

## Useful Bits & Pieces

by Lorrin R. Garson

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### New Computers with Windows 7

If you find yourself in the position of needing to buy a new PC and Windows 8 turns you off, you can still buy PCs with Windows 7. New, preassembled PCs with Win-7 are available from Best Buy, Amazon, Newegg, Dell, HP and others. Another approach is to build your own PC and buy Windows 7 from an online retailer. It seems that online retailers stockpiled Windows 7 licenses before Microsoft cut off access in anticipation of there being demand for the older OS. The price for Win-7 from retailers will undoubtedly rise as supplies dwindle. Finally, it is possible to buy a new PC with Windows 8 Pro and downgrade to Windows 7. This option allows you to return to Windows 8 without a charge should you wish. However, the downgrade path requires (a) purchase of a new PC with Windows 8 Pro and (b) a product key and installation disc for Windows 7 in hand. There are reports that the downgrade is not straightforward and some (most?) manufacturers are not helpful or encouraging. For example see HP's discouraging comments at <http://goo.gl/8VKshQ>.

## Office for iPad

While there is no such thing as “Office for iPad”, Microsoft is offering three free separate apps for the iPad (with iOS 7), namely, Word, Excel and PowerPoint. However, unless you have an Office 365 account, these apps are only document viewers. Bear in mind Office 365 allows you to install the suite of software on up to five PCs and/or Macs plus five tablets. Office for iPad apps is bulky; all three take up about 675MB (Word, 246MB; Excel, 223MB; and PowerPoint, 205MB). The iPad version lacks the complete feature set of Office 2013. Finally, these apps on an iPad are tightly coupled with Microsoft's Cloud storage OneDrive; you can't store files you create with these apps on the iPad. Reviews are generally positive. See <http://goo.gl/ZSxzDE> for information on Office 365.

## Mechanical Keyboards

Tablets and smartphones notwithstanding, there are still many people who use keyboards and mice. For heavy users of keyboards, consideration should be given to replacing your cheap membrane keyboard with a mechanical keyboard, which will increase speed and accuracy. Most mechanical keyboards are aimed toward gamers, and almost all are hardwired (i.e., not wireless), but most are have a very nice

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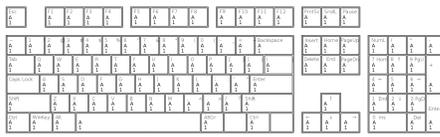
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tactile feeling for day-to-day keyboarding. The table below has some candidates for your consideration.

### SlickLogin

We are all aware of the limitations of IDs coupled with passwords. This information is relatively easily compromised. Google currently offers a two-factor authentication in which a unique single-use code is sent to your smart phone as text, voice call or their mobile app and you then key this additional piece of information to complete access. See <http://goo.gl/qI8uyn>. Now comes SlickLogin which uses a sound-based code for authentication. Instead of a code that you manually key in, a sound-bite is sent to your smart phone which you hold up to the microphone of the computer you are accessing, That in turn causes the computer to generate sound through its speakers that are picked up by the smartphone, analyzed by SlickLogin and, if

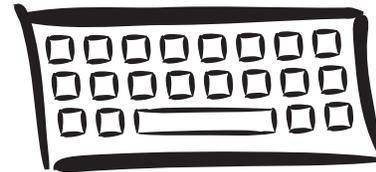


Keyboard Mappings

all is well, completes the login process. The technology can be used as a replacement for ID/password or as part of two-factor authentication. SlickLogin was acquired by Google earlier this year. For more information see <http://goo.gl/aP16mc> and <http://goo.gl/S9DHNT>. Stay tuned for developments.

### Microsoft Rumors

There are rumors afoot that in September Microsoft will release Windows 8.1, Update 2 (or perhaps to be called Windows 8.2), which will sport a Start menu. Is there a free version of Windows coming to compete with Android and other low-cost (or free) operating systems? How about a Cloud based version of Windows? See <http://goo.gl/LSZ7Bp> and <http://goo.gl/4S72yy>. Rumors aside, there is considerable confusion about Windows updates, see <http://goo.gl/z5AJV5>.



### Mechanical Keyboards to Consider

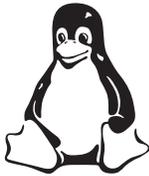
Model	Price <sup>1</sup>	Reference	Comments
Das Keyboard 4 Professional	\$170	<a href="http://goo.gl/w98pqT">http://goo.gl/w98pqT</a>	Several models available. PC, Linux, Mac
Freenix Autore	\$160	<a href="http://goo.gl/mRuP5v">http://goo.gl/mRuP5v</a>	Weak reviews
Logitech G710 Plus USB Wired Gaming Mechanical Keyboard	\$150	<a href="http://goo.gl/RWn58J">http://goo.gl/RWn58J</a>	Non-clicking key switches
Ozone Strike Pro	\$140	<a href="http://goo.gl/A9Jnz1">http://goo.gl/A9Jnz1</a>	3 models available
Razor Blackwidow Ultimate	\$140	<a href="http://goo.gl/SkC0Ae">http://goo.gl/SkC0Ae</a>	Aimed toward gamers
SteelSeries 6Gv/2	\$110	<a href="http://goo.gl/pBSbX5">http://goo.gl/pBSbX5</a>	Weak reviews
WASD V2 87-Key Custom Mechanical Keyboard	\$145	<a href="http://goo.gl/luogEy">http://goo.gl/luogEy</a>	No backlighting.

<sup>1</sup> Not necessarily the lowest price.

## Linux and Open Source News

by Geof Goodrum

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### Restoring the Microsoft Windows Master Boot Record with Linux

I recently restored the Master Boot Record (MBR) on a hard drive with a Microsoft Windows 7 operating system that would no longer boot up. The drive was from a laptop, which had a license but did not include the Windows installation media.

