THE COMPUTER CONNECTION
SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

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Club Information

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JULY 14, 2018 MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING

Art welcomed everyone to the July meeting. Margie Fornero led members in a prayer before we all enjoyed a great lunch of pizza, fried chicken, potatoes and dessert pizza provided by Pizza Ranch. There were about thirty members and guests attending. Joe and Neal set up the buffet and Art got the drinks ready. After we all finished lunch we had a brief business meeting and the secretary's and treasurer's report were approved. John Miller will present the August program, Howard will do the September program.

The board meeting will be Thursday July 19 at 6:00 PM at Wendy's this month. The next meeting will be August 11. Glenda won the drawing for the club desk top computer.

Respectfully submitted by Gloria Schneider for

HELPING OTHERS INTERGRATE TECHNOLOGY IN THEIR DAILY LIVES

BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR JULY 19, 2018

The July 19, 2018 board meeting began at 6:00 PM at Wendy's in Sterling. Present were President Art Bendick, Vice President Neal Shipley, Treasurer Joe Fornero, Secretary Darla Stigall. Board members Gloria Schneider Terry McLennan and trip coordinator Gloria McLennan. We had three guests Howard the club web site manager, George and Jim.

John Miller will present the August program on "Effective Use of E-Mail and E-mail Security", Howard will do the September program on the club web site, what's under the hood. October is when we fill boxes for Christmas Child, the meeting will begin at noon to fill boxes. Terry will do the program on misc. things good to know. Terry will also do the November program. December is Santa Joe and the Christmas buffet.

Respectfully submitted by, Darla Stigall club secretary

Drawing for Aug

The regular August drawing will include an Amazon Fire, a choice of 2 different $25 gift certificates and a 256gb flash drive.

Humor
Submitted by Joe Schmitt

I'm from tech support. I'm here to delete your cookies

Security Tips for April

By David Shulmann

Are the headlines, describing one security breach upon another, causing you to pay attention? As a result, this column has been added to the newsletter.

Those little packets marked "do not eat" or the capsules protecting medicine have an important use if you act now. Did you ever accidentally wet the remote control for your car or TV? Ever wet your phone? NOW is the time (before the damp spring) to make sure to dry and keep the packets safe and dry in freezer quality plastic bags. You can dry used packets in a 180-degree oven. When a wet accident occurs, wipe the electronics dry, open a new bag that fits, place those packets and the device inside, and seal. The next day you will hopefully have a working item.

Facebook scam! (not just Facebook). Do you get messages URGING immediate action? A message circulating REQUIRES immediate action to protect the number of "friends" you can have. It urges that you take some action NOW (like endorsing the message or posting it on your wall). SCAM! Sometimes the message asks for access to your address book or to forward it along or to respond. Unless you are sure of the truth TAKE NO ACTION! Do NOT divulge personal information!

Network hijacking is rampant. PLEASE use a long, complicated password (everywhere). On your network, the least you can do is to place a label under your router with the password in case you need it in the future. Change default passwords.

Advice from the WPCUG president: Pierre has a strategy for securing his portable devices. If a major software release is announced, wait 72 hours before installing it. If there is an issue, other people will find it, NOT YOU. Minor upgrades are another story. Install them IMMEDIATELY. There are serious hardware and software issues currently being addressed by manufacturers. Stay alert!

Facial recognition is being used by police in China. So— you have no plans to go there and don't care? BULLETIN— the facial characteristics that identify you as unique can be recorded and retained. This technology is going to have tremendous impact going forward and not just in China. In the U.S., scanners mounted on cars or in the street can read thousands of license plates per hour. Drive around a city block in Manhattan more than a certain number of times and your car will be flagged by a computer. Stay tuned. The automatic toll readers have created havoc.

Your author recently was charged for a trip from Albany to New York City on the NY State Thruway in error! Actually, it was a trip from exit 16 to Westchester. It took two months to correct! I would not have looked at the bill but had to change my credit card. CHECK ALL YOUR BILLS!

I Am Not a Robot
By Greg Skalka

You've seen the wavy, distorted text to translate on log-in pages on the web. You've had to match images to words to be allowed to buy concert tickets. You've even had to check a box that says "I am not a robot" to sign up for a web service. What's going on here? Why must we be inconvenienced? Are robots taking over the world?

The problem is not with robots, at least in the traditional sense. Robots are machines that can perform a complex series of actions, under computer or program control. These include industrial machines, military UAVs (unmanned aerial vehicles) and the Roomba cleaning your floor. Google is not trying to keep C-3PO from signing up for a Gmail account.

A computer running a program could also be considered a kind of robot, as it is a machine performing an action. An ATM machine is a kind of robot, programmed to provide you with cash (if you have money in your account). Programs that catalog the web could be considered robots. These kinds of robotic programs can help us find things. Unfortunately, there are more unsavory applications for these web robots, like spreading spam and capturing user information. If there is a limited amount of something desirable for sale on the web, a program could be written to go out on the web and buy up all of it the instant it goes on sale - concert tickets, for instance. It is not the poor robot program that is at fault, but the bad people behind its actions.

To prevent these misdirected online bots from buying all the tickets, spamming all the blogs and signing up for all the email addresses, tests were developed to try to filter out the bots and only let real humans sign up on web pages. Initial tests used CAPTCHA codes; CAPTCHA stands for Completely Automated Public Turing test to tell Computers and Humans Apart. These tests involved things that humans should be able to do, like recognize numbers and letters that appear melted, but that are difficult for machines or programs to understand and complete. After going through several different types of these tests to defeat ever-smarter AI (artificial intelligence) web bots, Google has gone to a test where the way you click on a box that indicates "I am not a robot" can reveal your humanity.

This may help protect your opportunity to go to Comic-Con, but it does nothing to stop the proliferation of robots in our society. The capabilities and uses of robotic devices and their programs keep increasing as advancements are made in AI. Robots are just like any other technology we use; they can have benefits and drawbacks.

Like recognizing melted letters, it is commonly thought that there are things that only humans can do. These things usually involve creativity, like writing a novel or painting a masterpiece. Computers may be able to quickly make decisions and complete calculations but lack an aesthetic sense and artistic capability. As processing power, memory capacity and algorithm sophistication all increase, computers will get better at these things as well.

I would have loved to have a robot writer to write my newsletter column this month, as I started on this article way past my normal

deadline. There now are news-writing bots that can quickly create basic stories for newspapers and magazines, using AI. While a great tool for journalists, some are concerned it could also be their replacement. Computers and AI are making inroads in other fields, such as law, where they are increasingly used to sift through documents for passages relevant to their casework. Computers are even using AI to claim some of that creativity that humans hold dear; there are programs that claim to create art, compose music and write novels.

Are we ready to accept more robots into our workplaces and our lives? The robots referenced in our popular culture are mostly the same - usually somewhat humanoid in configuration, often good, sometimes evil. Gort from the film The Day the Earth Stood Still, Robby the Robot from the 1956 film Forbidden Planet, the Robot from Lost in Space, the droids C-3PO and R2-D2 from Star Wars and the Terminator robots have all shaped our perception of what a robot is. Yet we now have many robots among us, and few have a humanoid appearance.

AI has helped computers beat humans at their own games. Watson, the IBM computer that competed and won against human contestants on the TV quiz show Jeopardy, is now being used to improve healthcare delivery and weather forecasting, among other things. Deep Blue was an IBM chess-playing computer that beat a reigning world champion human. AlphaGo, a program using Google's DeepMind AI, was able to beat top-ranked human players.

Other robots use AI to navigate, build and answer our questions. Self-driving cars are in development and testing by many companies. If successful and accepted by consumers, they will be a transforming technology in our society. They promise to reduce traffic, free up our time spent traveling, increase road safety and provide transportation for those that cannot drive. They may greatly change our driving-oriented car culture and affect our lives in ways we cannot anticipate. Robotic trucks are also under development, with the goal to make shipping safer and less expensive.

We already have UAVs and drones, many of which can take off, fly and land under computer control. Our robotic space probes have surveyed all the planets and even left the solar system. Our robotic rovers continue to drive around on Mars, helping us explore and learn about our neighboring planet. Back on Earth, robots help us build cars in our factories. Our Roombas sweep and mop our floors. Voice operated assistants like Amazon's Echo and Google's Home Assistant provide support in our lives.

All these robots touch our lives every day in positive ways. Perhaps we should not be so ready to segregate into us and them. Just as John F. Kennedy expressed solidarity with the citizens of West Berlin in his 1963 speech, saying "Ich bin ein Berliner", perhaps we should be saying

49 20 61 6D 61 72 6F 62 6F 74 2E

[Translation from ASCII Hexadecimal: I am a robot.]

By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood User Group, CA
May 2018 issue, Drive Light
www.uchug.org
president (at) uchug.org

Location
By Phil Sorrentino

Location, Location, Location has been the real estate mantra for a very long time, indicating how important location is to the value of a property. This reference to location is to a fixed location. The location in question here is that of a mobile communicating device, such as your smartphone, the location of which may be constantly changing, as it would be if you are driving down a major interstate like I-75. Even if you are not flying down an interstate, your location can still be changing as you walk down the street to visit a neighbor. So, with your location possibly changing, how does your smartphone know where you are? And for that matter, how do the Apps on your phone know where you are at any given time?

First, why is your location important, anyway? One reason may be that you are using an App on your smartphone to find the location of the nearest restaurant. The App you are using to locate these restaurants needs to know where you are, so it can calculate the distance from you to the restaurants in its database and give you a list of nearby restaurants, usually ordered by increasing distance away from you. Or, you may want to navigate from one place to another, using directions from a mapping App on your phone (which is similar to how a dedicated GPS device in your car operates). For this kind of navigation, you need a precise location so the App can determine where you are on the map and give you directions to get you to your destination. (Or it may have to give you corrections; you may have heard "recalculating!" if you were using an older GPS device.) The precision is necessary to make sure you are in the right place for upcoming turns or lane changes. As you probably know, the Global Positioning System (GPS) is the only way you can get this kind of precise location. GPS is a space-based radio navigation system owned by the United States government and operated by the United States Air Force. It provides geolocation (geographic coordinates) and time information to a GPS receiver anywhere on the Earth where there is an unobstructed line of sight to four or more GPS satellites. There are 24 satellites in the GPS constellation. GPS, as a government project, was started way back in 1973, and became fully operational in 1995. The US government currently claims 4-meter (approximately 13 feet) accuracy for civilian GPS (but there are many variables involved that might affect this estimate).

