC Groups.IO list will receive the Zoom link to this meeting before or on **February 9**. Click on it to enter the meeting. Guests may ask for the link by emailing Leah Clark at leahjc@sbcglobal.net before or on **February 9**. See pages, 8, 9, 10, and 20 for help in using Zoom, or email Leah with questions. See more information about LACS at www.lacspsc.org.



FROM YOUR PRESIDENT / EDITOR



LACS 2025 DUES

If you haven't already paid your 2025 dues, please do so NOW. If you don't, you may lose your LACS membership, and we don't want that to happen.

See page 19 for amounts and an application, and page 8 for alternate ways to pay. We value our members and don't want to lose a single one.

LACS BOARD OPENINGS

We still have openings for a board secretary and one 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?

USER GROUPS RELATIONS

[Gene and Linda Barlow](#) have been owners of the User Group Relations consulting firm which represents excellent Acronis products. They have provided discounts on Acronis True Image products to APCUG user group members for many years.

Gene and Linda are closing User Group Relations after a career of 62 years.

They will leave their website open until April 11, 2025. They may still have some inventory left to offer at great discounts. If you are interested, contact them at

gene@ugr7.com. or <https://ug7.com>.

LACS thanks them for their years of service and wishes them a happy retirement.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

Many of us are concerned about the misuse of AI. We know that all technologies that have the potential for the good of humanity are subject to being exploited by unethical people.

I ran into a document, *Rome Call for AI Ethics*, published by the Pontifical Academy for Life, in collaboration with several other organizations, including Microsoft and IBM. It has several quotes from the United Nation's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

Six ethical principles are listed.

1. Transparency—AI systems must be understandable to all.
2. Inclusion—These systems must not discriminate against anyone because every human being has equity dignity.
3. Responsibility—There must always be someone who takes responsibility for what a machine does.
4. Impartiality—AI systems must not follow or create biases.
5. Reliability—AI must be reliable.
6. Security and Privacy—These systems must be secure and respect the privacy of users.

You can read it at <https://>

www.romecall.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/ .

TRIVIA

1. In the acronym, **BIOS**, which refers to the firmware that provides runtime services for operating systems and programs, the **B** stands for **Basic** and the **S** for **System**. What two words do the **I** and **O** stand for?

Answer: Input and Output

2. Andy Rubin is known as one of the three founders of what massively popular cell phone operating system.?

Answer: Android

GENERAL MEETING REPORT

January 14, 2025

By Leah Clark, LACS President/Editor

Touring the Web, J. B. Burke

First, Larry McDavid commented on his articles in the January User Friendly on using your cell phone camera during Zoom meetings. You can change the computer's internal camera to your cell phone camera to pick up details around the room during a meeting by going into the Zoom audio settings. Read Larry's articles on how to do this.

J. B. likes to read the comics each day and showed us some. Here is a list of some websites he mentioned or showed us. Go to <http://www.lacspc.org> to click on the links below in the February 2025 User Friendly online version.

