

PATACS/OPCUG

**3rd Saturday, September 19
 1:00 P. M.-3:30 P. M.**

Exquisite DNA And Computers

Presented by Lorrin Garson



Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) is a substance essential for life. Surprisingly there is a link between DNA and computer technology. In fact there is a common topology between DNA, galaxies, flowers, sea creatures, plants and we humans. Several branches of the sciences and mathematics play a role in describing these common connections.

Learn in 30: By John Krout

John has been designing and printing annual month-per-page photo calendars at home using LibreOffice Impress, a Powerpoint clone, since 2012. He developed a calendar kit for quick preparation of calendar files. Recently he decided to release his 2021 calendar page files for your use, both in Impress ODP format and Powerpoint PPT format. This presentation will show you how to download the files, and customize the calendar pages by adding birthdays and other significant dates. Additionally, the calendar page files include blank pages on which you can place your photos.

PATACS Colleagues:

Our Society's chair for arranging program speakers for our 3rd Saturday joint meetings (and first Wednesday sessions) will be vacant October 1st, unless volunteers step forward.

These tasks can be divided among committee members:

- Solicit individuals to speak to our groups on technology, computers, and related topics often from referrals by other group members.

- Make contacts generally by email (templates available).

- Schedule speakers for open dates.

- Answer questions.

- Request title, presentation description, and bio information.

- Distribute contact information and materials to PATACS editor, webmaster, and meeting hosts,

- Maintain schedule spreadsheet.

- Send emails announcing meetings and topics to PATACS and OPCUG memberships,

- Email database maintained by membership chairs.

A package of more information is available, as is training and advice from incumbent.

Programs are vitally important for the success of our organization, please help with this critical activity!

Thanks,

Paul Howard

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Modern Television Technology
 By Jeff Wilkinson, President, Sun City
 Summerlin Computer Club, NV
 February 2020 issue, Gigabyte Gazette
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After a recent class on “Getting the Most From Your Roku” and in preparation for a March General Meeting update on “Cutting the Cord” I reflected on how different television viewing is today. Growing up in San Francisco my family had just a few choices for television viewing, all over the air, and received with an antenna either mounted on the roof or rabbit ears that sat on top of the huge console. I’m sure we all remember the gyrations we went through when using rabbit ears in an attempt to receive a stable snow and ghost-free picture! And, of course, the drudgery of walking over to the TV to manually change the channel.



How times have changed; now we change channels from our favorite viewing spot and control source, volume, channel, and even record our favorite shows!

Today, we watch TV on smartphones, tablets, computers, and television sets in various resolutions. We stream to TVs using different devices like Roku, Fire TV Stick, and Android boxes and we do it in a multitude of formats.

Many years and millions of dollars have been spent to build a streaming infrastructure capable of on-demand and live streaming to a myriad of different devices and configurations. The internet wasn’t set up to do this – top quality video in such a large scale - according to streaming media consultant and expert [Dan Rayburn](#). Streaming isn’t a static medium like TV, and our on-demand consumption pattern requires video to travel through lots of steps as it’s formatted for the final destination device.



If you look at some of the parts of the required process of streaming a live event, it is a complicated and involved process. First, you must capture the event, then convert the file format and maybe add a content protection scheme or ad insertion for on-demand revenue models and, finally, formatting for delivery through the internet to a multitude of devices.



According to Mr. Rayburn, it's a lot more complicated. There's no standard for encoding, so video files need to be "wrapped" differently for every platform they're delivered to; files are wrapped differently for [Roku](#) than they are for a desktop browser, a smart TV, or an Android or iOS device. A single video file could be wrapped 20 times or



more depending on the devices to which it's being delivered. Enjoying video on a powerful computational device such as an Xbox or PlayStation is different than streaming to a device with less memory and computational power such as a Fire Stick. The size of the video

file segments must be adjusted as well as the metadata payload. And we have begun to take for granted that the video we desire will be available in 720, 1080p, or even 4K quickly and reliably when and where we want it.

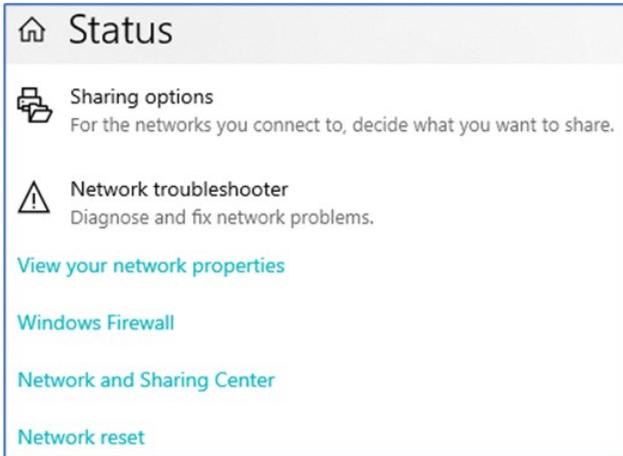
Video streaming is a whole new frontier to be developed and as the deployment of streaming options continually expands, so must the technology and computing power needed to reliably deliver it.

This is just a little background as to what is involved in streaming content as we all anxiously look for ways to improve our television viewing experience.



Recover Your Wi-Fi Password

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician,
 Sun City Summerlin Computer Club
 Gigabyte Gazette Newsletter
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 dkretch (at) gmail.com



Computer users often seek technical support when they are unable to access the Internet via their home wireless system.

