

PATACS/OPCUG

3rd Saturday, March 21
Osher Lifelong Learning Institute,
4210 Roberts Rd., Fairfax, VA 22032-1028

Meeting 1:00 PM



Television in the 1920s
Presented by
Dr. Brian Belanger

Few Americans have had an opportunity to view television broadcasts before the late 1940s or early 1950s. Color television broadcasting did not begin until 1954. But there was much experimentation long before that. Even in the 1890s, scientists were describing in some detail how someday people might be able to view live moving pictures in their living rooms. The first published book on the *history* of television had a copyright date of 1911! The first color television patent was filed in 1904, but it took exactly a half century before color TV became readily available to consumers. There was experimental television in the Washington, DC, area beginning in 1928, using motor-drive spinning discs to create the moving image. This talk describes the fascinating early history of television. Those who have previously heard Dr. Belanger speak know what a treat is in store for you.

Electrical engineer Brian Belanger had a long career in government service including the Atomic Energy Commission and the National Institute for Standards and Technology. He received Bronze and Silver Medals from the Commerce Department, and was a Commerce Science and Technology Fellow (1983-84). Since his retirement in 2000, Brian has been an active

volunteer at the National Capital Radio & Television Museum. One of the museum’s founders, he is currently the museum’s curator, a regular docent, and a co-editor of the Museum’s journal *Dials and Channels*. Brian received the 2001 Houck Award of the Antique Wireless Association for his dozens of articles about radio/TV history and served as that organization’s editor of its peer-reviewed journal, *The AWA Review*. He is an extra class amateur radio operator and is a co-editor of their monthly journal, *Radio Age*.

Learn in 30 – Lorrin Garson
SI Units—Who Cares?

Feet, meters, pounds, kilograms, acres, hectares, gallons, liters—how boring but **so important**. There are standards for all these things, which have been defined and redefined over the centuries. But last year, standards for seven fundamentals (ampere, candela, kelvin, kilogram, meter, mole, and second) were defined based entirely on unchanging fundamental properties of nature, and thus are now immutable. Of course, there are many other standards derived from these seven fundamentals. A brief history of standard setting will be discussed, and a description of these **new standards** will be given.

Thank you to our dedicated volunteers
who skillfully and patiently proof
our PATACS Posts:
Paul Howard
Leti Labell
Nick Wenri
Henry Winokur

| | |
|--|--------|
| Meeting..... | page 1 |
| Thank you, Proofers..... | page 1 |
| Making PDFs with LibreOffice Writer..... | page 2 |
| Interesting And Helpful Sites..... | page 5 |
| Lock Up Those Photos..... | page 6 |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|---------|
| Settings — Control Panel..... | page 7 |
| Tech “Fit” Things in Your Hands..... | page 9 |
| Tech “Fit” Cords, Voice, Sound..... | page 10 |
| Tech “Fit” Tech And Your Eyes..... | page 12 |
| Freshly Squeezed Review Light..... | page 13 |

Making PDFs with LibreOffice Writer part 2 of a 2-part article series By John Krout, PATACS member

LibreOffice is a freeware productivity suite that closely mimics Microsoft Office. I have used LibreOffice and its predecessor, OpenOffice, at home for roughly a decade.

Part 1 of this series provided some easy ways in LibreOffice to reduce overall PDF file size when multiple photos or screen captures are included in the PDF.

Recently I had a need to create a PDF document containing images of pages I scanned using a flatbed scanner. Most were grayscale (black and white) page images. Here is a summary of the PDF creation process I used.

For starters, I used Photoshop CC to run my scanner. Basically the page scans from my scanner produce page images in Photoshop, which I save as PNG photo files.

Before continuing, I should mention that PhotoShop CC is in no way causing any problem. Also PhotoShop CC is not uniquely part of the solution. The same scanning and color controls could be done using PhotoShop Elements, or Corel Paint Shop Pro, or many other graphics applications.

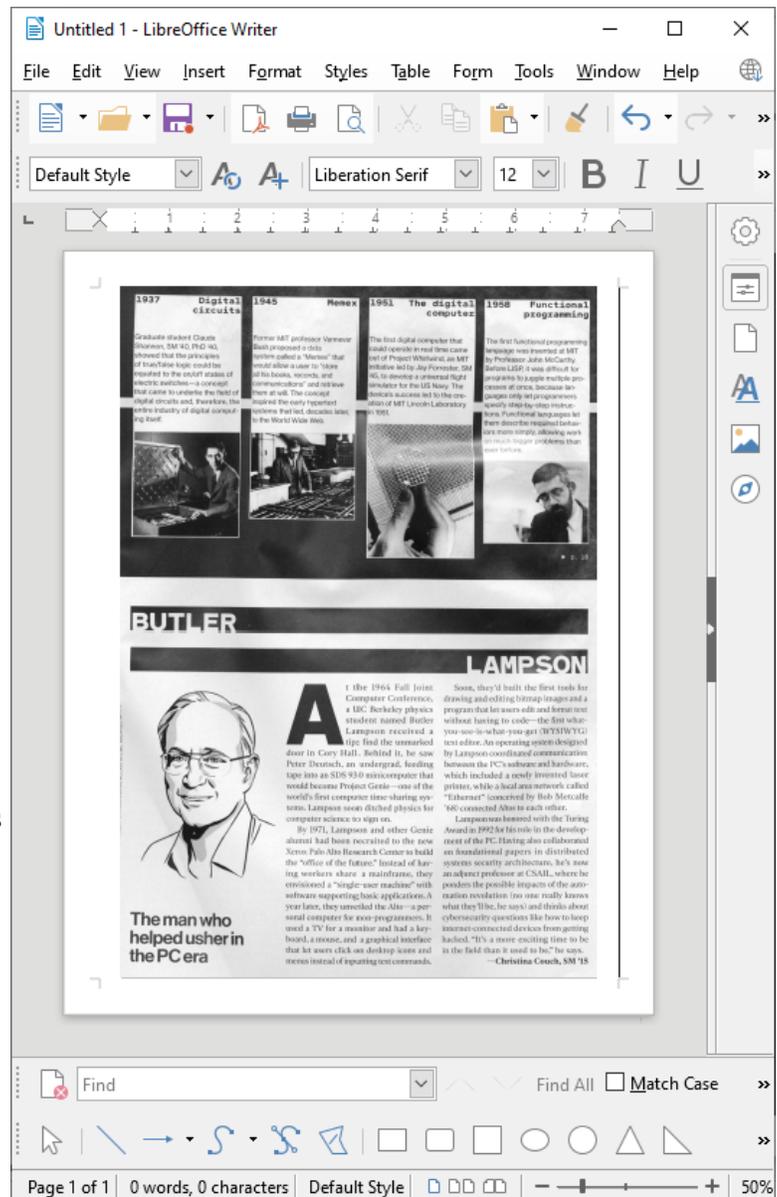
Then I used LibreOffice Writer to create blank pages, put a page scan image on each page, and then export the entire set of pages as a PDF file.