- The National Archives is looking for people who can read cursive—<https://www.aol.com/read-cursive-superpower-national-archives-100612982.html?guccounter=1>
- Boeing 787-9 Dreamliner executes vertical takeoff—<https://supercarblondie.com/boeing-787-9-dreanliner-pilot-steep-takeof-grand-theft-auto/>
- OneDrive is not backup, but file synchronization to keep files on your PC and in the OneDrive cloud synced. J. B. uses iDrive for backup.
- Iconic photos from each decade of the 20th Century—https://historyfacts.com/arts-culture/article/iconic-photos-from-each-decade-of-the-20th-century/ and <https://historyfacts.com/science-industry/fact/skyscraper-rotated-90-degrees-people-inside/>
- Map shows the language each country around the world wants to learn most—<https://mymodernmet.com/map-language-each-country-wants-to-learn/>
- In-N-Out workers reveal which “Secret Menu” items are fake—https://www.mentalfloss.com/posts/fake-secret-menu-in-n-out?mc_cid=5c2b56c.357
- The ancient Romans had central heating—<https://historyfacts.com/science-industry/fact/the-ancient-romans-had-central-heating/>
- Download 1,000+ digitized tapes of sounds from classic Hollywood films & TV, courtesy of the Internet Archive—<https://www.openculture.com/2024/09/download-1000-digitized-tapes-of-sounds-from-classic-hollywood-films-tv.html>
- Advanced moon photography—https://www.instagram.com/p/C-dWgkdAomS/?img_index=6
- Seven innovations that came out of World War II—<https://historyfacts.com/science-industry/article/7-innovations-that-came-out-of-world-war-ii/>
- Every country's favorite ice cream flavor, mapped—https://www.mentalfloss.com/posts/every-countrys-favorite-ice-cream-flavor?mc_cid=33abf63c55
- And now, the news from Colorado; a goat dancing on top of a parked car—<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K92-o1iRSD4>
- Dinosaurs were alive longer than they've been extinct—<https://historyfacts.com/science-industry/fact/dinosaurs-were-alive-longer-than-theyve-been-extinct/>
- Giant catapult launches satellites into orbit without the need for rocket fuel—

https://www.space.com/spinlaunch-aces-10th-suborbital-test-launch and <https://www.thebrighterside.news/post/giant-catapult-launches-satellites-into-orbit-without-the-need-for-rocket-fuel/>

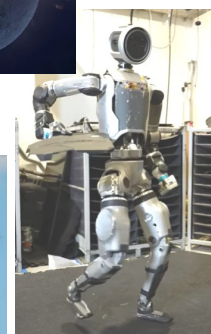
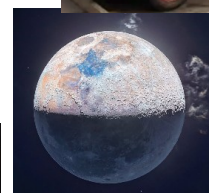
- Ten of the most historically significant aircraft in aviation history—<https://www.slashgear.com/1647077/most-historically-significant-aircraft-aviation-istory/>
- How to freeze your credit —Go to all three credit boroughs to create a free account with each.
- Top 10 smallest countries by population—<https://www.sciencefocus.com/planet-earth/smallest-countries-in-the-world-population>
- Seven reasons why a Chromebook is the best laptop for most people—<https://www.zdnet.com/article/7-reasons-why-a-chromebook-is-the-best-laptop-for-most-people/>
- Top 10 world's longest bridges—<https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/top-10-worlds-longest-bridges>
- “Data Is Beautiful”: 40 charts and guides that might change your perspective on things—<https://www.boredpanda.com/interesting-charts-maps-cool-guides/>
- Top 10 countries with increasing forest areas—<https://www.sciencefocus.com/nature/top-10-countries-growing-forest-area>
- Here are seven apps that may convince you about AI—<https://www.tomsguide.com/ai/my-parents-werent-convinced-about-ai-until-i-showed-them-these-7-apps>
- Top 10 countries with the speediest internet—<https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/top-10-countries-with-speediest-internet>

[science/top-10-countries-with-speediest-internet](https://www.sciencefocus.com/science/top-10-countries-with-speediest-internet)

- BBC Science Focus Magazine (Libby Magazine)—<https://ppl.catalog.yln.info/OverDrive/cff2830-168f-44b1-ab21-9a635924ba43/Home>
- Before FedEx and UPS, there was Railway Express Agency—<https://nprymuseum.org/railway-express-agency-room/>
- Visualized: Comparing the Titanic to a modern cruise ship—<https://www.visualcapitalist.com/visualized-comparing-the-titanic-to-a-modern-cruise-ship/>
- Boston Dynamics’ new video shows that its humanoid robot doesn’t need a human—https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F_7IPm7f1vI&t=41s
- Mental Floss – Amazing Fact Generator—<https://www.mentalfloss.com>

J. B. told us he likes **Joplin** for notetaking. He finds it easier to use than Evernote, and it’s free to use on one machine. ❖

Here are a few images from the websites J. B. showed us.



