MAKE WINDOWS 10 FASTER

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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Support for Windows 7 is now history. Support for Windows 8 will last for 3 more years. Windows 8 mostly consisted of intermediate steps (and missteps) toward Windows 10. In 2020 I can think of no reason for any user to be running Windows 8 instead of Windows 10, especially since Windows 10 is superior and is a free update to Windows 8. So, if you are one of the few users still running Windows 8 there is no better time than now to upgrade to Windows 10.

Most of us have used Windows 10 for a few years now; Windows lacks the flexibility of the flavors of Linux, and the slick user interface of Mac's Catalina, but is the operating system installed on the majority of home computers now.

Windows 10 is Microsoft's best operating system so far but is not perfect. However, it is virtually infinitely customizable and I'm going to make a few suggestions that will help you get the most out of your windows 10 system.

Keep Windows Up to Date
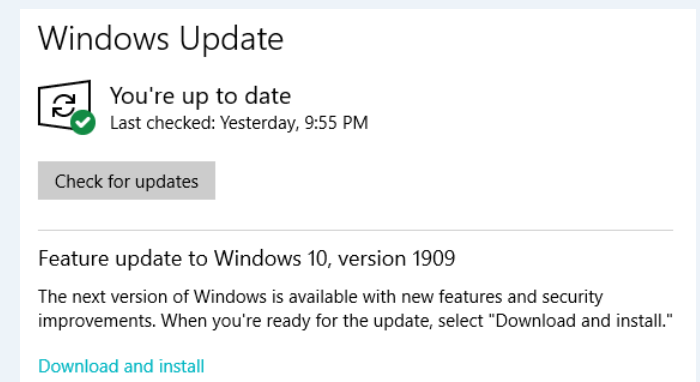
Windows is issuing updates on a weekly basis and these are important not only for the operating system and peripheral issues corrected but also for keeping your security malware definitions current. Go to Update Settings and confirm that updates are current. Hit Check for Updates to verify this. This is also where you can learn if your system is running the latest update to Windows 10 (1909) and possibly complete this process (as is required in the dialogue

July/August 2020

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

c/o Group Ambassador

"J.J." Johnson

News Journal

The LCACE News Journal is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions which will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Send articles to editor@lcace.org Permission is granted to reproduce any or all parts of this newsletter in other User Group publications, provided that credit is given to LCACE and the individual author (s). Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

Membership

LCACE membership is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club hotline, and are now available on our web site at http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Newsletter Submissions

Club members are welcome to submit classified ads, reviews, tips and other articles for publication, to our newsletter editor in Microsoft Word format (.doc). **Publication deadline is the 20th of the month for all ads and articles.** Please do not use tabs or special formatting.

Newsletter Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page - $15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card - $5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 15th of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

Notice

Phil's Ramblings

Hello, all

I hope that you, your friends, and your family are all well and staying safe from the various risks to health and wealth that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought to the U.S.! It seems increasingly clear that this will not be a short-lived scenario; as infections continue to grow in number and spread across the country, our economic recovery will be gradual at best as Americans follow healthcare recommendations to minimize contact with others. (Even when such restrictions are softened or eliminated, it is likely that many of us will voluntarily continue to observe them to safeguard our own health and the health of our family.) Best to plan for the long haul!

In our June newsletter I wrote about how this pandemic has affected our technology world. On the one hand, technology has become more important as many employees are now working from home and most children finished the school year from home (both of which are likely to persist at least through the balance of 2020 and perhaps beyond). On the other hand, availability of at least some tech products had diminished because of supply chain interruptions and increased demand. (I mentioned availability issues – and cost increases – for a popular Logitech webcam in my June column. Now, two months later, this webcam is still out of stock at Best Buy and still being sold at a high mark-up by isolated sellers on Amazon.) But there is some apparent good news on the availability front. There were inserts from Office Depot and Staples in Sunday's Chicago Tribune listing quite a few computers and peripherals on sale, so it does appear that supply chains are beginning to fill up again.

Probably because of the pandemic, political and financial news in recent months, the two big tech rollouts planned for 2020 have become almost anonymous. I had to do a web search to find anything about the current status of 5G wireless. It turns out that the various wireless providers have been busy while all the other stuff has been going on. Although there is still limited availability of both 5G phones and networks, both traditional cellular providers and ISPs are currently offering 5G service in select locations around the U.S.

While the 5G focus for many current smartphone users has been the possibility of enhanced cellular service, to enable faster streaming and other Internet services on cell phones, some ISPs are also building 5G infrastructure designed to provide home and/or business Internet service. For example, Verizon is currently offering 5G broadband internet, called "5G Home", in areas of six cities around the country. Service is expected to start October 1st. According to the company, there will be no data caps and customers can expect speeds ranging from 300 Mbps up to around 1 Gbps, depending on location.

For more 5G details, check out this Lifewire article, just updated on August 1, 2020: https://www.lifewire.com/5g-availability-us-4155914.

I haven't seen anything much about Wi-Fi 6 either, although I have noticed Wi-Fi 6 routers starting to appear on tech retail websites. But, as the saying goes, "It takes two to tango". As I understand this technology, to take advantage of Wi-Fi 6 speed and throughput both your router and the internal Wi-Fi "radios" in your computers must have Wi-Fi 6 capability. (If you think back to when Wi-Fi 5 came along - known then as "ac" Wi-Fi - many of us owned computers that would only connect at W-Fi 4 ("n" Wi-Fi) speeds. To take advantage of the faster network potential we had to either buy a new computer or buy a USB Wi-Fi 5 adapter.) However, when I searched on Amazon for "Wi-Fi 6 adapter", the products that showed up are all based on PCIE cards that would be installed in a desktop computer.

So, we'll see how this technology evolves. Meantime, chances are that our home networks are al-

ready fast enough to satisfy our present needs – so this should not be a current issue.

Meanwhile, scammers are continuing to seize every opportunity to steal information and money from everybody. Garmin just got hit with a ransomware attack that immobilized a big portion of their services to fitness buffs, pilots and others – although my Garmin golf rangefinder continued to work just fine. The bad guys supposedly demanded $10 million as ransom for the encryption key. Garmin has been very close-mouthed about the details, so we do not know whether they paid the ransom or not. Meanwhile, their services are slowly coming back online – and it appears they are almost back to normal. It will be interesting to learn the full story (and to verify that the personal data stored on their servers by their fitness customers is still available to them).