Some of the pages scans were in color; most were grayscale, which is appropriate for text and black & white photos. As usual, after completing the assembly of pages in LibreOffice Writer, I saved the document, and then exported the document as a PDF. In LibreOffice Writer, that export is

done by opening the File menu and choosing Export as PDF. During that process, the techniques for reducing overall PDF file size can be applied, as described in part one of this article.

This was the first time I worked with grayscale scanned images to create a PDF. In the LibreOffice Writer application all the images of scanned pages looked fine, very readable.

Illustration 1 below



When I loaded the exported PDF file into Adobe Acrobat Reader, I found a problem: *the grayscale images appeared as flat black rectangles* in the PDF file. Those pages were unreadable: no visible text and no visible photos.

See an example of the problem depicted in **Illustration 2 at right**.

The color page images in the PDF were nice readable pages.

The LibreOffice Writer file itself displayed each and every page containing a readable page image. Somehow its PDF generation capability was unable to use the grayscale images to produce readable grayscale pages in a PDF file.

That difference suggested to me that something in the color image recording details was working for LibreOffice Writer in the color images, and not working in the grayscale images.

Illustration 2 below

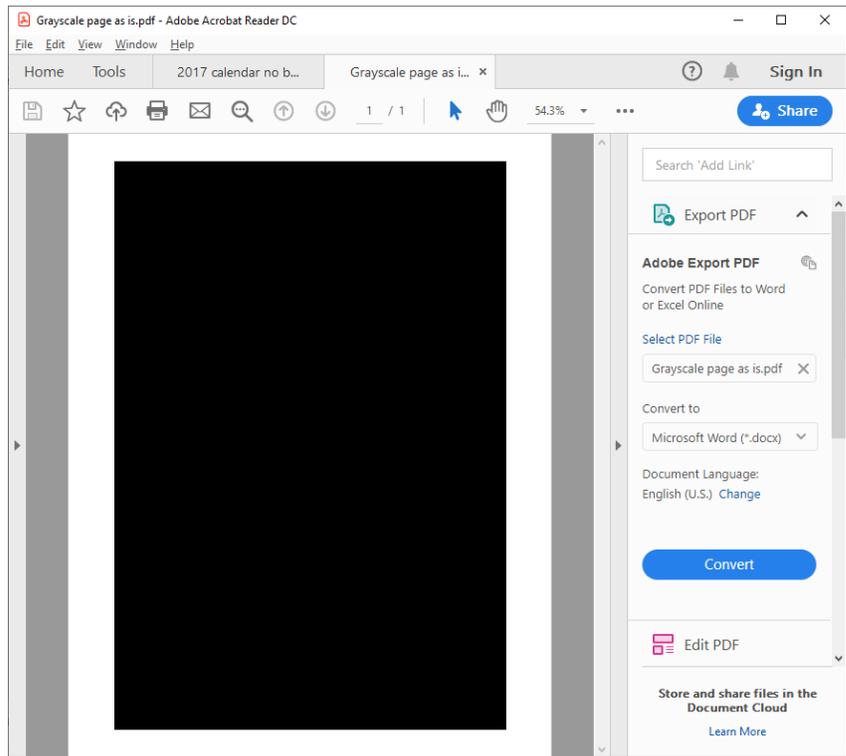
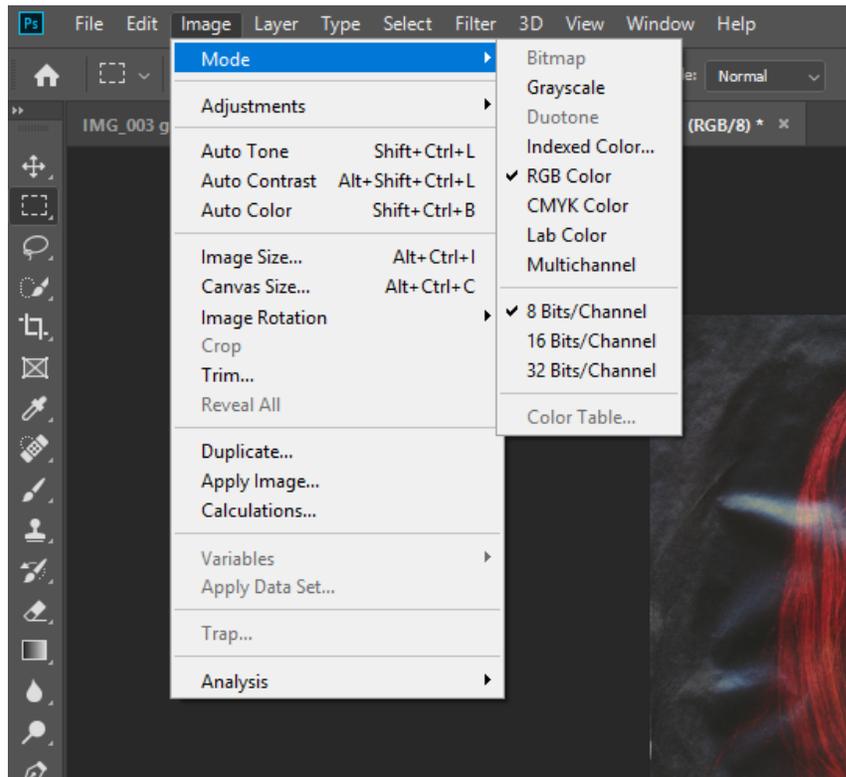


Illustration 3 below

So I took a look at the color details for a color page image, using Photoshop CC. Here is how I did that, and what I found.

