

July 9 , 2014, 7:00 pm

Jim Hurley

No-Host Dinner in Bistro begins at 5:45

July Musings from Your President by Brad Youngman

I will start this month's Musings with a copy of an email I recently sent to another group:

PASSWORDS

Email accounts, especially ones on Yahoo, get hacked by choice of poor passwords. Dictionary words, names of pets or relatives, or short collections of characters are not good, and are easily hacked. Access to financial accounts can be hacked also.

I know of two password programs. The first is **LastPass** (<https://lastpass.com/>). There is a free version. This program will make and store good passwords, and even fill in the name/password spaces for you. The \$12/ year paid version does a bit more.

Another free program is **KeePass** (keepass.info). This program makes and stores good passwords, but is manual. You must copy passwords from the program output to whatever form you are filling out.

Both programs require that you remember a **master password**. Pick a long one (12+ characters: upper- and lower-case letters, numbers, and punctuation marks). You can make it pronounceable, but NOT made of real words, even foreign ones. Either of the

SPAUG Meetings

General Meeting

Open to the Public
Second Wednesday of the month
Palo Alto Elks Lodge

Next Meeting:

July 9, 2014, 7:00 pm
*Note the new earlier
starting time*

Presenter: Jim Hurley

Topic: The Road to Windows 8.1

Come early to our pre-meeting
no-host dinner in the Elks Lodge
Bistro, beginning at 5:45 pm

Board and Planning Meeting

Open to all SPAUG members only

Next Meeting:

Wed July 23, 7:15 pm,
Barron Square Community Room,
Palo Alto

programs mentioned can help you pick a good master password.

If you carry a laptop around, KeePass is the better choice, since you must remem-

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◀ (Continued from page 1)

ber the master password to open the program. LastPass can be set up to require the master password on use, but you must remember to choose that option when you set up the program. I don't know what to use with tablets or smart phones. I don't do sensitive stuff on either.

There must be other good password programs available. And I must say that nothing is perfect. Especially short, easily remembered passwords. And choice of a password program is your own.

Always beware out there in the digital jungle.

SPAUG DUES REMINDER

SPAUG will be sending out notices to those whose membership dues are due. We rely on the dues to keep SPAUG running, so please re-up! You should receive a communication from our Membership Chair, Christie Bilikam.

NEXT SPAUG MEETING

Be sure to attend the next SPAUG meeting. Jim Hurley, a talented computer helper at the Sunnyvale Senior Center Computer Lab, is going to give us the word on Windows 8.1.

I have been using W8.1 since December 2013, and I find it acceptable.

I succumbed to installing “**Classic Shell**” (<http://www.classicshell.net/>) which replaces the W8.1 lower left desktop icon with something that emulates either the XP or Windows 7 menu. This reduces the incidence of flipping back and forth between the regular desktop and the W8 “Tile World”. I think that the Tile World is good for phones and tablets, but less useful for desktops and laptops. I have a laptop with W8.1 and a touch screen, but rarely use the touch features. I much prefer using the keyboard and a wireless mouse – I may be a dinosaur, but I prefer to be a comfortable dinosaur. Enough said. Come to the July SPAUG meeting.

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Print Screen is published by SPAUG, the Stanford Palo Alto Users Group for PC.

Dues are \$30 for twelve months.

Monthly meetings are held at 7:15 pm on the second Wednesday, at the Palo Alto Elks Lodge.

Website: pa-spaug.org

Mail: PO Box 20161, STANFORD CA
94309-0161

Spaug is a 501(c)(3) organization

Door Prize Tickets

Free

You get one ticket for free when you sign in at a general meeting.

Buy a Ticket

\$1 each

Buy More Tickets

Quantity discount: Six tickets for \$5

Must be present to win

Meeting Day: Wednesday, July 9

General Meeting

**Palo Alto Elks Lodge,
4249 El Camino Real, Palo Alto**

Meeting time is 7:00 pm

Jim Hurley

Speaking about
**The Road to
Windows 8.1**

The Elks Lodge is a light-colored two-story building on the North (bay) side of El Camino Real (ECR), just east (toward Los Altos) from the Charleston-Arastradero-ECR intersection. It's diagonally across ECR from the Crowne Plaza Ca-baña hotel. Map—<http://tinyurl.com/lzrzq8m>

Park in the lot that wraps around the lodge, and proceed to the front door (on the West side of the bldg.). This is a key-carded door. If you cannot get in the front door because you are late, press the intercom button on the post to the left of the main entrance, identify why you're there (try "computer club"), and you should hear the door unlock. Pull the handle and enter

Proceed to the Lodge Room—upstairs. An elevator is available behind the stairway.

**Note that the Start-
ing Time has been
moved to 7 pm**

Typical Meeting Agenda

- 7:00 "Boot up", Crosstalk, Announcements
- 7:30 Coffee/Social Break
- 7:50 Return to seats
- 8:00 Presenter introduction and program
- 9:00 Raffle and Adjournment

Optional pre-meeting dinner

Join us for dinner before our General Meeting at —

The Bistro—at the Elks Lodge

There's no dining place closer to our meeting place than this. It's on the ground floor toward the back of the building,

Directions: It's on the ground floor toward the back of the lodge building.

Menu: <http://www.paloaltoelks.org/bistro-restaurant/>

Review: <http://www.yelp.com/biz/palo-alto-elks-lodge-no-1471-palo-alto>

Note the **Time** for
this month's
dinner.