There have also been numerous reports of scams associated with COVID-19 – offering fake cures or preventative potions, offering "help" in receiving $1,200 government checks, filing bogus state unemployment claims and so on. As always, be wary of any unsolicited phone calls or emails!

And, in and around all the turmoil and conflicting information, stay safe and carry on….

Best,

Phil

box shown). Under Advanced Settings you can make sure auto-updates is checked.

Disable Cortana

She needs to just shut up. For most users, Cortana is

just an annoyance built into Windows 10. She mostly gives users annoying pop-ups, she is constantly gathering data, and does little more than try to force us into Bing searches. In this day of actually useful voice assistants, such as Google or Alexa, Cortana seems oddly dumb. I have learned to disable Cortana during the installation of Windows but if you have not had this opportunity shutting her off is easy. Go to Cortana under Settings and toggle all sliders off.

Go back to the main Settings window and under Privacy Settings you can turn off the sliders for speech and inking and typing to reduce the amount of data Cortana gathers on your computer usage. You can also block Cortana from accessing your microphone and camera on the privacy page. This is also a good time to review all your privacy settings to make sure you are putting as little information as possible out there.

Disable Notifications
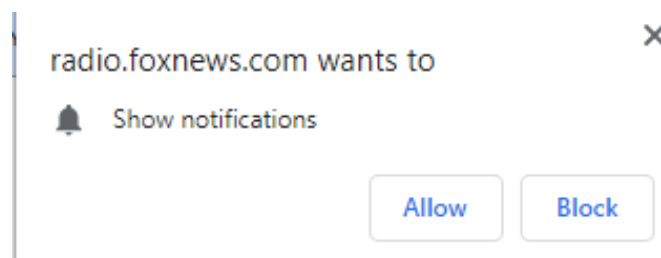
Many users are unaware of why they are constantly getting popups from the Notifications icon on the lower right-hand corner of your Taskbar. These popups use system resources and can be a pain when they interfere with your computer use. Go to Settings, System, Notifications, and actions and toggle off Notifications. Like magic, they will no longer appear! You will still have many web pages offering notifications, but you can just say "NO!" by hitting "Block" or "Don't Allow".

Disable Startup Apps

Go to your Task Manager Startup tab and disable any programs you do not need running immediately every time you go into your operating system. Microsoft OneDrive and speech recognition ore a couple of major resource hogs. Toggle off anything you do not need running all the time. Remember, you are not removing any programs and you are not preventing them from firing up when you need them.

Log-in Faster

The Windows 10 log-in screen is an excellent example of a worthless "improvement". Having to swipe up or down or hit "Space" is a step Microsoft somehow felt was necessary; typing in your password takes even more time. Most users prefer to use a four-digit PIN; just enter 4 digits and there is no need to even hit Enter. To set a PIN go to Settings, then Sign-in options. Click on Windows Hello PIN and set your 4-digit PIN. Note that a little further down on this page you can disable the requirement for a sign-in after you've been away from your computer for a while.

If you want to *remove* the sign-in password requirement, type "NETPLWIZ" in the search box then use this application to disable the password requirement for your computer.

Disable Background Apps

This is not necessary on a new powerful system, but if yours is older you might want to look at these under Privacy/Settings. With an older system performance might be improved by unchecking anything you don't need running.

Uninstall Unneeded Programs
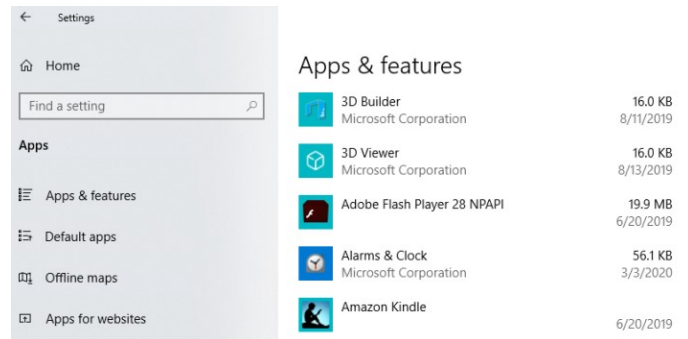
Talking about unnecessary stuff included with Windows 10, there is a ton of "Bloatware" included on most new store-bought systems you can just ditch. Right-click on Start and click on Apps and Features. Scroll through the list and you will see a lot of programs on your system that you never use. Games such as Candy Crush and security programs such as Norton or MacAfee are major offenders in this area. Here is where you can simply uninstall the unused applications, freeing up room on your hard drive, and ensuring these programs will not try to load and take system resources in the future.

ZOOM
Joining a Meeting
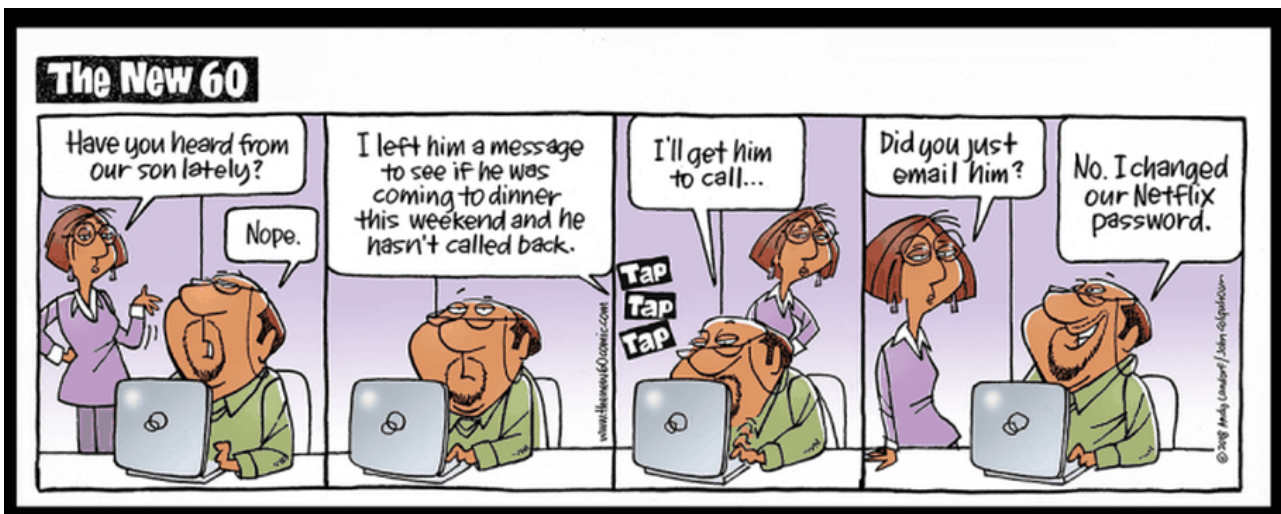
July 11 , 2020

Membership Chairperson Report

Members: 30
Meeting Attendees: 18

THANKS FOR JOINING
Theodore Rock

THANKS FOR RENEWING
Mike McEnery
Kenneth Nethercote
Bobby & Howard Jacobs
Julie Bell

