# February 2016

# CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

## This Week's Schedule

**February 13 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
General Meeting - Leader: Ray Carlson
Location: Prescott Public Library

**First Hour: Bob Gostischa of Avast will discuss computer security issues.**

**Second Hour:** Phil Ball will present Tips and Tricks with insights into various topics that assist with regular computer activity.

**In addition to the presentations, the following are typical events which take place at our General meetings:**

*1) We hold an informal Flea Market in which you are encouraged to bring in your excess computer equipment or software and make them available for others to enjoy at no charge. Please deposit give-away items on the table in the back marked "Free Stuff." Any items left here at the end of the meeting are subject to disposal.*

*2) If you have items that are just too good to give away, you may set up a separate table and hold your own sale.*

*3) We conduct a raffle of gift cards at the end of the meeting, so make sure to get a pair of tickets from whoever is in charge and place one on the item you'd like to win.*

*4) We will also accept your used ink and toner cartridges for recycling. They are turned in to Think4Inc for credits which PCS uses to purchase office supplies from them.*

## Future Meetings

**February 20 - Saturday**

There will be no PCS meeting today.

**February 27 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
Smartphone SIG - Leader: Murray Smolens
Location: Prescott Public Library

Murray Smolens will discuss Smartphone-related topics.

## Future Meetings, continued:

**March 5 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
Digital Photo SIG - Leader: Phil Ball
Location: Prescott Public Library

Many aspects of digital photography will be discussed, including use of digital cameras and using Photoshop Elements to make your photos look their best.

**March 12 - Saturday - 1:00-3:00 PM**
General Meeting - Leader: Ray Carlson
Location: Prescott Public Library
**First Hour: To be determined**
**Second Hour:** Phil Ball will present Tips and Tricks with insights into various topics that assist with regular computer activity.

**March 19 - Saturday**

There will be no PCS meeting today

**March 26 - Saturday**

There will be no PCS meeting today

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*Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.*
*Up to date information can be found on our website,* www.pcs4me.com

*Unless otherwise noted, our meetings are usually held in the*
*Founder's Suite at the Prescott Public Library.*

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## It's time to renew your dues

if you haven't already done so.
The good news: **again this year, dues are only $24.** Please make checks payable to "PCS" and present them to any Board member (gold nametag) or mail your check to:
Treasurer
Prescott Computer Society

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### Prescott Computer Society
### Officers & Board of Directors
### 2015-2016

| **Officers:** | | **General Directors:** | |
|---|---|---|---|
| President | Ray Carlson | Joan Baum | Murray Smolens |
| Vice Pres | Phil Ball | John Carter | Dick Mason |
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## Some Thoughts On The Future Of WinPhone 10

By Ken Johnson-Messenger Editor, Prescott Computer Society-Prescott, AZ

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As noted in previous articles, I have been a Windows Phone user since August 2014. My reasoning for choosing the Winphone was that the promise of my Windows desktop, Asus Transformer tablet and my phone being coordinated would make my life less complicated.

That promise has not yet been fully implemented although I have received some benefits even though the Winphone 10 version has yet to arrive at my Winphone 8.1 Samsung ATIV SE.

The most notable item is that Onenote  is synced with all devices which is very convenient. Frankly, I have not spent much time trying to use other aspects of the potential integration promised.

Since I am coming up this year with the option to upgrade my phone to a newer model, I have been concerned about the reports that Winphone is dead or dying. This has prompted me to do some "googling" to determine if Microsoft will continue it or not.

So far I have found much contradictory information/ predictions as to which way it is likely to go.

Since it seems that MS main reason for Win 10 is to provide the aforementioned integration of devices, there is a good argument to be made for their continuation of Winphone support.

On the other side of the equation, the many delays in releasing a completed version of Winphone 10 by MS has led many to believe that they are having perhaps insurmountable difficulties with the concept.

Most of the negative comments about Winphone revolve around the lack of apps. It is true that there are far fewer available than iOS or Android, but in my experience, I have had but a few that I lack, namely that one of my banks does not have a Winphone app.

IDC recently predicted that Windows Phone will grow to 5.4% of the market by 2019, not exciting.

Techradar recently stated:

"Those platforms (iOS & Android) still offer so much that Windows doesn't. But this update has at least seen Microsoft take a step in a different direction, with Continuum and the extensive customization features offering something distinct from its rivals.

And if you're invested in the Microsoft ecosystem at home or at work it makes perfect sense to add in a Windows 10 Mobile handset on top. Consistency and connectivity are big selling points, and the new Windows platform as a whole offers much more than the sum of its parts.

If, however, you don't have a Windows laptop, Xbox One or other Windows device, I find it very difficult to recommend Windows 10 Mobile. There's no good reason why you wouldn't choose a handset running the more ubiquitous and accomplished iOS or Android systems."

It is my belief that business will be the early adopters as they will save on training and obtain better integration, *if* they can live with the apps situation, which at that point will likely improve if the PC users acceptance of apps increases.

