

## Useful Bits & Pieces

by Lorrin R. Garson

Columnist, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society

*Editor's Note: What follows is the "lost" article Lorrin originally intended for the June issue.*

### Diceware

Perhaps you have become jaded about picking good passwords to protect your personal information and privacy. Ignore that tendency to yawn and continue reading. Have you heard of diceware? This is a method for creating passphrases and passwords using an ordinary die as a random number generator. This methodology creates strong and easy-to-remember passphrases. See

<http://goo.gl/xTOJW1> for a convenient way to generate such passphrases. For example, five groups of five "rolls of the die" to give 5114154311141333154441111 yields the passphrase

query sky betty grate loom

which is reasonably strong. See

<http://goo.gl/Aqyf3L> for FAQs related to Diceware as well as <http://goo.gl/y3rwRg> for more information. See <http://goo.gl/EcnSyY> for another site to generate diceware passphrases.

## Lost Administrative Privileges and Safe Mode

Under some circumstances you can accidentally lose administrative privileges. When this happens you can't install or uninstall programs and do many other administrative tasks. Fortunately all versions of Windows have a built-in hidden administrator account. In XP, Vista, Win-7 and Win-8 you can usually access this hidden account when booting in "safe mode". In "safe mode" the Administrator account appears on the sign-in screen.

To boot in "safe mode" see

- For XP see <http://goo.gl/wEzUSV>
- For Vista see <http://goo.gl/vxCbpq>
- For Win-7 see <http://goo.gl/DYBos5>
- For Win-8 and RT see <http://goo.gl/DDtMdZ>

There are reports that this procedure doesn't always work. You may want to create a separate "just in case" administrator account; an ounce of prevention ....

### Growth of the Cloud

As non-business users of the Cloud to store and sync information across devices, we focus on data storage. However, the Cloud is increasingly

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being used by businesses for computation and database functions. In time these functions will trickle down to home users. The three largest vendors of the Cloud are #1 Amazon, #2 Google and #3 Microsoft. See <http://goo.gl/PLRnHm> and <http://goo.gl/STGHl0> for more information. Want to make a comparison of 50+ companies offering Cloud services? See <http://goo.gl/Oyifv> but don't be put off by the label "The Best 10 Cloud Storage". You can compare offerings from many providers by storage space or price with links to detailed descriptions and reviews.

### **Mozilla Abandons Firefox for Win-8**

Although Mozilla has developed a version of its Firefox browser for Win-8, because of the small number of adopters of Win-8, they have decided not to release this Web browser. According to Johnathan Nightingale, VP Firefox, "On any given day we have, for instance, millions of people testing pre-release versions of Firefox desktop, but we've never seen more than 1000 active daily users in the Metro environment. This leaves us with a hard choice. We could ship it, but it means doing so without much real-world testing." For more information see <http://goo.gl/LLJ28y> and <http://goo.gl/zmNQTA>. Perhaps by the time you read this the situation will have changed.

### **Nirsoft Utilities**

At <http://www.nirsoft.net/> you will find 100+ utilities for Windows computers. These have been developed by one individual, Nir Sofer. This includes (a) password tools, (b) system tools, (c) browser tools, (d) network tools, (e) tools useful in forensics, etc. Using NirLauncher (<http://launcher.nirsoft.net/>) you can download a package of utilities to run from a USB device or DVD; also see <http://goo.gl/Spiigl>. The Nirsoft Web site also contains links to numerous sites for free software. Nirsoft utilities are highly regarded and widely used.

### **Threat to Your Wi-Fi**

Take a look at <http://goo.gl/Kkj9k>. If you haven't changed the default admin password on

your Wi-Fi router, you could well be infected by a wild virus in the near future. For some miscreants reading this InfoPackets article it may be an "Aha" moment; no doubt other rascals have already been exploring this vulnerability.

### **Analyze Suspicious Files**

Have you ever come across a suspicious file on your computer? Your anti-virus/antimalware software hasn't indicated anything amiss, but you wonder about this strange file you've stumbled on. How about a questionable URL to some Web site? VirusTotal to the rescue. You can submit either a file or URL to VirusTotal for scanning. See <https://www.virustotal.com/>.

### **Free Fax**

Yes, amazingly, Fax is still with us. Want to send a free fax (3-page max)? Go to <http://faxzero.com/>. A Fax can be generated from a wide variety of file types: DOC, DOCX, PDF, JPG, XLS, XLSX, TXT, PPT, etc. Before using this service you might want to read their FAQs at <http://faxzero.com/faq.php> for details.

### **ZAGGkeys Universal Keyboard**

Most mobile devices lack a truly useful keyboard. If you find yourself poking at letters one finger at a time, consider buying an external keyboard like this 10.4 oz Bluetooth device for Windows, iOS and Android devices. See <http://goo.gl/eHuUr4>.



The price is \$69.99 from Zagg.com or \$46.00 from Amazon.com. This keyboard, with stand, has received good reviews.

## Linux and Open Source News

by Geof Goodrum

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### Freecode.com Mothballed

I was dismayed to find the following notice posted on Freecode.com, my favorite online database of Free and Open Source licensed software:

“Effective 2014-06-18 Freecode is no longer being updated (content may be stale).”