YOU SHOULD HAVE A SUPER-FAST USB CAR CHARGER

By **Corbin Davenport**

Corbin (at) howtogeek.com
How-To Geek,
December 29, 2024



A fast USB car charger can be a great backup power source for laptops, battery banks, and other devices during emergencies or unexpected trips. If you don't have one already, you should get one.

I recently bought a [130W UGREEN car charger](#) (pictured below) for a grand total of \$27, which has two USB Type-C ports and one USB Type-A.



It can output 100W of power through one USB-C port, 22.5W on the USB Type-A connector, and 30W on the other USB-C port. There are other similar high-power car chargers from different manufacturers, like the [Anker Nano Car Charger](#), but the UGREEN is the one I've been using for a few weeks.

The Need for Speed

I don't usually need fast charging for my phone in the car since my phone gets charged overnight, and my car's regular USB port can keep it powered up while I'm on the road. There are still situations where fast charging a phone comes in handy, though. If you have a power outage at home or forget to plug it in overnight, a fast charger can potentially give you a day of usage much faster than a typical 10-15W car USB port or basic car charger.

Fast USB-C car chargers aren't just for

smartphones. Many tablets, laptops, portable power banks, PC handhelds, Nintendo Switch consoles, and other devices use the same [USB Power Delivery](#) (USB-PD) standard. My M1 MacBook Air can charge over USB-C at up to 45W, so this UGREEN car charger can fully recharge the laptop within a few hours. There are also reports of people using these fast car chargers for [Starlink Mini antennas](#), [DJI drone battery docks](#), and other devices with USB-C inputs.

You could already use [car power inverters](#) to power laptops and other larger devices from a car cigarette lighter/accessory port. Still, USB fast chargers are more compact and don't require you also to bring along wall chargers. Car USB chargers are also more power-efficient than inverters since power isn't being converted at all—the car's battery and USB both use [DC power](#).

A Great Backup

I bought my 130W car charger mainly as a backup power solution for emergencies rather than everyday phone charging. In the event of an extended power outage or unexpected road trip, it can quickly top up my phone, laptop, and anything else if I don't have a charged [portable battery](#) around.

There are a few catches to using these high-power car chargers. Most vehicles shut off power to the cigarette lighter/accessory port when the car is turned off. Otherwise, whatever is plugged in will slowly drain the vehicle's battery until it dies, and you need a jumpstart. Blowing the fuse in the port on some cars is also possible if the charger is drawing too much power. Check what your vehicle can handle and do a test charge before an emergency happens.

If you don't have one already, I recommend picking up a charger like [UGREEN 130W Car Charger](#), especially if you have USB-C devices that require more power to charge at full speed. ❖

A NEW SMART PHONE

Exciting or Frightening?

By **Phil Sorrentino**

Sarasota Technology User Group (STUG)
STUG Monitor, September 2024

A new phone is always exciting and sometimes a bit frightening. If you are replacing a phone just because it's about that time (3 or 4 years), there are many things to consider. But if you are replacing a phone because your old one just died—and it's almost impossible to exist nowadays without a phone—then hopefully you have planned for the replacement. Either way, there are lots of things to consider.



The phone—specifically the manufacturer and model—is actually the second thing to decide on; the first is the wireless service. There are many providers of wireless service. To start, there are the owners and operators of the three nationwide wireless networks: Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile (U.S. Cellular also operates a network but is considered just a large regional network.) In addition, there are a large number of Mobile Virtual Network Operators (MVNOs) such as Consumer Cellular, Boost Mobile, Virgin Mobile, TracFone, Republic Wireless, Mint Mobile, Cricket Wireless, Ting, and many more. Over 100 MVNO brands are in the U.S., accounting for a little less than 10% of U.S. wireless subscribers. These companies do not own their own wireless network; rather, they lease service from the three major networks—Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile—and resell it to the public.