THANKS FOR VISITING

HAPPY BIRTHDAY
July

De-Borah Sirilla

Phil Bock

Gary Quarnstrom

WANDER THE WEB

Locate Software Nicknames
Enter one of these terms in Wikipedia search to look up the nickname for your tech platform. Adding a nickname to a Google search helps leliver better results.
   Microsoft: "List_of_Microsoft_code-
   Android: "Android_version_history"
   Mac: "MacOS_version_history"
   iPhone/iPad: "IOS_ version_history"
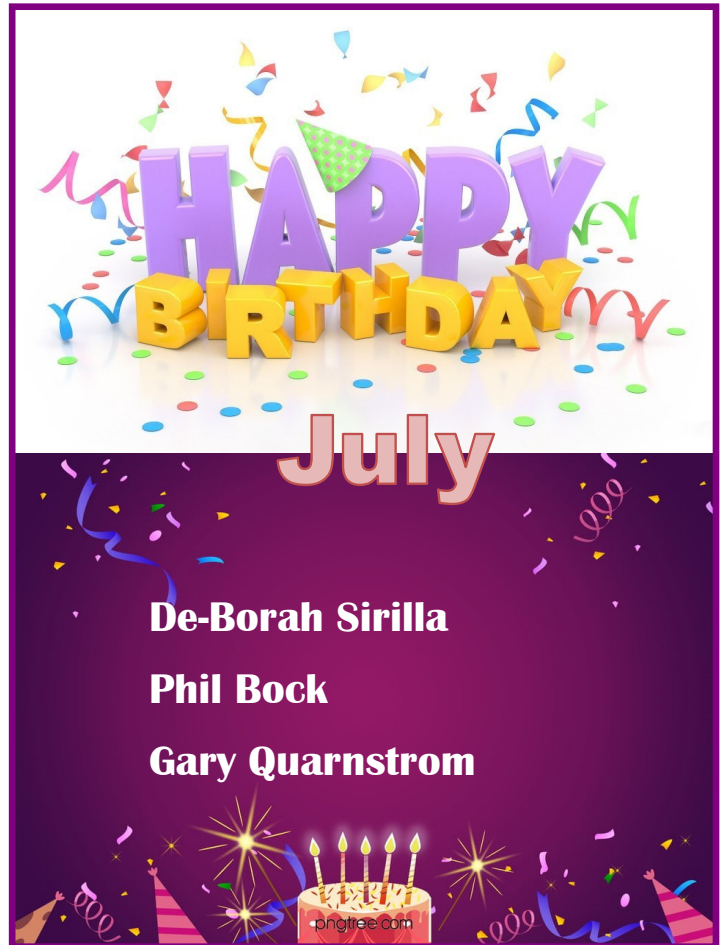wikipedia.org

Free Media Resources
This frequently updated article is a collection of links for free books, TV shows, and movies. cnet.com/news/the-best-free-stuff-while-youre-stuck-at-home
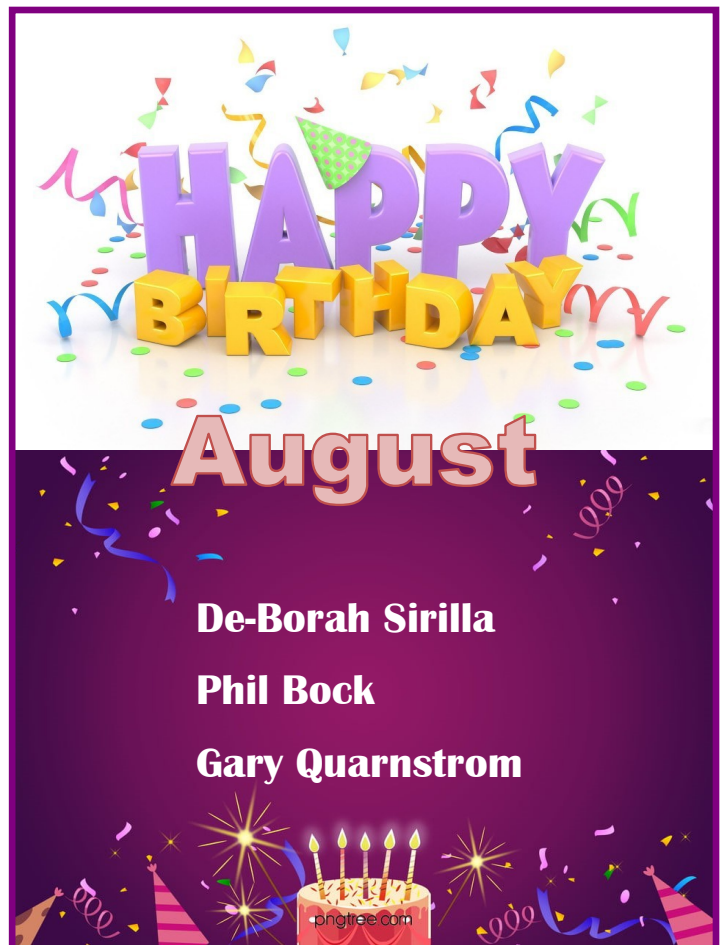
Some Good News
This YouTube channel is a friendly island oasis in a sea of upsetting news. youtube.com/somegoodnews

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY
August

De-Borah Sirilla

Phil Bock

Gary Quarnstrom

APCUG is pleased to announce that we will be having online workshops during the summer and fall.