Further details at <http://freecode.com/about> state this move was made due to “low traffic levels,” which is a real shame for such a useful community resource. However, the site will continue to be maintained as-is so still retains some value to find software projects that are not hosted on one of the larger community software development sites, such as [SourceForge.net](http://SourceForge.net), [GitHub.com](http://GitHub.com), and [code.google.com](http://code.google.com). These sites have searchable/browseable project listings, or use the Internet search engine of your preference (e.g., “open source cad linux” for Computer-Aided Design software for GNU/Linux operating systems).

Of course, the first place to look for software on GNU/Linux distributions is the built-in software manager with point and click installation from Internet software repositories. Just keep in mind that the “official” software catalog never has all of the Free/Libre/Open Source Software (FLOSS) available on the Internet.

On the other hand ...

### More Commercial Games for Linux

GOG.com announced availability of more than fifty games for Ubuntu GNU/Linux (and compatible) on 27 July 2014 (see [http://www.gog.com/news/gogcom\\_now\\_supports\\_linux](http://www.gog.com/news/gogcom_now_supports_linux)). These games can be purchased for download, and come without DRM (aka copy protection). Several classic titles, such as Duke Nukem 3D Atomic Edition and Microprose Pirates! Gold Plus Edition, are on the list, as well

as new, original titles. More games are promised in the coming months.

Add this to the growing support for Linux games from Steam (<http://store.steampowered.com/browse/linux/>), whose SteamOS game console runs Debian GNU/Linux (<http://store.steampowered.com/steamos/>), and the Humble Bundle game collections (<https://www.humblebundle.com/>).

### Mitro Releases a New Free & Open Source Password Manager

by Peter Eckersley

Electronic Frontier Foundation DeepLinks Blog, 31 July 2014, <https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2014/07/mitro-a-new-free-password-manager>

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Good security practices require us to use different passwords for most or all of the websites and services we interact with. For accounts of any significance, those also need to be strong passwords of one form or another. But if you combine those two requirements (one password per site, most or all passwords are strong) then remembering all of your passwords requires an inhuman display of memory. Of course, when we need to perform inhuman tasks, we use software. And in this case, we use password stores and generators of various sorts. There are a lot of options for password managers out there, but if like us you prefer all of your security-sensitive code to be free, auditable software, then the choices are more limited.

Today, the team from a password manager startup called Mitro will be joining Twitter. As part of the deal, Mitro will be releasing the source to its client and server code under the GPL. We’re very pleased to see this happening, and will be advising the Mitro team on how best to turn their startup’s code into a sustainable free/open source software project.

Mitro is distinctive amongst free/open source password managers in that it’s architected around cloud storage. For security, the online

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password databases are encrypted with client-side keys derived from your master password. For availability, they are mirrored across three cloud storage providers. With this design (documented here, <https://github.com/mitro-co/mitro/blob/master/PasswordManagerDesign.pdf>), passwords can be synchronized across all of your computers and devices with minimal effort. They can also be shared across teams and organizations. For those reasons, we're excited about the possibility that Mitro may turn into a valuable piece of infrastructure for the community.

Mitro has committed to funding continued operations of its servers until at least the end of 2014. If their code proves to be secure and popular with the community, we will be advising them on how to create a sustainable home for that infrastructure.

Mitro is already quite a mature and usable system. You can try it today and if you like it, tell your friends.<sup>1</sup>

### Hacking on Mitro

Mitro will succeed if it has an enthusiastic userbase and developer community. Aside from trying out the software, there are lots of things you can do to contribute:

Report any problems—there is a new bug tracker on github, so if you run into a bug or a web site that doesn't work reliably, please let them know. You can also always tweet @MitroCo.

Review the code, fix bugs—Mitro is free and open source; if you know Javascript or Java, you can improve it. Mitro has had some professional security auditing in the past, but if you're a security researcher, extra eyes looking for and reporting vulnerabilities are valuable. Contribute documentation—Mitro has some limited documentation on Github. The Mitro team would welcome any contributions to help others use it effectively.

<sup>1</sup>For the time being, we don't recommend using the Android variant of Mitro; the Android app is likely to be vulnerable to password theft by malicious apps because of security problems that follow inherently from its use of the Android clipboard. We are presently researching ways to work around this problem.