First, the technician will usually walk the user through the reset procedure for the router or router/modem (turn it off and on). If that does not fix the problem and it is determined the router is putting out a good signal, the subsequent conversation often goes something like this:

Technician: What is your password for your router?

User: I don't have a password.

Technician: If your router is not secured (i.e. password protected) you should be able to connect to it.

User: I don't have a password. I just click on the Google (or another browser) icon and get online.

At this point, the Technician explains to User that the Wi-Fi password is stored on User's computer and that a few steps are required to access that password. The technician might guide the user through a process to recover the password using the following procedure.

If the computer connects to the Wi-Fi automatically, with the latest version of Windows 10, Microsoft has buried the Wi-Fi password on a computer more deeply than with prior versions of word. You can still find your Wi-Fi password using the following procedure:

Locate the "Wireless Properties"

Right-click on the Internet access icon on the right side of your Taskbar then click on "Open Network and Internet Settings." Click on "Status" then click on "Network and Sharing Center."

Under "Internet" click on your network name (in blue) then click on "Wireless Properties."

Under "security" you can see the hidden password after you click on "show characters."

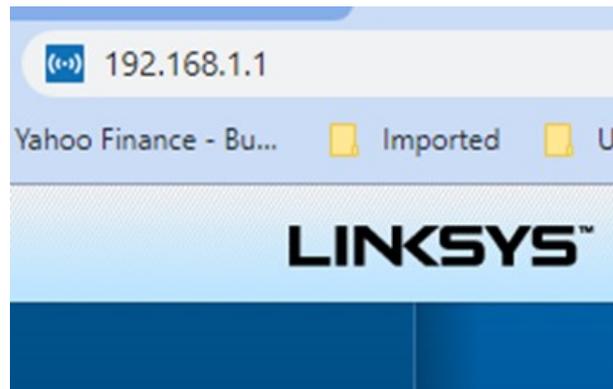
If you only own a smartphone/tablet or have a PC which has not stored the Wi-Fi password

Log in to your router as an administrator. You can access your router by entering its IP address into your browser, such as Google Chrome or Microsoft Edge. You can research the default IP address of your router by Googling "IP address [brand name of your router]. Every router I've dealt with had an address of "192.168.X.Y." The most common value for both X and Y is the number 1. If that does not work, try substituting the numbers 0 or 2 for X.

After you've logged in, you should be able to find the Wi-Fi settings on the Administrative pages of your router. There you can look up your Wi-Fi password.

If you are like many people: The Wi-Fi password is written on a sticker on the back of your router. This is how I usually set up home routers and it might be a good thing to do after you have recovered your Wi-Fi password.

This is a simple but effective strategy since it is so easy to find. A burglar would have to break into your home to steal your password, and they probably would focus on more tangible items.



Do Your Glasses Fog Up When You Wear A PPE Mask?

Here Is One Solution

By John Krout, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS)

Illustration 1



The pandemic has persisted through warm weather, so masks will likely be our fate in public for months to come.

I ran into a classic problem: when I wear a mask, for instance when I go shopping, my exhalation fogged up the inside surfaces of my glasses, meaning the side facing my eyes.

I researched solutions for that problem online. The only one I found was to coat the glasses with soap. I

do not like soap on my glasses, since I can see a distracting rainbow pattern in the soap film. I also have an aversion to putting soap near my eyes.

So I tried something else. There is an anti-fog product called RainX for interior glass, such as the inside of windshields. I bought it initially for my windshield.

When I experienced the problem while wearing a PPE mask, I tried it on my glasses. It works. On my glasses, RainX lasts roughly 24 hours, so long as I do not try to clean the inside of each lens.

RainX is available in 3.5 oz and 7 oz bottles, and larger sizes too. I put a small amount on a clean cloth and then wipe that onto the **inside** of each

lens of my glasses. I am fairly sure the 3.5oz bottle will last at least six months when used say twice per week. You can see the 3.5oz bottle in Illustration 1.

RainX is sold at automobile supply stores. Also it is available online. On Amazon in August 2020, I found a 3.5 oz bottle for less than \$5.

When I looked online, I found that some RainX products are specifically intended for use on plastic. I use a bottle that is intended for glass, though the lenses of my glasses are made of polycarbonate, and the glass version works quite well.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR: John Krout has been an avid amateur photographer since the mid-1960s and is very sensitive to any problem impeding his vision. He won a first prize and a second prize in the 2018 digital photography contest of the Association of Personal Computer User Groups (APCUG), and has won blue ribbons in the photo contests of the Virginia State Fair and the Delaware State Fair, as well as two Grand Prizes, and one Reserve Grand Prize (fairspeak for second best overall), various section champions, and many blue ribbons in the photo contest of the Arlington, Virginia County Fair.



THE WINDOWS 10 BUILT-IN APPLICATION VIDEO RECORDING FEATURE

Part 1 of a 2-part article series
 By John Krout, Potomac Area Technology and Computer Society (PATACS)

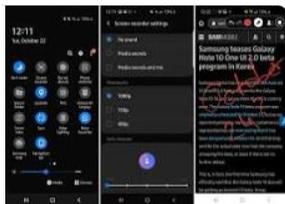
There are many ways you can use this feature, including recording Zoom meetings for personal use



INTRODUCTION During the August 2020 joint virtual meeting of PATACS and OPCUG, the PC users group of the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at George Mason University, I learned that Windows 10 has a built-in capability to record screen activity, including video and sound. It turns out that the Windows built-in recording capability is limited to recording one application at a time, such as a game, a Web browser or the Zoom application.