Getting to Know Windows from An Insiders Point of View

The second Wednesday of the month at:
9 am PT, 10 am MT, 11 am CT, 12 pm ET

May 13, 2020
June 10, 2020
July 8, 2020
August 12, 2020

Moderator: Bill James, APCUG Advisor, Region 8

The four 2-hour workshops will be on how to get the best out of Windows 10. There will be how-tos, hands-on demos, and discussion with ample time for Q&A.

Week 1
What's new with Windows 10, the 2004 Spring feature update.
Have you customized your Start menu, Taskbar, and Notifications? What are those Hidden Icons? How can I immediately get back to my Desktop? Can you easily see your mouse pointer? How about the Display text size? We'll also take a look at the powerful Search options.

Week 2
Settings
We'll explore the many options you can change to make your computer more secure. Do you know how much Ram you have? What version of Windows? What about the Security & Update area, do you take a look at every once in a while?
Do you check your custom settings after the spring and fall Feature update?

Week 3
File Explorer
Back-in-the-day, Bill Gates told us to think of our hard drive as a file cabinet and to organize our files. File Explorer is our handy file cabinet. We'll dig into File Explorer to see how it can help us with our daily life with our computer. Have you added the helpful checkbox?

Week 4
Edge
It's now a Chromium-based browser. It brings a lot of new features to the table. We will explore all of

them and find out if it is the best browser. We'll also learn how to earn $$ by using Bing.

We will use the same Zoom password encrypted meeting URL for each workshop. You will receive the URL after you have registered by completing this form.

Judy will be the contact point for these workshops and will be available to assist you in connecting to the Zoom sessions.

The registration list will be used to identify everyone in the Waiting Room before being admitted to the session.

The next series of workshops will be on Home Automation for Seniors – same time, same place on:
September 9, 2020
October 14, 2020
November 11, 2020
December 9, 2020

Week 1 - Why do I need it?
Week 2 - Where do I start?
Week 3 - Lights, doorbells, locks, and cameras
Week 4 - Doing It Myself vs Having It Done

We will begin by explaining why home automation is important to Seniors. What products are on the market, costs, security, and some real-world testimonials. In the second week, we will talk about how to go about planning your home automation project and best practices. In the third week, we will talk about applications using lights, doorbells, locks, and cameras. Lastly, we will talk about the benefits of making it a DIY project or having a professional install.

Stay Connected While Social Distancing

Explore new technology

Apps like FaceTime, Zoom and Skype offer fun and interesting ways to connect face-to-face with family and friends, even if it's a screen version. And most don't require a terrific amount of tech-savvy: a neighbor, niece or nephew can help with a quick tutorial.

Even popular board games have gone virtual. Classics like Monopoly, Scattergories and Scrabble can be played online together, and there are a host of sites with card games, trivia and other fun activities to do together. A game night is a great way to bring people closer, and take your mind off your worries.

If you need help getting started with a smartphone or tablet to use this technology, check the offerings from a carrier like Consumer Cellular. They've been an approved AARP provider for more than 10 years, and in addition to low prices and a wide variety of phones, offer top-rated customer support, which makes setting up and using your service easy.

Stay active in the community, from home
It may sound counterintuitive.
How can you remain a part of the community if you need to stay sep-arated from it?
Many organizations, like political parties, faith-based groups or non-profits, offer remote, options, relying on volunteers to make phone calls. Explore your options for doing community-based activity right at home.

Joey and Jimmy

Make a phone call

All the digital options available today may make a simple phone call seem old fashioned. But some-times, the old ways are the best ways. Just hearing someone's voice can-be enough to lift both your spir-its. Even if you only reach voice-mail, you've let someone know you were thinking about them, which is always good medicine.

Social distancing doesn't have to mean social isolation, and even a threat like coronavirus should not force us to be alone. Now, more than ever, people need to find smart ways to stay connected.
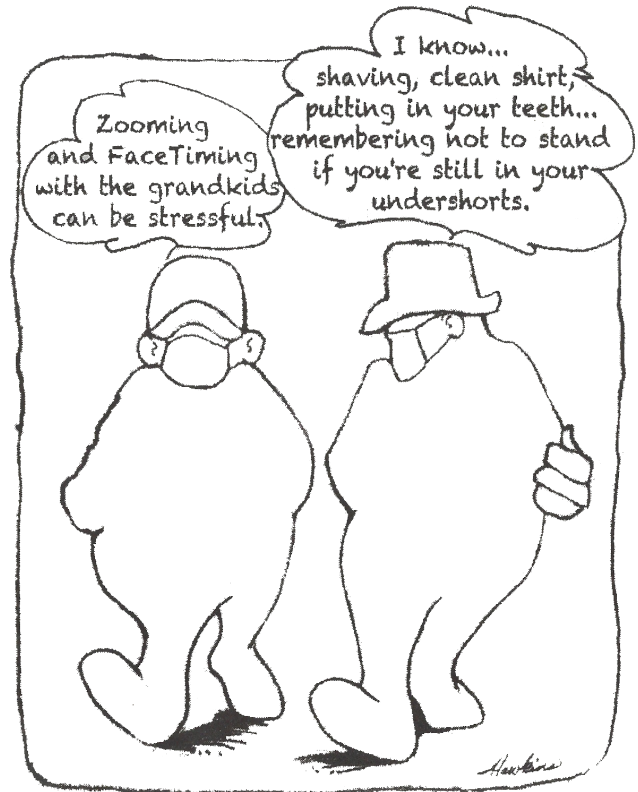
Let's go Shopping
By Rom Brown
Audible Audiobooks
By Hewie Poplock
A Hearing Revolution with Healthable Devices
By Dr. Rachelle Orsini Au.D.
Digitize Old Album Photos into Google Photos and Chromecast TV
By Chris and Jim Guld, Geeks On Tour
Roundtable Discussion - What's Happing with our Groups

Amazon
Echo Loop

by Jasmine Blue D' Katz

MY TOY BOX

It's been a few months since I've gotten my paws on something new to review and you know I like to keep abreast of new technology.

We got a new DJI Mavic Air 2 back in May and have enjoyed flying and taking aerial photos to post on Facebook and to enter into competition at our local camera club. But I not quite sure the drone would be something our club members would be interested in.

Amazon has been a leader in new technology for a few years and has essential taken control of our house from controlling several lights, the AC and TV. With the ability to link with other devices, I also able to control my security system and able to view several of the cameras installed throughout the house. Since Amazon Alex devices are pretty much located in most frequently occupied spaces, there's I have very little problem communicating my commands to Alexa.

Several months ago, Amazon announced a new produced called the Echo Loop, but until recently this device has become available to consumer. A few weeks ago, I received an invitation from Amazon offering the Loop at a discount price, but before ordering, Amazon would send you a ring sizing kit. After you decide the correct size then you could place your order.

Amazon Echo Loop may not be for everyone, but it brings Alexa out of the home. Yes, I said it's a ring and it may look a little strange on my paws and I may look weird using it, but now I have a voice assistant in the palm of my hand.

The ring has a simple, elegant use. It's has a decently attractive design, and I feel like a spy when I use it. The major downfall is I need to charge it daily.

Using the Echo Loop is a breeze, now instead of talking to Alexa through a smart speaker, I can just slip the Loop over my finger and chat with my voice assistant on the go, walkie-talkie style.

The Loop has an underside microphone – so you are essentially asking a question into my paws, then I lift my paw to my ear, where a speaker will give Alexa's answer.

The Echo Loop is on the thick side with a large, flat front and black titanium finish. It comes in four sizes (the reason for the sizing kit). There's a button located off-center on the inside which I can touch to activate (it vibrates) Alexa, then I just speak my commands, it's that simple. Next to the button is the speaker, then I raise the Loop to my ear to hear Alexa (now I feel like a CIA agent). I don't need my phone or any of my other devices that have the Alexa app

Cloud Storage

Six of the best online storage solutions for secure
image backup and easy worldwide access

Apple's iCloud system is the most logical cloud storage choice if you're already an iPhone or Mac user, such is its seamless device integration with its host devices. As with Microsoft Windows and OneDrive, iCloud is part of the Mac Finder app, making for super-easy file backup and sharing across numerous devices.

The connection is so slick that selected folders on your Mac's internal hard drive will automatically upload to iCloud: if you delete a file from your machine, it'll also be deleted from the cloud. Apple also includes access to web versions of productivity apps like Pages and Numbers.

The Photos app is available across all Apple devices, as well as directly through a browser. It enables you to quickly access, organize, download and share your images in one of the most streamlined interfaces available. You get 5GB for free when you sign up, although that can quickly get used up. Priced tiers start at just $0.99 a month for 50GB of storage, while 200GB is $2.99 a month, and 2TB is $9.99.

Dropbox has been the go-to cloud storage choice for years. You get a rather paltry 2GB for free, so really, you'll need to step up to the 2TB Plus plan at $9.99 a month, although this is charged annually at an upfront cost of $119.88. This also gets you extras like easy file sending and 30-day file recovery. A 3TB Professional plan is also available, but it's geared towards small businesses, and isn't great value for most photographers.

Drop box's simple interface enables you to drag-and-drop the files you want to store online into a Drop box folder on your machine. These are stored in the cloud automatically, mirroring what is on your device. If you delete a photo from your computer, it can be set to delete from the cloud. Using the mobile app for iOS and Android is also a very straightforward affair.

Although Dropbox doesn't offer a dedicated imaging application like iCloud Photos, the simple folder structure design will appeal to those who like to have full control over the way their files are stored and organized.

Google Drive enables you to store any file type and has a sliding pay scale depending on the services and storage you want. You get a generous 15GB for free. 100GB currently costs $1.99 per month, 200GB is $2.99 per month, and 2TB is $9.99 per month. There are 10, 20 and 30TB options, but they're hugely expensive. An added bonus is, like Apple and Microsoft, Drive isn't just about storage: it's integrated with Google's cloud-based productivity apps, which has no problem rivalling Microsoft's Word, Excel and PowerPoint packages.

The Google empire also has Google Photos. This app is designed to store and organize your images. You get unlimited storage for images up to 16Mp resolution: the theory here is to provide extended storage of phone photos, rather than a service for backing up your DSLR's high-res image portfolio. As such, Raw image support is limited rather than comprehensive. Google's image recognition algorithms automatically scan uploaded images and categorize them by the subject content for easy searching.

IDrive This fast, easy-to-use cloud storage solution offers continuous syncing of your files, even those on Network Attached Storage. There's 5GB of free storage, while an annual $69.50 buys you 2TB, and 5TB can be had for a very competitive $99.50.

The web interface supports sharing files by email, Facebook and Twitter. Cautious or click-happy users will be pleased to hear that files deleted from your computer are not automatically deleted from the cloud, so there's less danger of removing something important by accident. Up to 30 previous versions of all files backed to your account are retained. For photos, there's a neat facial recognition feature that helps you to automatically organize images, as well as syncing them across all your linked devices. iDrive also offers iDrive Express, which sends you a physical hard disk drive if you lose all your data, allowing for the swift restoration of all your backed-up files. That applies to the newly introduced disk image backup feature.

OneDrive: As a Microsoft product. OneDrive cloud storage is deeply integrated into Windows 10. It can be accessed from the operating system, much like a physical hard drive or SSD, making for an effortless cloud backup solution. There's also a macOS app to enable a similar experience when using a Mac, though perhaps inevitably it's not as slick as the iCloud ecosystem. OneDrive can also be used on iOS and Android mobile devices.

The photos section is just one part of the extensive OneDrive package, and it boasts a handful of other clever features. There's extensive Raw file support. as well as the ability to automatically recognize the content of your images and tag them, making it easy to search for images by content or theme. One Drive offers 5GB of storage for free, while 100GB will set you back a fairly accessible $1.99 a month. $69.99 will buy you a year's subscription to the Office 365 Personal plan, which gives you 1TB of storage, along with a useful file recovery service and access to online versions of Microsoft Word, Excel and PowerPoint

pCloud - This relative newcomer to the cloud storage scene is making waves, and it's easy to see why. pCloud is one of a few cloud storage companies to offer a one-off, lifetime payment option. If you can stomach that initial parting with, you get 2TB of storage for life, plus benefits like 2TB of download bandwidth for sharing images and videos. (Uploading is unlimited.) Alternatively, $175 will buy you a lifetime's worth of 500GBs of storage and the same again in linking/streaming bandwidth. pCloud also offers a few annual subscription plans, with the same 500GB/2TB storage options priced at $47.88 and $95.88 per year respectively, which works out at $3.99 and $7.99 a month.