### Featured Open Source Software of the Month: September 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.

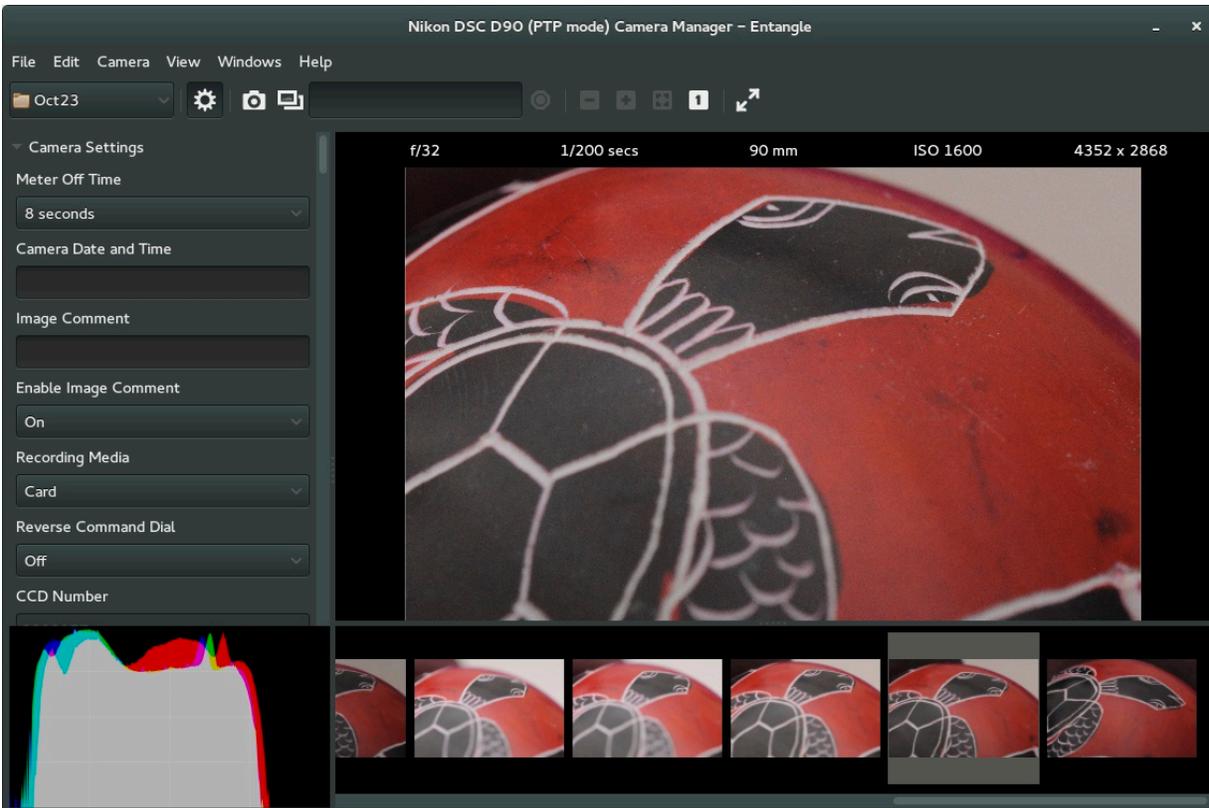
**Entangle** – v0.6.0. <http://entangle-photo.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code and executable packages for Fedora and Ubuntu/Debian GNU/Linux distributions by Daniel P. Berrangé. Entangle provides a graphical interface for “tethered shooting”, aka taking photographs with a digital camera completely controlled from the computer. With a sufficiently capable digital SLR camera (Canon and Nikon DSLRs recommended), Entangle allows:

- Trigger the shutter from the computer,
- Live preview of scene before shooting,
- Automatic download and display of photos as they are shot, and
- Control of all camera settings from computer.

Entangle is built on top of libgphoto using GTK-3 for its interface. It is fully color managed, auto-detecting system monitor profile and applying the necessary transforms when displaying images.

**JStock** – v1.0.7r. <http://www.jstock.org/>. Free GNU General Public License Java source code and executable for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, Google® Android™ and GNU/Linux® by Yancheng Cheok. JStock is free stock market software supporting twenty-six world markets. It provides Stock watchlist, Intraday stock price snapshot, Stock indicator editor, Stock indicator scanner and Portfolio management. Jstock supports SMS/email and desktop alerts. JStock Android integrates seamlessly with the desktop

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Above: Entangle main camera manager window

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app and can be downloaded from the Google Play™ store.

**Magarena** – v1.51. <https://code.google.com/p/magarena/>. Free GNU General Public License Java source code and executable for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, and GNU/Linux® by ubeeFX and others. Magarena is a single-player fantasy card game played against a computer opponent. The rules for Magarena are based on (but not exactly the same as) the first modern collectible card game. It focuses on an advanced AI and easy to use interface. It is written in Java and Swing. You play a duel against the computer with 40 card generated decks or any constructed deck. At the moment there are about 6,000 cards supported. The computer AI is capable and fast. The game fully enforces the rules. It is possible to undo moves. A comprehensive card browser is available. This game should run well on most computers. The minimum screen resolution is 1024x768. A Java runtime 7 is required to play.

**OWASP ZAP** – v2.3.1. [https://www.owasp.org/index.php/OWASP\\_Zed\\_Attack\\_Proxy\\_Project](https://www.owasp.org/index.php/OWASP_Zed_Attack_Proxy_Project). Free Apache License Java source code and executable for Microsoft® Windows®, Apple® OS X®, and GNU/Linux® by Simon Bennetts and the Open Web Application Security Project Foundation. The Zed Attack Proxy (ZAP) is an easy to use integrated penetration testing tool for finding vulnerabilities in web applications. It is designed to be used by people with a wide range of security experience and as such is ideal for developers and functional testers who are new to penetration testing. ZAP provides automated scanners as well as a set of tools that allow you to find security vulnerabilities manually. Note that this tool should never be used to test web applications that you do not have authority over.

**Kernel Source** – v3.16. <http://www.kernel.org/>. Free GNU General Public License source code for all platforms by the Linux community.