I loaded a color page image into Photoshop CC, pulled down the Image menu, and selected Mode. A submenu appeared, as shown in **Illustration 3 at right**. It displayed the color recording format (RGB) and the color depth, also known as bits per pixel (8 bits).



Then I loaded a grayscale page scan image into Photoshop CC. The mode submenu revealed that the grayscale page scan was recorded using Indexed Color, *not RGB*, and with 8-bit color depth, as shown in **Illustration 4**.

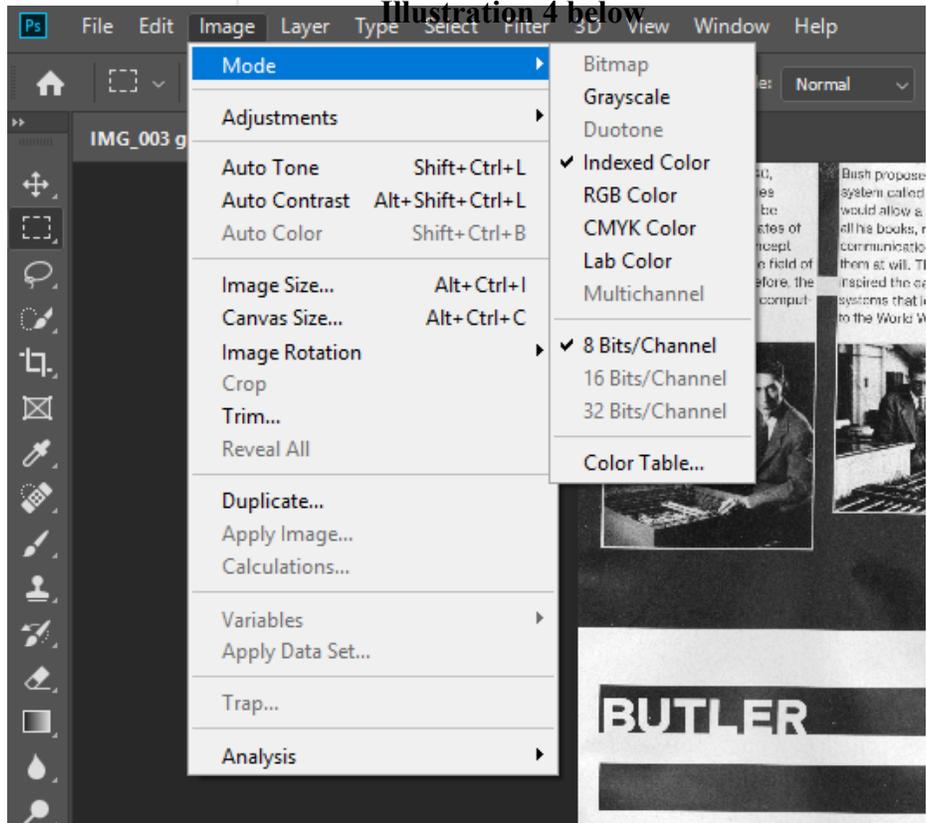


Illustration 4 below

Fortunately, Photoshop CC let me change the grayscale page scan image by selecting RGB color and 16-bit color depth. Then I saved the updated scan image file.

I imported that one updated grayscale page image file into LibreOffice Writer, and exported that single page document to PDF, as a test. When I loaded that new PDF into Adobe Acrobat Reader, it was a recognizable page, not flat black, as shown in **illustration 5**.

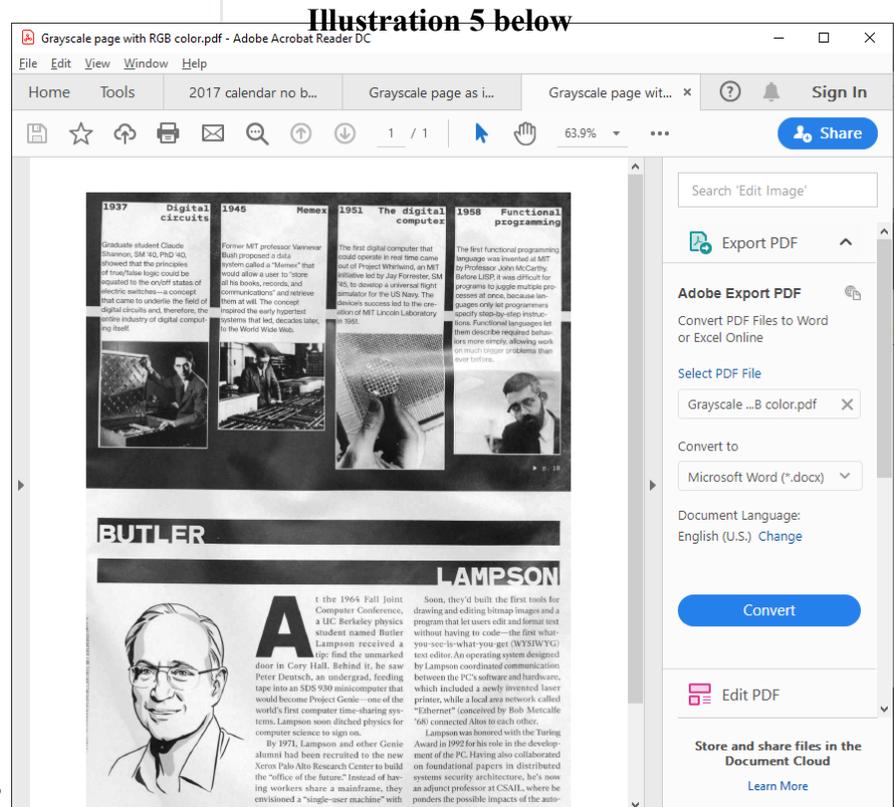


Illustration 5 below

I repeated those two adjustments for each of the other grayscale page scan image files. I loaded the updated image files into LibreOffice Writer. I used Writer to export a PDF. When I loaded that new PDF into Adobe Acrobat Reader, all pages in the file were recognizable pages, not flat black.