Your location, or more precisely, the location of your smartphone, can be determined by one of three ways. GPS, as described above, is the first and the most precise method. It is the only way to determine location if you intend to navigate using a mapping/navigation App. The second way, which is much less precise, is via the Internet Service Provider (ISP). This is the way location can be determined if you are using Wi-Fi, in your own home or some other Wi-Fi location. (Of course, this location will be fixed; not subject to

change.) The ISP knows approximately where you are because it knows where the ends of the cables that carry the internet to you are, and where the Access Points are geographically located, along with the IP addresses that have been assigned. This technique may give a precision of maybe 75 meters (approximately 250 feet) or a few blocks in a relatively populated area, but this may be all the precision needed to find the nearest restaurant or gas station.

The third way to determine your location is used when you are actively using the cell phone towers. The precision of the measurement of location in this case is only around 600 meters (approximately 1/3 of a mile), but it is accurate enough for normal cell phone system operations. The cell phone system needs to know your location constantly because it must track your smartphone's transmitter's signal. It needs to know where your phone is, so it can electronically aim its antenna at your phone.
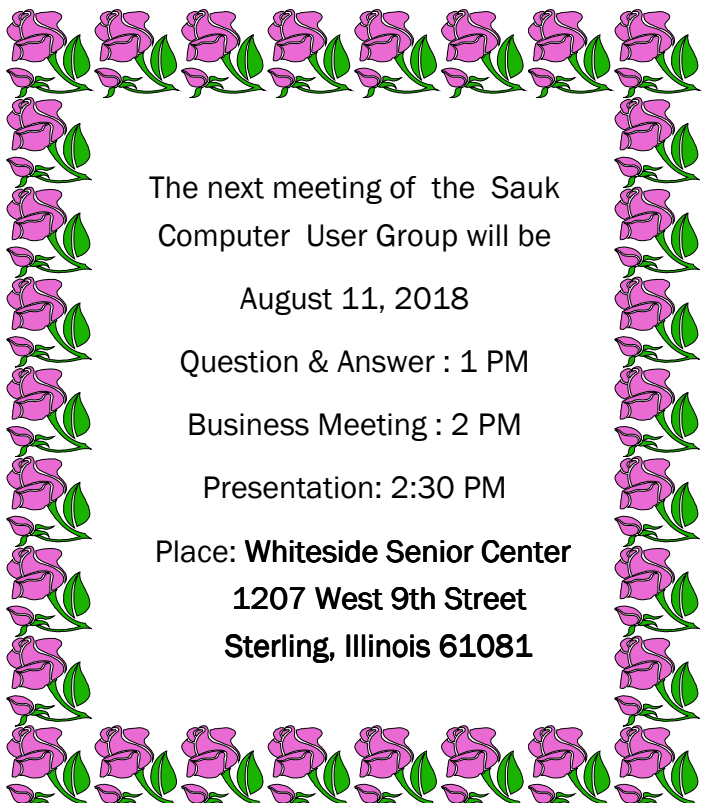
Yes, when you are using the cell phone towers, your device's every move is being tracked. Without tracking, the cell phone tower would not be able to keep your device connected when you pass through the tower's area, and it would not know when to hand-off your connection to the next cell tower. (Remember the cell phone system is a collection of contiguous areas, each around a central cell tower, so if you travel down the interstate far enough, you will go out of one cell tower's area and into the next cell tower's area. At this point your connection must be moved to the next cell tower for you to continue your connection without interruption while travelling into the second cell tower area.)

Now that you know the three methods of location determination, you can more easily determine how to set the "Location" setting on your smartphone. As an example, on an Android device (OS 7.0), go to settings and then Location.

Here you can set the Mode to "High accuracy", "Battery saving", or "Device only". High accuracy will use all the possible methods, Battery savings will use all but GPS, and Device only will only use GPS (the mode to use when navigating). If you are not navigating, then it is probably a good idea to use the Battery savings mode because the GPS receivers in your device use a lot of power, so it will affect your battery life, but if you need GPS accuracy then use either of the other modes. On an iPhone, you can turn Location Services on at Settings-Privacy-Location Services, and you can individually control which apps and system services have access to Location Services data. Knowledge is power, location is very important.

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

August 11, 2018

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Business Meeting : 2 PM

Presentation: 2:30 PM

Place: **Whiteside Senior Center**
1207 West 9th Street
Sterling, Illinois 61081

AUGUST PRESENTATION WILL BE:
EFFECTIVE USE AND SECURITY FOR EMAIL
BY JOHN MILLER