## Microsoft Releases Its Largest Collection of Free E-books

by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:

<http://blogs.msdn.com/b/mssmallbiz/archive/2014/07/07/largest-collection-of-free-microsoft-ebooks-ever-including-windows-8-1-windows-8-windows-7-office-2013-office-365-office-2010-sharepoint-2013-dynamics-crm-powershell-exchange-server-lync-2013-system-center-azure-cloud-sql.aspx>

<http://tinyurl.com/NEW-Microsoft-E-Books>  
(same link as above)

[http://www.mssmallbiz.com/ericligman/Key\\_Shorts/Windows%20%20Keyboard%20Shortcuts.pdf](http://www.mssmallbiz.com/ericligman/Key_Shorts/Windows%20%20Keyboard%20Shortcuts.pdf)

In early July, Microsoft released its “Largest collection of FREE Microsoft eBooks ever, including: Windows 8.1, Windows 8, Windows 7, Office 2013, Office 365, Office 2010, SharePoint 2013, Dynamics CRM, PowerShell, Exchange Server, Lync 2013, System Center, Azure, Cloud, SQL Server, and much more”. This announcement was posted in an official blog by Microsoft’s Eric Ligman, who is their Senior Sales Excellence Manager. I have compressed the very long URL (web address) of the blog into [tinyurl.com/NEW-Microsoft-E-Books](http://tinyurl.com/NEW-Microsoft-E-Books). This collection of approximately 150 e-books on contemporary Microsoft products has taken the computing world by storm, as over a million of these e-books were downloaded in the first two days following the announcement. It should be noted that while many of these e-books are new releases, other titles listed are prior releases, but still contain valuable content.

Each of these free e-books is available in one or more of the popular formats, including PDF, EPUB, MOBI, XPS, DOC, and DOCX, making them accessible to computers regardless of operating system, dedicated readers, mobile devices (tablets and smart phones). Many of these e-books can also be opened and displayed on almost all of the popular word processors as most

third party word processors can open Microsoft DOC and DOCX files.

I am typing this column on my three year old Windows 7 PC, using Office 2010; included in this recent release of e-books are several titles that cover Windows 7 and Office 2010. Some of the e-books specifically for Windows 7 users include Windows 7 Keyboard Shortcuts, Windows 7 Power Users Guide (free download from a third-party link), Deploying Windows 7 Essential Guidance, Welcome to Windows 7, and What You Can Do Before You Call Tech Support (Windows 7); these e-books are all available in PDF format.

One of my favorites on the list of Windows 7 e-books is “Windows 7 Keyboard Shortcuts” which provides 12 pages of keyboard shortcuts. Keyboard shortcuts are typically key combinations that implement Windows commands without the use of a menu or a mouse; most users are aware that CTRL-C (simultaneous pressing the “Control” key and the letter “C”) is the shortcut to copy something, while CTRL-V (simultaneous pressing the “Control” key and the letter “V”) will paste whatever was copied. CTRL-C and CTRL-V are but two of the hundreds of keyboard shortcuts listed. Many users are unaware that the “Windows Logo” key common on most PC and laptop keyboards (typically on the bottom-left row) controls about three dozen Windows and display functions; utilization of these “Windows logo” shortcuts can increase the usability and functionality of Windows computers. Windows Explorer, the file manager included in Windows 7, has its own list of about two dozen keyboard shortcuts, many of which I was unaware of. I found that CTRL-PERIOD (CTRL-.) will rotate an image clockwise, and CTRL-COMMA (CTRL-,) will rotate an image counter-clockwise. There are also keyboard shortcuts for those who use the Windows magnifier function, shortcuts for those items displayed in the taskbar, as well as shortcuts for Microsoft Paint, WordPad, Calculator, Windows Journal, and Windows Help. A user may learn a great deal about Windows 7 functionality by

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simply reviewing the list of shortcuts. Users of Windows 8 may find “Windows 8 Keyboard Shortcuts” and “Work Smart: Windows 8 Shortcut Keys” (a DOCX file) invaluable in increasing personal productivity. Other e-books provide specific lists of keyboard shortcuts for various Microsoft products, including Word, Excel, Access, InfoPath, Publisher, SharePoint, Visio, SmartArt, OneNote, Project 2013, and PowerPoint.

On this computer I am using Office 2010, and this directory is rich with Office 2010 content and guides. Some of the available Office 2010 titles include Office 2010 User Resources, Getting started with Microsoft Office 2010 – For IT Professionals, Security and Privacy for Microsoft Office 2010 Users, Planning guide for Microsoft Office 2010 - For IT professionals, and Microsoft Office 2010 First Look. Admittedly my Office 2010 is several years old, users of newer versions of Office will not be disappointed with the wealth of offerings covering Office 2013 and Office 365. Among the titles available are Getting To Know Office 365, Deployment Guide for Office 2013, Office 365 Midsize Business Quick Deployment Guide, Quick Start to Office 365 for Small to Medium Businesses, Deployment Guide for Office 2013, Microsoft Office 365 for professionals and small businesses: Help and How To, Office 365 – Connect and Collaborate virtually anywhere, anytime, Office 365 Guides for professionals and small businesses, and Microsoft Office in the Classroom.