These changes to the grayscale scan image files did increase the size of each file quite a bit, since additional bits were included. And the PDF file size increased too: the file size *quintupled*. But it was still less than 5 megabytes, and easily sent by email.

Later it occurred to me that possibly only one of the two changes I made really matters to the PDF generation process.

I suspected RGB color, and not the color depth per pixel, was the critical change.

Also, if I could avoid increasing the color depth per pixel from 8 bits to 16 bits, the PDF file size would be reduced.

So my second change was to reduce the color bits per pixel from 16 to 8 in the grayscale page images, and then re-create the LibreOffice Writer document with those images, and finally export the document to PDF.

And indeed the grayscale pages still appeared as desired in the PDF file, with a considerable reduction in the overall PDF file size.

So there you have it. The color mode that is known to work for LibreOffice export of grayscale images to PDF is RGB.

There are other options listed in the Photoshop CC mode menu: Grayscale, Lab Color, and CMYK color. I have not tested those options. They might work for grayscale images. Indexed color seems not to work.

And, to be brutally honest, I am not entirely sure that the LibreOffice PDF export capability is the culprit.

It might be that Adobe Acrobat Reader is the culprit.

It happens that Photoshop CC can also read and display PDF files. I did load the PDF with bad grayscale page images into Photoshop CC. It also displayed the grayscale page images as black pages. Since Photoshop CC is also published by Adobe, I was not surprised.

I hope I have saved you a bit of puzzlement and headache by showing you how to prepare grayscale images properly for the purpose of LibreOffice export to PDF.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout is a past president of the Washington Area Computer User Group (WAC), one of the two groups that later merged to become the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS). His digital photos have won first prizes at the Delaware State Fair photo contest, the Virginia State Fair photo contest, and the 2018 APCUG digital photography contest. He is a frequent contributor to the PATACS Posts newsletter and occasionally provides presentations at PATACS meetings. John lives in Arlington, VA and works for the Thales Group, a major maker of automated fingerprint identification hardware, writing tech documents to support use of that hardware in a major federal computer system.

Interesting and Helpful Sites From Various Sources:

Techboomers -- their tutorials make it easy to put a presentation together. We can also use their blog articles at www.techbloomers.com.

Ask Bob Rankin - <https://askbobrankin.com/>

Ask Leo Notenboom - askleo.com

How-To Geek - howtogeek.com

Cyn Mackley - she bought out WorldStart when they folded. I found her short articles in many newsletters and am glad she is still writing. <http://cynmackley.com>

Geekly Weekly, Rod Sher, former Smart Computing editor - <http://www.thegeeklyweekly.com/>

Dave's Computer Tips - <https://davescomputertips.com>



Lock Up Those Photos

By Bill Crowe, Director, Sarasota
Technology User Group, FL
October 2019 issue, STUG Monitor-
www.thestug.org
director1 (at) thestug.org



Last month I lost my wallet. Not a good day. I knew the last time I had used the card, and from there I went straight home.

They did not have the card at my last stop, so I had either lost it on the way to the car or at home. After an extensive search, I had to go about cancelling and replacing all my credit cards. I had to do the same for all my other cards like medical cards, driver's license, Costco's, and others. Not a fun job. The job would have been so much easier if I had kept a record of all my cards. I got to thinking that if I had taken a picture of each card (front and back), I would have had them on my iPhone. That would have solved the problem.

Thinking about it further, what if someone got my phone or was able to access my iCloud and gain access to my info? All my cards were there for the taking. I was hoping that there was a way to lock photos on my iPhone, but Apple has not yet provided one. I knew there must be an app for that and 'By Golly' there is.



Private Photo Vault

Keeping your photos private

Credit: www.privatephotovault.com

There are, of course, many applications that can do it, but one of the best is called Private Photo Vault. The following is a brief introduction to Private Photo Vault.



Private Photo Vault is one of the best free applications to protect your personal photos and videos by password/pattern-locking.

This feature-rich app allows easy album organization by allowing you to transfer images and videos from iPhone's photo app to your new protected album.

All you need to do is select photos you want to hide and password-protect them on your private album.

Private Photo Vault has a tri-protect system. You can either hide your photos via a secure password system or a nifty pattern lock system. There's also a pin lock option that lets you hide an image by entering a 4-digit pin.

Of many additional features, my favorite is the decoy password option. It allows users to enter two passwords – one for general access and another for those albums you want to really secure.

With a smooth interface, and simple yet extremely secure protection option, the app is a good way to hide your photos on your phone.

By the way, the end of my story is that after I cancelled most of my cards, I found the wallet.

FOUND

It was in about the only place in the house I had not turned upside down.

See the tutorials at

<https://privatephotovault.com/tutorials/>



Settings –

What happened to Control Panel?

Author: Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer,
 The Computer Club, Florida
 www.scccomputerclub.org
 Philsorr (at) yahoo.com

Way back in the days of Windows 7, the Control Panel was the way we adjusted the operation of certain parts of the Operating System. Control Panel was easily found because it was in a short list of options when you clicked the Start button. When you clicked “Control Panel,” you were presented with a set of Apps (originally called Applets), that would allow you to change the way certain features operated. (To get this list you had to choose “View by Icons” rather than “View by Categories.”) The list of Apps included, Display, Keyboard, Mouse, System, Default Programs, Power Options, Programs and features, Folder Options, Network and Sharing, Device manager, just about all the features that you can adjust. Maybe the statement at the top of the set of Apps was prophetic in its language. The Apps were introduced by a text line that said, “Adjust your computer’s settings.” And maybe the thought of Settings was carried over from the Smartphone world, (i.e. Apple’s iOS and Google’s Android) just about when Windows 10 was being developed. No matter how it evolved, Settings seems to be the preferred term for the

place to go to change the way the device operates.