If you are considering a different provider, check out the new provider's coverage map in all the geographic areas where you

intend to use the phone. There's no need to be concerned with 3G networks, as they were shut down in 2022. Most populated areas of the country are well covered with 4G capabilities. At the same time, 5G may only be available in certain locations (5G coverage may only be a consideration if you are choosing a 5G phone). Customer service is probably one of the most important considerations, but it may be the most difficult to determine before you make the "buy" decision. Talk to your friends who have other providers and see what they say about their customer service experiences.

So, unless you are interested in changing your provider for one reason or another—typically to save money—you will probably stick with your current provider and see what phones they might suggest. And if you have been happy with your phone's manufacturer, you might stick with that same manufacturer.

Then, the only decision would be the particular model and maybe the amount of memory. Sticking with the same manufacturer may make the transition to the new phone easier than if you were switching manufacturers. The larger manufacturers (Apple, Samsung, and Motorola, for example) typically provide some assistance in migrating all your old information (apps and documents) to the new smart phone.

By now, most of us know that there are two families of smartphones: the iPhone, manufactured by Apple, and the Android family, manufactured by many companies such as Samsung, Motorola, Sony, Lenovo, Google (Pixel), OnePlus, etc. In the U.S., Apple has about 55% of the market, leaving about 45% for Android, with 25% of that attributed to Samsung. Globally, Android accounts for about 70% of smartphones in use.

So, one of the first decisions to make is Apple or Android? If you choose Apple, then either go to your wireless provider's website

or to the Apple website to see what current offerings are available. If you choose Android, you will need to decide on a manufacturer. Currently, Samsung appears to have the largest percentage of Android smartphones in use, so that might be a good place to start.

If you plan to use the new phone while traveling outside the U.S., don't forget to check if it can be used internationally.

If you are selling or giving away your old phone, don't forget to remove the micro SD memory card, if you have one, and the SIM card.

One of the considerations when purchasing a phone is memory. There are two types of memory: **volatile** and **non-volatile**. Typically, memory refers to the amount of non-volatile memory, which is referred to as storage. This is where all the phone's objects and resources are kept, such as the operating system (OS), apps, pictures, videos, documents, and music. Depending on the OS version, the amount of storage on any phone can usually be found in Settings, possibly on a screen called Storage. Typical storage amounts are 32GB and up.

Volatile memory, the other kind of memory, is referred to as RAM and typically affects the performance and responsiveness of the phone. Typical RAM amounts are 2GB and up. And, as always, with both types of memory, the more, the better.

At this point, most phones for sale have the newer USB Type-C charging connector, but not all. If you look at the cable connector end or the connector on the phone, you will see it has a symmetrical oval shape. The connector can be inserted into the phone either way; there is no wrong way to insert it.

Just as a review, until recently, the connector on phones has been the Micro USB type, which is not symmetrical and is not interchangeable with the Type-C connector.



USB Type-C

Micro USB

My new phone just arrived, to my excitement, from my Internet service provider. My current wireless communications service provider is the MVNO Ting. Because I was happy with Ting and my old Motorola phone, I bought the new phone directly from the Ting website. My previous phone was a Motorola E, and I was happy with that, so I bought a new Motorola E (2020).

I put the old SIM card into the new phone, charged the battery, turned the phone on, and followed the instructions. Within a few hours, I had everything moved to my new phone, despite the great number of OS restarts. This new phone was not nearly as frightening as some have been in the past. Now, I can take advantage of some of the new capabilities, which was the reason for getting a new phone in the first place. ❖

HOW TO EASILY IDENTIFY PHISHING EMAIL

By **Jim Hillier**

Dave's Computer Tips, 12/18/2024

Phishing refers to an attempt by criminals to trick people into revealing sensitive personal information, especially banking and financial details. These attempts are delivered mainly either via email or text message. In this article, I'll be explaining phishing email. In the early days, phishing attempts were quite crude. However, over time they have become more and more sophisticated, even to ...

Read more at <https://tinyurl.com/265aw7xu>

❖

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 Zelle, log into your bank with your username and password.

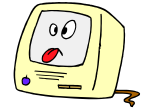
Select **Transfer Money > Send Money with Zelle**. Follow the instructions. The recipient is **Los Angeles Computer Society**. Select **Send by email**. The email address is: lacomputersociety@gmail.com.