I am not too ashamed to admit that I have been guilty in the past of having closed Office without properly saving what I had been working on; while it no longer happens to me (very much), it seems to be a common *faux pas* among some of my coworkers. For those of us unfortunate enough to have ever committed such an act, Microsoft has a free e-book that might help alleviate the frustration, “How To Recover That Un-Saved Office Document”. Simple illustrated instructions are provide to remedy many of these errors, as well as tips to minimize the likelihood

of it happening again in the future. When helping others with Office, I almost universally turn on the “Auto Save and Auto Recover” function integrated into Office. I recommend that from any Office component, that the user clicks on FILE or the “Microsoft Orb” in the top-left corner, scroll to OPTIONS, and then to SAVE. I have Office auto-save whatever I am doing every 10 minutes, so that in the event of some kind of problem or lockup (that obnoxious “Not Responding” notification), the most that I can lose is my last 10 minutes of work. While I choose the 10 minute auto-save function, users who are more concerned about performance than safety can choose a high number, such as 20 minutes, and worrywarts might want to choose a smaller number, such as 5 minutes. There is a slight performance degradation in Office as it auto-saves more frequently, and less degradation (slightly better performance) with more infrequent saves (higher number of minutes between auto-saves), but one must also consider the aggravation of losing a document or other project due to a program crash or other malady. Really smart Office users will frequently use the sneaky keyboard shortcut CTRL-S to save the latest iteration of their work. I just did precisely that (CTRL-S).

Many of the E-books posted by Microsoft are very technical in nature, covering such topics as SQL, Active Directory Migration Tools, Windows Server, Lync Server, CRM, Windows Azure, “Programming Windows Store Apps with HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, Second Edition”, and other interesting titles. For those into programming, there is also a wealth of free programming E-books, including Programming Windows Store Apps with HTML, CSS, and JavaScript, Second Edition; Programming Windows 8 Apps with HTML, CSS, and JavaScript; and Programming Windows Phone 7.

For users who have recently started using Office 2013, there is an entire series of “Quick Start Guides” for Office 2013 products including Excel, Word, Outlook, OneNote, Access, Visio,

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PowerPoint, Project, and Publisher. These Quick Start Guides are heavily illustrated, and clearly “show and tell” how to utilize the major features of each of these products. Quick Start Guides are also available for some other Microsoft products, including the highly promoted Office 365. The Office 365 Quick Start Guide file is one of the largest E-book compilations on the list, downloadable as a 99.4 MB ZIP (compressed) file.

Users of any Microsoft Office product, 2010 or later, as well as most other contemporary Microsoft products, will likely find a wealth of useful information among these free E-books. I strongly encourage users to browse the listings, and download any E-books of interest; for free, they are one of the best deals available.



## Review: East-Tec Eraser 2014

by Herb Goldstein

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It's a miracle! Yes, finding something on the Internet can seem to be miraculous. But the actual miracle is no longer finding what you are looking for; it's finally completely getting rid of what you've found! In fact, getting rid of what you've found is the real miracle. Pound on your delete key all you will, take an oath it's gone and forgotten, and don't you know that some smart-aleck computer enthusiast will come along and make a liar out of you despite your fervent oath.

Bringing back the text or photo you have vigorously deleted is not as miraculous as it may seem. The real miracle is how easy it can be to bring back from the dead. With surprisingly little effort your deleted item can be readily restored. Now if your restored text or photo happens to exist in any variety between embarrassing and deadly, you may wish you backed up your delete key with something that really did the job.

East-Tec Eraser is the quintessential software for eliminating anything you really want to get rid of without worrying that it will show up unexpectedly because someone was able to restore it. What's more, it's easy to use and fool-proof.

After an easy installation, East-Tec Eraser opens with a vertically placed menu bar the first item in which is Privacy Guard. Its purpose is to erase sensitive data you have gathered from Windows and the internet that was extracted without your knowledge or permission. It will not erase files you have saved or that are needed for normal operation.



The Privacy Guard engages as the first and basic “hot” item in Eraser’s menu and in my initial venture gathered a collection of 2,351 previously “deleted” files that had been originally quarantined by Malwarebytes or Norton Utilities over a several year period among a collection of other files that I had long ago considered “gone forever”. Well what do you know? There they were just sitting there unknown and out of reach to me, just waiting to be reclaimed by someone with the smarts to do it. With the click of a single button in Privacy Guard, one by one each of those 2,351 files was finally and finitely laid to rest by East-Tec Eraser.

Of course the object in the future would be not to wait until a few thousand of those files were accumulated, but to use Privacy Guard regularly on an ongoing basis which I will make it my

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business to do henceforth. Needless to say, before using Privacy Guard you need to be certain you are not erasing something you plan to possibly restore at a future time. This is a caveat that holds true for anything else you feed to East-Tec Eraser in one or another of its tools. The items selected by Privacy Guard will conform to pre-chosen defaults.

Button #2, Erase Files and Folders, allows you to indicate files or folders that you want to add to your erase list. You can specify certain criteria or otherwise drag and drop specific files or folders to this area.

Button #3, Erase Deleted Data, ensures that previously deleted files are removed from specified drives on your computer beyond recovery.

Button #4, Media Wiper, was designed to address all removable media devices up to 64 GB. It also has provisions for wiping entire disks or partitions.

Button #5 cleans traces of your online activities at certain intervals which you specify.

How does it all work? To the best of our judgment, East-Tec competently removed everything it boasted it was going to. We had the opportunity to put East-Tec Eraser through its paces in both Firefox and Chrome browsers. It worked equally well with both and can be expected to work similarly with other common browsers. Erasing the free space allocated to previously deleted files needs to be done while the computer is not in normal occupied usage. It takes plenty of time.