This built-in capability is important during the pandemic, because it can allow you to record a virtual meeting in which you participate, possibly via Zoom, Skype, or any of the other available applications for computer teleconferencing. A local recording lets you review the teleconference immediately afterward, without use of the internet, and review it repeatedly if you wish.



I have tested this Windows built-in recording feature only with the Zoom application. In short, it works.

Since so many of us have become familiar with teleconferences, I suspect the popularity will continue after the current pandemic is history. So screen video recording will continue.

The Zoom application for Windows and Macintosh provides limited recording capability, but *only for the Zoom account holder who uses the Zoom app to initiate or join a meeting*, and for certain participants permitted to do so by the account holder. PATACS does post video recordings of its Zoom teleconference meetings on its Web site for members to review, but that posting does not happen instantly.

So this info may be especially welcome for anyone who wants to record a Zoom meeting or webinar on a Windows 10 computer while acting as a participant, making the recording immediately available to themselves. You can use a recording to verify and make notes of the detailed information provided during the meeting, review step-by-step demonstrations many times if necessary, and refresh your recollection as frequently or infrequently as you might personally require.

I decided to look into it. I have been working with video editing on Windows computers since 2004, and more recently with video recording of screen activity and sound since about 2014. For editing, I have been using the Vegas suite of video editor applications, formerly published by Sony and now by Magix. For screen activity recording, I have been using the free OBS Studio application.

I wanted to see how the Windows 10 built-in application recording feature compares to



OBS Studio. In particular, I wanted to test it with Zoom teleconferences, to confirm that the built-in recording activity can indeed capture all video and audio delivered by Zoom.

In this Part 1 article, you will learn how to use The Windows 10 built-in application video

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recording feature to create screen video recordings on your Windows 10 drive C:.



ORIGINS IN THE GAME-PLAYING CULTURE

It is important to recognize that just about all computer video recording options now

available have origins in the game-playing culture, specifically with game console users. Xbox, PlayStation, Nintendo, and so forth were the first to demand recording capability, and later streaming capability. The reason was that game players love to record and stream their own play, simply to document their own discoveries of game shortcuts and solutions.

The first developments were external recording devices, peripheral add-ons containing hard drive or flash memory. Typically these devices connected to an HDMI output port of a game console, the port designed for connecting a game console to a flat-screen HDTV. Some recording devices buffered the video during the recording process, often running ten seconds or more behind the game activity on the game console.

When it became possible on the Internet to *stream* live video, for live viewing by others, some game players chose to stream demos of their successes, via Twitch or other streaming sites. The recording systems offered a pass-through for that purpose, so that the HDMI input to the recording system was converted to USB and then could be fed to a personal computer for transmission to Twitch. The buffering



behavior continued, so that the stream ran many seconds behind the game activity on the game console. Of course, some gamer players use Windows 10 computers as a game console, and that is what led Microsoft to include the application activity recording capability in Windows 10.

Note that all of that streaming experience was typically one-way transmission, with no real-time feedback from the streaming audience. The streaming audience does not know or care about the delay.

Why do I emphasize that delay? Teleconferencing needs are quite different from game demos. Delays of a second or more when communicating with Zoom make it far less comfortable to pose a question or hold a conversation. So a primary consideration when recording a Zoom teleconference is to avoid slowdowns imposed that impact Zoom by recording on your computer .

RECORDINGS OF PROBLEMS

There is another good reason to know how to use the Windows application video recording feature: if you experience any sort of repeatable application problem while using Windows 10 or a computer application, then you can make a video recording of how to force an occurrence of how to force an occurrence of that problem, and send the video recording to the application publisher or to Microsoft.

RECORDINGS AS TEACHING TOOLS

Another use of application video recording is to create an application demo to share with others. You can share a demo video either on YouTube or another web site, or by copying the demo to DVD-ROMs for physical distribution.

VIDEO FILE SIZE IS AN ISSUE

Video recordings are very bulky files and grow quickly, especially in these days of 1080p resolution video conferencing. Even a recording using MP4 compression can take up many gigabytes, and involve considerable use of your computer's resources, including CPU, memory and hard drive.

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There are steps you can and should take to avoid slowdowns that impact your use of Zoom while recording, and those steps will be outlined later in this article series.

Also I will provide a couple of ways to reduce the bulk of that video recording.

Size reduction allows you to store more recordings on a hard drive.

Also, size reduction enables you to send a video recording via email or a Web-based file transfer service such as WeTransfer.com.

HOW TO GET STARTED IN WINDOWS 10

Windows 10 provides a screen video recording console bar. The keystroke that reveals the controls is Windows key + G. Below I will refer to that keystroke combination as Win+G.

That keystroke combo is easy for game players to remember, and the first of some obvious clues that Microsoft had game players in mind when including this recording feature. That console bar is depicted in Illustration 1.

One of the amusing aspects of the console bar is that it incorporates the Xbox logo on the left, another hint that game players are welcome.

Three of the console buttons, Audio, Capture, and Performance, cause useful windows to appear. I will concentrate on the most important, which is the Capture window. In the console shown in Illustration 1, click on the circled button to make the Capture window appear.

