Bits & Bytes

Arkansas' Premier Computer Club

February 2022

Bella Vista Computer Club - John Ruehle Center

Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd Suite 208 (lower level), Bella Vista, AR 72715

Website: http://BVComputerClub.org   Email: editor@bvcomputerclub.org

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MEETINGS

Board Meeting: February 14, 6pm, in John Ruehle Training Center, Highlands Crossing Center.

General Meeting: February 14, 7pm, "Complete Robocall Defense", This is a presentation from an APCUG Workshop given by John Krout in October 2021. This presentation describes how to use your contacts list as a white list to only allow known contacts to cause an audible ring, and how to create a voice mail message to get robocallers to remove you from their list and not leave voice mail.

We will meet in-person in Room 1001 on the lower level of The Highlands Crossing Center, 1801 Forest Hills Blvd, Bella Vista, or you may attend the meeting on-line via Zoom. Zoom access information is published on our website.

Visitors or Guests are welcome.

Because of COVID-19, we recommend observing current masking and social-distancing guidelines as much as possible. Consider attending by Zoom if you or others in your family are in a high risk category.

Genealogy SIG: **No meeting** (3rd Saturday).

HELP CLINICS

February 5, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
February 16, 9am - noon at John Ruehle center
Members may request Remote Help on our website at https://bvcomputerclub.org at menu path Member Benefits ►Remote Help .

MEMBERSHIP

Single membership is $25; $10 for each additional family member in the same household.

Join on our website at https://bvcomputercub.org at menu path Get Involved ►Join/Renew, by mailing an application (from the web site) with check, or complete an application and pay in person at any meeting.

CLASSES

(At BVCC Training Center)

Wednesday, February 16, 2pm-4pm, "Why, When and How to Backup Your C Drive", with Pete Opland.

Wednesday, February 23, 9am-11am, "Slow PC? Let's Upgrade or Buy New", with Pete Opland.

Wednesday February 23, 4pm-6pm, "Computer Security for Regular People, Part 2", with Justin Sell.

Advance sign up required for each listed class (**Maximum attendance 8**): For reservations: email to edu@bvcomputerclub.org, or sign up at the General Meeting. Classes are **free to Computer Club members.** Class access information will be emailed to those signed up for the class the day before class.

Check the monthly calendar and announcements for any last minute schedule changes at https://bvcomputerclub.org .

NEW OR RETURNING BVCC MEMBERS

We are pleased to welcome the following new members or members returning to BVCC after an absence since last month's newsletter:

Sue Fellenzer   Debbie Trigg   Dennis Fitzgerald

DATA PRIVACY WEEK: 200 BAD PASSWORDS

By Joel Ewing, President, Bella Vista Computer Club
president(at)bvcomputerclub.org
Feb 2022, Bits & Bytes

One of the articles at https://cynmackley.com/ related to Data Privacy Week, January 24 – 28, is a reminder that "popular" passwords continue to be unwisely used by many people.   A list of the Top 200 most common passwords can be found at https://nordpass.com/most-common-passwords-list/. All of these passwords can be hacked in at best a very few minutes, most in under a second, if the hacker has access to an interface that allows automated trial and error.   If an Internet server containing passwords becomes compromised in a way that permits a hacker to download a file or database that includes user passwords, it doesn't matter that the passwords are encrypted.   With direct access to an encrypted password file, a hacker can use very fast trial-and-error techniques that will reveal the un-encrypted form of a poor password in short order.

Poor passwords tend to be short, follow simple sequence patterns or keyboard patterns that are easy to type, or include words or proper names that are common, with or without a few added characters.   Even using a word longer than 8 characters is not a guarantee of security should you happen to base your password on a word that is currently popular.

The best kind of password needs to be unique to each account, 12 characters or longer, a mix of upper and lower case and digits, and have at least some degree of randomness. Some websites may require special characters while others either do not allow them or may restrict which ones are acceptable. Length and "randomness" are much more important to the security of the password than whether special characters are also included. The best way to generate and manage such passwords is with a Password Manager application of some kind (LastPass, KeePassXC, and others). Be sure to use a decent password for the Password Manager database itself, and be sure to keep backups of your password database (and its password) in some secure location in case your primary computer goes belly-up, or your accounts need to be managed by someone else or accessed by an executor of your estate.

UNFRIENDLY TECHNOLOGY

By Jim Cerny, Forums Coordinator / Instructor, Sarasota Technology Users Group
www.thestug.org
vp1 (at) thestug.org

I suppose overall the advance in technology has given all the world many wonderful benefits. Instant email, global positioning systems, voice recognition, practically free storage of photos and documents, internet access to everything in seconds, and much more. But along with technology, some things are, may I say, not very user-friendly. The problem, I think, is that the people designing things do not ask us, seniors, how we like what they designed or how we would use it. So here are a few of my "Why did they do it THAT way??" rants, and maybe they are yours too.

Buttons and switches – Whether on your laptop, DVD player, or other devices, why do they make them so small and hard to find? Why color the buttons the same color as the panel? They should be large enough to see easily, press with your fingertip (not a pen point), and clearly labeled with print big enough to read.

Too many options – One simple example of this is setting an alarm on your smartphone. Will the alarm sound if your phone is on "silent" mode? Do you want it to vibrate too? What alarm tone or music do you want? Will it be loud enough? Do you want it to repeat? How often? Etc. It could take a long time to set all the options and parameters just for a simple alarm tone! It seems all apps keep adding on more options, but are they more confusing than helpful?

Company phone answering systems – Did you ever hear: "Your call is important to us, to help us serve you better, please listen and select from the following 19 options…"! Never mind that the reason you are calling has nothing to do with the options they give you. Now try to guess how to reach a real person. Do you press "O"? In the old days, dialing "O" always got you right to a real person. And if you do get to talk to someone, what country do you think they are in?

Too many accounts and passwords – Every company and every app you use wants you to set up an "account," – which means another account and password to remember. I hope you have all these written down somewhere! Getting a prescription? Paying your electric bill? Shopping at your local grocery store? Did you purchase a new tool or appliance? They ALL want you to have an account and password with them. And why not? They need to send you notices and ads and sell your email address to other companies so they can get an account with you too.

Ads with "timer countdowns" and no "X"s – Ok, I guess getting ads is a given these days on everything from games to company websites. But many do not show you a "countdown" timer for the ad, so you have no idea when you can exit it and get back to your game. Even if there is a countdown timer, where is that "X" to exit when the time is up? They still delay it or make it appear elsewhere, so you have to hunt and look for it. Sometimes they hide the "X" so you can't find it. It's a game we all have to learn to play and, to keep you from getting bored, they keep changing the rules.

I could go on with many more, but what are your complaints? I am still looking for a job ad like this: "Seniors wanted to test our software, apps, and products. So, we need your expert advice to make our service senior-friendly!"

MAGIC SLEEVE

By Jasmine Blue D'Katz, Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts
www.lcace.org
jj1450xl (at) yahoo.com

Got my new 12.9" iPad Pro last year, and even with the magic keyboard, it needed some extra protection when I travel with it. So, I decided to keep it protected with the Magic Sleeve. But I must say that I forgot I ordered it and was surprised when it arrived.

Magic Sleeve is a two-in-one desk pad and protective sleeve for my iPad Pro. The hidden magnet along the edge and the Merino wool felt sleeve allows seamless opening of the sleeve, which now becomes my desk pad. The

Magic Sleeves come in various sizes to fit all iPads; the one I got for my 12.9" iPad Pro was 15-16", and 16.75 x 23" unfolded. So, I ordered the charcoal sleeve, it is also available in natural grey.

I first ran across an ad for the Magic Sleeve and liked the two-in-one design and the fact that it was manufactured in the United States. Using 100% Merino wool from Australia was also a plus, and each sleeve is sewn by hand. Unfortunately, with the COVID-19 shutdown in March 2020, it took a while to get my order since Magic Sleeve's Scott Nedrelow is a one-person business.

I like the feel of the pad, and it feels so good on my paws, but when I try to put my claws on it, I get yelled at. On the other hand, when I'm on the go, it wraps around the desk setup and opens new possibilities in how I'm organized when I travel.

At $99.00, it's not cheap by any means, but I really appreciate the personal craftsmanship from the designer and creator. You get what you pay for, and I was very happy, and it was worth the wait.

I highly recommend this product.
magic sleeve – nedrelow