The answer from Windows support fora is to purchase the Windows installation DVD from the laptop vendor and use its system repair utility ([http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows\\_xp-windows\\_install/how-can-i-recover-the-windows-7-mbr-after-running/804f2a9d-11ce-4a87-afb4-36be65cd317f](http://answers.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/forum/windows_xp-windows_install/how-can-i-recover-the-windows-7-mbr-after-running/804f2a9d-11ce-4a87-afb4-36be65cd317f), <http://support.microsoft.com/kb/927392>, <http://www.thewindowsclub.com/repair-master-boot-record-mbr-windows>, <http://www.sevenforums.com/tutorials/20864-mbr-restore-windows-7-master-boot-record.html>).

But there is a much easier and free solution if you have a Linux operating system or utility disk handy.

I attached the affected Windows 7 hard drive to my Debian 7 GNU/Linux laptop using a USB adapter and followed the “Mini-Howto” instructions posted at <http://robert.penz.name/221/mini-howto-restore-windows-mbrbootloader-with-linux/>.

My laptop already had the syslinux utility (<http://www.syslinux.org/>) installed, so I entered the command (as root user) `dd if=/usr/lib/syslinux/mbr.bin of=/dev/sdb` in a terminal window, where `/dev/sdb` was the device name for the USB-attached Windows 7 hard drive (may be different depending upon your system configuration). Note that the sudo command prefix in the web

site example is preferred for GNU/Linux operating systems that have the sudo command configured by default, such as Ubuntu Linux and its variants.

As the web site cited above notes, this command can also be run directly from various Linux bootable media (CD or flash drive), such as Knoppix (<http://knoppix.net/>). A Linux operating system does not need to be installed on a hard drive to restore the MBR.

That was it—quick and simple. After running a single command, Windows 7 booted successfully from the hard drive after reinstalling it.

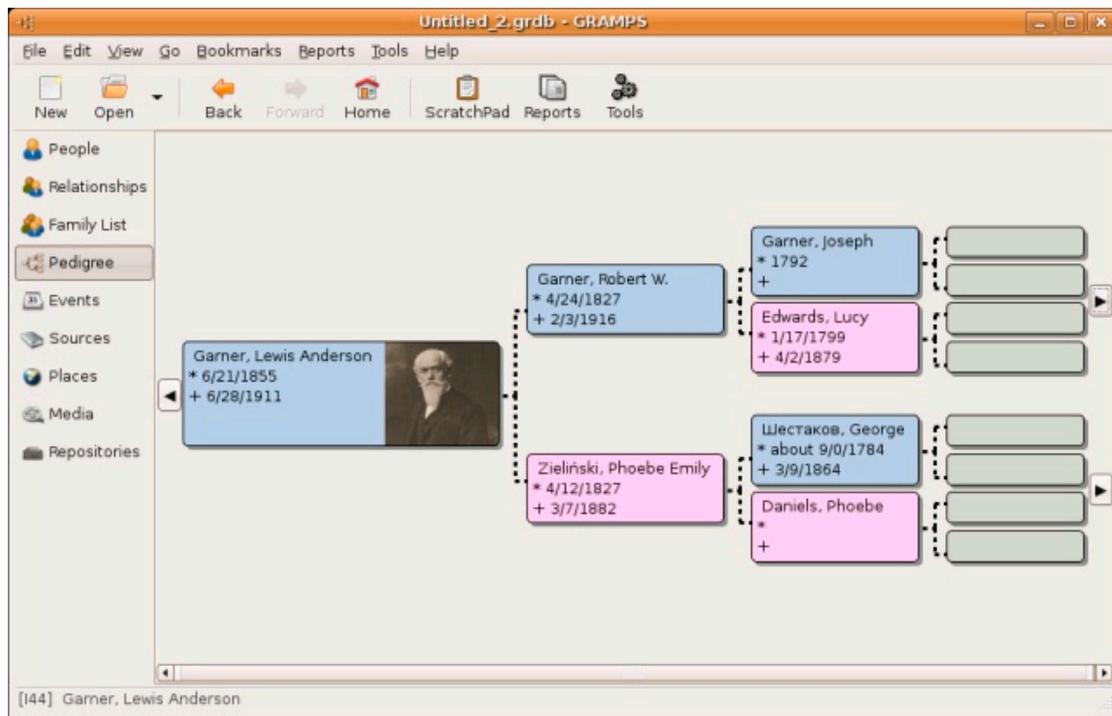
If you don't like entering text commands, there are Linux-based utilities that you can boot from a CD or flash drive to fix system boot problems through a graphic interface. Rescatux (<http://www.supergrubdisk.org/>) has various Windows recovery utilities including a BETA Windows MBR utility (as of version 0.30b8), though some reported it did not work reliably for Windows releases after XP. Boot Repair Disk (<http://sourceforge.net/projects/boot-repair-cd/>) is reported to work well in repairing the Windows 7 MBR (<http://askubuntu.com/questions/5748/how-to-restore-windows-7-mbr-without-a-cd>).