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

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

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 it is for dues, add any updated information: physical and email addresses, preferred phone number, and your dues type (regular, electronic, etc.) and if you don't want your contact information to be in our roster.

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 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



LACS Board Meeting, Monday, February 3

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

LACS General Meeting: Tuesday, February 11

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

Place: Wherever you are via Zoom

February 2: Groundhog Day

February 3: LACS Board Meeting

February 11: LACS General Meeting

February 14: St. Valentine's Day

February 17: Presidents Day

February 28: Ramadan begins



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

February 11: The Wonders of Cell Phones - Bill James

March 11: TBA

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

ZOOM MEETINGS

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

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

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 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 Elements - 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 - 9 | MS Publisher - 2 | WordPerfect - 5 |
| Hardware - 4 | PDF - 5, 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 Berkom, Paula | 9:00 AM | 5:00 PM |
| 8 | Wilder, Joan | 9:00 AM | 9:00 PM |
| 9 | McDavid, Larry | Contact by email | |

Note: Times are Pacific Times

OFFICERS, DIRECTORS AND LEADERS

| TITLE | NAME | TERM |
|--------------------------|----------------------|------|
| President | Leah Clark | 2025 |
| Vice President | Stephanie Nordlinger | 2025 |
| Secretary | Open | 2025 |
| Treasurer | Gavin Faught | 2025 |
| Director | Loling Beckman | 2025 |
| Director | Donna Benton | 2025 |
| Director | Mark Presky | 2025 |
| Director | Irv Hershman | 2026 |
| Director | Jim McKnight | 2026 |
| Director | Open | 2026 |
| Director | Paula Van Berkom | 2026 |
| 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.

How-To Geek's Best of CES 2025 Award Winners

By Joe Fedewa, Nick Lewis, Jordan Gloor, Andrew Heinzman, Kris Henges, Joe Keeley, Cory Gunther & Dan Helyer

[HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com), January 7, 2025

Best Laptop: Lenovo ThinkPad X9 Series



Lenovo's ThinkPads are known for being workhorse laptops, and the ThinkPad X9 looks to be no exception.

The ThinkPad X9 comes in two size variants: a 14-inch and 15-inch model. Both models are highly customizable—you can get up to 2TB of PCIe 4.0 storage, 32GB of RAM, and have your choice of Intel's Core Ultra 7 Processors (Series 2). That gives you plenty of

power to do everything from everyday office work to light video and photo editing, and the CPU options all include an NPU, which ensures you can run the latest AI tools.

They both come with Wi-Fi 7, Bluetooth 5.3, two Thunderbolt 4.0 ports, a 3.5mm audio port, and an HDMI port. The 15-inch model also sports a USB-A port.

Both models offer a 2.8K, 120Hz OLED display that is touch-enabled, though you can opt to get either model in a non-touch variant if you won't make use of the touchscreen.

The X9 lineup also features customer replaceable batteries—something that has become increasingly uncommon in modern laptops.

Best Gaming Laptop: Legion Pro 7i 16 Gen 10



There are no shortage of sleek-but-powerful gaming laptops at CES 2025, but one that stands out in particular is Lenovo's Legion Pro 7i Gen 10. The Legion Pro 7i Gen 10 sports a 16-inch, 2560x1600 (WQXGA), OLED display that supports refresh rates up to 240Hz.

Of course, if you give a gamer a fancy high-speed, OLED display, they'll want the hard-

ware to power use it. Here, the 7i (Gen 10) delivers. You can customize your hardware selections, but the top-shelf model comes packing an NVIDIA 5090, Intel's Ultra 9 275HX, 64GB of DDR5, and 2TB of SSD storage. That is literally the best money can buy in 2025. It is suitable for the most demanding gaming applications, as well as photo and video editing, CAD and 3D modeling work, and almost any intensive work application you'd be tempted to throw at it.

