



PATACS Posts

Newsletter of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society



PATACS/OPCUG

3rd Saturday, March 16

Osher Lifelong Learning Institute,
4210 Roberts Rd., Fairfax, VA 22032-1028

Meeting 1:30 PM

Apple Device & Ecosystem Update

The Apple EcoSystem – A Private Conversation

A representative of Apple will discuss Apple iDevices and software, including iOS 12 and topics of broad general appeal, including a hardware overview of the latest iPhones and iPads.

There will be no Zoom session available for this segment of the meeting, nor photography or other recording.

Learn In 30

VPNs: Don't get mugged on the Information Superhighway

Every time you connect your computer, phone, or tablet to another network, you're putting your device — and your personal information — at risk. Using a Virtual Private Network can mitigate the risks. We'll explain the risks and how the technology helps keep you safe.

Tom Gutnick — technologist, educator, musician — has worked in the computer industry for most of his adult life. As the owner of Sunny Banana IT Consulting, he helps small businesses and home offices use technology more effectively. He also teaches personal technology at Arlington Adult Education and information technology at Northern Virginia Community College.

The videos, handout, and slides from Lorrin and John's presentations on Saturday, February 16

have been posted on the website at:

<https://www.patacs.org/recmtgspat.html>

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**Six Ways To Disorganize Your Music
On Android smart phones
Part 1 of a 3-article series
By John Krout, PATACS member**

When I bought my new Samsung Galaxy S7 smart phone in 2017, I found out by experiment that Google Play Music (GPM) is able to play not only MP3 song files but also FLAC song files.

FLAC is an acronym for **Free Lossless Audio Codec**. The first word is Free, meaning anyone can use it without paying a fee to the developers. The next word is Lossless. Unlike MP3, song files created by the FLAC code do not discard any digital bit of the audio CD music file. I prefer FLAC rather than MP3 because I sometimes hear odd little noises in MP3 song files, noises introduced by the lossy compression method used in MP3. Lossy means that some of the bits are not recorded faithfully, because the MP3 recording process discards some bits. The philosophy behind MP3 is that the bits deleted are not audible; perhaps human hearing varies a bit more than MP3 developers believes. Or perhaps the MP3 codec is not implemented perfectly by its developers.

The word CODEC is a contraction of coder and decoder. In this case, the ability to write a music file in a particular way (such as WAV or FLAC or MP3) is called coding, and the ability to read and play a song file recorded in a particular way is called decoding.

The tradeoff to use FLAC instead of MP3 is not trivial: a FLAC song file is typically at least three times larger than the corresponding MP3 file for the same song. I bought a 64 GB microSD card for my Galaxy S7 phone, and right now I have more than 1,500 FLAC song files on the card, occupying about 51 GB. Recently I replaced that 64 GB card with a 128 GB card, because my collections of songs and photos continue to grow.

After I installed FLAC songs on the smart phone microSD card, I noticed that, when the GPM app

plays music, it does not always list the artist name for the song, instead it says Unknown Artist. I looked into the cause.

Ultimately, I found other symptoms and other problems. Most of the causes were my mistakes.

Read this article so you can learn to avoid my mistakes. And how to recognize and fix your own mistakes.

The info and methods outlined in these articles also apply to MP3 song files on Android phones.

METADATA

First of all, let me introduce the idea of *metadata*, and how it works in song files and the GPM app.

Metadata is descriptive data that is included in a file. If you shoot digital photos, you may already know that your phone or camera embeds the date and time of the photo, and the sensitivity (misnamed ISO), the aperture and the shutter speed in the JPEG photo file. In some photos, the map coordinates of the location are embedded, through use of a Global Positioning System receiver chip (GPS) included in all cell phones and some cameras.

Each of those descriptive tidbits embedded in a photo file is an example of metadata.

ID3 TAGS FOR SONG FILES

What kind of metadata might be useful in a song file? Artist name, Song title, Album name, album track number and many others can be included. The specific form of metadata used by the GPM app is called ID3 tags. It turns out that GPM can display and use that ID3 tag info it finds in a song file. This is important: the GPM app gets rather confused if ID3 tags are *not* included in a song file.

When I found out that the GPM app reads and uses ID3 tags, I looked for a free Windows app to edit ID3 tags, since I use a Windows computer to read audio CD song files and write FLAC song files onto a hard drive. I found a good one, called **AudioShell**, and it works for both MP3 and FLAC files.

Continued Page 3

When installed, AudioShell is included in the right click menu of Windows. An example is shown in **Illustration 1**. I selected the song file Taking Care of Business. Then the right click produced a popup menu including AudioShell. I selected that menu item and the submenu appeared, including Tag Editor.

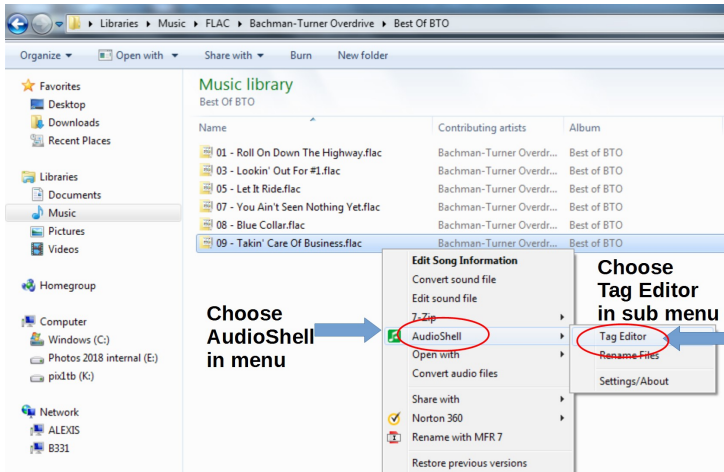


ILLUSTRATION 1

Selecting Tag Editor closes the menus and causes the Tag Editor window to open, as shown in **Illustration 2**. If no ID3 tags are included in the song file, then the fields for track number, artist, song title etc will be blank. If ID3 tags are included, then the fields contain the current ID3 tag values, as shown in the illustration. To save the updated ID3 tag values, tap the bottom button labeled Save. That closes the window.