Illustration 1

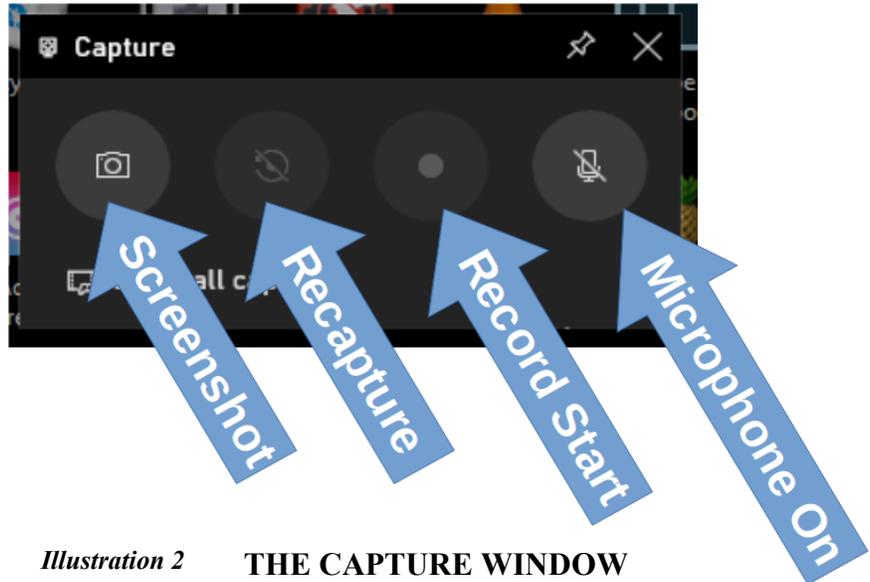
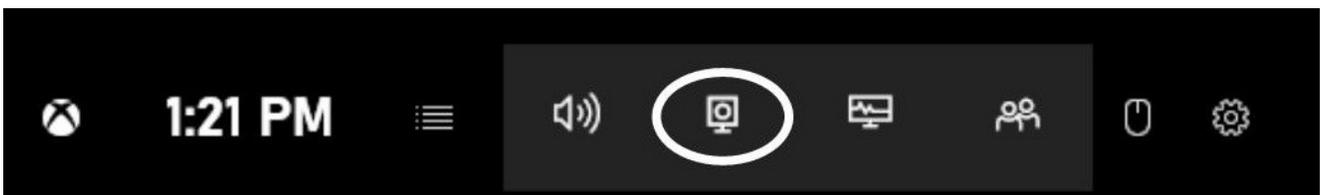


Illustration 2

THE CAPTURE WINDOW

The Capture window, depicted in **Illustration 2 (above)**, includes the Start button for video recording. If you want to use the screen recording capability, then this is the place to start.

The window includes four buttons, which I have identified in illustration 2. From left to right, the **Screen Snapshot** button enables you to capture a still image of the screen. The **Recapture** button captures the last 30 seconds of screen activity, and is inactive (ghosted) initially. This implies that the recording feature continually buffers that most recent 30 seconds of screen activity. The **Record** button does what you might guess, begin recording to your hard drive or SSD. Please note: in this illustration, the Record button is inactive, so clicking on it does not start recording. I will explain why below. When the button is active, the circle in its center will be bright white. The **Microphone** button allows you to add your own local microphone to the recording, and is primarily intended for recording your commentary while you demonstrate your game playing technique. As depicted in Illustration 2, the microphone is turned OFF

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Illustration 3

because it has that diagonal line through it. If you click on that button, then the diagonal line disappears and microphone audio is included in the video recording file. However, that Microphone button plays a critical role in Zoom teleconference video recordings, which I will explain below.

In the feature Settings, available by clicking on the far-right gear button in the Console window, I found some keystroke equivalents for the Capture window buttons. Some of the Capture window buttons have keystroke equivalents:

SCREEN SNAPSHOT: Win+ALT+PrtScr

VIDEO RECORD/STOP: Win+ALT+R

MICROPHONE ON/OFF: Win+ALT+M



When I first attempted to record screen video, using the keystroke above, a second window popped up, saying Gaming Features Not Available. That window also gave me the option of enabling the feature, which I did not do.

I tried it again, a few seconds later, and recording began, revealing a small bar with a timing clock running, and a Stop button.

You can see that in **Illustration 3 (above)**. When you see that bar, you are definitely recording. Obviously the feature was enabled at that point. I

captured 60 seconds of screen video, and then clicked on the Stop button.

WHERE DOES THE RECORDING FILE GET STORED?

The default location is a newly created sub-folder of the Videos folder for my Windows account. I found it in C:\Users\jkrou\Videos\Captures. The Captures folder was newly created by my first use of the recording feature. The video file name began with the name of the active application I was using during the recording, WordPad, on which I typed one of the paragraph above.

When I viewed the video recording, I found that the recording literally showed me typing that paragraph of this article in WordPad.

MORE OBSERVATIONS AND PROBLEM SOLVING

First, if no application is active at the moment you tap Win+G, then nothing can be recorded, and the recording button shown in Illustration 2 is inactive. At least one app must be active, meaning the application window is visible on the screen, not iconized, and you have clicked on that window, so that the application receives your keystrokes and other actions.

In short, this Win+G feature records one application, not the entire screen. OBS Studio can record the entire screen, and the activity of multiple applications if desired.