From my personal experience, Winphone is very easy to learn and convenient to use for the most used functions such as calls, text messages and emails. If you need an app for *everything* the world offers, you may be disappointed. Cortana does an excellent job sending, receiving and reading aloud text messages as well as responding to them. I am not a "gamer" so I have no use for them except for Talking Tom and like apps that I use to entertain my great grandkids.Ω

## The Web of Unintended Consequences

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA

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For all those new high school graduates out there, the World Wide Web has been around all of their lives. Even most new college grads have never known a time without the web. Though the Internet, a glob-

*Continued from pg 3:*

al computer network, has existed since the 1960s, the World Wide Web has existed publicly for only 20 years. Tim Berners-Lee, then an employee of the European nuclear research organization CERN, created the framework for linked information in 1989; it went into the public domain on April 30, 1993. Berners-Lee hosted the first website on a NeXT computer with the intent to allow physicists around the world to share information. To commemorate the anniversary in 2013, CERN resurrected that first web page, which explained the basics of the web and how to use it (see http://info.cern.ch/hypertext/WWW/ TheProject.html).

I wonder if Tim Berners-Lee could have anticipated the impact the web has had on life today. While he no doubt intended it to be a space to exchange information, fostering creativity and collaboration, the fact that it has become so much more has me considering the unintended consequences of his creation. What do we now have, over 20 years later, as a result of that first web page, and what price have we paid?

Whole industries have been created and fortunes made (and lost) in servicing the web. Our lives have been made easier, and the world has been made a smaller and more interconnected place by the resources available to anyone on the planet (and even on the International Space Station) from the World Wide Web. Though there are great global benefits in the free exchange of information it provides (at least in most countries), even helping to topple repressive governments, some would argue there are also detrimental consequences to its spread. The web has made good and useful information freely available to anyone with Internet access, but it has also allowed those with bad ideas, racist attitudes and radical goals to put their views and information before a worldwide audience. As with any new environment, it didn't take long for criminal activity to find it, and for governments to look at it as a new battlefield.

The World Wide Web could be thought of as an application running on the Internet, and while it is not the only Internet service typically in use today, it enables or enhances the use of most others. Although email and streaming media don't require the web, most people access them through it. It is hard to imagine social media and web commerce without the web.

Without the web, there would have been no "browser wars", and all those Netscape employees would have been without jobs. Today most computer users would cringe at having to use dial-up Internet access; the need for web connection has driven a worldwide broadband infrastructure expansion. New telecom technologies have been developed and the companies that promoted them have prospered as a result of this demand for web access, especially mobile access. Our own San Diego economy has benefited greatly from this infrastructure build-out driven by the need for improved web connections. Qualcomm pioneered new cell phone technologies that now carry more data than voice traffic, and have developed new processors that power smartphones. ViaSat in Carlsbad is planning to develop and launch their second satellite to help provide cheaper broadband satellite service to areas of North America not served by wired broadband. All that economic development and the related benefits (like jobs) that it provides are the result of Berners-Lee's development over twenty years ago.

The popularity of mobile computing, using laptops, netbooks, smartphones and tablets, came out of the use of the web. What would be the point of having a tablet or smartphone, devices primarily oriented towards consumption of content, if the World Wide Web were not there to provide that content? Devices like the Chromebook, which are pretty much useless without web access, and concepts like cloud storage exist only because of the web. Big technology companies like Apple, Intel and Microsoft owe a lot of their success to the existence of the web.

Google, of course, is the best example of economic success driven by the web, as a search engine is unnecessary if there is no web to search. The concept of making money from web advertising was another unintended consequence of the web's development.

E-commerce was probably unanticipated by Berners-Lee, yet it has grown into a significant economic factor worldwide. The ability to easily comparison shop products from all over the globe is definitely a great benefit, one that has become so popular that it is sometimes blamed for the demise of traditional "brick and mortar" stores. Today's political battles over taxes on Internet sales would not be happening were it not for e-commerce on the web. So many personal and financial tasks can

now be more easily performed on the web, including paying bills, registering to vote, booking travel and applying for college. Web banking has revolutionized personal finance and the banking industry, providing greater competition in the industry (including web-only banks), but no doubt costing jobs in local branches.

Without the web, there would be no YouTube, no Facebook, no Google Maps, no iTunes, no Amazon and no eBay. All these beneficial things owe their existence to the web, yet there are also unintended consequences, many of them quite detrimental, to all that information so easily accessible.

Could Berners-Lee have anticipated the growth in Internet porn facilitated by the World Wide Web? Or how much time people might waste on Facebook? Or how much deception might go on in online dating site profiles?  Or how much productivity is lost by employers each year on Cyber Monday, the Monday after Thanksgiving, when employees are lured by marketers into shopping online from work?  Cyber-crime, cyber bullying, cyber-attacks; these are all un-intended consequences of having the World Wide Web. Unfortunately, along with the benefit of web page links that take you to the information you want are corrupted links that hijack your browser and take you to undesirable sites, or facilitate the loading of malware on your computer. With useful web access also come denial of service attacks, where groups or individuals with malicious intent attempt to make web sites unavailable to intended users.