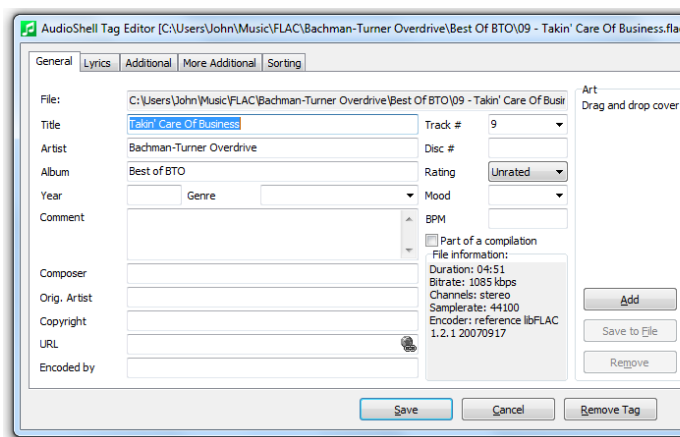


Illustration 2

It is possible to select multiple song files and edit all their ID3 tags. If you do that, then the Tag Editor window includes an additional bottom button labeled Save and Next. Tapping that

button saves the updated ID3 tag values and opens the next file's ID3 tag info, without closing and reopening the Tag Editor window.

That is a very convenient feature when adding tags to several songs from say a single audio CD.

It took a couple of months of my spare time to create the FLAC files and add the ID3 tags.

All this was done while the phone had the Android 7 operating system (OS) installed. I copied the FLAC song files onto the phone.

As far as I could tell, when playing the songs on the phone, the GPM app used all of them.

I did not literally check each and every song file using the GPM app.

THE GPM APP AND ITS VIEWS OF SONG FILES

The GPM app provides three different list views of song files:

- 1, An alphabetic list of all **song titles**
2. An alphabetic list of all **albums**, and within each album a list of all song titles on the album including the track number for each
- 3, An alphabetic list of all **artists**, and within each artist a list of all albums by

While playing a song, the GPM app displays the song title and the artist name. For the GPM app and its lists and displays, the significant ID3 tag items are: Song title, Artist name, Album name, and Album Track Number. Omit any of those, or misspell the text items, and grief happens.

Continued Page 4

SYMPTOMS, CAUSES AND REMEDIES

So, here are the mistakes I made, and how to recognize them using the GPM app, and how to fix them.

1. Artist name is omitted: If the artist name ID3 tag is omitted, then the GPM app Artists list includes the album under the artist name Unknown Artist. That name appears at the bottom of the Artist list in the GPM app. I found about 15 albums under the name Unknown Artist. When playing such songs, instead of