Dinner time is 5:45 pm

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June 11, 2014 General Meeting Notes

by Stan Hutchings
(edited for use here)

RANDOM ACCESS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

- President Brad Youngman asked how many blind calls we get from “Microsoft”. Several members have. Brad has fun with these callers, pretending to go along with them until they finally give up in disgust. Be careful of giving them any information or turning over control of your computer to them.
- Is SPAUG interested in an outreach program? Volunteer at a library, senior center, etc., to help others with their computer problems.

A few people volunteered.

The [Palo Alto] Mitchell Park Library will open November, and may be a venue for SPAUG to help. One-on-one would be the preferred method. Young people are even more experienced and knowledgeable and could possibly be a source

- The SIGs are going to take a summer break. DISIG has no leader. Kevin Lynn's WinSIG is well-led.
- There was a large hole in Java, but JavaScript is fairly reliable. Java has recently been "fixed", but social engineering might trick you into doing something unsafe.
- To set up a multi-OS machine, Brad recommends doing it in this order: install Win7, then VMWare, then install WinXP and LINUX in a virtual machine; or use Linux as the primary, then

install VMWare, then Win XP and/or Win7.

Backups of a multi-OS system can take a very large amount of disk space.

Most computers will allow you to set the boot order; use this function to set a default order that can be over-ridden at boot.

There are sites that will help you install your new operating systems.

- There was a Microsoft Win8.1 update that was free for a while. Everyone should have updated to it; if not, you may have to pay for it.

Break - Thank you, Christie, for arranging for the cookies and coffee.

PRESENTATION: SKETCHUP - BY MAURICE GREEN, PH.D.

[Maury gave permission to videorecord his presentation]

- Maury's own introduction to SketchUp began several years ago with his involvement with the 2013 Maybell Avenue Project. To show the real dimensions of the architect's plans. You get a whole new perspective from a true size.
- SketchUp works with Google Earth to place drawings in their actual geospatial location.
- Google SketchUp is a 3D modeling program that can be used for architectural, interior design, etc. People can give enhanced street views.
- Modeling home interiors is a strength.
- Shadows from the sun are realistic.
- There is a palette of textures available for architecture. Also, vegetation can be

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inserted, topography and terrain can be displayed.

- There is a Sketch This plugin that demonstrates many capabilities.
- The www.sketchthis.net website has the demo, and the free download.
- Three-D modeling is possible for many designs: people, models of autos, airplanes, ships, etc.
- SketchUp Desktop is available www.sketchup.com, click the download button. Take a look at all the possible applications. It would be for Personal use; give email address, Operating System. There are older versions available for compatibility as well as the latest.
- There are video tutorials available from SketchUp that are very comprehensive.
- Tools include ● Select, ● Erase, ● Line Draw, ● Arc Draw, and ● Shape Draw.

Motion tools include ● Push/Pull,
● Offset, ● Move, ● Rotate, and
● Scale.

Measure, Text and Paint Tools are also available.

There is a Camera View to allow Orbit, Pan, Zoom, etc.

There are addons for ● Geolocation,
● Models, ● Extensions, and ● Layout.

Right-click on tool brings up a tutorial.

- Tutorials at www.harwoodpodcast.com; www.sketchupschool.com; www.sketchupartists.org are very useful for learning the app.

Youtube "sketchup tutorial" has thousands of demonstrations.

- A 3D warehouse has models for many, many items that can be used in SketchUp. The models are free to use. There is an Extension Warehouse, some are free, some are purchased. Be sure to get extensions for your version of SketchUp. Blender 3D and V-Ray can be used with SketchUp files.
- Maury green gave a demo how to use SketchUp. It's available on the 6/11/14 meeting DVD.

Filler

by John Buck

MICROSOFT IS CHANGING THEIR TERMS OF USE AND PRIVACY STATEMENT

"If you use Microsoft Windows or Microsoft services such as Outlook.com (formerly Hotmail) you may want to have a look. If you live in the US, you might want to pay particular attention to the first sentence in the Microsoft Services Agreement:

IF YOU LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES,
SECTION 10 CONTAINS A BINDING AR-
BITRATION CLAUSE AND CLASS AC-
TION WAIVER. IT AFFECTS YOUR
RIGHTS ABOUT HOW TO RESOLVE ANY
DISPUTE WITH MICROSOFT. PLEASE
READ IT."

—gizmo

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/p9uf3xw>

FAST WAY TO TROUBLESHOOT PROBLEMS IN WINDOWS 8 AND 8.1

"Windows 8.x has a troubleshooting feature for system maintenance and repair that everybody should know about. A previous tip showed one quick way to access this very useful set of utilities. Here is another way that uses a single command.

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In windows 8.x, a new switch has been added to the “shutdown.exe” command (previously described here). This new switch restarts the computer in what is called “advanced startup” where the screen in the first graphic below is shown. One option on the screen is to troubleshoot.”

—gizmo

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/oyx2lek>

HOW TO DISABLE AVAST! POP-UP NOTIFICATIONS

“Performance Alert!

We found 31 bits of evidence that grime is slowing down your computer.”

If you’re an avast! antivirus (AV) user, you’ve likely had this message or something similar pop up, and may wonder about whether you should give them money to fix the condition they’re reporting.