“Settings” has become a common feature on many computing devices. It even shows up on other things like electric ovens, exercise machines, thermostats, and kitchen appliances. So now Settings is the place to set many of the features of Windows 10. Yes, Control Panel still exists, but it is not as apparent, or easy to find. It seems like it has been moved to different places in different Windows 10 editions. But, fortunately, you can always find it just by clicking the “Type here to Search” circle next to the Start button, and then typing “Control” into the Search bar.

You may not even have to go to Control Panel for most of the things you may want to change, because clicking Settings will more than likely get you there. And, Settings is very easy to find; just click the Start button and the Settings icon, which looks like a gear, appears right above the Power icon. Click the icon and you will be shown all the Settings categories. Just to add a little confusion, these new categories are not the same categories that are used in Control Panel, although some of the titles will be familiar. The Settings screen on one of my machines is as shown below.

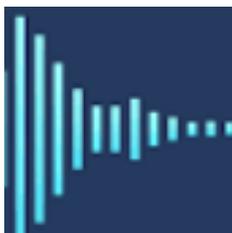


Notice that they are not in alphabetical order. Note too, that System is the first category, so Microsoft must consider these to be important settings. Here are the items in the System category:

Display Here you will find Display-related information and settings. The first setting is “Night light,” which allows you to set a schedule for the Night Light and set the “Color temperature at night.” The introduction explains that “Screens emit blue light, which can keep you up at night.” So, by using warmer colors, there may be less interference with your sleep.



(I’m only the messenger.) Here is where you can “Change the size of text, apps, and other items,” if so desired. The Resolution of the display is another setting that can be changed. Keep in mind that if you choose a higher resolution the text and pictures on the screen will be smaller, so if you want larger items on the screen, you will have to lower the Resolution. (I know that sounds counterintuitive.)



Sound is where you choose your output or input devices, volume, manage your sound devices and troubleshoot those devices.

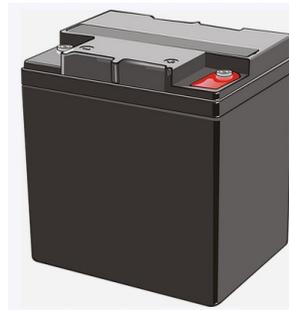
Notifications & actions is where you set up the Quick Actions, the icons you see when you click the Action Center icon at the right-hand end of the taskbar.

(Clicking the Action Center icon also shows you any notifications that are available.) This is also where you get to determine the notifications you can receive, and who can send you notifications.

.Focus Assist is where you can choose which notification you’d like to see and hear so you can stay focused. The rest will go straight to the action center where you can see them any time.

Power & sleep. You can customize how long the screen will stay on after the last input, and when the computer will go into the sleep mode. If you have a laptop, these settings are made for both “On battery power” and “When plugged in.”

Battery. Here you will see a battery charged percentage indication and if you click “Battery Usage by app,” you will see how the battery is being used by various apps. Battery saving options are also shown here.



Storage is where you can see the size of each local storage device (drive) and how much is being used. There are also a few storage related items here such as “Change how we free up space,” and Manage Storage Spaces.” You will probably want to customize these options. You will also find “Change where new content is stored,” which determines where various file types, like documents, music, and pictures will be stored.



Tablet mode optimizes your device for a touch screen so you don’t have to use a keyboard and mouse.

Multitasking gives you control of the “Snap” feature that is the ability to snap windows into half the overall screen. This can be useful if you want to Copy & Paste between two documents.

Projecting to this PC gives you the ability to wirelessly project some Windows and Android devices to your device. If you give presentations, turn on “This PC can be discovered for projection only when it’s plugged in.”

Shared experiences lets Apps on other devices open and message apps on your device, and vice versa. This feature improves the ability to share documents and apps among all of your devices and may or may not be useful to you.



Clipboard You can save multiple items to the clipboard to use later as well as sync them across devices, pin frequently used items, and clear the clipboard data.

Remote Desktop lets you connect and control your PC from a remote device by using a remote desktop client. **Note:** You never want to enable this unless you completely trust the person who wants to take over control of your PC. You might do this if someone you know and trust is trying to help you with something and they are at a remote location.



Making Your Tech “Fit” Things in Your Hands

By Debra Carlson, Technical Advisor, CVC Computer Club, CO Q3 2019 issue, Tech-Notes [cvc.computer.club \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:cvc.computer.club (at) gmail.com)

Last quarter we talked about monitors. Now we will talk about Things in your hands.



Do you have hand, shoulder or neck pain while and after using your computer? Spend hours online without moving? Taking breaks is helpful, of course. Having good habits can help avoid some potentially debilitating conditions:

- Carpal tunnel syndrome happens when pressure on the inner wrist makes the median nerve swell causing numbness, tingling, pain, and weakness.
- “Mouse shoulder” (pain in shoulder, upper arm and forearm) can happen when time is spent slouching while moving the hand. It leads to muscle strain of the shoulder girdle or the spine itself.
- A mouse that fits the hand poorly can also cause thumb tendinitis.



About contains a lot of device specification information. This is where you will find hardware information such as Device name (with the ability to change the name), Processor type, Amount of memory, and the system type, 64bit or 32 bit. Here you will also find Software information such as the Windows 10 edition, like Windows Home or Pro, and the version number.

“Settings” is a very important and comprehensive part of Windows 10. In this article, we have only reviewed the first category, System; there are 12 more categories full of various of settings.



Computer peripheral manufacturers mention three mouse grip styles: palm grip, claw grip, and tip grip.

1. The palm style mimics holding the mouse like a doorknob. Most of the palm / finger surfaces are in contact with the mouse and most of the hand's weight lies on it. Mice built for palm grip are big, wide, have a “hump” on the back, and an area to rest the middle or ring finger.

2. The claw grip arches the hand -- only the fingertips and a small part of the palm contact the mouse. It takes less hand weight to "flick the mouse" making it easy to change the cursor's aim. The hump on the mouse back is smaller, and the mouse is smaller than one built for palm grip.