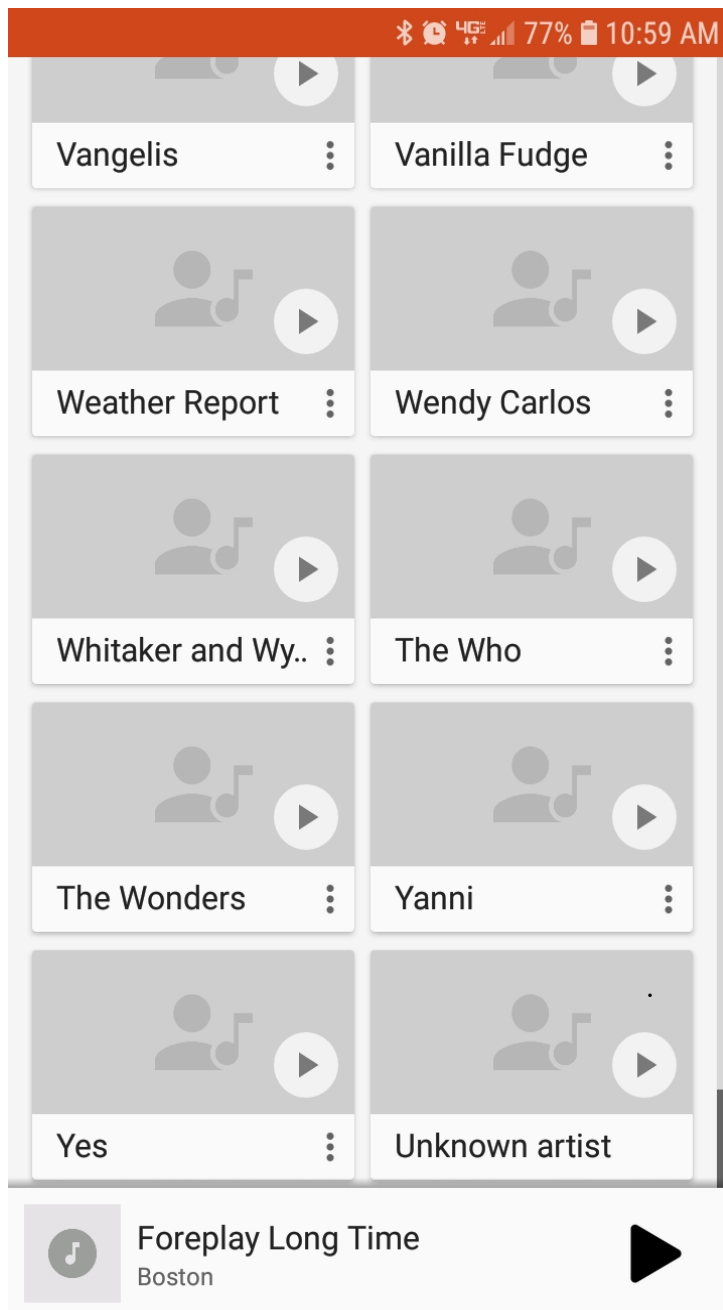


Illustration 3

displaying the true artist name, the GPM app displays Unknown Artist below the song title. Unknown Artist for songs being played was the first symptom I noticed.

The remedy is to enter the correct artist name in the appropriate ID3 tag for each song file.

Illustration 3 is a screen capture from my Android phone, showing the bottom of the alphabetic Artist list in the GPM app. You can see the final entry is Unknown Artist. At

2. Artist name is sometimes misspelled: When this happens in ID3 tags, the GPM app literally thinks that there are two different artists, not one. Examine the Artists list in the GPM app. The Artists list will include both names.

The remedy is to correct the misspelling in the appropriate ID3 tag for each song file. For example, I had this problem with a German musician; I own four of his CDs, and I misspelled his name when creating ID3 tags for songs from three of the four albums.

3. Song title omitted: When the song title ID3 tag is omitted, the GPM app will display the FLAC file name in the Songs list and when the song is played by the app.

My ripper software included the track number at the beginning of the FLAC file name, so the GPM app displayed those file names at the very top of the Song Titles list.

For instance, if I left out the Song Title ID3 tag info for the song Come Together by the Beatles, then the GPM app would display 01-Come Together.

The remedy is to type in the song title in the appropriate ID3 tag for each song file.

Continued Page 5

4. Track Number is omitted: When track number ID3 tags are omitted, if at least one song from album has a track number among its ID3 tags, then the list of songs in the album will show that one song with its track number, and all others with no track number. If no songs from an album have a track number in their ID3 tags, then the album is not listed at all by the GPM app, although the GPM app will play the songs in shuffle Play mode. To make such an album visible, the remedy is to enter the correct track numbers in the appropriate ID3 tags for each song file.

This next one was quite surprising to me.

5. Using the album name Greatest Hits for songs by multiple artists: If several artists have released the album entitled Greatest Hits, then the GPM app album list will include that album name once, and list all songs contained in every album name Greatest Hits under that one album title. This happened to me with the Monkees, Elton John, Journey, the Outlaws, Paul Revere and the Raiders, and a couple of other artists. According to the GPM app, the "album" contained over 35 songs by those artists.

The same thing could happen with the album name Best Of.

The remedy I used it to attach the artist name to the phrase Greatest Hits in the ID3 tag for album title. So now I have songs contained in the Elton John Greatest Hits album name, the Monkees Greatest Hits album name, The Journey Greatest Hits album name, and so forth. The GPM app then properly identifies each artist with their own Greatest Hits album.

I made the fixes on the versions stored on my Windows computer hard drive, again using AudioShell, and then copied the updated song files onto the phone. I think having copies with corrected ID3 tags on the hard drive is a very useful backup approach in case my phone is lost, broken, or the microSD card is somehow erased or ruined.

It is also possible to find smart phone apps that will let you edit ID3 tags of individual MP3 and FLAC song files, or small groups of files. One

song files, or small groups of files. One disadvantage of using a smart phone app to edit ID3 tags in song files is that you do not automatically keep track of ID3 tag updates and copy the updated song files to your computer.

A GLITCH INTRODUCED BY ANDROID 8

This next "mistake" resulted from a change made in the Android 8 operating system. In Android 7, this was not a problem.

6. Track number contains a leading zero character: It happens that AudioShell Tag Editor provides two different ways to enter a track number.

The first method allows the user to key in the track number: in the AudioShell window, click on the track number field and then use the numeric keys on the computer keyboard. See the accompanying screen capture image showing the AudioShell data entry window.

The second method provided by AudioShell Tag Editor, which I used for roughly the first 10% of my FLAC song file collection, is a pull-down menu, in which the values 1 through 9 are listed with leading zeros (01, 02, 03 etc.), no doubt to make the various values appear in numeric order in the menu. If you choose a value from 1 to 9 from the pulldown menu, then the leading zero is copied into the data entry field, and ultimately into the ID3 tag for Track number.

Leading zeros in track number ID 3 info caused no issue in the Android 7 operating system: the track numbers were recognized and displayed.

However, in the Android 8 operating system, the leading zero in the ID3 track number value causes the GMP app to treat the song just like the song had no ID3 tag track number value. See above for the symptom associated with a missing track number value. The remedy is to remove the leading zero.

Continued Page 6

While I discovered the symptoms and worked out the causes and remedies, I learned some other things. Behind the scenes on my Android smart phone, the Android operating system maintains indexes of ID3 tag information for song files: Album titles, Artist names, Track Number and Song titles. With a song file collection as large as mine, now more than 1,500 songs, each update to ID3 tags in a FLAC song file causes the Android OS to update the indexes, and it takes measurable time to do that. For instance, every time I added Artist ID3 tag values to songs in an album under the Unknown Artist name, I could see the GMP app take a second or two, blink, and remove the album from the album list group under the Unknown Artist name.

DIRECTORY STRUCTURE I CREATED FOR SONG FILES

One thing I want to make clear up front for the topic of directory structure: there is no one objectively correct or best way to organize it.