### Featured Open Source Software of the Month: July 2014

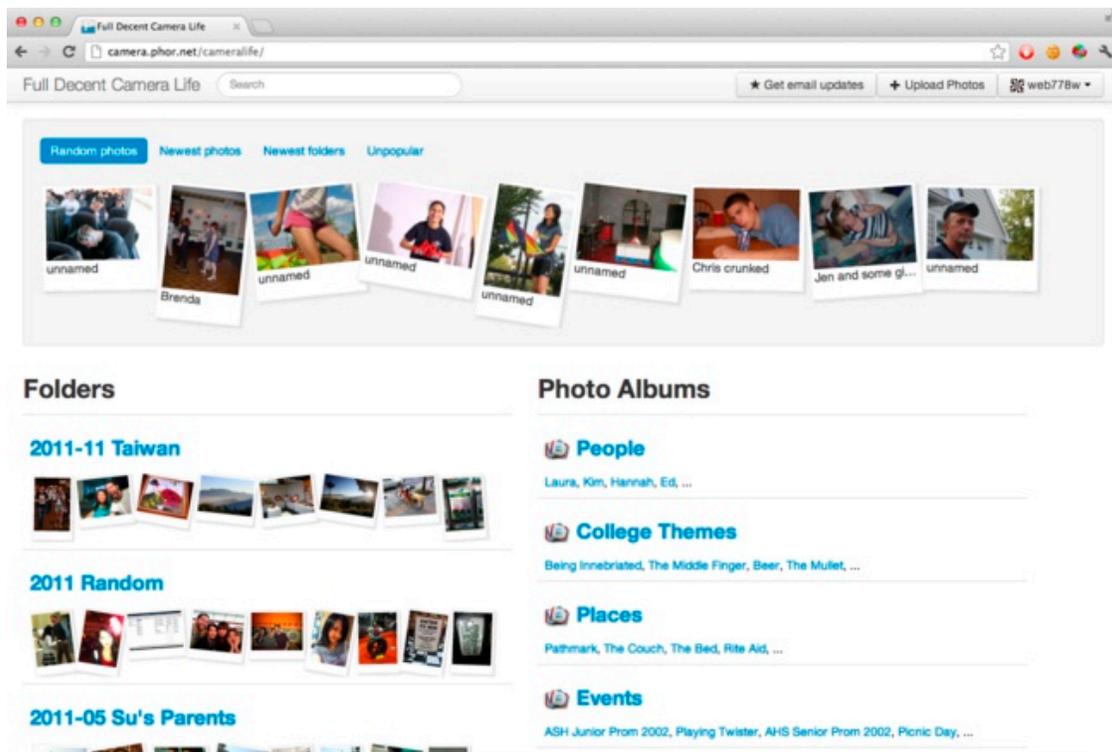
The software described below can be downloaded at the links provided or copied onto a USB flash drive at the PATACS Fairfax meeting. However, please check the online package management tool included with your GNU/Linux distribution first, as installation is often just a click away.

**Camera Life** – v2.7.0a3. <https://github.com/fulldecent/cameralife>. Free GNU General Public License cross-platform PHP script by William Entriken. Camera Life is a system for cataloging your photo collection. It gives users the ability to search or browse your archive in intuitive ways, with an attention to powerful administrative functions. Photos can be stored locally, on a

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Above: Gramps Genealogy software Pedigree display  
Below: Camera Life photo management software



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remote server, on Amazon S3, or on Flickr. The theme and icons can be easily customized. It is compatible with the Gallery Remote API (so you can upload with iPhoto, Digikam, and Java). It is RSS enabled, supports microformats and OpenSearch, and has a special version of the site for iPhone/iPod touch. AJAX is used to optimize the site as necessary.

**cppcheck** – v1.65. <http://cppcheck.sourceforge.net/>. Free GNU General Public License Perl script for Linux and Microsoft Windows by Daniel Marjamäki. Cppcheck is a static analysis tool for C/C++ code. Unlike C/C++ compilers and many other analysis tools, it does not detect syntax errors in the code. Cppcheck primarily detects the types of bugs that the compilers normally do not detect. The goal is to detect only real errors in the code (i.e., have zero false positives). Cppcheck requires a C++11 compiler supporting the common subset of features supported by GCC 4.4, Microsoft Visual Studio 2010 and Clang 2.9.

**Gramps** – v4.0.4. <https://gramps-project.org/>. Free GNU General Public License Python script for Apple OS X, Microsoft Windows, BSD, Solaris, and Linux by the Gramps Project Community. Gramps (Genealogical Research and Analysis Management Programming System) is a genealogy program. Every person has their own story but they are also part of a collective family history. Gramps gives you the ability to record the many details of an individual's life as well as the complex relationships between various people, places and events. All of your research is kept organized, searchable and as precise as you need it to be. It helps you organize your family tree, and is capable of exchanging data with other programs using GEDCOM, the general standard of recording genealogical information.

**Legend of Edgar** – v1.16. <http://sourceforge.net/projects/legendofedgar/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executables for Debian Linux and Microsoft Windows by Richard Sweeney. Legend of Edgar is a 2D platform game with a persistent world, a variety of weapons,

over fifty enemies, large levels with different environments, Boss battles, music soundtrack, and sound effects. When Edgar's father fails to return home after venturing out one dark and stormy night, Edgar fears the worst: he has been captured by the evil sorcerer who lives in a fortress beyond the forbidden swamp! Edgar must battle his way across the world, solving puzzles and defeating powerful enemies to achieve his quest.

**Kernel Source** – v3.14.4. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.



## Computer Archeology

by Geof Goodrum

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There were two recent news stories related to computer history and archeology that caught my interest, because I still have an Atari 2600 game console (actually, the rebranded Sears Video Arcade) and a Commodore Amiga 1000. Yes, I'm a packrat.

### E.T. Unearthed!

A documentary film crew investigated an urban legend about the video game company Atari, Inc. burying 10-20 truckloads of unsold Atari 2600 E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial game cartridges in a dump outside of Alamogordo, NM in 1983. Turns out that the legend was true, as an excavation in late April 2014 turned up not only E.T. cartridges, but over sixty other titles and game consoles, as well. The documentary "Atari: Game Over" is scheduled for exclusive release on Microsoft Xbox 360 and Xbox One platforms in 2014 and a screening at the July Comic-Con. This is a rather fascinating story that was covered widely by the media (e.g., <http://www.cnet.com/news/found-ataris-e-t-games-dug-up-from-new-mexico-landfill/>, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/04/27/tech/gaming-gadgets/atari-et-video-game/>

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[index.html](#)) and documented on Wikipedia ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atari\\_video\\_game\\_burial](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Atari_video_game_burial)).

The city of Alamogordo completed an inventory of the excavated items and plans to distribute them to the film company, museums, and the public ([http://www.alamogordonews.com/News/ci\\_25862460/City-still-deciding-what-to-do](http://www.alamogordonews.com/News/ci_25862460/City-still-deciding-what-to-do)).

### Andy Warhol and the Amiga

The Andy Warhol Museum (<http://www.warhol.org/>) announced in April 2014 that they had recovered examples of the late artist's work from Commodore Amiga 1000 computer floppy disks, commissioned by Commodore International in 1985 to promote the cutting-edge video and graphic capabilities of the computer when it was launched. A YouTube video clip of the launch event, where Andy Warhol produced a video-sampled graphic of model and singer Debbie Harry, is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3oqUd8utr14>. A team at Carnegie Mellon University's Computer Club (<http://www.club.cc.cmu.edu/>) and CMU's Frank-Ratchye STUDIO for Creative Inquiry recovered the art on the 3.5" floppy disks (in Amiga format), a task further complicated because the graphics software the artist used was pre-release with a unique image format that had to be decoded. This is another fascinating story of computer history and forensics. Again, the story was widely covered, with examples at <http://www.pbs.org/newshour/rundown/warhol-computer-artwork-rescued-amiga-floppy-disks/> and <http://time.com/75658/andy-warhol-amiga-art-recovered/>, with the official press releases (PDF) at [http://www.warhol.org/uploadedFiles/Warhol\\_Site/Warhol/Content/The\\_Museum/Press\\_room/documents/The\\_Warhol\\_Amiga\\_Project\\_Release\\_4-24-14.pdf](http://www.warhol.org/uploadedFiles/Warhol_Site/Warhol/Content/The_Museum/Press_room/documents/The_Warhol_Amiga_Project_Release_4-24-14.pdf) and <http://studioforcreativeinquiry.org/events/warhol-discovery>. A documentary video about the recovery effort is online at <http://www.nowseethis.org/>.

### Create and Save a Custom Footer in Word

by Nancy DeMarte

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January 2014 Issue, PC Monitor

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As you build up a library of documents you have written, it helps to have a system to have some sort of ID on each document to help you remember where it is stored. A good place to record this information on a document is in a footer along the bottom of each page. In Word 2007 and later, you can easily create a custom footer which includes the information you want and save it in a handy spot called the Building Block gallery for insertion into any document. Here is how it's done.

For illustration, I chose to create a footer which includes the date the document was created and the file name, including the path. The path shows the location of a file by listing all the folders and subfolders that need to be opened to find it, beginning with the hard drive (c:).

```
c:\users\nanbd\documents\office talk two\custom footer article.docx
```

First I opened a document I had saved that had no footer. I clicked the Insert tab, and then Footer. From the gallery of footers, I clicked the footer labeled, "Blank (Three Column)" even though I was adding only two pieces of information. I then scrolled down to find my footer at the bottom of the page with my cursor flashing inside the footer area.

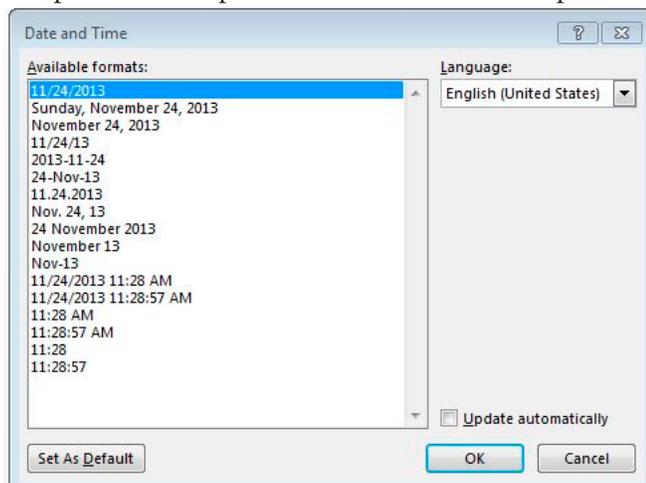
To customize the footer, first I highlighted the left placeholder and pressed Delete to remove it. Leaving my cursor in that spot, I clicked the Insert tab in the ribbon, then Quick Parts – Field. I scrolled down the list and clicked "FileName." I chose lower case for its format, and checked the box which said, "Add path to filename." When I clicked OK, the entire path appeared in the footer.

Then I highlighted the center and right placeholders and deleted them. (I knew I would

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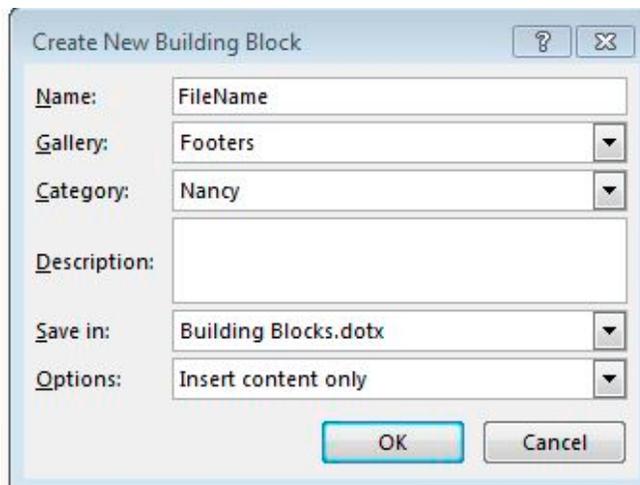
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not be using the center placeholder with this footer, but a page number fits very well in that center spot.) My cursor was then flashing in the spot where the right placeholder had been. To add the date, I clicked the Insert tab again, then Date & Time, which opened the Date and Time dialog box. I opted for the default date format (first one on the list). Now I had a choice: Do I want the date to remain static to remind me when I composed this document, or do I want it to update to the present date each time I open it.



I decided not to have the date update automatically. So I clicked to remove the checkmark from the option, “Update automatically.” I knew I could always update the date manually by clicking it in the footer and selecting Update.

My last step was to save this footer so I could reuse it on other documents. I double clicked in the footer area and highlighted the entire footer line. I clicked the Insert tab – Quick Parts – Save Selection to Quick Parts Gallery. The Create New Building Block dialog box opened with several choices to make. I named my new footer, “FileName” and put in the Footers gallery. Then I clicked the arrow next to Category, chose Create New Category and typed my first name. This way it would be easy to find my custom footer by looking in the Building Block organizer. I left the last two lines as they were, Building Blocks.dotx and Insert content only.