Best Networking: NETGEAR Orbi 870 Series Mesh Wi-Fi System



The [Netgear Orbi 870 Series Mesh System](#) takes the top spot for networking gear at CES 2025. Granted, it didn't have a ton of competition, but it's still impressive thanks to its expansive support for up to 10-gig internet. The Wi-Fi 7 mesh network boasts a collective speed of up to 21 Gbps across its bands, and it also has you covered on the wired front with our 2.5 gig Ethernet ports. Its multilink back haul takes advantage of the

6GHz band introduced not long ago in the Wi-Fi 6E standard.

It will be available for purchase January 7, starting at \$1,000 for a router and single satellite unit, which covers 6,000 square feet. So it won't be cheap, but considering its expansive support and the fact that all the latest wireless devices support Wi-Fi 7 now, it is a epitome of future-proofing.

Best Computer Monitor: Dell UltraSharp 27 Thunderbolt Hub Monitor



There are plenty of flashy and innovative computer monitors at CES this year. And although we appreciate style, there's nothing better than substance. [Dell's new Ultra Sharp 27 4K Thunderbolt Hub Monitor](#) (U2725QE) is a truly substantial desktop display, offering a high-quality image and a monstrous I/O selection.

Launching for \$700 on February 25th, the UltraSharp 27 4K Thunderbolt Hub Monitor utilizes an IPS Black display panel to achieve a 3,000:1 contrast ratio. Its integrated Thunderbolt 4 hub provides 140-watt passthrough charging, Gigabit Ethernet, four USB 3.0 Type-A ports, a pair of USB-C ports, two DisplayPort connections with daisy-chaining, and a pop-out module with extra USB-C and Type-A connectivity. This is an insanely convenient and high-quality monitor, particularly for laptop owners who want to sit down and lock in at a desk.



Best TV or Projector: Samsung S95F



The Samsung S95F is a 4K OLED display with a refresh rate up to 165 Hz, a feature gamers with high-end hardware are sure to appreciate. Since it is an OLED display, you can count on a great contrast ratio—an essential consideration when paying top dollar for a television.

Critically, Samsung claims that the S95F is 30% brighter than any other OLED on the market. Lower max brightness has historically been one of the drawbacks of OLED televisions when compared to competing display technologies, but a double-digit bump goes a long way to making the real-world difference, in normal viewing conditions, unimportant. It also features an update to Samsung's anti-glare coating. That, when combined with the improved brightness of the display, make it an appealing option for almost any room. The S95F also comes packed to the brim with the latest in AI-technology, including AI-upscaling, and automatic optimization of contrast, brightness, and color for those that like those features.

Best Robot Vacuum: Eufy Clean E20 3-in-1



The Eufy Clean E20 is one of the more interesting robot vacuums in recent years. It can be used as a typical robot vacuum, but also as a cordless stick vacuum and a small handheld vacuum. This 3-in-1 functionality makes it a great choice for tackling a variety of messes around the house.

Need to clean up crumbs on the floor quickly? Simply attach the extension tube with floor brush to the vacuum module and pull it out of the robot body to use it as a stick vacuum. For cleaning up messes on furniture or in hard-to-reach places, attach the smaller combination tool to the vacuum module. You don't have to only rely on automated cleaning. The Eufy Clean E20 3-in-1 is available right now for pre-order, and it will launch officially on February 10th for \$549.99. It will be for sale at eufy.com, Amazon, Best Buy, and Kohl's. Early buyers will get \$50 off and a 100-day free return period.

CONSUMER ELECTRONICS SHOW

Best Mouse: HyperX Pulsefire Saga Pro Wireless Gaming Mouse



If you regularly sink hours into gaming, you need a mouse that is not only accurate and reliable, but also comfortable. That's why HP's HyperX Pulsefire Saga Pro Wireless Gaming Mouse stood out at CES.