East-Tec provides for very secure erasing that meets and exceeds the U.S. Department of Defense standards for the permanent erasure of digital information. If there is a caveat, it is in nomenclature. East-Tec provides for a free trial period for Eraser. You need to wring the software out to make certain you are comfortable with its instructions, straightforward as they may be. It is very powerful software whose purpose is to

readily, permanently and irretrievably erase. Not too much imagination is required to imagine problems that can result in improper use. While there is little really difficult in its usage, wisdom dictates caution. East-Tec helps by making a trial copy of Eraser available to you. It will also help convince you it is software you don't want to be without if you desire to maintain unrestricted control over what is available or not on your hard drive.

As you would expect, whatever Eraser activities you may be employing at the moment need be during a period of time when your cyber-activities are not otherwise occupied. Eraser helps by offering a scheduler to properly and conveniently plan the periods of time during which Eraser functioning will occur and prevent other computer or Internet usage.

*Editor's Note: East-Tec extended a 70% discount on East-Tec Eraser 2014 (download) for APCUG user group members and a code for 30% off other East-Tec products. See the offer on APCUG's web site at <http://www.apcug2.org/content/70-east-tec-eraser-2014-program-download>.*



## **Review: You Won't Believe Your (TV) Ears—The Gadget Geezer**

by Les Goldberg

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As a 70-year-old, I have trouble hearing my TV. There are no audio controls on the set itself, so I have to strain to listen to the dialogue when it is combined with background music.

My doctors tell me that “when you get to be your age” it is common to experience what is called “ambient noise” problems—the inability to distinguish different sound sources and tones and block them out. It is like trying to listen to one person speak in a nightclub with loud music, laughing and people shouting.

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They said ambient noise is the same thing as background noise. You hear these terms used frequently when discussing devices with built-in microphones, such as Bluetooth headsets, computer headsets and webcams. The more ambient noise there is, the more difficult it can be to hear the caller.

In my case, watching TV is frustrating since my wife, only four years younger, does not suffer from hearing loss and background noise does not bother her. When the sound level is fine for her, it is inaudible for me.

My problem is only with the TV, so I wasn't ready to explore hearing aids. What I found, however, was a product called TV Ears.

Since I review all the products before considering them for this column, the manufacturer sent me a product to evaluate.

I can safely tell you that of all the products I have reviewed over the years, TV Ears provided the most immediate improvement to my particular problem.

How do they work? TV Ears is a wireless TV listening device that uses an infrared signal similar to that used in your television remote control. You don't need to have a wireless router.

Following the easy one sheet, easy-to-follow instructions, I plugged one end the audio cables into my cable box (or directly into your TV) and the other end into the headset base unit. Then I seated the headset into the base unit charger.



When the green light on the charger came on, I put the headset's two ear pieces into my ears, turned down the sound on my TV and turned on the headset volume. I also adjusted the tone control to a comfortable combination of treble and bass.

Let me tell you, folks, the difference was amazing. With the help of the product's "voice

clarifying circuitry" technology, the manufacturer's claims were unmistakably true:

"(This technology) automatically manipulates the audio curve to increase the clarity of television dialogue and decrease the volume of background sounds such as music and sound effects. The words seem to jump out of the sound track, making even whispers and accents understandable."

Don't like to wear headsets? TV Ears solved that problem, too. Weighing only two ounces, the headset is designed to rest under your chin, not on your head. It won't mess up your hair, it won't get hot and you can even watch TV lying down. The TV Ears tips adjust easily to your ears.

One TV Ears customer wrote:

"Just wanted to tell you that I have the latest and greatest hearing aid technology at a cost in excess of \$4000. To watch TV, I take them off and use the TV Ears wireless headset. The hearing aids do not even come close to reproducing clear sound from the television as does the TV Ears product."

TV Ears offers a variety of options, including a wireless speaker system, a special device for use with hearing aids and a mobile system for travelers.

Prices for TV Ears products range from \$79.95 to \$249. They are available at [www.tvears.com](http://www.tvears.com) or (888) 883-3277.



## **Book Review: Monochromatic HDR Photography by Harold Davis**

Review by Mark Mattson

Editor, Computer Users of Erie, Pennsylvania

[www.cuerie.com](http://www.cuerie.com)

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Color is the best. Color sells. Color is what a real photograph is. Color is the only photography I will ever do.

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How short-sighted and closed-minded a lot of people can be. Yes, color imagery has a look and feel all its own, and can evoke emotions in most any viewer. But to limit oneself and one's work to just color is missing out on a whole world that awaits exploration: the world of monochromatic imaging.

Photography was born in the early days of the 19th century, approximately 1826 or 1827...the exact date is lost in history. In those days, ALL photos made were monochrome - or black and white. Color photography experiments began around 1860. But an affordable, long-lasting color film and process did not appear until 1935 when Kodak introduced their Kodachrome line of films.

Even after the advent of color films for general purpose photography, black and white continued to be a popular medium to work in. Most of the more famous photographers worked in this field, including Ansel Adams, Steiglitz, and others. Through hard work and countless hours in the darkroom, they produced amazing images that are classic examples of the art form.