Second, Win+G seems very finicky about the conditions that enable (unghost) the Recording Start button. Here's what I found. Not only must you click on the window of the active application to be recorded, but **your mouse pointer must remain on that active application window when you tap Win+G**. Without doing that, the Start button is never active.

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One easy way to ensure that mouse position is to make your application's active window full-screen before you tap Win+G. When you tap Win+G, the Console bar appears superimposed over the top edge of the active application, along with the Capture window. However, full-screen also guarantees that your recording file will be maximum resolution and grow very quickly.

Third, when you are or might be a speaking participant in a Zoom teleconference, in order to record your own voice, *you must activate the microphone using the button shown in Illustration 2*. I thought perhaps Zoom would transmit my own voice from its servers back to my Zoom application, making the use of that recording console button irrelevant.

To find out, I did a WIN+G recording test during a Zoom teleconference, with the recording console button turned OFF. I played the recording later and found out that *the video recording did not capture my own voice*. So now I know Zoom does not transmit my own voice back to my Zoom application.

I did a second WIN+G recording test during the monthly PATACS Zoom problem solving meeting on August 26, 2020, with the recording console button turned ON. That video recording did include my own voice.

If you access Zoom using a web browser, remember to click on the Zoom meeting window, and leave your mouse on that window, when you tap WIN+G to open the recording console.

This ends Part 1 of this article series. So far, you have enough info about the Windows 10 screen recording feature to begin making screen video recordings yourself.

In Part 2, you will learn how to estimate file size, and how to minimize impact on drive C: while recording screen video.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: See page 4.

President's Corner

Lessons from the Lockdown - Tech and Other Observations While in Captivity

By Greg Skalka, President,
Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA-
May 2020 issue, Drive Light

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I don't have an Apple device for FaceTime and have not used Skype much recently outside of work. I have used Zoom a lot. I've attended Zoom seminars, like APCUG's VTCs (Virtual Technology Conferences) and other meetings where there is mostly a one-way transmission of information, perhaps with questions and answers. I conducted our last UCHUG meeting on Zoom, which was mostly presentations, but with an open forum "Random Access" session at the end.

I've also run or participated in other Zoom meetings that were held more like a group discussion. Our last two board meetings were held in this way and worked nearly as well as in-person (no snacks or drinks, however, unless you BYO). I've had many Zooms with friends and family; it works great when you can't physically get together. My extended local (Southern California) family always gets together for Easter dinner. This year we had to eat separately, but most of us got together on Zoom in the afternoon. It wasn't the same as sharing holiday food and drink together, but it was much better than having no connection at all.



Zoom works on most tech devices that can connect to the Internet, but some work better than others. As with most online activities, the experience is better with faster connection speeds and more processing power. I've connected with my smartphone, Chromebook, laptop, and desktop. A smartphone works, but the small screen limits what you can see. A tablet is a little better but similar. Chromebooks work pretty well, as do laptops. A camera and microphone are essential if you want to participate fully. For the best experience, use headphones or earbuds, rather than speakers, and a headset (headphones with a mic) rather than a device's built-in mic if possible. My gold standard for Zoom equipment is now a Win10 desktop with a big monitor (or duals), an external HD webcam, and a gamer headset.

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Tech to Stay Alive - Internet services can help in many ways to keep up life's normal activities while restricted to home. A lot of things can be done online or ordered to be delivered, eliminating the risks of going out. Online banking and bill payment allow most financial transactions to be done from your computer or phone. Many institutions will even allow deposits of paper checks through a photo on your phone's banking app. You can get cash from ATMs (remember to bring a sanitizing wipe for the keyboard), but if you are not going out much, you probably don't need much cash anyway.

Online ordering and delivery services can help keep your household supplied with food and essentials, but they are not without issues. Most everyone used Amazon before COVID, but now, with greater demand and fulfillment also affected by the virus, many online deliveries are getting delayed. I've found items can be out of stock online while store shelves are full. I've been trying to buy some bar soap I like from Walmart.com but it has not been in stock since the crisis. I finally went to the Poway Walmart store yesterday and found it was readily available there.

Grocery delivery is something Amazon and others have been trying to bring into the mainstream for a while, and COVID-19 might help, though it seems the execution is still poor. I'm in the camp

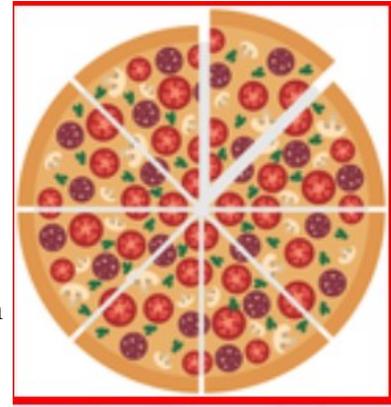


that wants to pick out my own produce, thank you, and so I don't have any interest in online groceries beyond packaged goods. My wife feels the same but has much greater concerns about going out to stores, and at the beginning of the pandemic she tried for weeks to place an order through Amazon Fresh.

Fortunately this delay has been resolved. She has had much better luck ordering online from Target and getting curbside pickup.