To make sure I had succeeded, I saved my document and closed it. When asked if I wanted to save a new building block, I clicked yes. From now on, if I want to add this footer to a document, all I do is open the document, click Insert – Footers and choose it from the Footer gallery. If I add it to an unsaved document, of course, the filename will be Document 1 with no path. I can always delete it from the Building Block organizer, which will make it disappear from the Footer gallery, as well.

I have created several customized quick parts, depending on my task. The one I use the most has my name on the left, page number in the center, and date on the right. Creating footers, headers or any other groups of text that you reuse often can be a real time-saver. They are worth exploring.



## Bitcoin—a New Currency?

by Phil Sorrentino

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 April 2014 issue, The Journal  
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Bitcoin is basically a payment system. It provides the ability to transfer some type of value from a payer to a payee. (There are no physical coins, only entries in a software ledger.) If you have been monitoring the news with your tablet or laptop, or you have been reading the daily

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papers, you probably already know a lot about Bitcoin. (Mostly negatives lately, I suspect.) But the interest here is mostly on the technology. Bitcoin uses fairly complex peer-to-peer software technology and operates with no central authority (or banks). (It reminds me of the operation of the Bit Torrent file sharing networks, only “value” files are being transferred instead of “entertainment” files.) I must say, up front, that I am not a proponent of this type of software currency. With the current levels of computer security, I feel that there is too much opportunity for problems, like hacking, spoofing and down-right dishonesty. However, progress will probably move this technology forward. I must also admit that I missed some major changes like MySpace, and Twitter, so my opinion of Bitcoin should probably be taken with a grain of salt. The idea of a digital currency, convenient and untraceable, and far from the oversight of governments and banks, has been an interesting software technology topic since the beginning of the Internet.

Bitcoin is a network of computers running Bitcoin software. The Bitcoin network manages the transactions and the issuing of bitcoins. All this is carried out collectively by the network participants. Bitcoin is open-source. Nobody owns or controls Bitcoin, yet anyone with the proper software can take part in its operation. Proponents say that “through many of its unique properties, Bitcoin can enable uses that could not be accomplished by any previous payment system,” but I’m not sure what that really means. Bitcoin is not the only peer-to-peer based digital currency, but it is certainly the most notable. Peercoin and Primecoin are also mentioned in the literature, and in fact a research team at Johns Hopkins computer lab is developing a similar digital currency called Zerocoin. Maybe this type of currency will really be in our future.

Bitcoin, as a new currency, was created in 2009

by an unknown person using the name Satoshi Nakamoto. Satoshi Nakamoto, it is said, is almost certainly a pseudonym for the actual individual, or individuals. Transactions are made with no middle men, meaning no banks. There are no transaction fees and no need to give your real name. Some Internet merchants have begun to accept Bitcoins. Supposedly, you can use bitcoins to buy things on the Internet like web hosting services. There are even indications that you can buy everyday items like pizza using bitcoins. Because bitcoins are used to transfer wealth, people can send bitcoins to each other using their computers, or mobile phone, or tablet apps. It is supposed to be similar to sending cash digitally. Bitcoins can be used to buy merchandise anonymously, a characteristic that has certainly caught the interest of the government. In addition, international payments

are easy and cheap because bitcoins are not tied to any country, country’s currency, or subject to any regulation.

(But the lack of regulation may actually encourage volatility and add risk to the value of a Bitcoin in the future, so this may not be as good as it sounds.) Small businesses may like bitcoins because there are no, or very low, fees. Some people have even been buying bitcoins to have as an investment, hoping their value will appreciate. But bitcoins have been extremely volatile, not really like an investment, but more like a speculation similar to a roulette bet at a casino.

Bitcoin employs the use of very complex peer-to-peer software technology, along with software cryptography. Bitcoin is called a cryptocurrency, because it uses cryptography to control the creation and the transfer of bitcoins among the users. Bitcoin uses public-key cryptography in which pairs of cryptographic keys, one public and one private, are generated. (A cryptographic key is a piece of information that specifies a particular transformation of plaintext into

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ciphertext, and vice-versa.) A collection of keys is called a “wallet”. A Bitcoin transaction transfers bitcoin ownership to a new individual. A coded alphanumeric string is created from the use of the individual’s public key. The corresponding private key is then used to decode the transaction. Only the correct private key will complete the transaction. Additionally a digital signature is checked for validity. (A digital signature is a mathematical scheme for demonstrating the authenticity of a digital message or document.) Private key protection is critical for Bitcoin security, because anyone with the correct private key can spend all of the bitcoins sent to that individual. Security is of paramount importance for the success of Bitcoin. Theft of bitcoins has occurred on numerous occasions and the practical day-to-day security of bitcoins remains an on-going concern.

Bitcoins are stored in a “digital wallet,” which exists either in the cloud or on a user’s computer. The wallet is a kind of virtual bank account that allows users to send or receive bitcoins, pay for goods, or save their money. Bitcoin wallet software has been implemented in several programming languages for personal computers, mobile devices, and as web applications. At the most basic, a wallet program generates and stores private keys and communicates with peers on the Bitcoin network. Unlike bank accounts, bitcoin wallets are not insured by the FDIC. Although each bitcoin transaction is recorded in a public log, the names of buyers and sellers are never revealed, only their wallet IDs are recorded. This lets users buy or sell items without anyone having the ability to trace the transaction back to them. This is why it has become the currency of choice for online illicit activities.

Bitcoins can be obtained in exchange for products, services, or other currencies, or by a process called “mining.” Bitcoins are actually created by the mining process. People compete to “mine” bitcoins using computers to solve complex math problems. In other words,

Bitcoin’s mining operation consists of the network of its users’ computers solving complex mathematical problems. I’m not sure how this really works, but as a result of the effort to solve the problems, at preset intervals, an algorithm releases new bitcoins into the network. The interval is said to be 25 bitcoins every 10 minutes, with the pace of bitcoin generation halving in increments until around the year 2140. This automated pace is meant to ensure regular growth of the monetary supply without interference by third parties, like a central bank, (of which it is thought might lead to hyperinflation).

