May 2018

Visit our website at www.pcs4me.com   Ken Johnson, Newsletter Editor

CALENDAR

SIG = Special Interest Group

This Week's Schedule

May 12 - Saturday - 1:10-2:50 PM

General Meeting - Leader: Ray Carlson

Location: Prescott Public Library; Founders Suite A & B

First Hour: The Best Laptop Computer

Tom's Guide a/k/a Laptopmag recently published rankings of several major laptop manufacturers. During this presentation, Ray Carlson will describe the criteria they used as well as their conclusions. The criteria include ratings of individual models, customer support, cost, and the like. He will look at how the rankings change if different criteria are given more or less weight. Finally, he will summarize rankings that have been presented by other respected sources and the criteria used by these other sources.

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

May 15 - Tuesday - 10:00-11:00 AM

Technology Help Hour - Leader: PCS Staff

Location: Prescott Public Library Training Lab; Third Floor

Ask a technology question and get help from members of the Prescott Computer Society. Bring your own laptop or mobile device or use a library laptop. This is a weekly drop-in service and registration is not required.

Future Meetings-(cont'd.)

May 19 - Saturday - Noon-2:00 PM
PCS PICNIC

The annual PCS picnic will be held on Saturday May 19 from Noon - 2:00 PM at the Lakeview Pavilion, Goldwater Lake Park, Prescott -Parking info and map to picnic

PCS will provide chicken, soft drinks and the usual paper and plastic products. There will also be a drawing for prizes. But wait! There's more! How about some amazing mind-reading entertainment to grab your interest? Murray Smolens, that silver-tongued devil, has talked Juan Karnak the Magnificent to temporarily quit his day job as a "unindicted co-conspirator" to appear at our picnic! Yes - that sage from the South who can divine the answer without ever having seen the question will make an appearance at the picnic. It just doesn't get any better than that!

To attend this most amazing event, please bring a dish to share. You're not limited to just salad or dessert. We'd like to see your culinary skills so feel free to bring something more substantial if you wish. If you're bringing an entree or side dish, please describe it when you RSVP. To let us know you're coming, please fill out our quick and easy online RSVP form right now!

Note that these dates are correct at time of publication but are subject to change.

Prescott Computer Society
Current Officers & Board of Directors

Officers:

President	Ray Carlson
Vice Pres	Phil Ball
Secretary	JB Burke
Treasurer	Edi Taylor-Richards

General Directors:

Joan Baum	Murray Smolens
John Carter	Dick Mason
Ken Johnson	

Need Help With Computers?

   Did you know that the Prescott Public Library has a program of Computer mentoring on a one-on-one basis? They have several experienced volunteers who will work with you using one of the Library computers.

   All you need to do is make an appointment with either the "Ask a Librarian" personnel or go to: http://www.prescottlibrary.info/.

I want to share (1) something to think about as we enter this time of "no personal privacy;" (2) a very useful program for keeping your PC applications up-to-date; and (3) a fun website for displaying street views of houses.

1) My wife was reading a book on her Kindle and was getting close to the end. She wanted to finish the book, so she cloistered herself in the snug family room chair and had at it. After about half an hour, she finished the book and explained that it really was a great book and she really enjoyed it. A moment or two later, her cell phone made the noise for an incoming email and she reached over and read it. It was from Amazon and it asked her how she liked the book that she just finished. That was so spooky! It really made us feel like our privacy had been compromised. I'm a very strong proponent of technology advances and all the good things that it can bring, but this just seemed like too much and too close.

A couple of days later, she started another book, read a few chapters and had to put it down as things get busy around the first of the month. Sure enough, after a couple of days, she gets an email from Amazon asking, "how's it going." Guess she wasn't reading enough and needed to be prodded. Now, I don't know what you think of that intrusion, but I find it really disturbing. Guess we'll have to get used to it or take the Kindle off-line.

2) An important part of being safe online is keeping your computer's software up-to-date. Outdated software often contains security exposures that can provide hackers access to your computer. Outdated software can also be buggy and have performance issues which are usually fixed with a newer version of the software. Unfortunately, if you have lots of different programs this is an onerous task.

Patch My PC Updater will make patching your PC easy. It is free and keeps over 165 apps up-to-date on your computer. It is an easy way to update or install any of these programs on to your computer.

When you open Patch My PC Updater, it will scan your system for outdated programs. It will show programs that are outdated in Red, programs that are updated in Green, and programs that are not installed in Black. With one click you can easily do all your updates. You can download Patch My PC from https://patchmypc.net/download.