With more and more business and infrastructure information and systems connected to and accessible through the web, the threat of misuse of that information and access becomes greater. Cyber spying by criminals and governments unfriendly to our own is costly to businesses, individuals and our country's economic and military security. There are legitimate concerns about terrorist threats to our infrastructure through cyber attacks. Investigations into recent terrorist acts often lead to web sites where groups hostile to our country and our way of life promote their views, recruit members and provide how-to information on bomb making and other terrorist tactics.

The cyber threat is so significant that our own military has a specific branch devoted to cyber security and warfare, the U.S. Cyber Command. Our adversaries are increasing their hostile cyber activities, requiring us to fund a growing cyber capability for our defense in that arena.

On a personal front, the presence of the web has had unintended consequences for my finances. In addition to all the personal financial benefits I've received  from the web, there are added costs as well. All that connectivity comes at a price. For me that cost is around $100 a month, for cable Internet access at home and smartphone data plan expenses for family members. My own personal security costs add up as well. While viruses and malware can be spread through removable media and emails, a lot of the threat comes from the web. Would I need to have so many antivirus and anti-malware programs if the web didn't exist?  Would I need to go to such great lengths to keep track of hundreds of unique and complex passwords to protect my financial and personal information in all my web-based accounts?  Would I need to worry about doing everything right in terms of cyber security but still having my identity stolen by criminals that hacked the web site of a careless online merchant I purchased from?

With each anniversary of the World Wide Web, we should be grateful to Tim Berners-Lee for all the benefits the web has brought us. It has profoundly changed our lives and culture, mostly for the good. We must also be aware that almost everything that seems good comes with unintended consequences.Ω

**Google**

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Google, it seems, has not just the most wonderful web search device in its arsenal; it is also accused of collecting private data from its clients (that's us) – far more than we necessarily know or suspect. No one in this country seems to bother about that much, but in Europe....

Think of it: how has Google become so huge? And I mean HUGE. If it's just there for us to use as a combination dictionary, gazetteer, art museum and library – for free – how can it amass the $millions necessary to keep those battalions of servers waiting to satisfy us almost instantaneously? The answer is: Cookies.

A Cookie is a small file of data sent by a website to a

contact and stored on the contact's computer. When you log in to a website which uses cookies it will create a quick summary of who you are and maybe what you have accessed on the site and this will be saved on your computer so that next time you log in you can be recognized and perhaps welcomed by name. Fine; but think of it: the site now knows who you are, what your email address is, maybe (if you set up a more formal link) the User ID and password you created to use the site, and even the fact that you looked at, say, electric kettles rather than glassware. And for Google, what you looked at could be anything.

So Google can collect this data and sell it to others: to marketers of electric kettles to warn them you are on the prowl for one, say – the list could be endless. And as you move from searching history to ski equipment to checking maps to reading the news, a fairly full idea can be formed of the sort of person you are. Rather like the personal live-in servant who, over the years, knows a lot more about who you really are than even you may realize. And this worries a lot of people – particularly in Europe, which has had more than its share of secret police over the years.

So now Google is in trouble in Europe, and most of all in France. The trouble really came with the introduction of Google Street View, when specially-equipped vehicles drove the roads of the world recording pictures of what they were passing. It turned out than someone had added to the equipment a Wi-Fi recorder which was picking up all sorts of extraneous information – emails, data transfers, passwords and such. And though Google officially denied authorizing this and promised to delete the data recovered, it turns out that they have not done so. Two years ago an investigation was begun. It is still raging today, as the authorities try to rein Google in. Now the BBC reports Google has been given 35 days to delete the material. After that, who knows? Can France remove the website www.google.fr from the world?

Back to cookies. They started in the 1990s when a commercial site wanted to retain some information on visitors, but found this would quickly clog its data storage. So they asked the browser writers (Netscape in those days) to arrange for small files to be stored by the browser on each personal machine instead. When they were originally implemented nobody knew they even existed, let alone they were being stored locally. But there are now, as a result of complaints, rules for cookie construction (each issuer can only read its own cookies, for example) and ways of reducing the numbers.

You can, for example, turn them off completely ("I do not wish to help you recognize me at all!") but this may backfire. There are sites today which will not let you onto them unless you allow them to store cookies on your machine. My Firefox browser is set to tell me when cookies are requested and I can reply Yes or No. This is interesting: I have seen sites that want to place as many as six cookies at a time on my machine (Six? Why?). I often reply No and wait to see if the request is repeated until I say Yes, or if I can get onto the site without them.

Many sites also, as they create the data stream for building their picture on your screen, branch to other sites which then ask for cookie permission. One of the most notorious is DoubleClick (which is now owned by Google too!). DoubleClick is purely advertising-related: we can provide marketers (for a fee) with information on the effectiveness of their ads, or the shopping habits of the public. It seems all they do is drop cookies and read them. By being called from a website as part of its setup, routine, they get by the restriction that only the issuer can read a cookie. This annoys me. I try to say No to DoubleClick cookies when I can.

What fascinates me is that "google" has become a word in common use. We no longer search for information; we google it, even if we are using another search engine. I remember as a child that Hoover came into the common English lexicon. We did not vacuum the carpet; we "Hoovered" it. And my parents owned an Electrolux "hoover". That is, to me, the ultimate in Having Arrived!Ω