Here is what I chose to create on my microSD card in my Android smart phone and on my Windows computer. At the top level is the Music directory, which is apparently a mandatory directory in the sense that the Android operating system expects song files such as MP3 and FLAC to be found somewhere in the tree of directories under Music.

A little tip: the Android OS also treats any .AAC or .WAV files in the Recordings directory as song files. This is a bit vexing to me because I record various voice memos, and the recordings are in that directory. I certainly do not need to hear my own voice memos when I am using my smart phone to play music. So I remove those files to my Windows computer fairly often.

You could conceivably put all of your MP3 and FLAC song files in the Music directory. In my case that would be roughly 1,600 files. I thought that approach would make it very difficult for me to do some useful things: find and update one

song file, and confirm that an album of song files has been added (since the newly added files would be listed alphabetically, not grouped together). I don't think I have ever deleted any song files, but that too would be difficult.

So, to keep MP3 and FLAC song files separate, under Music I created a FLAC directory. If I still had a significant number of MP3 files on the phone, I would also create an MP3 directory. At this point I think I am down to about fifteen MP3 files, not a significant number.

Inside the FLAC directory, I created a directory for each Artist, such as Beach Boys, Beatles, Eagles etc.

Inside each Artist directory, I created one or more Album directories. Under Beatles, for instance, I created a directory for Abbey Road, another for Help, another for A Hard Days Night, and several others, since I own many Beatles Cds.

See **Illustration 4** for a Windows Explorer list of the first few Artist and Album directories in my FLAC directory tree. Inside each Album directory, I store FLAC song files from the album.

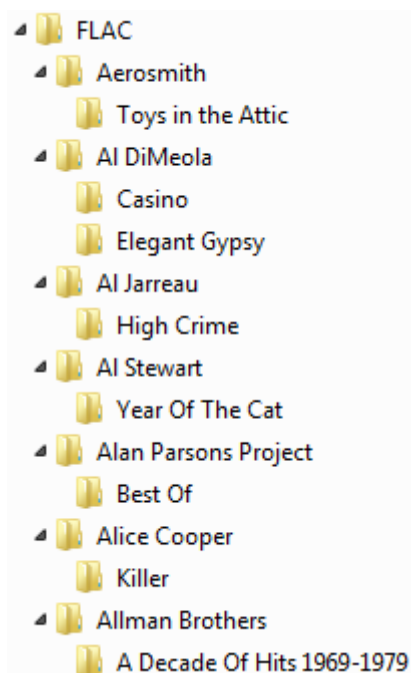


Illustration 4

Continued Page 7

FINDING NEEDLES IN THE HAYSTACK, IN BULK

Since I did not know of any way to identify songs that contained a leading zero in the ID3 tag for track number, I looked into automatic ways to do that.

The first question is: **what does an ID3 tag look like, inside a FLAC song file?** To find out, I used a type of file viewer called a *hex editor*. This type of file viewer is especially valuable for viewing text embedded in a binary file such as a song file.

I downloaded a freebie application called **wxHexEditor** from the SourceForge web site. It runs on Windows, and shows the contents of any file. It displays each and every character of a file as a two digit hexadecimal (base 16) number. Additionally in a parallel column of the same window, it displays the alphabetic and numeric characters in the file in readable form. In that window, when looking at my FLAC song files,

I saw that the track number ID3 tag takes the form of TRACKNUMBER=X, where X is one or two numerals. You can see an example of the display by wxHexEditor in **Illustration 5**.

Note that in the readable text on the right, the value TRACKNUMBER=01 appears for this song file (Big Shot by Billy Joel, from the 52nd Street album). This is an example of a TRACKNUMBER tag value that has a leading zero. I had to edit the ID3 tags for this song file to remove that leading zero.

The word Editor means that you can also change the contents of a file using wxHexEditor. I did not use that capability.

I just wanted to see the way that the metadata is identified and organized.

This ends Part 1. In part 2, you will learn about a freebie utility program I found that scans all my FLAC music files and identifies each one that contains the metadata string TRACKNUMBER=0.

Software Products mentioned in this article:

AudioShell: <https://www.softpointer.com/AudioShell.htm>

wxHexEditor: <https://sourceforge.net/projects/wxhexeditor/>

About the author:

John Krout is a former president of WAC, one of the predecessor clubs that became PATACS. He hated English in high school and probably became an engineer in part to avoid writing, like so many engineers do. His former English teachers would probably be laughing hysterically in their graves if they learned that he is a writer and speaker on modern digital technology and its many uses since the 1980s. Admittedly, during his high school years, he did not have the advantage of word processors for easy revision, re-organizaition and spell checking. Also he writes now about what he knows, not about what the high school teachers told him to research.