3) On a more fun note, I've been sharing a website called www.showmystreet.com. When you go to the site, you get a box where you can type in an address. It's a simple interface that lets you display almost all locations. Just start typing the location's address and the background Google Map is updated in real-time. Like any other regular Google Map, you can drag the map, zoom in/out, and select the following views: map, satellite, hybrid, and terrain. Wherever available, Show My Street will automatically display the Google Street View of the address. Type the address one character at a time and watch the location that it displays. It's amazing. The views can be directly shared on Twitter and Facebook. You can also obtain a direct URL to the view and share it with your

Continued from pg 3:

If your home is very large or if there are many walls between your router and the location at which you want Wi-Fi access, you may have Wi-Fi dead spots. Your Wi-Fi signal, as all electromagnetic emanations, is diminished by distance and by certain intervening objects, such as walls. (Your specific Wi-Fi capability is dependent on many things, but a typical Wi-Fi router, using the 2.4GHz band and 802.11n, can work 100 to 150 feet with no intervening objects.). Not to get very technical: for distance, the signal drops off proportional to the inverse of the square of the distance; and for intervening objects, the loss getting thru the object is dependent on the type of material and its density; metal may stop the signal dead in its tracks. So, if there is a line-of-sight back to the router, dead spots are probably far from your router. If there is no line-of-sight back to the router, you might have dead spots wherever the signal encounters a lot of loss going thru walls and objects. (I have seen a reference to Wi-Fi as being a "3 wall solution", meaning that the signal may get through no more than three walls, so if you have a spot more than three walls away from the router you will probably have a dead spot.)

So, if you have a dead spot, or dead spots, you may want to think about a Wi-Fi extender (a simple solution), or even a new "mesh network" (a more involved, more expensive solution). A Wi-Fi extender is a device that may look like a router, but is a receiver and transmitter. It receives the Wi-Fi signal and immediately retransmits the signal. The retransmission may then be received by a device that is in a dead spot of the original signal, (but not in a dead spot of the extended signal). The Wi-Fi extender simply extends the area that the Wi-Fi signal may be received. When you set up an extender, you do have to make sure that the Wi-Fi extender is not placed in a router dead spot. If the Wi-Fi extender can receive the router signal, it will retransmit it and devices that can receive the extender's signal will be included in the Wi-Fi network as if they got the signal directly from the router. Wi-Fi Extenders can be purchased for anywhere from about $50 to $200, depending on features and capabilities. You may even find one below $50 if you wait for a sale; I found one for $25 and it seems to do the job quite well. If you are interested in reviewing some possible choices, just Google "Wi-Fi extender reviews" and you will find a good number of reviews based on price, features, and specifica-

So that is the easy (and less expensive) solution, and probably the one you will want to try first

The other solution, the Wi-Fi Mesh Network solution, is more involved and usually much more expensive. A mesh network may be $200 to $400, or more. Basically, a Mesh Network is a communications network made up of many nodes (access points), organized in a highly-interconnected grouping where all nodes cooperate in the collection and distribution of data in the network. Each node is a router and an access point for your devices. The size of the area to be covered will determine how many nodes you would need to install. (One recommendation I saw was to install a node every 50 to 75 feet, but that depends entirely on the shape of the installation area.). From Wikipedia, "Mesh" refers to a rich interconnection among devices and nodes. Wi-Fi mesh networks consist of routers and devices that use the network. The devices are typically the laptops, tablets, and smartphones you have in your home. The mesh routers (access points) send messages to the devices, and other routers. The routers are placed in an arrangement so that each one can send and receive from at least one other router. The more routers that can send and receive messages from many other routers, the more robust the network will be. (Though I have seen some indications that there may be some practical limits as to how many nodes can be used in a home mesh network.). A mesh network is usually highly reliable due to its multiple redundant paths to a device. If one node is inoperable, the other nodes can still communicate with each other directly or through one or more of the other nodes. This type of network can be very dynamic, much like the internet itself. (The internet topology and design allow for messages to be re-directed around nodes that may be inoperable so that a message always arrives at its intended destination. Though, this may be hard to believe if you have ever had an unexpected and unexplained temporary problem with an internet session.).

From reviews I've seen, a mesh network may be a great solution for a large home or a home with multiple levels. If a mesh network seems to be a solution for you, do a little research before you jump in. Google the term "Wi-Fi mesh network" and look at some of the reviews. You will find many of the router manufacturers you are familiar with, like Linksys and Netgear, but you will also find some new names such as Eero, Luma and Amped Wireless, as well as Google. So, if you think you have dead spots in your Wi-Fi setup at home, you may want to give one of these two possible solutions a try.Ω

Use Speech to Control Your PC and Compose Text

By Nancy DeMarte, 2nd Vice President, Sarasota Technology Users Group, FL

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Speak:

Many modern devices have digital voice personalities that can help you find things or complete tasks. Some of these even have names, like Siri for Apple devices, Alexa for Amazon Echo, and Cortana for Windows. Microsoft Office and Windows 10 recently have added or upgraded speech features that provide both text to speech and speech to text. Speak is a new feature that helps you proofread what you have typed by listening to the computer read it aloud.