I (jb) did a gsearch on the string [We found 31 bits of evidence that grime is slowing down your computer] — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/okgnnau>.

The first hit — <https://forum.avast.com/index.php?topic=144993.0> — is to a series of discussions of the problem, which you may find interesting. Even tho’ it’s an Avast forum, the comments are fairly critical.

The second hit — <http://www.getavast.net/support/disable-pop-ups> — whose title I’ve used as the title of this item, has what seem to be clear information and instructions about dealing with Avast popups.

TEAMVIEWER—A PROGRAM FOR REMOTE PC CONTROL

CrossLoop, the program that simply let us control or view a remote computer has died.

The successor program I’ve used with a friend is TeamViewer. Out of the proverbial box, It’s just about easy to use as CrossLoop was; just provide an id and a password and you’re good to go.

The biggest problem I’ve had using TeamViewer, as the controlling user, is that it doesn’t show me the controlled computer’s cursor. CrossLoop did. A gsearch showed thst other users have the problem, but there seems to be no cure.

I found TeamViewer where I find most of mine, on Snapfiles.

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lvsapw>

If you want to do some exploring, here’s Snapfiles’ list of Remote Computing Free-ware, sorted by current popularity.

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/keahqf6>

THIS IS WHAT THINGS SOUND LIKE THROUGH A COCHLEAR IMPLANT

“To someone who’s profoundly deaf, a cochlear implant can be a godsend. But to those of use with well-functioning hearing, the sounds are alien and a little bit scary.”

—digg, video

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qjpbsun>

WHAT DOES A COLOR-BLIND PERSON SEE?

One of our members has told me he has a problem seeing the dot made by a red laser pointer, so I try to bring a green pointer to our meetings.

“A person with color-blindness has trouble seeing red, green, blue, or mixtures of these colors. The most common type is red-green color-blindness, where red and green are seen as the same color.

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Here are some illustrations of the most common forms of color-blindness:"

—Color Matters

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/9mgrr93>

THIS STARTUP WANTS TO TURN YOUR OLD ELECTRONICS INTO SOLID GOLD

"As long as you've got the companies developing these devices and consumer behavior that propagates the proliferation of devices, you're going to see an exponential rise in electronic waste," she says. "We need to be thinking about how we want technology to impact the world, not just in our utilitarian use, but at the end of life, too."

—Wired

—<http://www.wired.com/2014/06/blueoak/>

TECH COMICS

—datamation

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/nxkkhv3>

—gsearch

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/m4jjwpp>

HOW TO SHOW THE TASKBAR DATE ON A SINGLE LINE IN WINDOWS XP, VISTA, WIN 7

"You can however get the date and time to show up in the taskbar in WinXP, WinVista and Win7 in single-tier taskbar mode using TClock Light."

—pcmech

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qyq4mmd>

IT'S OFFICIAL: THE INTERNET IS FULL

"There is no plan B. During the past 10 years, 1.6 billion IPv4 addresses have been given out. It's inconceivable that the Internet as we know it today can continue to grow at a meaningful rate over the next decades with pretty much no new addresses being added, even as addresses are now traded. Even if no additional addresses were required, when one ISP grows and another loses business, the contracting ISP is left with a Swiss cheese-like address space full of holes while the growing one needs to find new addresses in the form of reasonably sized blocks to avoid exploding routing tables."

—ars technica

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/pywk9qy>

CITIZEN SCIENTISTS HELP ASTRONOMERS SEE THE LIGHT

"Einstein@Home volunteers find four Gamma-ray pulsars and shed light on another part of the galaxy. ... The combination of globally distributed computing power and innovative analysis methods is now a proven formula for the discovery of new once-elusive pulsars. ... Funded by the National Science Foundation (NSF) since 2005, Einstein@Home creates a global supercomputer by connecting more than 350,000 participants, and is therefore one of the largest projects of this kind. "This discovery proves again that harvesting the enormous computing power offered by vol-

(Continued on page 10—in the online version only) ▶

There's More

In order to save on our printing and postage expenses, your Editor is limiting the size of the printed newsletter to four sheets (eight pages). However, there's often more material than the space in these eight pages can hold, so your Editor provides an online version that has more than this printed version.

SPAUG CALENDAR

Always subject to change; verify event with host, or a Board or Planning Committee member.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	30		2 Independence Day		4 ★	5—Clinic, by appointment
	7 7–9 pm BIYSIG Central Computers		9 5:45 pm Dinner (Optional), Elks Lodge—Bistro 7:00 pm General Meeting Elks Lodge, 4249 El Camino, PA Speaker: Jim Hurley			12—Clinic, by appointment only
	14 7–9 pm WinSIG Central Computers		16			19—Clinic, by appointment only
	21		23 7:15 pm Board and Planning Mtg Barron Square Community Room			26—Clinic, by appointment only
	28 7–9 pm WebSIG Central Computers		30			2—Clinic, by appointment only

Saturday Clinic

Clinics usually are held when needed. **Call Jim Dinkey** to make a reservation. The clinics are to help you unscrew your Windows XP and Windows 7.

Email: jimdinkey at jimdinkey.com or call 650-493-9307 for an appointment.

Board and Planning Meeting

NOTE: Please contact Brad Youngman to confirm venue and time.

Next mtg: Wednesday, July 23, 7:15 pm, Barron Square Community Room

Board and Planning Meetings are open to all SPAUG members

SIGS

NOTE: SPAUG-member participation in any of these SIGS requires membership in SVCS, currently \$12/yr. SVCS is not a part of SPAUG.

**Note:
All the SIGs are on a Summer Vacation**

Without-Whoms

SPAUG is an all-volunteer operation. Listed below is contact information for those who work to keep it happening.

Please help us.

President: *Brad Youngman*
brad.youngman@gmail.com
408-685-0826

Treasurer: *Robert Mitchell*
rfmitch66@gmail.com
650-867-2852

Program co-Chairs:

- *Maury Green*
mauryg3@comcast.net
650-493-5914
- *Christie Bilikam*
christie.bilikam@gmail.com
650-248-3026

Membership: *Christie Bilikam (see above)*

WebMasters:

- *John Sleeman (see above)*
- *Maury Green (see above)*

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stan.hutchings@gmail.com
650-325-1359

Computer Clinic: *Jim Dinkey (see above)*

▶▶▶ **Positions Open:**

- Publicity

SPAUG Online

The SPAUG Web Page is at <http://www.pa-spaug.org>

hosted by www.svpal.org/



Listserver

spaug-list at svpal.org

Any member on the spaug-list can send messages to all other members on the list automatically by sending e-mail to this address. This list is intended for announcements of interest to all SPAUG members. Please avoid excessive or trivial announcements, since some members have speed or cost to consider. Additions or corrections can be sent to:

info@pa-spaug.org

Here's the Rest

The stuff your Editor didn't find room for in the eight pages of the printed newsletter begins here. It ends wherever the Editor decides it ends, regardless of whether a page is filled.

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unteers can be effective in pursuing significant scientific discoveries, plus it represents an important milestone for Einstein@Home," said Bogdan Mihaila, a program manager in NSF's Nuclear Theory and Computational Physics Division."

—labmanager

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qzbwhuc>

THUMB DRIVES

At our June 11, 2014 SPAUG General Meeting (Maury Green discussing Sketchup —<http://preview.tinyurl.com/plge8ak>— was our speaker), one of the door prizes was a thumb drive labeled, IIRC, "Microsoft Sharepoint 64 MB." And it got a fair number of tickets. 64 MB? That's tiny. What's Sharepoint? Why would anybody spend a buck for a puny thumb drive with some unknown MS thing on it? Gsearching, I found no image matching the drive I'd seen and held, no shopping info about it, and no text-only descriptive material.

Thumb drives are fairly ubiquitous, mundane little chunks of technology that we take for granted every day, so it was amazing to me the variety of thumb drives out there, and the range of prices—

- The high-price spread (\$8/MB)—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/ptbqg25>
- My usual neighborhood (\$0.40/GB)—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/pkq5gz4>

And, yes, the MB and GB are not typos (at least on my part). Quality and durability comparison versus price? I didn't investigate.

This Google images page—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/nw4kskj>—gives a small indication of the many many cute ways thumb drives look.

And what is Sharepoint?

- Microsoft says it's "The new way to work together"
—<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/sharepoint/>
- Wikipedia says—"Microsoft SharePoint is a web application framework and platform developed by Microsoft. First launched in 2001, SharePoint integrates intranet, content management and document management, but recent versions have broader capabilities."—http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Microsoft_SharePoint

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HOW SHOULD I SHOP FOR A MEDICAL ALERT SYSTEM?

“Our safe and secure colleagues down the hall at Consumer Reports determined what consumers should look for in an alert system, and evaluated the features of the best choices in the business. A few important things to look for: [are listed in the article]”
—<http://consumerist.com/2014/06/13/how-should-i-shop-for-a-medical-alert-system/>

GOOGLE INSTANT REDEFINES YOUR ABCS

“A is for AOL. How great must they feel? Good thing they renewed their Google search deal.” And 25 more.
—<http://www.fastcompany.com/1687730/google-instant-redefines-your-abcs>

EXTENSION LIST DUMPER DOESN'T WORK IN FIREFOX 30

A very useful tool in my Firefox arsenal has been Extension List Dumper (ELD)—<http://tinyurl.com/7k3poa7>—which lists my addons/extensions. It's handy for sharing my addon/extension info with others. Working with a friend, I needed a list dump for Firefox 30. It was then I learned that ELD doesn't work with FF30. My gsearch for [extension list dumper doesn't work]—<http://tinyurl.com/pdwcbps>—turned up “Replacement for Extension List Dumper?”—<http://tinyurl.com/q7yr966>—which, when you dig down far enough, describes the FF30 change that caused the problem, the cure, and provides a link to an unofficial version that works—<http://tinyurl.com/nltmc9u>

WHY THAT PHONE CHARGER TOOK TWO YEARS TO ARRIVE

An interesting story of technology today, IMO. “A problem with Kickstarter projects a couple of years ago, they said, was that people who backed them might not have understood that they might be funding ideas that hadn't yet been developed or manufactured. In 2012 Kickstarter began to require that hardware projects on the site show prototypes to reduce the chance of two-year delivery lags like the one I experienced.”

—nytimes

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lxod4f5>

BITS SPECIAL SECTION: CLOUD COMPUTING

“This is an inside look at how technology is remaking an industry, lowering costs for some and handing even more influence to a handful of powerful companies.”

—nytimes

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/l93uk2t>

THE HISTORY OF ANDROID

“Android has been with us in one form or another for more than six years. During that time, we've seen an absolutely breathtaking rate of change unlike any other development cycle

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that has ever existed. When it came time for Google to dive in to the smartphone wars, the company took its rapid-iteration, Web-style update cycle and applied it to an operating system, and the result has been an onslaught of continual improvement. Lately, Android has even been running on a previously unheard of six-month development cycle, and that's slower than it used to be. For the first year of Android's commercial existence, Google was putting out a new version every two-and-a-half months."

—ars technica

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/phdcy77>

HOW TO LAUNCH A JET OFF A CARRIER

A technician records his final check of a jet about launch off USS George H. W. Bush.

—<http://digg.com/video/how-to-launch-a-jet-off-a-carrier>

VOICE RECOGNITION

- You talk, Dragon types — Dragon desktop solutions help you get more done faster.
- Meet Nina, our virtual assistant — She speaks 38 languages, works in Mobile, Web and IVR (Interactive Voice Response).

Interesting stuff. Both are from Nuance —

—<http://www.nuance.com/index.htm>

—gsearch [Interactive Voice Response] — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/o7em7w8>

HOW DIFFICULT IS IT FOR THE NSA TO SPY ON YOUR INTERNET USE?

"Our experiment would answer the question: could a passive observer of Internet traffic still learn much about a target in this post-Snowden world?"

—ars technica — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/ovt6y4j>

"The Pwn Plug R2 is a miniature NSA, ready to exploit networks for their own good."

—ars technica — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lyslmml>

—metafilter — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/ld9yn87>

THE SHADOW INTERNET THAT'S 100 TIMES FASTER THAN GOOGLE FIBER

"Although we won't see 10-gigabit connections—let alone 100 gigabit connections—at home any time soon, higher capacity internet backbones will mean less congestion as more and more people stream high-definition video and download ever-larger files. And ESnet isn't stopping there. [ESnet director Gregory Bell] says the organization is already working on a 400 gigabit network, and the long-term goal is a terabyte per second network,

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which about 100,000 times faster than today's home connections. Now that sounds like science fiction."

—<http://www.wired.com/2014/06/esnet/>

DEATH ON THE FARM [NOT STANFORD]

"Agricultural jobs are the most dangerous in the world. Why aren't we talking about it?"

It's an interesting read (or skim), and there is technology involved, both causing danger and trying to reduce it.

—<http://modernfarmer.com/2014/06/farm-deaths/>

HOW AN INDEPENDENT REPORTER BROKE THE TARGET SECURITY BREACH STORY, AND AT WHAT RISK

"According to Krebs, it all started when several smaller banks came to him and reported that fraud rates were going off the charts. . . . He asked the banks to tell him if they all had a common point of purchase, and the fraud teams at the banks verified that they were all used at Target between Thanksgiving and Dec. 15, 2013. Krebs knew this had to be more than just coincidence."

—<http://ajr.org/2014/06/16/reporter-mingles-criminals-cover-cybersecurity/>

HOW NEST IS ALREADY USING ALL THAT DATA FROM ITS ARMY OF SMOKE ALARMS

"This simple little device could scrape an incredible amount of data about your life if Nest asked it to: From when you get home, to when you go to bed, to your daily routine, to when you cook dinner."

—<http://gizmodo.com/how-nest-is-already-using-all-that-data-from-its-army-o-1591811364>

HOW TO ANONYMIZE EVERYTHING YOU DO ONLINE

"Though it's hardly the sole means of achieving online anonymity, the software known as Tor has become the most vouchsafed and developer-friendly method for using the Internet incognito. The free and open source program triple-encrypts your traffic and bounces it through computers around the globe, making tracing it vastly more difficult. Most Tor users know the program as a way to anonymously browse the Web. But it's much more. In fact, Tor's software runs in the background of your operating system and creates a proxy connection that links with the Tor network. A growing number of apps and even operating systems provide the option to route data over that connection, allowing you to obscure your identity for practically any kind of online service."

—http://www.wired.com/2014/06/be-anonymous-online/?mbid=synd_digg

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ISPs ARE MOSTLY DELIVERING THE SPEEDS THEY ADVERTISE, JUST NOT CONSISTENTLY

“Consumers deserve to get what they pay for,” said [FCC Chair Tom Wheeler] in a statement. “While it’s encouraging to see that in the past these reports have encouraged providers to improve their services, I’m concerned that some providers are failing to deliver consistent speeds to consumers that are commensurate to their advertised speeds.”

—consumerist

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/kffn3kz>

IF YOU WANT TO BUY A LAPTOP

Here’s a *PC Magazine* June 12, 2014 comparison of “The 10 Best Laptops”. I found it interesting that the price range is a factor of seven.

—<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0%2c2817%2c2369981%2c00.asp>

YOU CAN’T JUST PATENT AN IDEA — YOU ACTUALLY HAVE TO MAKE A THING, SUPREME COURT RULES

“Tech and legal experts agree that patentability and software patents will almost certainly wind up before the Supreme Court again in the future at some point, because of the sheer number of them and because the Court has issued fairly narrow rulings each time the matter comes up, leaving the window open for stricter readings in the future.”

—consumerist

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qc5jpn4>

AMERICA'S POLICE BLOTTERS ARE DELIGHTFUL

“The magic of police blotters is that a sentence alone can be mightily revealing.”—digg

“Although the odd behavior isn’t rare, the police blotters documenting them are getting so. As local newspapers condense and fade, money once set aside for young reporters to listen to police scanners gets spent elsewhere, leaving unpaid admirers on Twitter and Facebook to document the strange happenings in some towns, while others go without any record of the villainous squirrels within.”

—washingtonpost.com/

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/nhqt8vc>

Some samples: Google (News) [police blotter] — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lkplvaz>

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GRAVITY AND ERROR BARS

“Yet most of our measurements of G come from an updated version of a device designed by Henry Cavendish back in the 1700s. And rather annoyingly, these measurements don't agree with each other—they're all close to a single value, but their error bars don't consistently overlap. Now, researchers have made a new measurement of G using a method that certainly wasn't available in the 1700s: interference between clouds of ultracold atoms. And the value that they have come up with doesn't agree with many of the other measurements, either.”

—ars technica

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lm2jrqt>

—gsearch [error bars]—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/pa72zyj>

CLOUD-BASED CALL CENTER

“Q: What is LiveOps doing that's different from the stereotype of a call center staffed with people wearing head sets, listening to angry calls all day long?”

A: All those agents are sitting in a cube with all this complicated technology -- four or five screens -- in front of them that's all optimized for a phone call. But people are emailing for help. They're chatting for help. They're tweeting that they're unhappy and call centers were not ready. They were only ready to handle phone calls. We sell software to manage that call center -- we call them contact centers -- in a much more efficient fashion. We got rid of the phone, the actual phone. All the agent needs now is a browser, a laptop or desktop and a headset to talk into.”

—murky news

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qa4v362>

THE HIDDEN BEAUTY OF AIRPORT RUNWAYS, AND HOW TO DECIPHER THEM

“Airports are known for rules and regulations, a reputation that applies to the runways as well. Almost all airport designs are governed by regulations established by the International Civil Aviation Organization to ensure pilots circling Toledo or Timbuktu remain properly oriented and deliver passengers and cargo safely.

Lauren O'Neil turns those strictures into art, with the help of Google Earth. The Brooklyn-based designer has made a meticulous study of airport runways and logged the results on a Tumblr called Holding Pattern. These views reveal beautiful compositions at airports that are nothing special at ground level.”

—wired.com

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/oyxp7mj>

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US LIFTS RESTRICTIONS ON MORE DETAILED SATELLITE IMAGES

“Sites like Google and Bing Maps will be able to use higher-quality satellite images, thanks to US government restrictions being lifted. . . . [O]ne imaging firm, Digital Globe, said it would be able to sell images that showed features as small as 31cm. [30.48 cm = one foot] —<http://www.bbc.com/news/technology-27868703>

FIND OUT IF YOUR PC’S CPU SUPPORTS VIRTUALIZATION

“The virtual operating system emulated Windows XP on Windows 7 allowing companies and users to run software not compatible with Windows 7 but with XP to run on the newer operating system.

While XP Mode is no longer supported due to the retirement of the operating system, virtualization software such as Virtual PC, Virtual Box or VMWare Player are.

While those may not require hardware virtualization support to run, some may and others will run better if the processor supports virtualization.

There are quite a few options to find out if the cpu of your PC supports virtualization. If you know maker and model, you can look it up online right away.” —<http://www.ghacks.net/2014/06/21/find-pcs-cpu-supports-virtualization/>

KATHARINE THE WHITE SHARK CRASHES RESEARCH SITE’S SERVERS

“I think what makes her special is she swam right down the east coast of Florida, right through Miami, right around Key West and then showed us for the first time in history how the white shark gets up into the Gulf of Mexico,” Fischer said in an interview with Computerworld. “When she swims through these populated areas ... more and more people feel included and join in the movement.”

Up to 100,000 people simultaneously have been visiting OCEARCH's website in recent weeks, and its Facebook page has received as many as 5 million visits a week, but it's Katharine that has been at the center of an ongoing soap opera of sorts.

You see, Katharine may be pregnant.” —computerworld —<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lxffvww>

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USENIX: UNSTABLE CODE CAN LEAD TO SECURITY VULNERABILITIES

“Program compilers can inadvertently erase code, causing all sorts of hard-to-find performance problems and security issues”

—computerworld

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/ouejro8>

WHY YOU SHOULDN'T BUY THE AMAZON FIRE PHONE

“it's the most effective device ever sold for harvesting the personal data from its owner.”

Also read the comments.

—computerworld

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/kwalmqf>

MICROSOFT, INSURER, MAY MAKE HOME AUTOMATION INEXPENSIVE -- EVEN FREE

“If home automation can reduce insurance claims due to fire, water damage and theft, insurers may become advocates for Internet of Things technologies.

That could change the business model for the Internet of Things as it applies to home automation. Insurance companies may one day subsidize the cost of installing the technologies, or possibly cover the entire bill.

”

—computerworld

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lxe9p49>

STEPHANIE L. KWOLEK, INVENTOR OF KEVLAR, IS DEAD AT 90

There are so many articles, of varying quality, about this woman that I'll just provide a Google link.

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/llphnpe>

QUADROTORS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES

“Quadrotors have four propellers that allow them to deliver a very stable flying platform. They also come in all shapes and sizes from microdrones that will fit in the palm of your hand to larger systems that have longer flying times. Most of the smaller quadrotors are electric and have a flight time from 10 to 20 minutes. Larger ones tend to have gas engines with a longer flight duration.”

—<http://electronicdesign.com/embedded/quadrotors-come-all-shapes-and-sizes>

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5 ESSENTIAL THINGS THAT KEEP A DATA CENTER RUNNING

“A data center is all about one thing: uptime. Clearly, being able to process mammoth amounts of data is of no use if that data is unavailable to those who need it. There are several critical cogs involved in ensuring these systems run like clockwork. Essentially, these measures turn what seems like mission impossible in mission accomplished.”

—techopedia

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/d2pu27z>

REBECCAPURPLE—A MEMORIAL TO A YOUNG DAUGHTER

“Eric Meyer is an expert on the Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) system used to control the appearance of web documents. He's the author of multiple books on CSS, and the "chaperone" of the css-discuss mailing list. His daughter, Rebecca, passed away, and her family asked that those attending memorial services wear purple, her favorite color. Dominique Hazaël-Massieux requested that a purple be added to the CSS color list be named "Becca Purple" in her memory. Eric suggested that it be named rebeccapurple because his daughter wanted everyone to call her Rebecca after she turned six, and she was six for almost twelve hours. Today, a co-chair of the CSS Working Group announced approval of the change. From now on, rebeccapurple means #663399.”

—metafilter

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/pectu6u>

REMOVE TOOLBARS AND PLUGINS WITH AVAST BROWSER CLEANUP TOOL

“Avast recently [as of Feb 23, 2013] integrated a browser cleanup tool in its newest anti-virus software version - currently available as a release candidate and soon to be released - which offers another option to users to remove persistent toolbars from web browsers.

The program is also available as a standalone application that you can run to do the job, which is an excellent option if you use another resident security software on your system.”

—ghacks

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/kjd8bte>

HOW TO REMOVE BROWSER TOOLBARS

“The free software Toolbar Uninstaller scans your system and displays the installed toolbars if they are known by the software. It currently [as of February 28, 2013] detects 53 Firefox toolbars and 3 Internet Explorer ones. This does not seem that much but the author is explicitly asking for help to be able to add more toolbars to the application.”

—<http://www.ghacks.net/2007/08/09/how-to-remove-browser-toolbars/>

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GSEARCH ["BROWSER TOOLBAR" REMOVE OR CLEANER]

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qg8tcqt>

REMOVE OPENCANDY FROM YOUR WINDOWS PC

“Whenever you install software on your Windows PC, there is a chance that it comes with third-party offers included. . . . OpenCandy is one service that developers of software use to power these offers. . . . The easiest way to determine whether an installer uses OpenCandy or not is by checking for the OpenCandy EULA link in it. If a reference to OpenCandy is made it is being used. . . . OpenCandy collects information when it is run on a computer system including the operating system and version, country, location and time-zone.”

—<http://www.ghacks.net/2014/06/23/remove-opencandy-windows-pc/>

HOW TO CLEAN AND PROTECT YOUR ANDROID DEVICE AGAINST RANSOMWARE

“The plague of ransomware has spread to Android devices. There are numerous recent reports of malware infections on Android platforms that lock or encrypt personal files and demand payment before you can regain access to the files. Here is some help with this growing problem.”

—tgizmo

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lvhhtbk>

CONTROL TWO PCs FROM ONE MOUSE WITH THIS FREEBIE FROM MICROSOFT

“You drag the mouse pointer off the side of the first computer's screen, and it appears on the screen of the second computer. Which means that you can now control both PCs from the same mouse. Just drag onto the screen that's connected to the PC you want to control.

Even more impressive, you can drag files between computers. To copy a file from the first computer to the second, just click on the file and drag it, with the mouse, between the 2 machines as if by magic.”

—gizmo

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/ocrpqu2>

IS YOUR PC UPDATING CORRECTLY? ARE YOU SURE?

“Once in a while, it's a good idea to check. From your control panel in Windows 7 and below, go to Windows Update and then click to view the list of installed updates. If you're using Windows 8, click on the Settings charm, then click Change PC Settings, then click on

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Update & Recovery. Either way, you should end up at a list of updates that your PC downloaded, so you can check that there are some recent entries in there. You should also check the "status" column to ensure that all of the updates installed correctly."

Also read the comments following the article.

—gizmo

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/lnmoqge>

YOUR NEW CREDIT CARD IS ALREADY WAITING INSIDE THIS SECRET FACILITY

"In fact, your future card may already exist. This new facility was built specifically to make EMV cards, since they'll have to crank out more than a billion cards in order to meet the deadline and replace all current magnetic strip card with chip ones by next year. CPI Card Group already has millions of EMV cards stockpiled and ready to go: they will simply need to be encoded with your name and card number when it's time to upgrade America's payment systems."

—consumerist.com

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/n4oyvn8>

HOW A CREDIT CARD IS MADE

"Ultimately, it costs card issuers as little as 10 cents each for simple, traditional plastic cards, about \$1 to \$2 each for cards equipped with EMV smart chips and contactless payment systems (where the card is just waved over a terminal), and much more for prestige cards made of metal or other alternate materials.

The entire process is conducted under tight security, to comply with standards set by Visa, MasterCard, American Express and Discover. In fact, each blank piece of plastic is coded and tracked throughout the entire process."

—<http://blog.credit.com/2014/02/how-a-credit-card-is-made-74903/>

Also—

—gsearch [How a Credit Card Is Made] — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/lnxkluv>

—videos — <http://preview.tinyurl.com/nm8d79w>

THE THIRTEEN GREATEST ERROR MESSAGES OF ALL TIME

"They're rarely helpful. Actually, they usually add insult to injury. But what would computing be without 'em? Herewith, a tribute to a baker's dozen of the best (or is that worst?)."

—<http://www.technologizer.com/2008/09/18/errormessage/>

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WHY 404?

“In principle, 404 File Not Found should be one of the dreariest of errors; in fact, many sites take it as an opportunity to be creative. For instance, check out Hulu’s page. And The New Yorker’s. [. . .].

Oh, and does the fact this error is called 404 mean there are at least 403 other HTTP errors you might run into? Nope: the first “4” means it involves a syntax error or can’t be fulfilled, and the “04” is its sequence within errors of that sort. Here’s the whole fascinating list of HTTP errors—read and enjoy!”

<http://www.technologizer.com/2008/09/18/errormessage/4/>

A COUPLE OF RECENTLY DISCOVERED ERROR MESSAGE GEMS

- Description: An exception occurred while processing your request. Additionally, another exception occurred while executing the custom error page for the first exception. The request has been terminated.”
—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/qjtass6> — Note: This gsearch leads to many interesting rabbit holes.
- Server Error in '/' Application.
Runtime Error
Description: An exception occurred while processing your request. Additionally, another exception occurred while executing the custom error page for the first exception. The request has been terminated.”
—<http://www.esri.com/> — Note: I wasn’t able to repeat it, so I’m glad I’d captured it.

WHAT IS GIS?

“A geographic information system (GIS) integrates hardware, software, and data for capturing, managing, analyzing, and displaying all forms of geographically referenced information.

GIS allows us to view, understand, question, interpret, and visualize data in many ways that reveal relationships, patterns, and trends in the form of maps, globes, reports, and charts.

A GIS helps you answer questions and solve problems by looking at your data in a way that is quickly understood and easily shared.

GIS technology can be integrated into any enterprise information system framework.”

—http://www.esri.com/what-is-gis/overview#overview_panel

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AEREO MAY BE GOING AWAY, BUT YOU CAN STILL GET SOMETHING AEREO-LIKE AT HOME

“[W]hile Aereo may soon be fading into the annals of “It Was Worth A Shot” history, it does not mean consumers are beholden to cable operators to receive or record freely available network content.”

—consumerist

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/memjjwz>

POLICE MUST NOW HAVE A WARRANT TO SEARCH YOUR PHONE

“The Supreme Court today [Wed 6/25/14] put an end to years of contentious debate over whether or not police can search the phones of people they arrest without first getting a warrant, ruling unanimously that law enforcement must always have a warrant before they can do the search.”

—consumerist

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/p739d9g>

IMPROVE WEBSITE READABILITY

Some websites are simply hard to read, or even look at, because of font selection, color choices, etc.

Opera 12.17 (and earlier versions), now obsolete, has an easily selectable Author/User option. In “Author”, the website looks the way the designer wanted; in “User” a lot of the design formatting is turned off, often resulting in a page that is easier to read.

In Pale Moon (and Firefox), the Monochro addon performs a similar function.

—<https://addons.mozilla.org/en-US/firefox/addon/monochro/>

Another addon that seems to do much the same thing is “Readable”.

—<https://addons.mozilla.org/EN-us/firefox/addon/readable/>

PC CARTOONS

—http://www.cartoonstock.com/directory/p/pc_users.asp

BAR CODE SCANNING JUST TURNED 40 [JUNE 26, 2004]

“The Universal Product Code was first put into use only 40 years ago, when a \$0.67 10-pack of Wrigley’s gum was scanned by a cashier at an Ohio grocery store on June 26, 1974. Yes, bar codes have only been on the things we buy for 40 years.

—consumerist

—<http://preview.tinyurl.com/k2qole7>

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ERASING YOUR HOME FROM GOOGLE MAPS IS WAY EASIER THAN YOU THINK

“The process is relatively simple. First go to Google Maps and enter your home address (or the address of whatever you want blurred). Enter “street view” mode by dragging the little man on the right side of the screen to the spot you want blurred. Once there, hit the “Report a problem” button on the lower-right corner of the screen. It will pull up a page where you can specify whatever image you want to have blurred.”

“Just because you have your house blurred out on Google, that doesn’t mean images of it are necessarily wiped from the Internet—both Bing and Yahoo maps provide similar street view sites.” [The article provides instructions for dealing with these outfits.]

—<http://www.dailydot.com/politics/how-to-erase-your-house-from-google-maps/>

RADIO-LOCATOR.COM — A SEARCH ENGINE FOR FINDING RADIO STATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND ALL AROUND THE WORLD

I’ve just installed a new am/fm/sw receiver and wondered what am/fm stations I might receive. Radio-Locator.com is the most versatile site I found to answer my questions. If you’re into radio listening, check it out. You may discover some local stations you’ve never heard of. You can scroll down the page to an area that allows you to customize your search results. Useful when you’re travelling, to find stations serving the area you’re in.

—<http://radio-locator.com/cgi-bin/page?page=about>