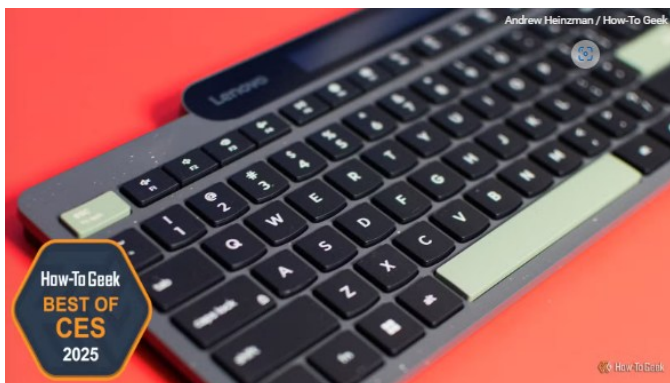
It offers a modular shell design, with interchangeable magnetic components so that you can customize the mouse to your liking without any tools. It comes with two different shells, button covers, and side button

pairs—sixteen combinations in total. No matter your setup, the mouse comes in at a light 72 grams. Even better, HP will provide free 3D print files, so you can create your own alterations at home if you have the necessary gear.

The wireless mouse has polling rates up to 4,000Hz, optical switches, and gamer-essential adjustable RGB lights. Plus, if you use it in 1,000Hz polling mode, HP says it will last for up to 90 hours on a single charge.

The HyperX Pulsefire Saga Pro Wireless Gaming Mouse is expected to launch in March 2025 for \$119.99. A wired, non-pro version launches at the same time (with slightly different specifications) for \$79.99.

Best Keyboard: Lenovo Self-Charging Bluetooth Keyboard



Lenovo unveiled a wealth of products at this year's CES, but a humble wireless keyboard particularly caught our eye. Thanks to a solar panel that sits at the top of the keyboard, it charges itself through indoor ambient lighting and is capable of up to 45 days of use in a completely dark environment. If ever completely depleted, it only needs two minutes of light exposure to regain enough power for immediate use.

Solar keyboards aren't new technology—Logitech's now-discontinued K750 came out over a decade ago—but there isn't much choice, which is why Lenovo's sleek-looking Bluetooth 5.1 offering is a welcome addition. It has a spill-resistant design and an exterior made from 95% post-consumer recycled plastics. It can connect to three devices, which is perfect for seamless work station switching.

Best Bluetooth Speaker: JBL Authentics 200



JBL's new speaker delivers on both form and function. It retains the iconic retro design of previous models, styled after JBL's L100 speakers from the '70s. It's a Bluetooth, Wi-Fi, and Ethernet-equipped speaker with automatic self-tuning, and you can control it through either voice assistant or the companion JBL One app. However, my favorite aspect of this Bluetooth speaker is the retro Quadrex grill and

rectangular shape. Ditch the boring design of your average cylindrical speaker, and elevate your home with a vintage-looking speaker that offers punchy, loud, and crisp sound.

The upgraded JBL Authentics 200 series now comes in black or white and will be available in March 2025 for \$350.

Best Audio: Shokz OpenFit 2



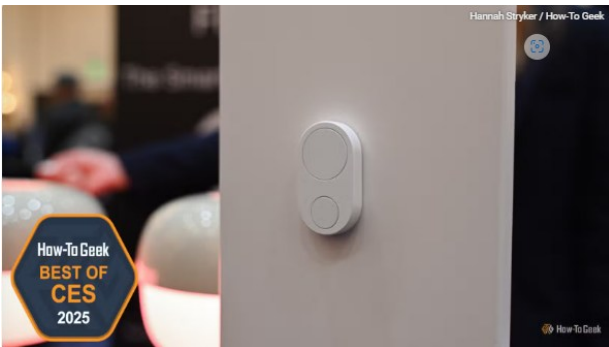
If you like listening to music while being active, you know how important it is to stay aware of your surroundings. Shokz specializes in earbuds and headsets for active people, and we took note of the improvements they've brought to the table with the Shokz OpenFit 2 earbuds. The OpenFit line uses an earhook shape to stay in place and lets you hear everything around you with its "open" design.