Bitcoins can be bought and traded on an “Exchange” website, however the most prominent exchange site “Mt. Gox,” has just recently “gone dark,” and is not to be found online. Another exchange, “SecondMarket,” was about to go online, but the apparent collapse of Mt. Gox may delay, or even eliminate the possibility of any new exchanges.

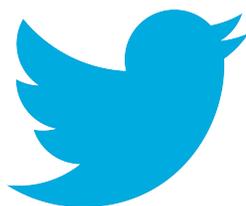
Because the bitcoin transactions are anonymous, there can be a dark side to this technology. Bitcoin has been the subject of government investigation due to its ties with illicit activities. In 2013 the FBI shut down the website, Silk Road, which came on line in 2011, as the first, or one of the first, websites to use Bitcoin for anonymous purchase of all sorts of illegal products and services. The acceptance of only the digital currency, Bitcoin was meant to add an additional layer of anonymity to buyers and sellers. As of September, 2012, the Silk Road site had over 10,000 listings for drugs including heroin, cocaine and LSD. Silk Road was shut down by law enforcement officials last year. This February Federal officials announced a grand jury indictment of the man accused of creating the online drug marketplace. He is in law enforcement custody, and could be behind bars for the rest of his life. He is charged with engaging in a continuing criminal enterprise, computer hacking, money laundering, and operating a narcotics conspiracy. (Sounds a lot

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like hacking, spoofing and down-right dishonesty, to me.)

Bitcoin as a form of payment for products and services has seen growth, because merchants have an incentive to accept the currency because transaction costs are lower than the 2 to 3% typically charged by credit card companies. Commercial use of Bitcoin, illicit or otherwise, is currently small compared to its use by speculators, which has been the cause of bitcoin's price volatility. No one knows what will become of bitcoin. It is mostly unregulated, but that could change. Governments are concerned about taxation and their lack of control over the currency. Maybe the government will take a more active role in the development of a digital currency, but I think the government is happy with its own dollar based currency. It's not clear if Bitcoin will be in our future, but it does look like we will have some form of digital payment technology when we get there.



## Twitter for Seniors

by Larry McJunkin

The Retired Geek Technical Tips for the Non-Technical "Over 50" Crowd  
<http://retiredgeek.net/>  
<http://retiredgeek.net/contact-me/>

You've never used Twitter. You say you're too old for Twitter...it's only for kids, and you could care less about reading what Lady Gaga had for lunch today. So obviously, Twitter is not for you. Wrong! If these are your thoughts about Twitter, I can say with authority that Twitter is not what you think.

Twitter does not exist to tell you what a celebrity had for lunch, or what the thoughts are of the singer who was just voted this year's American Idol (though they might tweet this information). Twitter is a handy way to break news, share knowledge, and refer people to longer forms of communication.

Here's some great examples of how I use Twitter. Where we live, in Tellico Village (a golfing and boating community in East Tennessee), the demographic is very much retired and very much over the age of 60, and some of the most important information we receive each day comes via Twitter. Updates from our three golf courses regarding whether carts are on the path or not; what the flag positions are; are any holes under repair; status of last night's storm damage...and the list goes on. The golf course superintendents post these tweets very early in the morning so the hundreds of golfers here know what to expect as they start their day on the links.

Twitter is a free social networking and micro-blogging service that enables its users to send and read messages known as tweets. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the followers. That's why information on Twitter is short, to the point and effective.

More than half the people I talk to about Twitter think they have to have a smartphone to use it. Not so! You can access Twitter via Web, Desktop Applications and smartphones. It costs nothing to use and it's just one more social media source, like Facebook, that you won't know how much you needed it until you try it.

Twitter also has a built-in function for you to befriend and track the messages of other users. This is a simple way for you connect with like-minded people outside of your usual circle. A Twitter association can be developed into a long term acquaintance (if you desire).

If you do happen to have some famous folks you like (singers, actors, golfers, etc.), Twitter is a wonderful way to unobtrusively follow what they're up to. One of my personal favorites is Brandt Snedeker, the professional golfer from Nashville. His life is comedy of tweets that make me laugh almost every day. Recently, he's been

*(Continued on page 11)*

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trying to figure out how to win a war with raccoons and his garbage can...and so far the raccoons are winning!

As an individual, you have a variety of interests that a single newspaper or magazine can't cover. With Twitter you create your own personal newsfeed. You can get small bites information on local events, celebrities, politicians, hobbies or interests, your favorite news sites, etc. Much like you read a newspaper by scanning the headlines, on Twitter you can see short headlines describing an article and you can decide if you want to click on the link to read the rest of the story.

News is published on Twitter the instant it happens and if something big happens you'll likely find out when someone you follow tweets about it. In fact, Twitter became more widely known after a user tweeted a link to a picture of the US Airways plane that successfully landed in the Hudson River.

Unlike traditional media where it is a one-way medium, you can be involved in Twitter. You can re-broadcast (re-tweet) the information you find valuable. You can comment on issues and share your own views (within the 140-character constraint, of course).

You can quickly and directly contact local politicians, celebrities and other people you don't know. You don't have to find out their address and compose a lengthy message, you can instantly let them know your opinion. These are people you will probably never meet in real life but now you can get daily updates on their lives and their interests.

Public figures tend to have hundreds of thousands, if not millions of followers and they may not respond to a tweet, but they often do read their (most important) messages because a 140 character tweet is easier to read quickly than a lengthy e-mail. Celebrities usually have an aide sift through tweets and pass on only the ones they think are worth reading.

You can also use Twitter to quickly inform friends and family about your daily life. You can tweet about things that aren't important enough for an e-mail but something you would mention to your friends if you bumped into them. You can also keep track of what they are up to by following them (if they're on Twitter, of course). You may also connect with other people with similar interests and strike-up an online friendship.