Digital imaging has made the processes vastly easier, by giving you instant feedback on your exposure and composition, and post-capture processing now takes place in the 'digital' darkroom, as opposed to the traditional 'wet' darkroom of days gone by. Digital imaging has also introduced a new technique known as HDR, or High Dynamic Range imaging, a method where combining a sequence of exposures extends the range of tones you can capture well beyond the range of the camera.

In his newest book, author and photographer Harold Davis explores the world of Monochromatic HDR imaging as a way of producing high quality fine art images with

impact and emotional meaning for the viewer.

This volume is jam-packed with not only step-by-step tutorials and tips on how to achieve the best images you can, it is also overflowing with sample images created by author Davis to explain and demonstrate the techniques covered in the book. Practically every page has a photograph on it, with technical information presented on how the image was created. The images in this book make the purchase price worth it alone.

The scope of this book is wide. In only 209 pages, he presents 53 topics arranged into 4 sections, touching on topics ranging from RAW

processing, HDR sequence shooting, Lightroom and Photoshop techniques and more. But the basics are not forgotten either. There are pages devoted to teaching you how to visualize your final image in black and white before you shoot it, and learning how to see in monochrome.

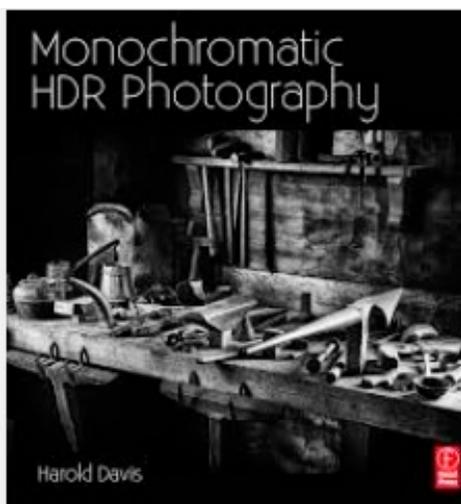
One point to remember, though, when capturing images to make monochrome prints: be sure to capture them in COLOR.

Processing images from black and white is done using the color channels of your master file. When it's time, you then convert the original color capture to the monochrome state. If you do this, you can always go back and produce color versions of the image as well. If you set your camera to shoot in black and white you will lose this ability.

Monochromatic HDR Photography is published by Focal Press ([www.focalpress.com](http://www.focalpress.com)). If you wish to check out the page for the book, click on <http://www.focalpress.com/books/details/9780415831451/>.

I've done a lot of monochrome shooting in my days. Most of it was done when I was shooting film, as this was early on in my photography days. I've tinkered some with converting my

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color digital images into black and white, but haven't found yet the right way to go about it.

Until now.

When I read through this book for the review, I learned a lot about how I should be doing things, to get the images I really want to show. A lot of the concepts I've known now for some time, but just haven't made the connection to monochrome. With Harold and this book I now have a guide to show me the way on this new journey.

The list price is \$39.95, but if your group belongs to the Focal Press User Group Program, you get a 40% off. It is also available at Amazon.com for \$27.76 (plus shipping). In either case, the ISBN number is 9780415831451.



## What to Do if Your iPad/iPhone is Taken

by Bill Crowe

2nd Vice President, Sarasota PCUG, FL

January 2014 issue, PC Monitor

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

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Last month I wrote about how to secure your device. This month is about what to do if a bad guy got your device. There are several things that can be done.

### If you enabled Find My iPhone on your missing device

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

These steps are can be followed if Find My iPhone/iPad was enabled on your device before it was lost or stolen:

1. Attempt to locate your device using Find My iPhone at [icloud.com/#find](http://icloud.com/#find), or using the free

Find My iPhone app

(<http://itunes.apple.com/us/app/find-my-iphone/id376101648?mt=8%5C%5C>).

2. Put the device in Lost Mode to set a 4-digit passcode and display a custom message with your phone number on your device. While the device is in Lost Mode, you can also keep track of changes to your device's location. Lost Mode requires that your missing device be using iOS 6 or later. If your device is using iOS 5, you can still lock your device remotely and display a message on the screen.

Use lost mode or lock a device:

Sign in to [icloud.com/#find](http://icloud.com/#find) with your Apple ID (the one you use with iCloud) If you're already using an iCloud web app, click the app's name to switch apps.

Click All Devices, then select the device you want to track or lock.

Click Lost Mode (iOS 6 or later), or Lock (iOS 5 or OS X v10.7.5 or later).

Follow the onscreen instructions, keeping the following in mind:

- If your iOS device already has a passcode, that passcode is used to lock the device.
- If you're asked to enter a passcode, that passcode will be required to unlock the device.
- If you're asked to enter a phone number, enter a number where you can be reached. The number appears on the device's locked screen.
- If you're asked to enter a message, you may want to indicate that the device is lost or how to contact you. The message appears on the device's locked screen.
- If your device is online, it locks and tracking begins (if applicable). If Location Services is turned off on the device, it's temporarily turned on to track its location. A confirmation email is sent to your Apple ID email address.
- If it's offline, the lock and tracking (if applicable) take effect the next time it's online.

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- If you used Lost Mode, you see the device's current location, as well as any changes in its location on the map.
- To change the message or phone number shown on the lost device, or to turn off Lost Mode, click Lost Mode, then make your changes.

