



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

JANUARY 2017

VOLUME TWENTY-SEVEN
NUMBER ONE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- BOARD MINUTES & JANUARY DRAWING 2
- VOICE CONTROL: HEY CORTANA, OK GOOGLE, SIRI & ALEXA 3-4
- NO MOROBO 5-6
- USB IS CHANGING AS TECHNOLOGY ADVANCES 7

DECEMBER 3, 2016 MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING

The December 3, 2016 Christmas buffet began with Margie Fornero saying a blessing for our food and members. The menu included Chicken George with Jan sauce and fried onion rings, sweet potato fries and bread sticks from Candlelight Inn. Members brought a great variety of wonderful food to accompany the meat. There were about forty-two members and guests.

After the dinner, Dorothy Szewczyk informed members on how Christmas with Santa at the Senior Center is accomplished with gifts for children to purchase for family members. Also, there is a silent auction being run.

Doug Vandersee WCSC director thanked SCUG for all the ways they have helped the Senior Center. The club recently purchased

a new security system for the Senior Center from Liberty Computer along with a few other items.

A short business meeting was held and officers for 2017 were nominated. Art Bendick for president, Neal Shipley for vice president, Darla Stigall for secretary and Joe Fornero for treasurer. Five board members were nominated for four positions Gloria Schneider, Cheryl Johnson, George Schneider, Terry MacLennan and Joe Schmitt. Election will be held in January. **Remember memberships are due in January.** Meeting was adjourned.

The fun began with Santa Joe entertaining members with Christmas program and gave out many wonderful prizes. Everyone went home with prizes and great memories.

*Respectfully submitted by
Darla Stigall, club secretary*

Club Information

Sauk Computer User Group
PO Box 215
Sterling, IL 61081-0215

Art Bendick - President
a.bendick@comcast.net

Website
www.saukcomputerusergroup.org

SCUG Email
saukcomputerusergroup@gmail.com

Editor and Printing done by:

Joe Fornero



**BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR
DECEMBER 7, 2016**

Drawing for January

The December 7, 2016 board meeting was held at Wendy's in Sterling starting at 6:00 PM. present were Art Bendick, Neal Shipley, Darla Stigall, Joe Fornero, Terry MacLennan and trip coordinator Glenda MacLennan.

The treasurer preliminary report was given. Since we will be electing a new treasurer next year, an audit will be need to be performed. Darla volunteered to do the audit after next year's cruise. The cruise has been changed to the Mexican Riviera. Glenda will have details in the January Golden Echo.

Nominations for next year's officers are Art Bendick, president; Neal Shipley, vice president; Joe Fornero, treasurer, Darla Stigall, secretary and member's at large

Terry MacLennan, Joe Schmitt, Cheryl Johnson, Gloria Schneider and George Schneider. Four members at large will be elected.

We will be purchasing a new projector screen for the Senior center. Joe will be checking on prices from various places and ordering before the end of the year.

Programs for January and February will be by Terry on "How to speed up your Computer". Terry will have handouts available also.

Remember to pay your membership dues in January.

Meeting adjourned.

*Respectively submitted by
Darla Stigall, Secretary.*

The club board has decided to have some better prizes in the new year. The monthly drawing prizes will have a combined retail value of approximately \$100 for all months except July and December when we have our cookout and Christmas party. A person can only win one of the large prizes once every 3 months, so everyone should have a chance to win something nice. The large prizes for January will be an **Amazon Fire tablet** (choice of either black or blue) with accessories and a **\$50 gift card from Applebee's**. There will still be a number of smaller items including a flash drive. We are hoping you will invite friends to the meeting and thereby increase our membership.

Also remember club membership are due in January. \$20 for a single or \$26 for a family.

Voice Control: HEY CORTANA, OK GOOGLE, SIRI & ALEXA

By Phil Sorrentino

Remember Dragon Naturally Speaking? It was, and still is, Voice Recognition software mostly used to control the operation of a word processor like Word. Certain words were used for very specific manipulation of the cursor and the text. Naturally Speaking came on the scene and became useful sometime around 1999 to 2003, depending on how much you needed to transcribe documents into the computer. Early versions had to be “trained” by the user to recognize their individual voice, and the speed and accuracy were sometimes acceptable, and sometimes not so much. Things have really improved since then; now the manufacturer, Nuance, claims in its advertising that “Dragon is 3x faster than typing and it’s 99% accurate”. So, Voice Recognition software has really come a long way.

(For those of you, who are not familiar with Naturally Speaking, it has three primary areas of functionality: dictation, text-to-speech, and command input. The user is able to dictate and have their speech transcribed as written text, or they can have a document synthesized as an audio stream, or they can issue commands that are recognized by the program.)