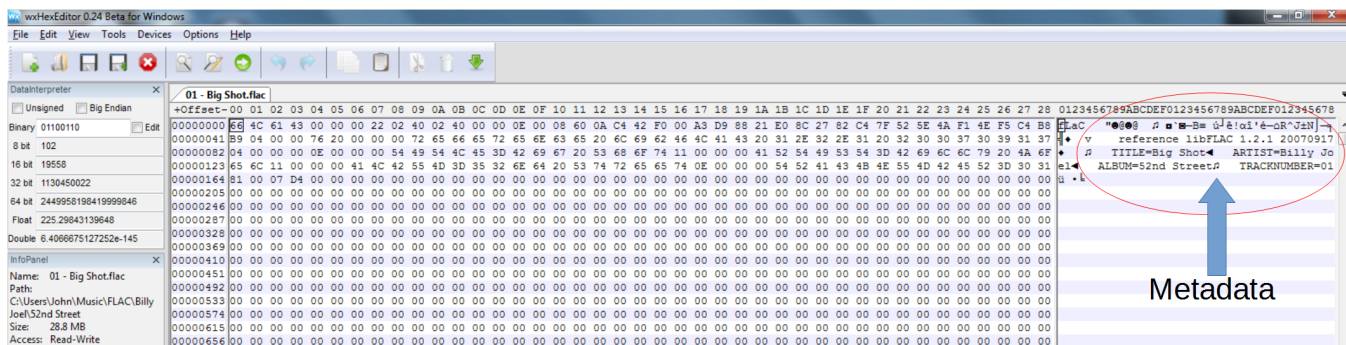


Illustration 5

DavesComputerTips

Blog

<https://davescomputertips.com/>

How To Self-Publish Your Book Part One

January 8, 2019 by [Marc Thomas 4](#)

It's said that we all have a book inside us waiting to come out and whilst this may be true, the path to publishing that book can be long and torturous—until now. The Internet has changed everything and publishing a book today is a somewhat more democratic process, shall we say.

I've recently completed my first fiction novel and whilst being a relative novice at publishing, here is my story so far.

Self-Publishing Is No longer A Stigma

“The stigma has left the building”, to quote a self-published author I spotted recently when they were commenting on the current state of publishing today. The traditional route for publishing your novel has been to find yourself a literary agent to represent you, who in turn will try to sell with JK Rowling and others of their ilk. your work to the publisher with the highest bid. If you were very lucky, you'd receive a handsome



advance (which you pay back through book sales royalties, by the way), your books would sell by the bucket-load and you'd be rubbing shoulders with JK Rowling and others of their ilk.

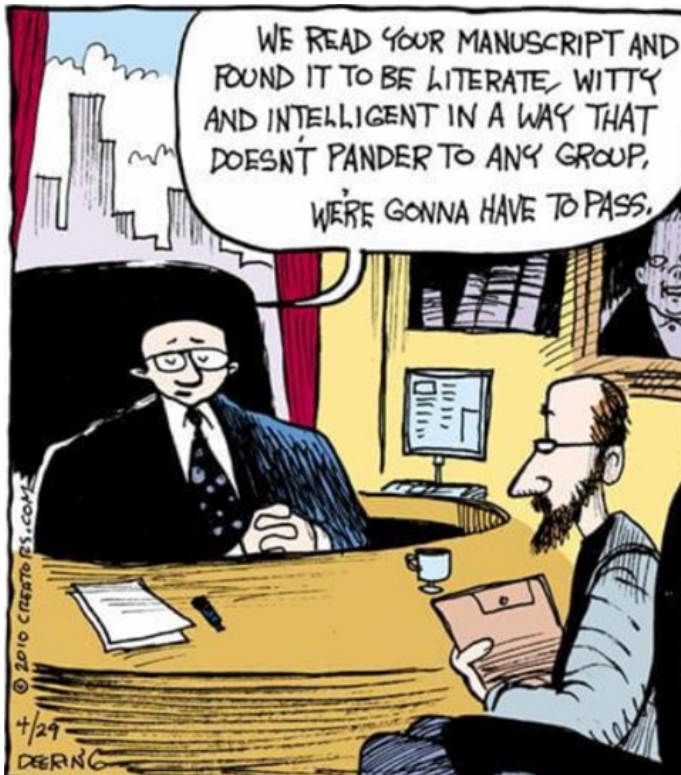
But the reality is a little different, I'm afraid. Assuming you've written that book, you'll need to prepare it for submission to literary agents, bearing in mind that each agent has their own preferred method of receiving unsolicited submissions. By this, I mean that you will need to find the agent's website, head for their submissions section (if they have one) and carefully read the requirements. Most will ask for a query letter, a synopsis of no more than 500 words (with spoilers) and the first three chapters of your book. Some will ask for your biography as well, an elevator pitch and a written account of why you think your book is worthy to be chosen by them. They may even ask which books you read and who are your preferred authors. In fact, the entire process can seem like a job interview, where first impressions are the [key](#) to success. In reality, the first impression is **chapter one** of your book, at least in my opinion. All this is assuming that they pick you from their rather frighteningly named, **slush-pile**. And make no mistake, you will be in that slush-pile.

About a decade ago, I self-published a non-fiction book through an online publisher and was foolish enough to pay for the experience, and although my English teacher would have marked it down as *needing much improvement*, I learned a lot of lessons along the way. It's also true that since 2007, book publishing has changed quite dramatically and self-publishing is now regarded as legit. Even established authors self-publish their books nowadays because they want to retain complete control of their work. On the other hand, some authors would disagree quite strongly with this opinion, as does Ros Barber from *The Guardian*: [For me, traditional publishing means poverty. But self-publish? No way](#)

Why Did I Choose Self-Publishing?

I wrote the first words of my novel around three years ago, the idea having gestated in my

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If you're lucky enough to land a contract with a literary agent, the downside is that it can take **up to two years** for your book to be published. Yes, *two* years. In the meantime, you'll need to be writing your next book and/or continuing with your day job. That's a long time to wait, bearing in mind that you'll probably have to wait a few months in the first place from the initial date of submission.