Some restaurants are still closed for dining, although some have outdoor dining, and a few have inside dining. Also, some have stayed open for take-out and delivery. I have read that the delivery services are costly to the restaurants, so I

won't use them. My wife and I have ordered meals for pick-up a few times since the lockdown, but I am generally dissatisfied with the experience. I don't mind picking up In-N-Out or a pizza, as these places



make take-out their business and their prices keep that in mind. I find take-out from normal sit-down restaurants to be expensive for so-so food. I'm more willing to pay \$10-\$12 for a sit-down burger as a significant part of the value is in the experience of going out. Having the same food in a box at home (perhaps cold or missing something) is not worth it to me at the normal menu price.

Unless you filed early, you probably didn't get your tax returns in before the restrictions hit. My daughter had an appointment with a tax preparer for after the lockdown that she canceled. Fortunately, all of us late-filers caught a few breaks.

The Federal and most state deadlines for filing and paying have been extended to July 15. Except for those very few with complex tax situations, almost everyone can fill out their returns online or through a tax program like Turbo Tax and file without involving anyone else. I'm using Turbo Tax again as usual, but without a near-term deadline, I've put off completing mine.

Shortages - We have all seen or experienced the shortages in some items since the pandemic. Toilet paper, water, gloves, cleaning supplies, and masks have been in short supply and are still often rationed in stores when in stock. A few other more unusual shortage items I have seen or heard about are laptops and USB webcams. I was fortunate enough to buy a new laptop in January for the prior, now insignificant crisis of Windows 7 expiring. I've heard that companies buying up laptops to supply their employees now working from home have created a shortage. I expect the same thing has happened to Chromebooks (especially the lower-cost models) and other items useful for remote learning since the schools closed.

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I bought a new desktop PC for my mom to move her to Windows 10 in January. I wish I'd thought to buy her a webcam then. Since the COVID crisis, I've tried to get one for her, so she could more easily participate in family Zoom meetings. With everyone trying to videoconference, they are now out of stock.



Hoarding is Not Always a Bad Thing - It is reported that a lot of the shortages we have experienced recently were caused by hoarding, where some people bought up large quantities of certain items, far more than for their immediate needs. Some were probably hoping to turn

around and sell some at a profit due to the self-created shortage, but fortunately, price gouging laws, purchase limits, and strict return policies have limited these bad hoarders.

My wife calls me a hoarder, which is perhaps not totally inaccurate, though I don't rise to the level of things you might see on TV. I like to get full utilization out of the items I buy; value is usually the most important thing to me. I have lots of older tech gear, spare parts, and speculative items I got at very low prices. When we found we would have to move our group's meetings to Zoom, I was able to find in my stockpile two old Microsoft webcams I had kept from 2009 and 2012. They had no problems being recognized by Windows 10 and still work great, allowing the desktop PCs my wife and I use to work well with Zoom. If I'd not saved them, I'd be scrambling now to find some webcams at any price.

I also have a garage full of extra fasteners (screws, nuts, etc.), leftover paint, wire, pipe, and spare lumber from prior projects. These supplies have allowed me to fix a few things and complete some household projects without making additional and possibly risky visits to Home Depot,



PC parts

Price Gouging - I've always been suspicious of Amazon's pricing. It would be easy for them to show different pricing to different customers, determined by Amazon's perception of their likelihood to pay more. I have seen small price changes in items I have bought multiple times, but recently I've seen a 45% increase for one item.



While California's legal definition of price gouging includes only "essential" consumer goods and services, it still stings when you see a big price increase on something you really could use.

When we started our planning for conducting Zoom meetings, I decided I wanted a better headset (headphones with microphone) and bought a NUBWO gamer headset with a noise-canceling mic for \$29 on Amazon. I made the mistake of showing it to my wife, who preferred it to her speakers and the mic in her webcam. I gave it to her and figured I'd just order another for myself but found the price for the same item had gone up to \$38 in about a week. I refuse to be gouged, so we have to share the one headset. I keep looking at it online, but it is now up to \$42.



Old Folks Get Some Perks - No one likes being called old, except when stores provide senior-only shopping hours and priority entrance for seniors. I'm just barely into the age group considered at greater risk for COVID-19, and so am happy to go right in while others wait in line to enter Costco. I've yet to take advantage of senior's hours as they are typically while I'm at work.



What I'm Doing More of - and Less of - I'm doing a lot less shopping, both in-person (to decrease exposure risk) and online (why wait

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two weeks for things). I used to enjoy “recreational” shopping at Costco and Fry’s - can’t do that anymore. I routinely delete all the Fry’s ads and Groupon and Living Social emails I get; I’m not buying any experiences if I’m not sure when I’ll be able to use them. I miss going out to eat and seeing family and friends. Zoom helps a lot, so I’m doing a lot more of that. I have a Chromebit (a Chrome OS stick computer) plugged into one of the HDMI inputs on our main TV, and I use it a lot more now (we watch our local Sunday Mass broadcast over YouTube on it).

Though I still go to work, we are now on ten-hour days so I’m driving a lot less. I’m stuck in less traffic and spend less time in line to buy cheaper gas. I have been driving more from San Diego to Orange County, however. Every few weeks I’ve been delivering batches of meals my wife has made to my parents there, so they don’t have to leave the house as much. Though my evenings are typically free (nothing is open late anymore), I’m not spending more time on the computer or with the TV. After a long day at work or at home trying to catch up, I’m beat.

Bad Things Don’t Stop Happening Just Because You’re in Lockdown

- Dealing with life’s problems can be difficult in the best of times. During a pandemic, everything gets harder. People may be deferring maintenance or repairs until after COVID; hopefully, a catastrophic failure won’t occur. We discovered in the big day of rain we had a couple of weeks ago that we have a roof leak, but we will hold off on repairs, hoping social distancing ends before the next rainy season begins.



My wife had a crown fall out not long after the stay at home orders were put in place. Our dentist had closed his office to normal work but agreed to come in to deal with this emergency situation. I’ve had several recent medical appointments, including my annual physical, canceled, and

rescheduled due to the coronavirus. I have a friend with cancer who is having to weigh the risks between having surgery now during a pandemic and holding off on treatment of a cancer that appears to be slowly growing. One of our members had a death in the family a few weeks ago; my heart goes out to them in having to deal with this tragedy in tragic times.

Life Still Goes On, So the Show Must Go On -



With everyone under restrictions, life must still go on, in as normal a manner as is possible under the circumstances. Though we must be isolated, the needs of life must still be met. Food must still be obtained, bills paid, laundry done, and houses cleaned. We are seeing that our tech devices like smartphones and computers, along with connections to the Internet, are our lifelines. They help us get the news, order our food, manage our finances, apply for unemployment, and communicate with others. Keeping those lifelines in place is important. There are still backups to be made, scams to be avoided, and devices to be maintained and recharged.

Though we all will have our own issues, with luck we can keep our group going through this pandemic. It may be some time before we can meet again at Wesley Palms (if ever, perhaps). With only a month to go, it is unlikely we will have a physical member picnic. Even the fate of our December party looks hazy. Having our newsletter arrive in the inbox, and at least getting together virtually on Zoom can help things seem somewhat normal. Now more than ever, we probably need that social connection

There will still be new tech items to be understood, computer problems to be solved, presentations to be given, questions to be answered, broken things to be fixed or replaced, scams to be warned about and software bugs to be debugged. Hopefully, our group can survive COVID-19 and continue to provide useful benefits to our members and the public. Our tech is based on microelectronics; I’d hate to see UCHUG become another casualty of this microorganism.

Video Chatting Apps

Skype, Facebook Messenger, and Others

By Tom Burt, Vice-President, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club

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SOCIAL DISTANCING



Maintain a distance of at least six feet or two meters between each other.

While practicing “social distancing,” I got interested in ways to use video chatting to have face-to-face interaction with friends, family, and potentially with doctors (telemedicine) and

or macOS). High on the list was **Facebook Messenger** for smartphones, tablets, and computers. Also high was **Microsoft Skype** for smartphones, computers, tablets, smartwatches, and Xbox One. Two others of interest are **Zoom** and **Webex**. All of these have free versions as well as higher-end paid versions. There are links to the details of these in the articles referenced above.

Most video chatting services mediate the connections through dedicated web-based servers that can handle thousands of simultaneous connections. As a user, you set up an account with that service. Your login ID also serves as the “handle” to which other video callers connect. For instance, on Facebook Messenger, you use your existing Facebook ID, and on Skype you use your existing Microsoft ID. You can easily create accounts if you don’t already have them.

that led to this article. **Video chatting** is a real-time video/audio conversation between two or more parties connected via the Internet. They use your device’s webcam, microphone, and speaker to create a virtual face-to-face interaction between you one or more other connected parties. These connections can be full audio and video, audio-only, or even just text messaging, depending on what hardware features are available.



Some of the video chatting apps are implemented as web browser extensions. Others, including Skype and Facebook Messenger, have standalone client apps that run on your desktop.

What Hardware Do You Need?

Aside from some kind of computing device (smartphone, tablet, PC, Xbox) with a video display, the key requirements are a **webcam**, **microphone**, and **speakers** connected to or built into the computing device. Laptop PCs, all-in-one PCs, tablets, and smartphones normally have these built-in and also have the proper hardware drivers installed by the manufacturer. On desktop tower PCs the webcam, speakers, and microphone are usually separate add-ons. In all cases, it’s important to have the latest hardware drivers for your webcam, speakers, and microphone.



We’ll start with an overview of some of the major video chatting apps and services and then delve into Facebook Messenger and Microsoft Skype in more detail to illustrate how it’s done.

Video Chatting Apps Overview

I found a couple of good articles describing the best free video chatting apps:

<https://parade.com/1010666/jessicasager/best-video-chatting-apps/>

<https://www.cnet.com/news/7-free-video-chat-apps-to-use-if-youre-social-distancing/>

At the top of the list was Apple’s **FaceTime**, which works for Mac and iOS devices, but not Android or Windows. The second was Facebook’s **WhatsApp** for Android and iOS devices (but not for Windows

Facebook Messenger

Facebook Messenger is available on Windows, macOS, Android, and iOS. It also can run via a web browser. For Windows, I recommend getting the free Facebook Messenger app from the Microsoft Store. Once it’s installed, you can just launch it from the Start menu or a desktop icon. The first time you start it, you can configure and test your webcam, microphone, and speakers. It then asks you to

Continued Page 14

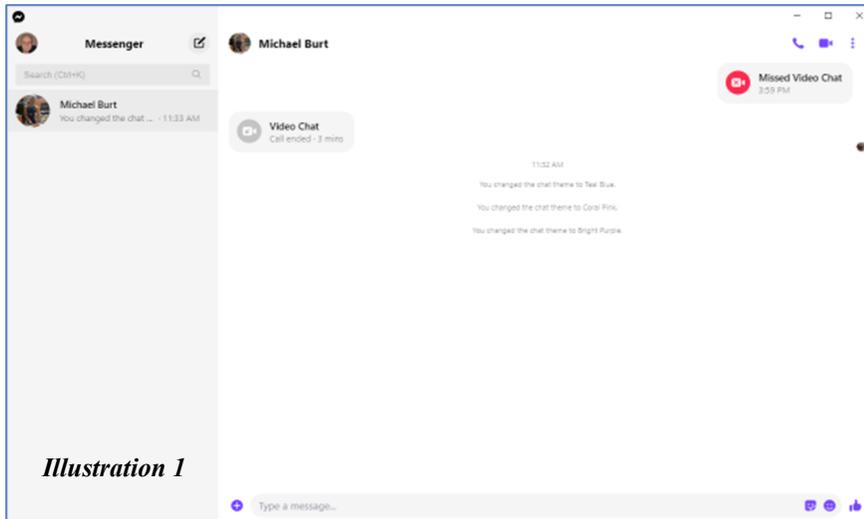


Illustration 1

login using your Facebook ID (**Facebook Messenger Windows App Main Screen (Illustration 1 above)**)

Once you're logged in, you can search for other Facebook users (family, friends, business associates), select one and then click an icon in the upper right to initiate a video or an audio call to that person. If the other party accepts your call, the screen will show what the other party's webcam is showing along with a small image of what your webcam is showing them. This helps you stay "on camera" during the chat. When you're done, you can click an "end call" icon to close the connection.

Microsoft Skype

Skype is available on Windows 7, 8.1, and 10, Android, iOS, and the Xbox game console. It is a built-in app on Windows 10 and is updated automatically via Windows update. You can download it from the Microsoft download site as well as the Android and Apple app stores.

When you launch Skype, it will first walk you through configuring your webcam, microphone, and speakers. You can then log in

using your Microsoft ID and password. Once logged in, you can search for other Skype users or type in the Skype ID of a user. (**Illustration 2 below**)

Then you can initiate a video or an audio call by clicking the icons at the upper right or you can type text messages.

Microsoft Skype Windows App Main Screen

If the party you're calling accepts the call, the screen will display what their webcam is

seeing along with a small image of what your webcam is seeing. When you're done, you can click an "end call" icon to close the connection.

Final Thoughts

As you can see, the Facebook Messenger and Skype desktop apps for Windows are very similar in layout and behavior. There's a lot I haven't touched on – especially chats involving more than two participants. You will probably have a better experience if your desktop device is using a wired Ethernet connection, but a strong WiFi signal should also be okay. The video chat is definitely more engaging with a large screen that you don't have to hold.

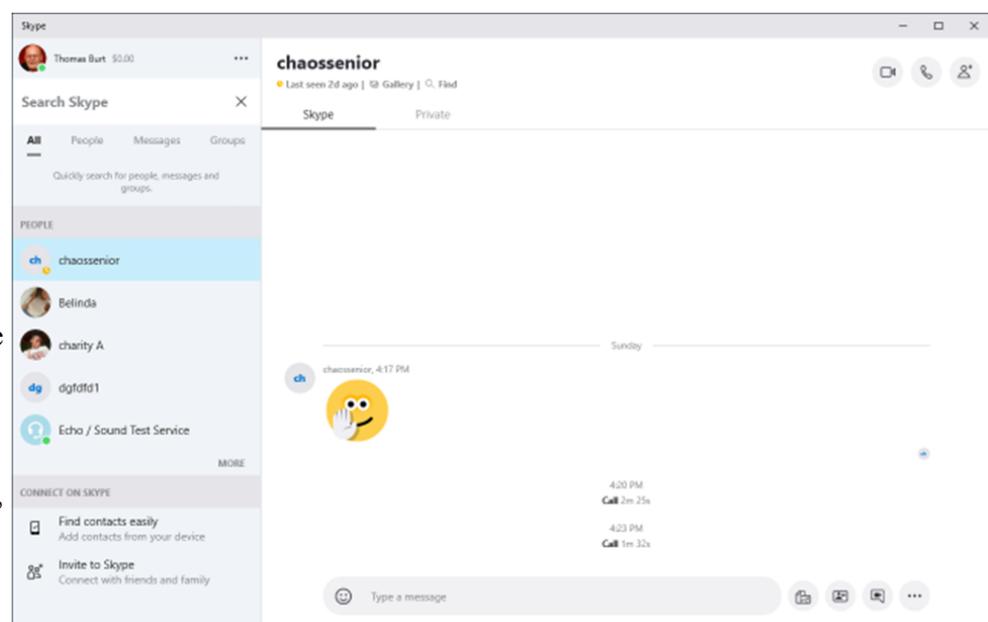


Illustration 2

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OPCUG / PATACS Saturday Meetings

In person meetings are not currently being held due to COVID-19.
Join us on ZOOM.

1:000 – 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 1 or 2 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.)

Meeting Information and Agenda

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

See: <https://.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

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September 2020 PATACS Event Calendar
 Call (703) 370-7649 for Meeting Announcements

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2 7-9pm Online Program By Zoom	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 7-9pm Online Program By Zoom	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 1-3:30pm General Meeting By Zoom
20	21 7-9pm Board Meeting By Zoom	22	23 7-9pm Tech&PC Help Desk By Zoom	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			