Naturally Speaking is an

example of a local computer application or App. All the computing needed for it to operate is on the computer that runs it. Naturally Speaking doesn’t take advantage of Client-Server technology. If you attended one of our classes, you will recall that when an application is implemented with Client-Server technology, the heavy lifting (computer processing) is not done locally, but rather at a Server that is very powerful and very fast, but remote from the Client. The remote Server is connected to the Client by the internet, which allows rapid movement of data between the Client and the Server. So the Client App runs on the local computer and is connected to the Server Software, running in the cloud, via the internet. This combination provides the total Voice Recognition & Control System. The client collects input from the user and sends it to the Server where all the really complex computing is accomplished. The Server analyses the input and develops the responses and sends them to the Client where the results are presented to the user in audio and/or display formats.

Naturally Speaking is certainly a useful product, but the voice recognition and control that

has really gotten the attention of the public lately, are the intelligent personal assistants that are provided by some of the leading computer companies, Apple, Microsoft, Google, and Amazon. Apple was first on the scene with “Siri”, followed by Google’s “Ok Google”, then, with Windows 10, came Microsoft’s “Hey Cortana”, and finally Amazon’s “Alexa”.

All of these are Client-Server implementations. The Servers are somewhere in the cloud and the Client resides on your smartphone, in the case of Siri and “OK Google”, or on your laptop (or desktop, or tablet) in the case of “Hey Cortana”, or on a special device that is placed centrally located in your home, in the case of “Alexa”.

All of these assistants use a Natural Language User Interface to answer questions. You’ll need a microphone on your device to take advantage of this capability. The Client app, on the device, uses the microphone to listen for a “Wake Phrase”. After this phrase is recognized, the

following intercepted speech is then sent to the Server where it is analyzed via speech recognition software, and converted to commands. The Server then uses these commands to gather answers to the original spoken inquiry. All of these assistants can make recommendations and perform various actions via their Server capabilities. (For example, a verbal request for the “weather” might yield various audible statements about the weather in your location. Or, a request for “traffic” might yield audible indications of the traffic in your location, or possibly maps indicating traffic problems. Or, a request for the best restaurant might yield a list of restaurants near your location. Or, if you have things set up, the statement “Add eggs to my shopping list” will yield an updated shopping list including eggs.)

Here are some descriptions (and advertisements) found for each of these Voice Recognition & Control Apps.

- Siri (Speech Interpretation and Recognition Interface) is a computer program that works as an “intelligent personal assistant” and

“knowledge navigator”, according to Wikipedia. “The software adapts to the user’s individual language usage and individual searches with continuing use, and returns results that are individualized”, also from Wikipedia. “Hey Siri” is the wake phrase, which can be turned on or off.

- OK Google lets you do things like search, get directions, and create reminders. For example “OK Google do I need an umbrella” to see if there is rain in the weather forecast. To use “OK Google”, make sure you have the latest Google Search App and turn on “OK Google detection” in settings.

- Cortana is an App with which you can use your voice to make a call, send a text message, search the web, or open another App. Cortana can help you: schedule a meeting, set a reminder, get up-to-date weather or traffic. (Note: you need a Microsoft account to use Cortana.) “Hey Cortana” seems to be tied to the “Notebook”, and thus is setup in the Notebook-Settings, which may not be obvious. (You get to the Notebook-Settings by clicking in the search bar on the Taskbar, then selecting Notebook [the square icon under the home icon], and finally Settings.)

Alexa is the name of Amazon’s assistant that comes with the Amazon Echo. Echo is a wireless speaker and voice command

device. The device consists of a 9.25-inch tall cylinder speaker with a seven-piece microphone array. “Alexa”, the “wake word” is always on and can be changed by the user to either “Amazon” or “Echo”. The device is capable of voice interaction, music playback, making to-do lists, setting alarms, streaming podcasts, playing audio books, and providing weather, traffic and other real time information. It can also control several smart devices. Echo requires a Wi-Fi internet connection in order to work. The Echo must be plugged in to operate since it has no internal battery.

If these personal digital assistants are successful, many more may show up. I just read that the company that brought us the SoundHound App also has a personal assistant called Hound that they hope to embed in other applications so that those Apps can be voice controlled. Imagine setting up an Uber ride by voice. (If you will recall, SoundHound is like the Shazam App, just hum a tune and it will tell you the tune’s name.) With all these personal assistants around, we certainly will never have to feel lonely.

By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing Writer, The Computer Club, Florida
<http://sccccomputerclub.org/>
Philsorr.wordpress.com
[philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philsorr@yahoo.com)

NoMoRobo BY DACS CONTRIBUTOR

At last: A way to block telemarketers and robo calls that really works!

Do any of these ring a bell?

“Hello, I’m Rachel from Card Holder Services...” (Note 1)

“Hello, I’m Kevin. ... May my crew power wash your home? ... How about sweeping your chimney? ... God Bless!” (Note 2)

Caller ID shows your name and phone number as the source of the incoming call. (Note 3)

The phone rings, you answer, and there is no one on the line – just silence. (Note 4)

The “National Do Not Call Act” was set up in 2004 and has failed to make a dent in SPAM phone calls. In 10 years the FTC has imposed \$117 M in fines but taken only 101 offenders to court – that’s just a drop in the bucket. Part of the problem is that it is left to the consumer to file a complaint, using an awkward web site rather than an automated mechanism such as dialing, say, *99 during the call. It is estimated that less than 1% of consumers have filed a complaint.

If you saw the movie “The Imitation Game” about

breaking the Enigma cipher during WW-II, you may remember that Alan Turing convinced Winston Churchill that it would take a machine to defeat a machine. The same holds true for defeating robo calls. Now there is such a mechanism, it has recently been adopted by many of the carriers and is easy to activate. Lastly, it is both free and effective.

In the 1960’s the telephone systems converted to electronic switching using computers rather than electro-mechanical switching gear. Along with Touch Tone there were additional services made available, such as Caller ID, Call Waiting, Call Return, Call Blocking etc. There is a little-known service “Simultaneous Ring” where you may associate additional telephone number(s) with a specific telephone number. For example you could associate a vacation home’s number with your primary residence. A call to the primary residence number will also ring at the vacation home number. Accepting the call at either location terminates the ringing at the other. The patent pending service developed by Telephone Science Corporation has been implemented by most of the carriers. You set up a simultaneous ring which points to the service. They know the identities of the robo caller

and telemarketer accounts – the real ‘switching’ phone number, not the Caller ID number – which may be different as explained in note 3. If the call is recognized as a robocall or telemarketer the service instantly answers it and instantly hangs up. Your phone never rings.

In addition it is reliable in that it will NOT interfere with legitimate mechanized calls such as school closings, reverse 911 calls as used by the town’s Emergency Operations Center during storms, notifications that your prescription drug order has been processed, medical appointment reminders etc.

To activate it, first you need to go to www.nomorobo.com. Once there

Select the type of service you have from a list, such as Land line/VoIP or Wireless. (Actually, only VoIP appears to be implemented at the time of this writing, analog wired and wireless are in the works but not yet available. DSL as from Frontier is NOT analog so it IS supported.)

Select your carrier such as Comcast/Xfinity, Uverse, Frontier, MagicJack etc. Enter your e-mail address. You do not create an account; you do not have

to provide a password. Click the Sign Up button. Note that at this time you do not specify your phone number. NoMoRobo.com doesn't need or want to know it.

You will get an e-mail telling you if your type of service is supported by your carrier, and if so it will include a link to instructions specific to your service. For example, for Comcast/Xfinity, you need to use your web browser to log into your Comcast account, find the Account link in the menu bar, then click Preferences, and within that page click on Advanced Features. This takes you to the same place that you set up Voice Mail, number of rings before Voice Mail kicks in, etc. One of the advanced features will be Simultaneous Ring. Select or enter the number to be protected (i.e. your home number) and the 10-digit number NoMoRobo.com provided for intercepting the call. Ignore the number of rings entry field, it isn't needed. Click SAVE and you are done. If for some reason you decide to discontinue the free service just go back and delete the Simultaneous Ring entry. Reminder: This is done at your service-provider's site, not at NoMoRobo. Having provided the type of service you have so they can send instructions, they no longer need to know about you.

I've been using the service for some time, as have my relatives, and it really works.

Notes

1) Violations of the Do Not Call List can not be enforced if the call is not originated in the United States. So many of the robocalls comes from off-shore. A U.S. area code as the Caller ID does not mean that it is really originated in the U.S. Rachel is a robot/recording. [Robert, Bill, Tom, Susan – pick one] from [Microsoft Support, Microsoft Technical Services, Microsoft Security Services, Microsoft Research – pick one] maybe human but they aren't employed by Microsoft or a company contracted by Microsoft. They are most definitely off-shore, the accent gives them away. Microsoft doesn't call you to tell you that there is a problem with your Windows computer. If you are still running XP it is probably true.

2) There are various exceptions to the National Do Not Call List – political vote or fund-raising campaigns – of course, charity and religious organizations, etc. Perhaps Kevin is a Pastafarian? He does say "God Bless" at the end if you stay on the line that long.

3) Computer generated

calls using a service hardware or software such as MagicJack. It can change the visible Caller ID phone number and display name on the fly. This hiding of the real value is legal; for example a corporation may have many fax machines, but only want to publish a single machine's number for inbound traffic. Thus the ability to change the Caller ID may be legitimate, but the spamming is not. I may talk to myself but I never call myself.

4) The robocallers use a mechanism called "Predictive Dialer" (Do a Google search for details.) As an agent wraps up a call he/she presses a key and perhaps a dozen calls or more are made simultaneously. They all ring, he/she gets the first to answer, and the other numbers are just silent if answered. According to a Wikipedia entry, the U.K. has outlawed this practice but is having the same difficulty enforcing as we are with the National Do Not Call Act.

AUGUST 15, 2015 BY DACS
CONTRIBUTOR

USB is changing as technology advances

By Bart Koslow

USB-C? USB 3.1 generation 1 and 2?

The USB interface is changing. It is becoming more versatile, faster, smaller and easier to use. Always interested in new computer developments, I decided to check out these latest developments.

USB long ago replaced the old serial, parallel, and other computer ports. Now it is set to replace many more types of connectors and ports and add functionality.

USB 2.0 (maximum speed 480Mbps) and USB 3.0 (now called USB 3.1 gen 1) are being replaced by USB 3.1 gen 2.

USB 3.1 gen 2 doubles the data transfer speed from USB 3.1 gen 1 from 5Gbps to 10Gbps. This will cut data transfer times in half. USB 3.1 gen 2 will provide up to 100 watts of power for compatible devices.

USB 2.0 provides up to 2.5 watts, which can power only small devices like cellphones and tablets. You will get

faster charging speeds for all your mobile devices and laptops, and you will be able to deliver power in either direction using a USB-C cable, which means you can use a fully powered device to recharge another device. USB-C, more properly known as USB 3.1 Type-C, is a new, smaller industry standard cable and connector type that will be used for multiple purposes. All of your devices will use this cable type. A USB-C cable will be used for power, video, data, and audio.

Your computer, laptop, mobile phone, and USB hard drive will all use one type of cable.

The USB-C connector supports and will replace DisplayPort, HDMI, power, USB, and VGA cables. This includes all the multiple USB cable types now being used.

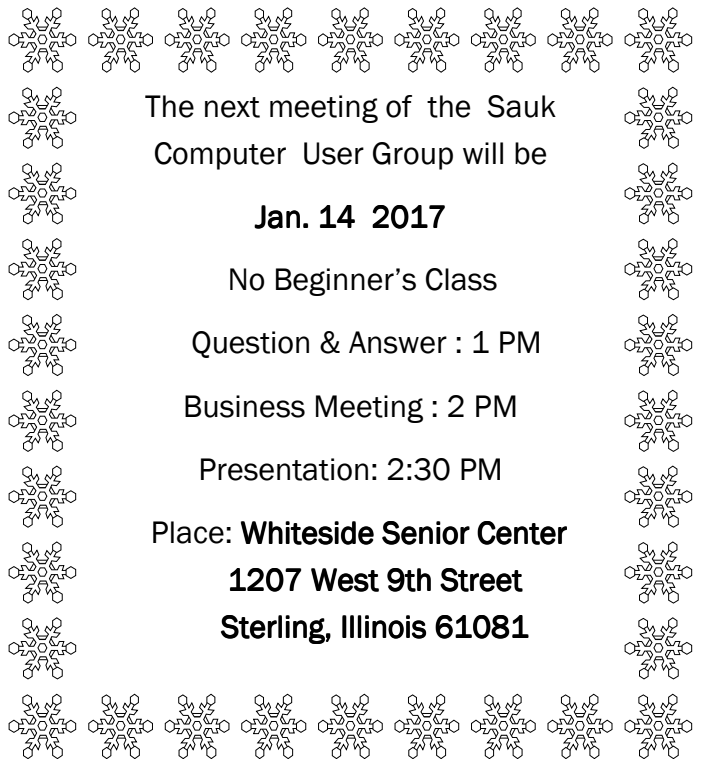
Instead you will be using USB-C cables. You will no longer have to carry AC adapters. All your devices will be charged and powered using USB-C. USB-C connectors are not only smaller.

They are the same at each end and are symmetrical in cross section so you will not be required to turn them around or rotate them to connect to a USB-C slot.

You will have to buy new cables, but think of the many types of cables you will no longer need and the huge improvement in facility and speed these new standards will provide.

*BART KOSLOW,
is review chair, Channel Islands
PCUG, CA.
This article appeared in the April
2016 issue,
The TOE. (www.cipcug.org;
[bartkoslow \(at\)
verizon.net](mailto:bartkoslow@verizon.net)) and is reprinted by
permission*

There will be a Question & Answer Session starting at 1 PM. Bring any questions you have about your computer or problems you may be having. It will be conducted by:
Art Bendick & Neal Shipley



The next meeting of the Sauk
Computer User Group will be

Jan. 14 2017

No Beginner's Class

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Business Meeting : 2 PM

Presentation: 2:30 PM

Place: **Whiteside Senior Center**

1207 West 9th Street

Sterling, Illinois 61081

**OUR JANUARY PRESENTATION WILL BE: "HOW TO
SPEED UP A SLOW COMPUTER, PART 1, BY TERRY
MACLENNAN.**