In any event, much like Facebook or Skype, don't be afraid to give Twitter a try. It's free, nothing tracks you or your actions, and you might just find that it's fun! If it isn't for you...that's what the DELETE key is for.



## Securing Your iPad and/or iPhone

by Bill Crowe

2nd Vice President, Sarasota PCUG, FL

December 2013 issue, PC Monitor

[www.spcug.org](http://www.spcug.org)

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It is an extremely good idea to secure your device (iPad or iPhone). If it is taken and not secure, then all the information can be and probably will be used if the person who took it has malicious intentions. Your entire list of contacts, emails, notes, everything on your device is now compromised. Let alone the fact that you may get a very large phone bill from your cellular provider.

There are steps you can and should take to protect your device(s). The first is to add a lock code. This will prevent anyone from using your phone unless they have the pass code. You can make this code a simple 4 digit code or a more complex code, if desired. I prefer the simple 4 digit code. But not 1234 or 1111. Those are the first codes a thief will try.

In order to set up the code use the following steps. Go to Settings>General>Passcode lock>turn Passcode on. Then enter your passcode twice. Be sure to write down this code and keep it

*(Continued on page 12)*

*(Continued from page 11)*

in a place you will be able to access. (Not on your device). If you forget this code you will not be able to use your device. And the Apple guys can only restore your device back to store conditions. Meaning that all your data is lost

One of the options on the Settings>General>Passcode lock screen is to "Erase data". If you turn on this feature, all data will be erased if there are 10 sequential unsuccessful attempts to enter the passcode. Use this at your own discretion.

Now you have your phone secure. When you wake up your phone and get to the lock screen, you need to enter a code. This is great. Now if you "lose" your phone all is not lost. At least your data is safe.

I like to believe that at least 80%-90% of the folks who find a device like this would like to return it. There is a way to let them know some information that may very well get your device back to you. This can be done by putting a note on your lock screen.

There are several ways to do this and I will cover a couple with you. The first way is to create a new note using the Notes application on your device. Then put text like "IF LOST CALL XXX\_XXX\_XXXX" in the middle of the note.



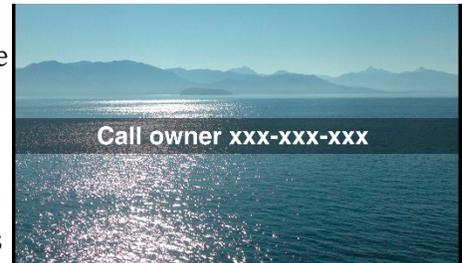
Then take a picture of the page. You do this by pressing and holding the home button and the sleep/wake (on/off) button at the same time and then releasing them. A picture will be taken of your screen and placed in your camera roll album.

Now you need to make that picture your lock screen wallpaper. Click Setting >Wallpapers and brightness. Then tap in the box below, choose wallpaper, tap camera roll in photos, and locate your picture and tap on it. Move and scale the picture using one figure to move and two figures

to make it larger or smaller. When it looks good to you, tap set as lock screen and you are done.

Another way to do this with a little more panache is to put text on a picture you have in your photos.

This can be done using the App call "If Found Lock Screen". It costs \$0.99. Download this application,



tap on it and select a picture from your photos as directed. Tap on the box in front of the picture and enter the desired text then position the text. Now tap the pen on paper icon at the bottom left of the screen and position the text on the picture. Tap save and follow the directions that come up that tell you how to make this picture your lock screen.

Next month we will have an article on the actions to take if your device is taken by a bad guy. In order to prepare for that ensure your device has "Find My iPad/iPhone" turned on.

To enable "Find My iPad/iPhone"

1. Enable iCloud by going to Settings>iCloud, and entering your Apple ID and Apple passcode(password)
2. Turn on Find My iPad



## APCUG Region 2 NOOZ

by Gabe Goldberg

APCUG Region 2 DC/DE/MD/NJ/VA Advisor  
ggoldberg(at)apcug.net

[Ed. The Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society is a member of APCUG, an International Association of Technology & Computer User Groups. For more information, visit <http://www.apcug2.org/content/about-apcug/>.]

## May Virtual Technology Conference (VTC) YouTube Videos

The May VTC videos are now on YouTube as well as links to them on APCUG's website:  
<http://www.apcug2.org/content/vtc11>.

We had over 200 registrants; 77 attendees responded to our conference survey. Those responding to the survey who included their e-mail address were entered into a drawing.

The winner of Acronis True Image 2014, donated by Gene & Linda Barlow (User Group Relations, <http://www.ugr.com/>), was: Henry M. Whitney, Co-chair of the Capital PCUG Seniors SIG.

### TRACK 1

Photoshop Elements

<http://apcug2.org/content/photoshop-elements>

How Inkjet Printers Work, Tips & Hints

<http://apcug2.org/content/how-inkjet-printers-work-tips-and-hints>

Linux: Winning Pretty Much Everything

<http://apcug2.org/content/linux-winning-pretty-much-everything>

### TRACK 2

Mavericks & iDevice Benefits

<http://apcug2.org/content/mavericks-idevice-benefits>

De-Mystifying Windows 8.1 & the Latest Update

<http://apcug2.org/content/de-mystifying-windows-81-and-latest-update>

Creating a Website in WordPress

<http://apcug2.org/content/creating-website-wordpress>

Many groups have used a video for their meeting when the presenter didn't show up and then have gone on to schedule one for another meeting. For those of you who remember Presentations in a Box, this is APCUG's version of that benefit.

## Subscribe to APCUG's YouTube Channel

If you would like to be immediately notified when APCUG uploads new videos to its YouTube channel, you can subscribe to our channel. Here's how to do that:

Type <http://bit.ly/APCUGVideos> in the address box of your favorite browser. This will take you to our YouTube channel.