We reviewed a previous iteration, [the OpenFit Air earbuds](#), last year and generally liked them. The OpenFit 2 brings a bigger driver for improved sound, and it also attempts to address our complaints about touch control sensitivity by adding physical buttons in addition to the touch. It also got upgraded to an IP55 rating, which will make them better for handling rain and maybe the shower, if you're careful.

The OpenFit 2 is available starting January 7 for \$180. We haven't put them to the full test yet, but Shokz claims you can expect up to 48 hours of listening time with the charging case and up to 11 hours per charge.



Best Smart Home: Flic Duo Button



There's no shortage of impressive gadgets in the smart home space at CES 2025, but for our pick of Best Smart Home product, we opted for something deceptively simple that you might actually want to buy: [the Flic Duo](#).

Despite its minimal design, this pocket-friendly smart remote combines two buttons with motion controls, letting you set over 30 unique commands for your smart home.

For example, you could mount the Flic Duo on a wall and use the top button to turn lights on, while the bottom button turns them off. Holding or double pressing each button could set different smart home scenes. Then you could lift the Flic Duo off its mount and swipe up while holding a button to turn up your smart speaker, or you could twist the remote to lock or unlock the front door. The possibilities go on.

All of this comes in a stylish remote available in black or white. We haven't even touched on the fall detection, three-color LED, or range of accessories. Pre-orders start January 28, with shipping from Q2 2025.

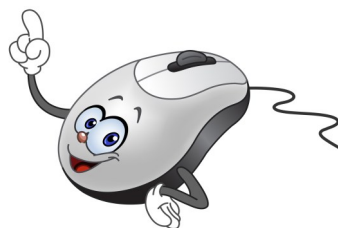
Best Smartphone Accessory: Belkin Stage Power Grip



The [Belkin Stage PowerGrip](#) is more than just a stand and a battery pack—it's also a camera grip. And if that's not cool enough, hidden within its design is a retractable USB-C cable, allowing you to charge your iPhone or other devices on the go.

As a camera grip, the PowerGrip works with Bluetooth to enable snapping a photo with the shutter button on the top of the grip. As a battery pack, the PowerGrip features a 10,000mAh battery to charge your phone and other devices with the cable. And as a stand, it can be positioned both in portrait and landscape orientation. Not a bad multipurpose device.

Belkin did not share pricing for the PowerGrip, but it did say it will be available in powder blue, sandbox (beige gray), fresh yellow, black, and pepper (dark gray). We don't know when it will be available. ❖



FOR MANY HELPFUL TIPS AND TRICKS

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Formerly TechBoomers

<https://www.techlifeunity.com>

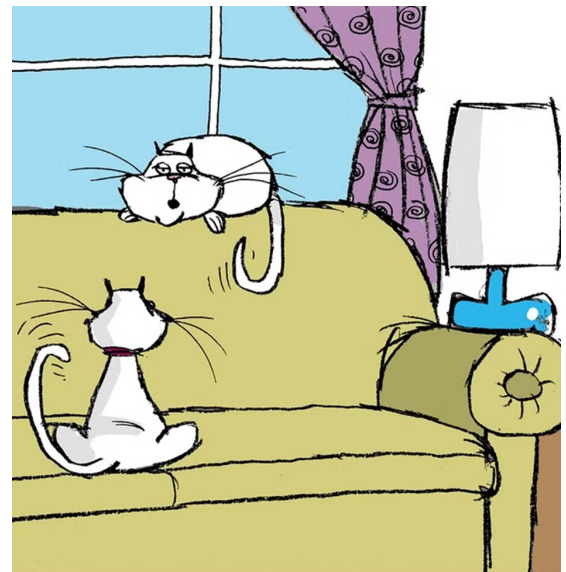
For learning how to use internet-based websites and applications for free.

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LAUGHING OUT LOUD

Submitted by Sylvia Davis, LACS Member



"I don't know if technology has made me lazy, or I was born this way."

From www.howtogeek.com

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

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

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

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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.

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 you to re-enter.

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