For example, if I'm typing a Word document and want to see if my wording is smooth and accurate, I can use "Speak" to hear how it sounds. The Speak feature is also found in other Microsoft apps - Outlook, PowerPoint, and OneNote.

To use 'Speak,' click anywhere in a document. Then click the Review tab on the ribbon. In the Speech group, click 'Read Aloud,' which

Speak icon

Audio Control bar

opens an audio control bar. Click the right-pointing single arrow, then sit back and listen. You can choose a male or female voice by clicking the setting icon which resembles a person on the audio bar.

Windows Speech Recognition (WSR):

Windows has had a speech recognition feature for several years. This tool lets a user dictate into a microphone without the use of a keyboard or mouse and have his or her speech translated into text. It can be used to compose articles, write letters or emails, fill out forms, or complete other writing tasks. You can also use WSR to perform the basic functions of a computer, like opening an app, selecting a word, showing a list of commands, and adding punctuation. Originally, it was difficult to set

up, but the current version is much , o configure and use. Learning to use WSR is especially worthwhile if your typing skills are weak.

You must have a microphone before setting up Speech Recognition. I found that a set of headphones with a microphone attached works very well. While it is also possible to find a Windows microphone in the MS store, a headset or freestanding mic is recommended.

Once you have a microphone plugged into your computer and turned on, it's time to locate and set up Speech Recognition. In Windows 7, click Start > All Programs > Accessories > Ease of Access > Speech Recognition. In Win 10, type 'Speech' in the Search box and choose the best match, Speech Recognition, which opens the Speech Configuration window, pictured below:

1) There is a wizard (set of steps) to help you with setup. Click "Start Speech Recognition" to start the wizard. It will take you through all the steps in the order in which they are listed.

2) First, you will set up the microphone for correct placement and volume setting.

3) The speech tutorial consists of two short video tutorials that demonstrate the two main uses for speech recognition: "How to use WSR to get around your computer" and "How to use dictation with WSR". These are worth watching more than once.

4) In "Train your computer," you practice reading text

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    aloud so that WSR can learn your vocal inflections, accent, and tone. This makes the transition from speech to text more accurate.

    5) The last step is to print a few pages of valuable commands that WSR recognizes, a handy list.

While no speech recognition tool is perfect, the Windows version does a pretty good job, and setup is an easy, non-threatening process.**Ω**

WYSIWYG Web Watch

by Paul Baecker, Treasurer, Sterling Heights Computer Club, MI

January 2018 issue, WYSIWYG

www.sterlingheightscomputerclub.org

webwatch (at) sterlingheightscomputerclub.org

This column attempts to locate sites containing valuable, amusing, and free content, with no over-bearing pressure to purchase anything. SHCC members are encouraged to submit favorite sites (a description is optional) to the above address, for inclusion in a future WYSIWYG issue.

Troubleshooting right-click issues caused by shell extensions (when right-clicking a mouse produces no context menu).

http://www.winhelponline.com/xp/slowrightclick.htm

Animation shows the sources of U.S. Immigration over two centuries. http://metrocosm.com/us-immigration-history-map.html Appreciating Chinese calligraphy. (4-min. video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MEN0CzGv5-Y

Can you really trust that green padlock? This new phishing scheme could fool you with a false sense of security.

http://www.nextgov.com/cybersecurity/2017/12/new-phishing-scheme-could-fool-you-false-sense-security/144418/

If you don't really need to password-protect your Windows 10 login, then why add that potentially corruptive aspect to your PC? Here's how to configure your PC to start Windows 10 without a password automatically.

http://www.howto-connect.com/start-windows-10-without-password/

Detect and remove malware from USB (a.k.a flash, thumb, or zip) drives. http://www.nirmaltv.com/2017/02/01/detect-and-remove-malware-from-usb-drives/

5 Ways to print folder and directory contents in Windows. http://www.makeuseof.com/tag/5-ways-to-print-folder-and-directory-contents-in-windows/

8 deadly commands you should never run on Linux. https://www.howtogeek.com/125157/8-deadly-commands-you-should-never-run-on-linux/

Some basic security measures specifically for people getting started with Linux. https://gendersec.tacticaltech.org/wiki/index.php/Linux_security#Using_removable_storage_media

How to find the best Wi-Fi channel for your router on any operating system, particularly in close living conditions.

https://www.howtogeek.com/197268/how-to-find-the-best-wi-fi-channel-for-your-router-on-any-operating-system/

Backyard astronomy basics for students of all ages. https://www.homeadvisor.com/r/home-science-backyard-astronomy/

What is a "fileless attack?" How hackers invade computer systems without installing software.

https://www.itworld.com/article/3227046/malware/what-is-a-fileless-attack-how-hackers-invade-systems-without-installing-software.html

A real view of a train derailment cleanup event in a peaceful farming countryside. (15-min. video) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5G-N36QfCdI **Ω**