Note: If you forget the passcode, then lock it and later find it, you may need to take it to an authorized repair center to unlock

3. If you want to delete all of your personal information from your missing device, you can erase it remotely. Please note that when you erase a device, you will no longer be able to locate it.

4. Report your lost or stolen device to local law enforcement and your wireless carrier. Apple doesn't track or flag lost or stolen products, but you can use My Support Profile ([supportprofile.apple.com](http://supportprofile.apple.com)) to find a list of serial numbers for products that you've purchased or registered with your Apple ID.

Note: If your missing device is offline, you can still put it in Lost Mode, lock it, or erase it. Your commands will take effect when the device comes back online.

### **If you did not enable Find My iPhone on your missing device**

If you did not enable Find My iPhone before it was lost or stolen, you can't use it to locate or protect your device, but you can still follow these steps:

1. Change your iCloud password to ensure that no one else can use your device to delete or make changes to your iCloud data.
2. Report your lost or stolen device to local law enforcement and your wireless carrier. Apple doesn't track or flag lost or stolen products, but you can use My Support Profile ([supportprofile.apple.com](http://supportprofile.apple.com)) to find a list of serial numbers for products that you've purchased or registered with your Apple ID.

## **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/site/stores/instore-clinics.aspx>).

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.

### **August – September 2014 Schedule**

Start Time is 2pm local unless otherwise stated.

August 16 & 17: Windows® 8.1 Basics

August 23 & 24: Build Your Own PC Demo

August 30 & 31: No Clinics

September 6 & 7: Backup & Restore



## Fairfax Meeting: September 20 The Internet of Things

Presented by Gary Arlen

The Internet of Things (IoT), depending on whom you believe, will be an industry generating \$300 billion (Gartner) or \$7.1 trillion (International Data Corp.) in revenues by 2020. Or maybe something bigger, smaller or in between.

As devices—from connected wearables to smart-home products—expand their presence worldwide, the opportunities in IoT loom large. Interconnectedness is at the core of IoT, raising important questions about how well companies can play together to exploit the promise of this emerging business. The evolving IoT ecosystem encompasses consumer electronics, computing, telecommunications (wired and wireless) plus countless variables, including human interfaces and market acceptance. Two studies in mid-summer offered widely varying outlooks about IoT, raising questions about security of devices plus public awareness and appetite for IoT services that may provide great efficiencies.

In his presentation, industry analyst Gary Arlen will examine the organizations pushing for IoT (including technology developers, retailers, telecom and health providers), the products in the market and on the drawing boards plus the policy issues likely to arise as IoT evolves. He'll interpret the avalanche of ideas for IoT development and evaluate timetables plus potential winners/losers in IoT's future.



Gary Arlen is President of Arlen Communications LLC, a Bethesda research and analysis firm specializing in converging media, telecommunications and information services. Arlen's primary focus is on the development of new applications and services that are enabled

by digital, broadband, broadcasting and interactive platforms. His research and analyses explore the integration of technology, tech policy, audience acceptance, economic impact and other factors that affect the deployment of digital media systems.

For more than 30 years, Gary has conducted extensive research on business development and customer acceptance of new media/telecom technologies. Clients have included AARP, Consumer Electronics Association,

Citibank, Intel, Microsoft, Hillcrest Labs, GTech, Interactive Network plus many technology start-ups. Gary has served on advisory boards for numerous interactive media/technology firms and non-profit organizations. He has been on the adjunct faculty (teaching communications-related courses) at George Mason University and American University and has guest-lectured at MIT, Harvard, UCLA, University of Southern California, University of Maryland and countless media, marketing and technology industry events. His commentaries, blogs and editorial insights appear regularly in many trade and business publications. ([www.Arlencom.com](http://www.Arlencom.com))

## Learn 30: Overcoming the Physical Stresses of Computer Use

Presented by Rolston James

The computer has become one of the most powerful forces in society today, with a significant impact on organizations, organizational structure and the workforce. Despite the numerous benefits and advantages, this use also has potential problems. Health issues such as lower and upper back problems; muscle spasms; overly tight neck and shoulder muscles; headaches; Carpal Tunnel and other issues are now more prominent than before. Learn about the various movements or stretches that would help to prevent some of the complications experienced, as a result of sitting at a desk in a crouched over position for extended periods of time.

Reston YMCA Wellness and Fitness Instructor Rolston James is a former certified Army Master Fitness Trainer, a graduate of the National Massage Therapy Institute of Therapeutic Massage, and a certified Performance Enhancement Specialist.

## Northern Virginia Genealogy Groups

Gabe Goldberg provided the following web links as resources in response to a question at the July Fairfax meeting about how to publish family history information:

### Mount Vernon Genealogical Society

<http://www.mvgenalogy.org/wp/>

### Annandale Family History Center

<http://www.annandalefhc.org/>

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# PATACS Posts

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## E-mail article submissions and reprint requests to editor(at)patacs.org

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Call (703) 370-7649 for meeting announcements



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<http://www.patacs.org/>  
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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 (9/3), 7 p.m. ET

#### Technology & PC Help Desk

4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday (9/24), 7 p.m. ET

#### Board of Directors

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday (9/15), 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 (9/20), 12:30 p.m. ET

#### Online-Only Webinar

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday (9/10), 7-9 p.m. ET

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