On the other hand, self-publishing is much faster, depending on the type of route you choose. There are specialist companies who can sell you a publishing package for a fee, which could include editing and book cover design, but this can get very expensive—this used to be known as vanity publishing, by the way. Today, one of the most popular routes to take is through [Amazon's Kindle Direct Publishing](#) (KDP), previously run through Amazon's [Create Space](#) division, which has now merged with KDP. This is the route that I've chosen for the following reasons, as highlighted on the KDP website:

- Self-publish eBooks and paperbacks for free with Kindle Direct Publishing, and reach millions of readers on Amazon
- Publishing takes less than 5 minutes and your book appears on Kindle stores worldwide within 24-48 hours
- Earn up to 70% royalty on sales
- Keep control of your rights and set your own list prices
- Make changes to your books at any time

The short resumé above is a little over-enticing and simplistic, perhaps. However, the basic message that the actual publishing is free, is true. KDP also supplies [free tools](#) for formatting, cover design and calculating book trim and spine size. However, I have decided to pay for a cover design because, apart from the absolutely vital aspect of book editing, the cover is an essential part of getting the book noticed. Besides, the designer I chose is the same one who designed the cover for my first book more than ten years ago. She's a known quantity so to speak, and her designs are excellent and eye-catching.

In Part Two of this article, I'll be writing about how I formatted the book, set up an account with KDP, assigned a free ISBN and prepared the book, ready for publication. I will also reveal details about the plot, the title, and a teaser on the storyline.

has been changed from a fictional country to a real one. By late last year, I felt I was ready to thrust it out into the world and submitted the manuscript to around 50 literary agents in the UK, using the methods I've just described. In fact, some of the agents I approached insisted on the manuscript being submitted through their proprietary online form where you copy and paste the material into boxes, thus ruining any formatting you may have done. I personalised my query letter (also known as a *pitch*) to each named agent and in some cases actually posted my submission by snail mail. The result, as you may have guessed by now, was rejection after rejection. All done in the nicest possible way of course and usually preceded by, *unfortunately*.

That was last September 2017 and although I feel I may have been a little premature, I have practically rewritten the book, with particular regard to changing the setting to a real country. I have also had the book edited and critiqued by a professional editor (for no charge, since they are a good friend) and with their help, I've also paid close attention to the timeline of the story. In retrospect, my first submission attempt was probably too early, however, it has allowed me to investigate independent publishing in more detail and also to weigh up the pros and cons of traditional vs self-publishing.



5 EASY TIPS FOR LINUX WEB BROWSER SECURITY

By Jack Wallen

In this article, you'll find a few basic tips, for users of all sorts, to help decrease the chances that your data will end up in the hands of the wrong people. It will be demonstrated on the Firefox web browser, but many of these tips cross the application threshold and can be applied to any flavor of web browser. Read more at this PCMag article: <http://bit.ly/2CWdaHW>

WHAT IS OPEN SOURCE? - Have you ever wondered just what is open source? Jack Wallen from TechRepublic explains the concept, why it's important, and what you can do to help the cause. <https://tek.io/2Q5RWje>



CHROMEBOOK TIPS & TRICKS

Judy Taylour with input from
Hewie Poplock, <http://cb4s.net/>

CHROMEBOOKS SHOW THEY'RE READY FOR PRIME TIME AT CES 2019 –

Google was as visible as any company at CES in 2019, with loads of promotion, integrations with other companies and product announcements of its own. Its Chrome operating system got some love, too, featured in a handful of new laptops and convertibles from Acer, Asus and HP. Marking one of the most significant milestones for the operating system in years.

AMD announced that it has retooled two of its A-series processors to run Chrome OS.

This will give Intel some real competition in the low-price Chromebook market for the first time -- and offer consumers more choices, and perhaps lower prices, for Chromebooks in 2019. Read more of this CNet news report: <https://cnet.co/2FYui3P>

15-MINUTE CHROMEBOOK TUNE-UP –

As far as computers go, Chromebooks are almost shockingly lowmaintenance. Google's Chrome OS operating system updates itself silently and automatically — as do most of the core apps associated with the platform — and it doesn't get gunked up and slowed down over time, as traditional operating systems tend to do.

There's no antivirus software to fret over, either, and little in the way of complicated settings or compatibility concerns. By and large, things “just work” — like, for real.

But hey, you're a proactive person. You like knowing your tech is always in tip-top shape. Plus, you have impeccable tastes in tech-related reading material (clearly).

But hey, you're a proactive person. You like knowing your tech is always in tip-top shape. Plus, you have impeccable tastes in tech-related reading material (clearly).

JR Raphael, COMPUTERWORLD Contributing Editor, shares a little secret with you: Despite Chrome OS's minimal-upkeep nature, there are some things you can do to clean up your Chromebook, clear out its clutter, and keep it primed for optimal productivity (and/or procrastination — equally important, as far as JR is concerned). And they don't take long at all to power through.

Take a few minutes now to go through these steps, then rest easy all year knowing your Chromebook is running at its best and ready to handle whatever tasks (and maybe even soft objects) you throw its way. <http://bit.ly/2TS1Wen>

Vehicle Location App Suggestions Please

By Kathy Perrin

I purchased a vehicle (car) locator app with a device you leave in your vehicle for location purposes. I did this apparently without adequately reading the fine, fine, fine print. (If you are detecting some annoyance, your perception is totally accurate.)

The first time I used it, I parked in the many level garage at the Tysons Corner Center. The app clearly informed me that it does not function in parking garages that have much steel and concrete and that I could take a photo to later locate my car. Hmmm—*not* helpful.

The next time I used it, it informed me that I must park at least 65 feet away from my shopping location—also *not* overly helpful at the grocery store and many other locations.

What app have you used that has functioned successfully?

Thank you for all future helpful suggestions. I will be happy to include a summary in a future newsletter.

Interesting Internet Finds

By Steve Costello
scostello (at) sefcug.com

While going through more than 300 RSS feeds, I often run across things I think might be of interest to other user group members.

The following are some more items I found interesting during December 2018

The Real-World Guide to Using Google Drive <https://infolific.com/technology/software-worth-using/complete-guide-to-google-drive/>

If you have a Chromebook you will be working more with Google Drive, so check out this post.

How Does Bluetooth Work, and Why Is It So Terrible?
<https://www.maketecheasier.com/how-does-bluetooth-work/>

Bluetooth is everywhere. Ever wonder how it works, or why it is so bad sometimes? This post answers both of those.

Is Your Charging Cable Killing Your Phone?
https://askbobrankin.com/is_your_charging_cable_killing_your_phone.html

Until USB-C becomes standard there is a lot to be aware of in this post.
4K HDMI Cables: How To Cut Through The Marketing Lingo And Figure Out What You Actually Need

<https://www.techhive.com/article/3330376/gaming-gear/do-i-need-a-4k-hdmi-cable.html>

Get a new 4K TV over the holidays? If so, check out this post before getting new HDMI cables.

What Is Wi-Fi 6 and Do You Need a New Router?
<https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/what-is-wifi-6/>

Have you heard about Wi-Fi 6 but want to know more? If your answer is yes this MakeUseOf post explains a lot.

Turning Your Mouse into a Laser Pointer
<https://www.howtogeek.com/398980/turn-your-mouse-into-a-laser-pointer-in-powerpoint/>

I wish I had known about this the last time I forgot my laser pointer. If you do PowerPoint presentations, keep this information handy, in case you forget yours.

Simple Questions: What Is OLED? What Does OLED Mean?
<https://www.digitalcitizen.life/what-is-oled-what-does-it-mean>

Do you know what OLED is? If not read this post from Digital Citizen. It explains what OLED is, as well as its advantages and disadvantages.

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Today -- Any Day! -- At Apple

By Gabe Goldberg

If you have one or more Apple devices -- iPad/iPhone/Watch/Mac/TV/etc. -- it's worth visiting Apple's free presentations web page <https://www.apple.com/today/> to explore sessions offered at all Apple stores.

These cover products (devices, etc.), services (iCloud, etc.), and a great variety of skills and techniques (photography, video, music, coding and apps, art and design, health and fitness).

You register online, specifying topic, day/time, and location. Sessions are held around tables in stores, with an instructor speaking and demonstrating using a large monitor, and never more than five other attendees. Most events I've joined have been just me and one or two others, so they've been very personal and interactive, great for asking questions.

I've sat in on several product talks (iPad/iPhone), iCloud, Health app, and found them all interesting and immediately useful with new ideas and usage tips.

Northern Virginia Locations:

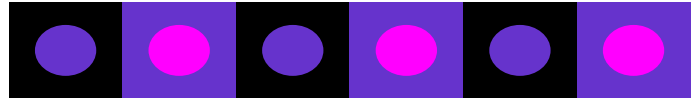
Arlington, Clarendon and Pentagon City
Fairfax, Fair Oaks
McLean, Tysons Corner
Reston, Reston
Woodbridge, Potomac Town Center

Maryland Locations:

Bethesda, Bethesda Row and Montgomery Mall
Columbia, Columbia
Towson, Towson Town Center

Over 50 new sessions in Photography, Art & Design, Music, and more

Photography Music Video
Coding and Apps Art and Design
Health and Fitness Products

**FROM PAUL HOWARD, President****WELCOME****Here's a list of recent folks who've paid dues in the last three months.**

Terry DeBiase

Roger Hillson

Michael Pafford

Connie Herrmann

Brenda Soares

John Sullivan

Paul Howard

Steven Wertime

Jon Mabudian

Roger Fujii

Ronald Burek

Josephine Lowe

Jim Rhodes

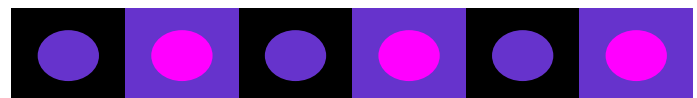
Kosmo Tatalias

Lloyd Johnson

Cornelia Newbold

Tom Urman

Geof Goodrum





**JERE'S TECH TIPS / APPLE
TECH TIPS ON
www.apcug2.org
Jere Minich, Advisor, Region 5**

HOW TO LOCK YOUR WINDOWS 10 PC REMOTELY - Android and Apple have long given people a way to track and disable your gadgets remotely. Microsoft has also joined the club by letting you track and lock your Windows PC using the "Find My Device" on Windows 10.

Find My Device uses your device's location data to help you find it when it's lost or stolen. You can use the same service to make sure that the device is locked so that no one can use it, and also to display information about how people can return it to you.

The device needs to meet a couple of requirements to use the feature. Read this How-To Geek post to find out how to enable "Find My Device" (with screenshots). <http://bit.ly/2BcaUMm>

CAN ANYONE REALLY TRACK MY PHONE'S PRECISE LOCATION? – It's the year 2019, and everyone willingly carries a tracking device in their pockets. People can have their precise locations tracked in real time by the government, advertising companies, and even rogue bounty hunters. It sounds like dystopian fiction—but it's a reality.

We like debunking sensationalist stories, but this latest controversy is true. Your phone's precise location can be tracked in several different ways. Go to this How-To-Geek web page and find out how Family, Advertisers, Government and Rogue Bounty Hunters can track your location. <http://bit.ly/2QXWaWs>

15 SECRET TRICKS AND TIPS INSIDE iOS 12 - Many are big, flashy, in-your-face features. Just as many are little hidden tricks that only a true iOS aficionado will find fascinating. Apple released iOS 12 in September 2018, and it has since gone through several dot revs (as of this writing, we're at 12.1.2). That's plenty of time to have figured it all out, right?