3. Tip grip is "all" fingertip. No part of the palm touches the mouse. It's faster and more agile than claw grip, but also more tiring. Making small adjustments on the screen such as photo edits, can be tough because the mouse moves so quickly. These are small, like "travel" mice. If not from overuse, pain often comes from using a mouse that, because of mis-sizing, requires an awkward grip or too much pressure to click.



So, what can be done to minimize problems?

1. Figure out your grip type and buy the right mouse for it. If you can, go to a store and "try" some mice. If that isn't practical, pay careful attention to the size on the description -- and its relationship to your hand size. Don't wait until you hurt to start using a mouse correctly or to find a mouse that fits your grip style.
2. When you're using a computer, keep the mouse a little above elbow height with your wrists relatively straight.
3. Take frequent breaks to avoid repetitive stress injuries. Also ... Trackball, vertical mice, trackpads, and even some mice shaped like larger pens are made. Consider how you use your mouse and, if you have pain, consider one of these options as well. There will be a learning curve ... and, yes, these do cost more. It could well be worth the savings on pain relievers.

Another alternative is the touch pad. There is a learning curve associated with this, but some find it more comfortable. Capacitive touch and other peculiarities of smartphones / tablets that make finger temperature or humidity a factor do not impact desktop or laptop touchpads. Worth a mention if you are looking for a new mouse – cordless is nice, but it is possible to have increased latency (time lag) between mouse movement and the time the cursor moves on the screen.

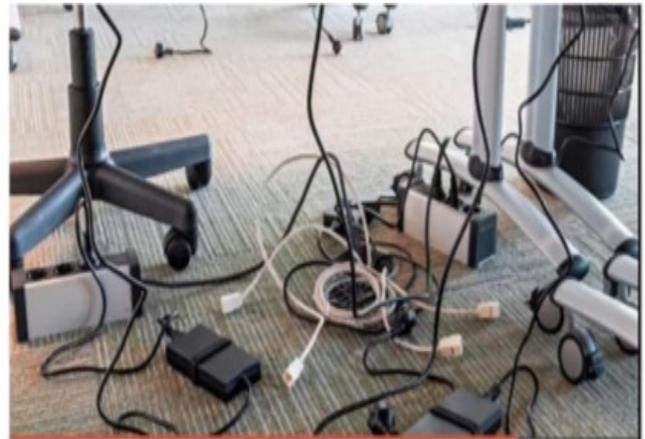
- Spending a bit more when buying a Bluetooth mouse can increase quality / decrease latency.
- Making sure your mouse battery is not depleted also helps performance. "Wired" mice take power from the host machine, so this is only a consideration with wireless mice. Most mice are now optical, meaning they use light rather than a ball for movement. They do not require a mouse pad (the old "ball" mice often did to ensure consistent surface) but can react differently when placed on more reflective surfaces. If your cursor seems to be "jumpy", try putting a clean sheet of paper under it to mute some of the reflection.

Mouse choice, as with all input devices (keyboards, microphones, etc.) is very personalized. Don't believe it when someone says, "anything works". It's your comfort that counts.

Making Your Tech "Fit" – Cords, Voice, Sound, and other hazards

By Debra Carlson, Technical Advisor,
CVC Computer Club, CO
Q4 2019 issue, Tech-Notes
cvc.computer.club (at) gmail.com

Cords – whether tripping or kicking (and disconnecting) them ...or getting the contents of your desktop lost in the shuffle ...cord / cable management is both a convenience and a safety issue.



Some basic principles:

- Label each Cord you plug into your outlets / surge devices.



Hint: When you get a new device, unplug the power cord from the device and attach the outlet end of the new device to this with a twist tie (or tape). Pull the old cord from the outlet end and it will fish your new cable to the surge strip or outlet.



Continued Page 11



If you have many peripherals intermittently connected to your machine (a couple of cameras, a scanner, an external drive), consider a cable management “toy” for that as well.

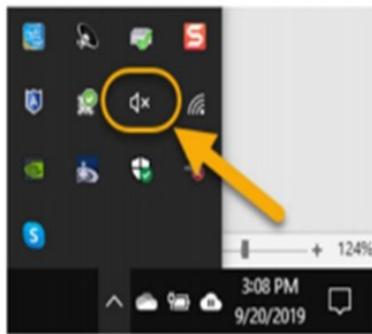
Your YouTube or other video may need either unmuting or volume adjustment (YouTube shown).

You may need to adjust the speaker volume AND the volume of the audio/video – setting both of them to maximum can interfere with sound clarity.

- Other hazards – UPS units and surge/power strips can be great, but may have on/off switches. Be sure your unit is not in a position where it can be easily kicked (or hit) – and shut off.
- This situation might not occur for you. However, all computing devices can over-heat. Have circulation space -- at least a couple inches each side on a tower, and if you have a laptop that lies flush on a desk, consider a cooling pad or other prop (I like bread cooling racks – right height and size).

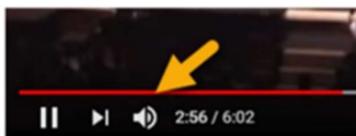
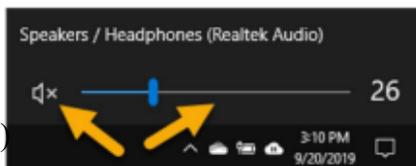
Voice – You may have a microphone built into your webcam (or the webcam in your laptop), part of a headset, or a separate microphone. Settings are most often tested in an app that uses the microphone (e.g. Skype). External units may connect to your machine by audio jack, USB cable or Bluetooth (wireless). Two things are important:

1. Train transcription software completely if you use it. It will help minimize errors in the text.
2. If you are using this for dictation, assume there are going to be errors! Check for them ... this will help avoid embarrassment over the messages you may send.



Sound – The biggest issues with speakers – USB, audio jack, Bluetooth, or Wi-Fi – is accidental muting. This may happen on the speaker – especially if the on/off switch is a button rather than a knob control OR ...

Your sound is muted (see the X next to, or on top of the megaphone)



If not muted, the volume may be too low.