You can access your files from a PC, a Mac, mobile devices or the web, with pCloud storage appearing as a local drive on a PC or Mac for ultimate ease of access and backup. What's more. for an extra $3.99 a month, you can upgrade to pCloud Crypto so each stored file can be encrypted, and password protected.

Five Things To look Out for

1. Most providers offer at least 10G free storage, but realistically you'll need at least 100GB for long-time storage.

2. Could storage can be supported by desktop apps that enable you to easily monitor your storage.

3. Mot services offer automatic uploads from a specific folder on ou hard drive to the cloud.

4. Some providers offer tempting monthly prices, but the may actually be charged as a annual fee.

5. The likes of Apple , Google and Microsoft also integrate online productivity and photo origination software.

Comrades go out to our **Jasmine Blue D'Katz** for getting her March 2020 article "What's in my Toy Box?" picked as a APCUG PUSH Article to be sent out for other clubs to publish in their newsletters.

to set up the Loop.

I've used my Loop for nearly everything including playing music, though the tiny speaker is not great. I can also use it for phone calls. It easily handles adding things to my list (to-do and shopping), and for adding reminders to my calendar. There are probable many other things when I have not tried yet.

The Echo Loop batterie will last all day and to charge it, just drop the Loop onto its cradle.

Coming Soon

Apple 12.9" Apple Pro & Magic Keyboard

What Exactly Is Telemedicine—and How Does It Work?

Everything you need to know about virtual doctor appointments, plus when you really should see an MD in person.

Nearly half of US doctors now report treating patients via telemedicine (also known as telehealth), according to a recent survey by Merritt Hawkins in collaboration with The Physicians Foundation. Telemedicine isn't actually a new thing; doctors have been offering telephone consultations for decades. But the COVID-19 era has brought telemedicine to the forefront of health care. Until there's a proven treatment or vaccine for the new coronavirus, getting medical advice, checking out symptoms, or going for a checkup remotely might be a reality for many of us. Here's what doctors who practice telehealth want you to know about it.

What is telemedicine?

Telehealth is simpler than it sounds. Basically, you get a consultation or an appointment with your doctor over the phone or via an online video platform like Skype, FaceTime, or Zoom. Think of it as a "virtual visit" with your health care provider.

Before COVID-19, New York City-based gynecologist Rebecca C. Brightman, MD, assistant clinical professor of obstetrics, gynecology and reproductive medicine at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, offered phone consults to patients. But since the outbreak, she's offered both consultations and appointments via phone or webcam. "I offer both to my patients—it's up to them whether they want the face-to-face interaction," she tells *Health.*

Orthodontist Heather Kunen, DDS, co-founder of dental practice Beam Street, in New York City, is another doctor

who has embraced telehealth. "Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, my office had been considering incorporating virtual Invisalign consultations as part of our list of services," she tells *Health*. "The lockdown/stay-at-home orders motivated us to officially implement the virtual service using Zoom."

Most health care providers are pretty flexible when it comes to digital platforms. "Using FaceTime is a simple option for those with an iPhone, and Skype works great as well," pediatric urologist Jay Levy, MD, who is a medical director at Aeroflow Healthcare, tells *Health*. "Many providers also offer an electronic medical record system, like Doxy.me, where patients can check in online and connect with their doctor."

Various health care platforms are available to connect patients remotely with the right medical providers, such as Walgreens Find Care, which also offers a virtual

pharmacy to those who need to have their prescriptions filled and delivered.

What do I need to do telemedicine appointments?

If you're happy with a phone consultation, all you need is a phone. If you'd prefer a face-to-face consultation, you'll need a smartphone, tablet, or a computer with a webcam. To ensure a positive, productive telemedicine experience, Dr. Levy says the most important thing is to check your WiFi is working properly. "One of the biggest issues is an appointment being sidetracked or ultimately cancelled due to poor WiFi connectivity," he says.

Just as you have a private, quiet space when you meet with your health care provider in their office, it's a good idea to do the same at home. Dr. Levy suggests a well-lit space where you're not likely to be disturbed. On that note, it's a good idea to let others in your home know ahead of time that you'll be unavailable during your appointment time frame.

Any other preparation, such as checking your weight or your temperature, really depends on the specific health questions you have. To give your doctor an accurate health history, take note of any symptoms and their duration, Kevin Ban, MD, chief medical officer at Walgreens, tells *Health.*

Do all insurance companies cover it?

Not necessarily. "As telehealth has become even more critical to help address medical needs during the coronavirus outbreak, the government, health plans, and providers have begun instituting new policies and technological advances to make it more accessible to patients across the nation," says Dr. Ban. For instance, the federal government recently passed legislation expanding the availability of services provided through telehealth under Medicare.

When you call the doctor's office to make or confirm an appointment date and time, staff will verify your insurance, make any necessary updates and, if applicable, take payment for your co-pay over the phone, Dr. Levy

says. Still, play it safe by asking your health care provider or their office staff about coverage before you schedule an appointment, or what the total cost will be.

What happens during a telemedicine appointment?

During a telehealth consultation, Dr. Brightman asks her patients questions about their medical history and current symptoms to decide the best course of treatment. She never asks a patient to disrobe, but they can send her a photo (without any identifiers) if they are concerned about a visible finding. "This can help me make a diagnosis and work out whether or not it can be treated remotely or requires an office visit. "Typically, nobody else is present when I host a telemedicine visit," she adds.

If she decides that a patient needs an exam, she encourages them to come to the office, where all precautions have been taken regarding social distancing, hand hygiene, and personal protective equipment (PPE) where appropriate.

Dr. Kunen starts a Zoom consultation by asking her patient what their chief concern is. She then examines their teeth and analyzes their bite before providing a diagnosis. "I explain the Invisalign product and process to the patient and answer any questions they may have," she says. After the consultation, the practice's treatment coordinator contacts the patient to discuss financials and the next steps.

Can my partner or friend listen in for support?

It's absolutely fine if you want your partner, family member, or roommate to be present during your telehealth appointment. "I have had several telemedicine appointments with young teens who have wanted their moms present during the visit," says Dr. Brightman. "Having a family member present can also be helpful when it comes to obtaining a family history or reviewing a course of treatment."