Anyone with iOS can get a pretty simple operating system, so it's easy to get going. But with each new version there comes new innovation and new options.

Since iOS 12 works on iPhones from the 5s on up, the iPod touch, and iPads going back to 2013's iPad Air, that's a lot of devices that can take advantage of Apple's latest mobile software upgrades. The new stuff featured in this article are the items that should push you from casual user to power user in no time. Show your friends and relatives and you'll soon be their iPhone guru (for better or worse). Read more at this PCMag article: <http://bit.ly/2CWdaHW>

**PENGUIN PLATFORM
"Free" John Kennedy,
Advisor Regions 3 and 6**

THE MANY NEW FEATURES & IMPROVEMENTS OF THE LINUX 5.0 KERNEL - Linus Torvalds just released Linux 5.0-rc1, what was formerly known as Linux 4.21 in late-December. While the bumping was rather arbitrary as opposed to a major change necessitating the big version bump, this next version of the Linux kernel does come with some exciting changes and new features (of course, our Twitter followers already have known Linux was thinking of the 5.0 re-brand from 4.21). The merge window is now closed so we have a firm look at what's new for this next kernel version. As is standard practice, there will be seven to eight weekly release candidates before Linux 5.0 is officially ready for release around the end of February or early March. Read more of Michael Larabel's (Phoronox) original feature overview of the new material to find in this kernel at: <http://bit.ly/2GgiARr>



Let's talk about cookies

By Joe Issac, Tech Talk, Central Kentucky
Computer Society
December 2018 issue, CKCS Newsletter-
www.ckcs.org
[joeisaac1234 \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:joeisaac1234@gmail.com)

NO, NOT CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES -- I'M TALKING ABOUT BROWSER COOKIES: Browser cookies are good, they make life easier and don't take up much space.

First, let's start with what cookies are. Cookies are simple text files that are created when you open a website. They help users navigate websites and perform certain functions. Cookies are used when you tell a website to "remember me," or when you log onto a message board, play online games, and a bunch of other things. A cookie allows you to log onto a website without having to enter your email and password every time. They can only be read by the site that creates it.

The main purpose of a cookie is to identify users and possibly prepare customized Web pages or to save site login information for you.

They make surfing the web more seamless, and help websites operate more profitably and with greater efficiency. They record which pages you viewed, and how long the visitor stays and can help you return to a place you visited.

Cookies may store street addresses, city and zips, passwords, credit card numbers, etc. which allows you to enter those with a single click and are used by web servers to know whether the user is logged in or not, and to which account they are logged in, like your bank or stock broker.

Cookies were designed to be a reliable mechanism for websites to remember information, such as items in a shopping cart or to record the user's browsing activity (including clicking particular buttons, logging in, or recording which pages were visited by the user as far back as months or years ago). Cookies are designed to save you time and trouble. The chocolate chip kind are also rather tasty!

There is a theory that the name for browser cookies came from the Chinese fortune cookie which usually contains a chunk of text, but there are arguments against that.

How to join a PATACS Zoom meeting using your computer
By John Krout, PATACS member

You can enjoy a PATACS meeting from just about anywhere your computer has a connection to the Internet. You may need to use this capability if the meeting locale is closed due to inclement weather. I started to investigate Zoom in February 2019, a week or so before I was to make a Learn in 30 presentation at the Fairfax City meeting of PATACS and OLLI OPCUG. Because of the prospect that winter weather might force the meeting site to close, Paul Howard wrote an email to me and to the other presenter, asking us if we had enough Zoom experience to participate as presenters in a virtual PATACS meeting.

A virtual meeting means club members and the presenters stay at their homes and use Zoom to meet. At the time, I told Paul that I was not up to speed on Zoom. It occurred to me that many other club members might be in the same boat. So I decided to get up to speed, and to write this document to explain how to join and enjoy a Zoom meeting.

I confess there is some self interest at work here. If I make a presentation at a virtual meeting, I would like to have a large audience. Snow, ice, et cetera will no longer be an impediment (though a power outage might be).

First of all, if you have never before joined a Zoom meeting, please be aware that the Zoom.us web site will install a program on your computer when you first prepare to join a meeting. The program is called the Zoom client app, though it has a very long and convoluted file name, and it does not occupy a vast amount of hard drive space. After the first time, all you do is start the Zoom client.

Second, every Zoom meeting has a Meeting ID. These are assigned by Zoom to Zoom account holders. You do NOT need to be a Zoom account holder to join a Zoom meeting. However, you do have to know the Zoom Meeting ID in order to join a Zoom meeting.

Read the entire article:

https://www.patacs.org/pdf/jk_joinzoommtg-2.pdf

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Publicity..... Volunteer Needed

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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

Arlington: Carlin Hall Community Center
 X 5711 4th Street South
 Arlington, Virginia 22204

Fairfax: Osher Lifelong Learning Institute
 4210 Roberts Road
 Fairfax, Virginia 22032

| SUN | MON | TUE | WED | THUR | FRI | SAT |
|-----|--|-----|---|------|-----|---|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 7-9pm Arlington Program | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 7-9pm Online Zoom Meeting | 14 | 15 | 16 12:30- 3:30pm Fairfax General Meeting |
| 17 | 18 7-9pm Arlington Board Meeting | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 May Newsletter Articles Due |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 7-9 pm Arlington Tech & PC Help Desk | 28 | 29 | 30 |