Old program CDs make good drink coasters, wind chimes, or decorative hangings / picture frames. A couple ideas to make your desk area manageable and clear some clutter.

Making Your Tech “Fit” Tech and Your Eyes

By Debra Carlson, Technical Advisor,
CVC Computer Club, CO
Q1 issue 2019, Tech-Notes
cvc.computer.club (at) gmail.com

Words like “ergonomics” and “accessibility” fly around when talking about tech devices but what does that mean practically to the user?



First, a definition:

Ergonomics is an applied science concerned with designing and arranging things people use so that the people and things interact most efficiently and safely — called also biotechnology, human engineering, human factors.

www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/ergonomics

This quarter we’ll talk about how tech interacts with EYES.

COMFORT can be an important guide for dealing with eyes and tech.

1. Ambient lighting should complement light from the screen.

Lamps pointed directly at the screen cause reflection making it harder to see what is printed.

If you are typing from notes, however, it is important to have that document well-lit to prevent eye fatigue.

Avoid setting a monitor where it will get direct sunlight for the same reason.

2. Most monitors (*hardware*) and operating systems (*software that controls how interactions occur within various computing components like hardware or programs used to browse the internet or create documents*) have light level controls in addition to color and size settings. All monitors have at least, brightness and contrast controls. The OS (operating system) might have more granular controls, but the monitor itself is adjustable, though the user might have to RTFM.

Tempering the background color and complexity of any graphic that “shows through” your viewing windows will lessen the need for more lumens (*the amount of light*).



Sometimes changing to dark background and yellow or white print is less taxing to the eyes ... making it easier to see.

3. The position and angle of the monitor are important!

You might be surprised how much raising the monitor, or tipping it slightly, will improve screen visibility.

4. Some find “computer glasses” help arbitrate the distance to a monitor if using a desktop or laptop regularly ... and some find glare is cut (*particularly with cataracts*) by using “yellow lens” sunglasses .

Safety is assisted by comfort, but it is a **DISCIPLINE**.

Eyes, balance, circulation, joint health, and physical health in general benefit from:

1. Adjusting the monitor so you can see it easily. Perhaps getting a riser for it (*if you are taller*) so you will sit straight in the chair.
2. Look away from the screen often. When you look away from the screen, shake out your hands.
3. Plan to stand and walk regularly – some suggest every 10 minutes ... most at least every half hour.

Don't be afraid to experiment with screen resolution or font size. Just remember the following:

1. Before a change, take note of what it is you are having trouble seeing. Every solution makes "changes."

But making the *most efficient change* for your problem will be the most helpful.

It also makes it easier to "undo" if your needs evolve.

2. Make one change at a time and see if (or how well) it works for you.

This may seem pedantic, but it will assist you in knowing what part of the system, changed, helps you most.

3. Don't forget – color change can be as or more effective than size change in some circumstances.

4. Many programs have "options" or "preferences" that can be set to make viewing easier. Where these do not exist, third-party "extensions" can provide additional modifications not included by the developer.

Remember about using ZOOM to make individual pages larger or smaller when needed, rather than changing the entire machine unnecessarily. The zoom control is often found in the lower right-corner of the application window.



Freshly Squeezed Review Light Cubed By Frank Petrie <https://ympnow.com>



Several months ago I reviewed the benefits of Bias Lighting, not just for setting ambience but regarding taxing your retinas.

Lately, I have found myself being a creator of video not just a consumer. I've appeared on the occasional podcast (what were they thinking?) and created a short project for a film festival. Plus from time-to-time I video chat with my daughter on the other side of the continent and friends around the globe. (This is all that my Film degree has gotten me.)

For drone-fanatics you are probably already familiar with Lume Cube as not only do they manufacturer lighting for taking shots in a multitude of situations, they have recently released anti-collision lighting to apply to your drone when night shooting. But I was in the market for an inexpensive, versatile light to mount on my iMac for video conferencing and aforementioned activities. That's when I stumbled into the world of Lume Cube.

I already knew of lighting setups for TV and film work, and their myriad of benefits such as drastically reducing heat generated by the lighting (when recording an interview in a small room, a Tungsten light could turn said room into an oven extremely fast).

Lume Cube has many solutions for a vast number of situations from regular video conferencing, chatting on your mobile devices, to lighting for your drone shots and now The Strobe - Anti-collision Lighting For Drones. Plus there is an incredible amount of accessories for the amateur to the professional (honestly, a snoot for use with a light on your iPhone).

I purchased the Lume Cube Air VC Lighting Kit for Video Conferencing (for brevity, I'm going to refer to the Lume Cube Air VC as LCAVC) which I use for daily activities as well as for my short film projects. I'll base my review on that unit. (As

Lume Cube has an astonishing selection of devices and assortment of accessories, I enthusiastically suggest that you visit their site: www.lumecube.com

##The Good Let's begin with the packaging which has more of a 'Whoa' factor than anything Apple has produced. It's a simple white box, but it opens and closes in a unique fashion. Instead of sliding cardboard 'ears' into and out of slots, the box unfolds. How? The right side has a small piece of cloth which you pull on to release magnets imbedded in the cardboard and some metal in the body of the box. This keeps the box securely closed. It's ingenious. I've never seen anything like it.

Once opened, you'll find your LCAVC, a powerful suction cup mount, two diffusion bulbs, and a micro USB charging cable.

You use the suction cup to mount your LCAVC to any flat surface. For conferencing that most likely would be your computer, phone or tablet.

The brightness is incredible. You can adjust it by pairing it with their free iOS app, Lume-X, which will ask for access to both your camera and microphone. You also use it to register your light's serial number. This is handy in the event you should switch whatever your cube is mounted to so you can use their free app without constantly refilling your information. They offer both the iGizmo and the Android app.

The interface is very intuitive, allowing you to turn the cube or multiple cubes on and off, adjust the brightness, the duration of the flash for photography, giving you the amount of battery life left, and more. A very useful feature is you can switch to your selfie camera, allowing you to adjust the aim and brightness to your liking.