By clicking on the red subscribe button you will automatically be subscribed, if you have a Google account and are logged into your account. If not, you will be prompted to create an account or to log into your account.

Once you've subscribed, you can change how you want to be notified when a new video is uploaded by clicking on the gear. By checking one or both of the boxes, you can have notices emailed to you and / or have the uploads appear in your YouTube feed.

## APCUG Website

You are encouraged to visit [www.apcug2.org](http://www.apcug2.org) and request a log-in and password to check out all that APCUG has to offer.

The website was inundated with bots trying to create fake accounts; after you receive your log-in and password there is a two-step log-in process to distinguish whether you are a human or a robot (info on the Home Page).

The screenshot shows the APCUG website's login page. A red box highlights the 'Login or Create Account' section. This section contains a 'Login Instructions' box with the following text: 'To gain access to most of this website, you need to be a registered user. To register or login, you must go to the proper page. Please click above to Login or Create an account. (Please note: If you get the option to distinguish whether you are a human or a robot, the user name is valid and the post is NOT a duplicate.)' Below this is a 'Benefits of Membership' section with the following text: 'Your User Group pays \$50.00 per year for membership. Your new membership has huge benefits helping you help your group. To pass a site, hold your mouse over the site.' Underneath is a 'Discount Offers from Vendors' section with the heading 'Your \$50 Dues Include' and a list of benefits: 'Discount Offers from Vendors', 'Access / Free Press / PCMag HD / The Bank / CD/MP3 / Printer / Personal / Customers / Money / Asset / User Group Relations / Webinars', and 'Done your group being to these devices program!'. Below this is a 'Previous Phase Test' section with the text 'Submitted to news on 2014, May 23 - 11:25am' and 'Please do not become alarmed if the website appears different! We are trying some different color content. Feel free to comment. We started with standards. We are currently using Agreements'. At the bottom of the page, there is a 'No Alarm' section with the text 'Submitted to news on 2014, May 23 - 11:25am' and 'Please do not become alarmed if the website appears different! We are trying some different color content. Feel free to comment. We started with standards. We are currently using Agreements'. The footer of the page includes the text 'Log in or Register to post comments. Read more | Share / Like | Like'.

## Fairfax Meeting: July 19 Save Your Memory and Your Mind: 7 Steps to Better Brain Health

Presented by Susan I. Wranik

Our meeting discussions usually center on hardware and software. In July, our speaker, Susan Wranik will talk about ‘wetware’—the component truly vital to keeping our technology exploits really on track!

How many times do you say “I don’t know” in the course of a day? Ever go to the store for a specific item, only to return with everything but? Do you go from one room in the house to another and forget what you went there for? Do your thoughts evaporate in mid-sentence? Difficulty finding the right word or recalling names? This program is based on the clinical protocol for treating short term memory issues and cognitive deficits related to stroke, traumatic brain injury, and dementia...but why wait? If it works clinically, it can work for you, too! Susan explains what’s happening to your memory, why, and what you can do about it. She’ll introduce 7 helpful strategies for better brain health, including a 60 second trick for recall.

Susan I. Wranik, a Milwaukee native, is a speech-language pathologist, linguist, speaker, and writer.

She has over 30 years experience in the communication field, initially as an interpreter/translator, and then clinically as a speech-language pathologist.

She earned undergraduate and graduate degrees at Georgetown University, and a Masters in Speech-Language Pathology at The George Washington University, with post-graduate work at Harvard and Johns Hopkins.

## Learn 30: Clip Converter

Presented by Bill Walsh

Clip Converter (<http://www.clipconverter.cc/>) is a media download tool that allows you to download video or audio URLs while converting them to a common format. The process is free and the format conversions will allow you to upload the files to many different devices.

## Micro Center® In Store Clinics

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Micro Center stores host free events called “In Store Clinics.” The clinics cover a wide range of topics. All Micro Center store locations follow the same schedule of topics.

A link for store locations is at the top center of the home page, [www.microcenter.com](http://www.microcenter.com). For those in the Washington, D.C. area, the only store in Virginia is in the Pan Am Plaza at 3089 Nutley Street, Fairfax, VA 22031, phone (703) 204-8400, and the only store in Maryland is in the Federal Plaza at 1776 E. Jefferson #203, Rockville, MD 20852, phone (301) 692-2130.

Micro Center Clinics are held on most weekends, except during holidays. The same topic is usually presented on both Saturday and Sunday. Topics may change and clinics may be cancelled without notice. Please verify the schedule with the store before leaving and register online for e-mail updates ([http://www.microcenter.com/instore\\_clinic/sign\\_up.html](http://www.microcenter.com/instore_clinic/sign_up.html)).

Signing up in advance reserves a seat, recommended as space is limited. This can only be done at a store, either at the Tech Support or Customer Support area.

## June – July 2014 Schedule

Start Time is 2pm local unless otherwise stated.

June 21 & 22: Windows® 8 Networking

June 28 & 29: Smartphones, Tablets & eReaders

July 5 & 6: Video Capture & Editing

July 12 & 13: Virus & Malware Troubleshooting



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# PATACS Posts

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Call (703) 370-7649 for meeting announcements



Scan the QR code at left or enter  
<http://www.patacs.org/>  
to visit our web site



**Free Admission — Bring a Friend!**

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### **Arlington Meetings**

Carlin Hall Community Center

5711 S. 4th Street, Arlington, VA 22204

<http://www.patacs.org/arlingtonmeetings.html>

#### General Meeting

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday (7/2), 7 p.m. ET

#### Technology & PC Help Desk

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday (7/23), 7 p.m. ET

#### Board of Directors

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday (7/21), 7 p.m. ET

### **Fairfax Meetings**

(with OLLI PC User Group)

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI)

4210 Roberts Road, Fairfax VA 22032

<http://www.patacs.org/fairfaxmeetings.html>

#### General Meeting

3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday (7/19), 12:30 p.m. ET

#### **Online-Only Webinar**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (7/9), 7-9 p.m. ET

<http://www.patacs.org/webinarpat.html>