Dr. Kunen always encourages her patients to invite a friend or family member to be present. "I want consultations to be fun and comfortable, whether they're done in person or virtually," she says.

When should I stick with an IRL visit?

"Telemedicine can support many acute care needs and illnesses, but it's not appropriate in some circumstances," says Dr. Ban. "For example, patients can't undergo procedures or receive imaging tests remotely." And telemedicine is never a replacement for an in-person appointment for patients who are extremely ill and require urgent medical attention, or who have symptoms that could indicate a serious and urgent issue.

Dr. Brightman has performed consultations via telemedicine for the management of menopausal symptoms and painful periods and family planning, as well as to treat urinary tract and other infections. Some obstetrics visits can also be done virtually, with women checking their blood pressure and weight at home. But Dr. Brightman says there are times when an in-office visit is necessary, such as abnormally heavy bleeding and STI screening.

When it comes to dentistry, almost all procedures will require an in-person visit at some stage to let the dentist complete any physical work that needs to be done. While minor emergencies like a broken bracket or a popped-out wire can often be resolved temporarily at home via virtual guidance by an orthodontist, detailed clinical observation and specific diagnosis must be done in person, says Dr. Kunen.

What are the drawbacks?

While telemedicine offers face-to-face interaction with health care providers—which is crucial at a time like this, when needs are critically high due to the COVID-19 pandemic—it's important to remember that it does have limitations.

"Physicians are able to rely on patients to take their temperature, however things such as blood pressure and lab work all rely on nursing staff," says Dr. Levy. "It's also impossible to recreate the hands-on element of a standard office visit. Without the ability for the doctor to touch or feel the patient, it is sometimes more difficult to determine what the actual issue is."

Dr. Kunen agrees that telemedicine may be somewhat limited in terms of what can be accomplished, but she believes it's "a wonderful adjunct to modern practice." And during this unprecedented time, when many people may not be able to (or want to) go to an in-person visit, a virtual one is a great alternative in many cases. "Going forward, I think telehealth will remain an important component to all medical practices," she says.

A Hard Drive For Every Need

A normal hard disk drive comes in a couple of form factors, but both share one thing in common: moving internal components that have been the standard for decades. One of the benefits of this type of drive is its relative affordability.

Affordable and Easy

Take the Seagate Backup Plus series, for instance. It's a USB 3.0 external hard drive with 4 TB storage capacity perfect for those who want an affordable drive for shuttling image files and videos between systems or for straightforward data backup. What this bus-powered drive may lack in speed it makes up for in simplicity and affordability. It's plug-and-play formatted for both Windows and Mac right out of the box, and it includes a complimentary two-month subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud's photography plan. Best of all, the 4 TB drive retails for just $99 at bhphotovideo.com. Visit seagate.com for more information.

Solid-state drives, better known as SSDs, have become increasingly popular in recent years, as they're fast and reliable with no internal moving parts. They're compact, too, which makes them great for photographers and videographers who need to travel light. The current ideal among SSD drives is NVMe, which maximizes speed and stability of these flash-based drives.

Other World Computing's Envoy Pro EX is a compact NVMe drive that's perfect for Mac users who relish traveling light while protecting their data. This USB-C drive offers data transfer up to 980 mb/s, and its rugged, all-aluminum construction is built to withstand the rigors of serious travel, as it's both waterproof and dustproof. 240 GB to 4 TB capacities, ranging from $119 to $1,099. eshop.macsales.com

Big and Secure

Those who want to ensure data security go above and beyond by mirroring the data from one drive onto another. This is done most efficiently with a RAID drive array, which automatically duplicates the contents of one hard drive to another. RAIDs have the reputation of being complex, though that isn't always the case. They're available in multiple setups starting with a pair of drives that simply duplicate one another. If one fails, simply pull it out

How to make your laptop last longer so you don't have to buy a new one now
Some laptops can take a licking and keep on ticking. But you shouldn't count on it if you want to maximize their usable lifespan.

The best things to organize your wires.
If you need to put every cord in place and get rid of the clutter of loose wires on your desk, counter and in the drawers, then these items may help you our.

This is the best free password manager.
LastPass may be the best free password manager you will ever need.

Finding a Therapist Online
This site combines a searchable directory of in person and online therapists with general info about mental health. The line below is a noteworthy pate that compares to popular online therapy services.
blog.zencare.co/betterhelp-vs-talkspace

Turn your Gmail into an email pro.
Using these 7 hidden steps will give you a handle on your Gmail inbox.

Want 2TB of Cloud Storage for Life
ThunderDrive Cloud is offering a Lifetime Subscription for $59.Your clould will be accessible from your web browser and you get sharable folders.

USB Web lights
Want to look better while Zooming. These inexpensive Ring Light will brighten up your image.

The most technologically efficient machine that man has ever invented is the book.
— NORTHROP FRYE

While attending several Zoom presentations the past couple of months, I gathered some some information I would like to share.

Password Management Presentation
BitWarden one of the easiest and safest ways to store all of your logins and passwords.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=05EJIs10FVM

Wyze Cams
This is a cheap security camera or webcam at a dirt cheap price.
https://wyze.com/wyze-cam-black.html
White Version: https://wyze.com/wyze-cam.html

Duplicate Photo Cleaner

Duplicate Photo Cleaner is absolutely the best way to remove duplicate photos from your PC and phone!Tired of cluttered photo albums?

Get DPC at a special AskWoody discounted price, and delete duplicate and similar photos from your computer and smartphone in a flash! AskWoody special: Add **File Cleaner** for just $9.95!

Click here to claim your exclusive discount! Duplicate photos won't stand a chance.

and replace it.

The LaCie 2big, two-bay drive array offers a whopping 28 TB capacity with two SATA 3.5-inch drive bays and a USB C interface capable of transfer speeds up to 10 Gb/s. It's perfect for intensive needs such as editing 4k video. The 28 TB, two-bay array has a suggested retail price of $1,149. lacie.com

Q&A

Smartphone, Zoom Privacy, HBO and Data Caps

By Bob DeLaurentis

Q. Which mobile phone is the best value?

A. Although many options exist in the smartphone market, one choice stands above all the others: The 2020 iPhone SE.

I am so impressed by the new iPhone SE that I believe it should be the first phone anyone considers, even current smartphone owners who want to upgrade. It is simply that good. ·

Technology refinements over the last few years have created a revolutionary. landscape for consumers. The iPhone SE capably matches top of the line phones from a few years ago for less than half the price. Even more astounding, the iPhone SE has a faster processor than any Android phone ever made.

The base model iPhone SE packs more than enough power for any user, and there are only a handful of add-ons worth considering. An external case can be nice but is not necessary'. I strongly recommend adding AppleCare for 3.99 a month. If you expect to. take a massive number of photos and videos, an extra $50 will double the internal storage, which is a worthwhile luxury.   .

The iPhone SE is the only Apple phone that still uses a fingerprint to unlock the screen. Differences in phys-iology make TouchID troublesome for a small group of users, so if this is your first TouchID device, use the exchange policy if the phone does not meet your needs.

Premium smartphones continue to push the lead-ing edge of technology forward, but the iPhone SE has nar-rowed the performance gap signifi-cantly. An iPhone SE is a bargain-priced workhorse that you should con-sider for your next smartphone.

Q. I have read horror stories about privacy with Zoom conferences. Should I be concerned?

A. In December 2019, Zoom had 10 million · daily users. In March, their daily users numbered over 200 million. That twentyfold increase attracted a lot of attention, including headlines about security is-sues.

Security issues can be found in any tech product that includes software. In other words, every tech product. However, from a practical perspective, most of these red flags are not especially wide-spread. And in Zoom's case, its problems have been addressed.

So how does a consumer identify the problems that he or she really needs to worry about? If the problem prevents you from getting your work done, or if a product or vendor ignores security vul-nerabilities over a sustained period of time, that is a signal that it might be time for greener pastures. My advice is to pay attention news reports, but do not jump to another product lightly. Similar products have security issues too.   .
Today we need to connect with one another now more than ever, and Zoom is one of the best ways to do that.

Q. I feel lost whenever I try some-thing new with a personal tech device. Are user manuals gone forev-er?

A. I remember the days when com-puter software was sold in boxes stuffed thick with manuals. I also remember bookstore tech shelves that contained thousands of books explain-ing everything you could ever want.

That era has passed, but we are not as bad off as it may appear. There is a lot of help if you know where to look for it.

Every smartphone, tablet, and lap-top has at least one manual available online. For most hardware, one of those little slips of paper in the box will have a link to a PDF document that you can download.

The next option is to look on the [internet. Try searching for the name of the product, the operating system name, and the phrase "user guide" or "getting started." For example, "MacBook Pro Catali-na user guide" or "Android 10 Pixel 3 manual."

Another place to find support is the help menu built into most apps. These menus usually provide another link to a PDF manual, along with links to the manufacturer's web site, tutorials, and context spe-cific help.

The bottom line is that great docu-mentation still exists, but it is usually hard to find.
outside with a camera.

Q. How do I disinfect a smartphone or tablet?
A. Manufacturers usually publish guidelines for their products, and you should follow them. The most common advice is to avoid using too much liquid by applying it first to a clean, lint-free cloth. Use a disin-fectant solution that contains at least 70% alcohol. Never use bleach or similar strong chemicals.

Products intended for cleaning screens do not dis-infect, even if they contain alcohol.

Which country made it illegal to own just one guinea pig?

⇒ Brazil

⇒ Iran

⇒ Ethiopia

⇒ Switzerland

I usually use a pre-moistened alcohol hand wipe and wait a couple of minutes for any liquid to evaporate, followed by a clean cloth to polish away any leftover streaks. A minimal amount of liquid and the right cloth can do wonders to keep a device looking great and reasonably well disinfected.

Q. What is the difference between HBO Now and HBO Go?
A. Science fiction movies love to use popular brands to make the future seem familiar.
A classic example was 2001: A Space Odyssey, where names like Hilton and Bell Telephone implied that the future will resemble the past.

Here in the present, HBO is now owned by AT&T. You read that right, the company formerly nicknamed "Ma Bell" is now a media conglomerate. And HBO is no longer constrained by the cable box, it is a line of services paraded under the HBO banner.

HBO Now and HBO Go are for different audienc-es. The HBO Now app provides a way for cable-cutters to access HBO without cable, while HBO Go allows cable subscribers to access HBO on phones and tablets. Neither are going away anytime soon, but the times they are a-changin'.

Enter HBO Max. Launched in late May, HBO Max joins Disney+ and AppleTV+ in the on-demand streaming market currently dominated by Netflix and Amazon. If you have an HBO cable subscription, HBO Go is free. If you have HBO Now, you may be offered an upgrade to HBO Max. If you are new to HBO, jump straight to HBO Max.

The times are changing. HBO's future beyond cable is a premiumpriced service with a mix of legacy titles and new programs.

Q. Occasionally I get warnings that I am close to hitting my data cap. What can I do to lessen data use?
A. Although everyone uses the Internet differently, video streaming almost always takes up the overwhelming share of total data use.

The most obvious way to use less data is to watch less video, but there is another, often overlooked approach: switch to a smaller sized stream.

Video size is not very prominent to most users. The stream for your device is selected automatically, based on app preferences, the speed of your connection, and the screen size of the device. That works most of the time, but it can result in a stream that consumes more data than necessary.

Take a look at a YouTube video. Under a small gear icon is a popup menu that includes an item titled "Quality." Usually you will see a range of choices that start around 300 and go up to 1080 or more. These numbers describe the resolution of a video stream, but the effect is to change the total number of data bits that fill the video frame.
The "Auto" option will make its best guess for what you need, but often you can go a step or two lower without diminishing the viewing experience.

"Quality" settings exist in most streaming apps, but too often they are hidden away and hard to find. How much you can lower the quality depends on many factors, including the content itself, the screen size, and the distance to the screen. Even the quality of your eyesight plays a role.

Now that you know what is possible, try experimenting with the services you use most. The data needed to view one two-hour Netflix movie on a wall TV will be cut by two-thirds by switching from HD to Standard Definition. That is a lot of data.

Trivia

Who was offered an internship at Hewlett-Packard in the 8th Grade.

⇒ Bill Gates

⇒ Steve Jobs

⇒ Nolan Bushnell

⇒ John Sculley

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