##The Bad I wish they had made the button on the cube itself more prominent (fortunately, you can turn the cube on/off with the app once you have turned it on via the cube). I don't have the greatest tactile sense, so locating and operating it without being able to see it (mine is mounted on my iMac) is difficult. The button also seemed somewhat wobbly.

The biggest problem that I found was mounting the cube to my iMac. Mounting it to a perfectly

flat surface such as my iPhone or iPad was a breeze as their backs are perfectly flat. But in the case of the iMacs latest form factor, there's an ever so slight curve. It took me repeated attempts and some seaman's lingo to get it to adhere to the back of the iMac. Regrettably, I ended up placing it where it would grip and not where I wanted it.

Another is their "gotcha" sales tactic when buying accessories. As an example, I wanted to buy barn doors for my cube. I paid and received them within several days. I unpacked them, went to mount them to my cube only to find that I couldn't without a special mounting bracket. I returned to their site to find that the mounting bracket was sold separately! The barn doors were only \$15. Coincidentally, so was the "AIR MODIFICATION FRAME" that I now had to purchase.

Why wouldn't you sell the two as a bundle as neither is functional without the other piece? You could nickel and dime yourself to death. (They do have kits but you wind up buying extra things that you may have no intent of ever using.)

Nowhere on the site did it mention that I needed the aforementioned bracket. I later found that they have entirely separate ecosystems for the LCAAV as opposed to their other similarly looking cube. It would have been nice if they had placed the two ecosystems on separate pages. (Be fair, there is a button on the home page, "SHOP THE KIT." But if you aren't sure what you need to fulfill your requirements, it's a crapshoot.)

##Conclusion I don't regret my purchase. The output of light is impressive. Regrettably, trying to mount to it the iMac wasn't a pleasant experience. (Is there a trick that I don't know?)

All the users in the promo shots seemed so happy!) If need be, I can gerry-rig it somehow if need be. Lume Cube has a vast assortment of products to choose from.



While I don't condone their business model, I definitely feel you should consider giving them a look and see if they have something that will fit your lighting needs. But pay close attention to the details.

Copyright © 2020

PATACS Information

Monthly Circulation: 75

PATACS, Inc. 201 S. Kensington St. Arlington VA 22204-1141

Club Information call: 703-370-7649 Web Site: www.patacs.org

President, Registered Agent, Internet Services..Paul Howard, 703-860-9246, [president\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:president(at)patacs.org)
1st Vice President:.....Ron Schmidt, 301-577-7899, [director11\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director11(at)patacs.org)
2nd Vice President, Membership Chair:.....Mel Mikosinski, 703-978-9158, [director4\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director4(at)patacs.org)
Secretary.....Jim Rhodes, 703-931-7854, [director7\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director7(at)patacs.org)
Treasurer:.....Roger Fujii, 703-426-5917 [treasurer\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:treasurer(at)patacs.org)
Director, Meeting Setup:.....Bill Walsh, 703-241-8141, [director14\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director14(at)patacs.org)
Director, APCUG Liaison:.....Gabe Goldberg, [director10\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:director10(at)patacs.org)
Vendor Liaison:.....Volunteer Needed
Directors: (<http://patacs.org/boardpat.html>).....Leti Labell, Melvyn Sachs, Charles Throneburg, Nick Wenri, Steven Wertime, Henry Winokur

Windows Support:..... Jim Brueggeman, 703-450-1384, [windows\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:windows(at)patacs.org)

Newsletter Editor:.....Kathy Perrin, [editor\(at\)patacs.org](mailto:editor(at)patacs.org)

Columnists:.....Volunteers Needed

Publicity.....Volunteer Needed

Posts is an official publication of the Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS), a Virginia membership corporation, a tax exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Contributions are gratefully received and tax deductible. We encourage our members to organize small topic-specific meetings at your choice of time/place. For further information or suggestions chat with any officer or director. Tech clubs often have Special Interest Groups (SIGs) on topics such as photography, Windows, Apple products/services, genealogy, financial applications, and much more. SIGs offer members the opportunity to find others with similar interests and increase knowledge in specific areas. We are very fortunate to have members with many skills they generously share.

OPCUG / PATACS Saturday Meetings

Meeting Information and Agenda

12:30 – Social time in Coffee Room and Annex

1:00 – 1:05: TA-1: Meeting Start –
 Introductions, Announcements

Please silence phones.

1:05 – 1:19: Q&A – detailed responses may be deferred to post-meeting communication.

1:20 – 1:50: 'Learn in 30' Presentation

1:50 – 2:00: Break in Coffee Room / Annex

2:00 – 3:20: Featured Presentation

3:20 – Door Prize Drawings (usually 3) for each group. Eligibility - group members only.

3:30 – Adjourn (Expect some flexibility in scheduled times. Order may be varied to accommodate scheduling needs of our valued presenters.)

In June and December, a PC Clinic / Tech Help session is run concurrently with the meeting from 1 PM in the Annex.

See: <https://www.patacs.org/clinicpat.html>

With the concurrence of presenters, meeting sessions are webcast using the Zoom.us cloud meeting service.

Dues-paid members may 'attend' from remote locations, using the meeting number information provided on the PATACS website.

Please see:
<https://www.patacs.org/mtgdetpat.html#3rdsat>

Need more information about Zoom?
 Contact: webinarhosts@patacs.org

PATACS, Inc.
 201 S. Kensington St.
 Arlington VA 22204-1141

First Class

AFFIX
 FIRST
 CLASS
 POSTAGE

TEMP-RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

March 2020 PATACS Event Calendar
 Call (703) 370-7649 for Meeting Announcements
 Visit Our Web Site: <http://www.patacs.org> Free Admission Bring a Friend!

Arlington: Carlin Hall Community Center
 X 5711 4th Street South
 xxxxxx 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 7-9 pm Arlington Program | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 15 | 16 7-9 pm Board Meeting Arlington | 17 | 18 7-9 pm Online Zoom Meeting | 19 | 20 | 21 12:30-3:30 Fairfax General Meeting |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 7-9 pm Arlington Tech & PC Help Desk | 26 | 27 | 28 May Newsletter Articles Due |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | | | |