



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

MARCH 2020

VOLUME THIRTY
NUMBER THREE

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FEBRUARY 8, 2020 MINUTES: SCUG CLUB MEETING

Open Meeting: By President Art Bendick. Iggy, SCUG's sponsored CGH therapy dog was here with his owner Chris. Iggy is a 7lb. 4oz. Maltese & has been a therapy dog for 8 years. The club continued its sponsorship for another year by presenting them a check for \$250.

Discussed changing computer mouse from Right to Left hand; how to more easily switch stereo speakers from one electronic component to another; downloading windows 10 to a windows 7 computer using a installation creation program; changing cursor line configuration;

evaluating compatibility of browser with email; also the new update for MS Edge.

Treasurer's report presented by Joe Fornero and was approved.

Old business: Internet kept shutting down at WCSC due to switch box problem, a new switch box installed with the new system.

New business: There is a need for more computer lab volunteers.

Election of officers and board member was held. Art Bendick, President; Neal Shipley, V.P.; Joe Fornero Treasurer; Nancy Rich Sec.; and members at large: Terry and Glenda MacLennan, Tom

Rich, Joe Schmitt and Janice Maves. Voted in unanimously.

The next board meeting is Wednesday, 2/12/2020 at 5:30pm at Angelo's.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned.

Program: Presented by Neal with videos on cell phones, how to do conference calls, three-way calls, how to add & merge calls, how mobile phones work, and what 4G versus 5G is.

Next month's program: March program will be videos from the Consumer Electronics Show presented by Neal.

*Respectfully submitted
by Nancy Rich,
Secretary*

Club Information

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**BOARD MEETING MINUTES FOR
FEBRUARY 12, 2020**

March Drawing

The regular drawing for March will be \$50 gift certificate from Forest Inn, a \$25 gift card from Pizza Ranch and Menards and a 1Tb flash drive, plus some misc. items.

Meeting was called to order: By President Art Bendick

Attending the meeting were: Glenda and Terry MacLennan, Neal Shipley, Joe Fornero, Joe Schmitt, Art Bendick, Darla Stigall, Cheryl Johnson, Nancy and Tom Rich.

Treasurer's report was presented by Joe F. and reviewed by attendees.

Discussion Highlights:
No old business.

New business:

Glenda is getting info from Holland Cruise Line concerning Alaskan cruise in July, 2021, which will also include a land package.

Club liability insurance increased considerably, agent searching for another company.

Club computer was updated to latest Windows version 1909. To prevent meeting interruptions, Tom

will run computer updates prior to meeting date.

Brad Popejoy donated two coffee makers (45 and 100 cup) and delivered them to WCSC kitchen staff.

Glenda utilizing chair found by Ken and is working well. Desk that was free in senior center was removed by someone else before Terry could move it into computer lab. We will get next available desk for lab.

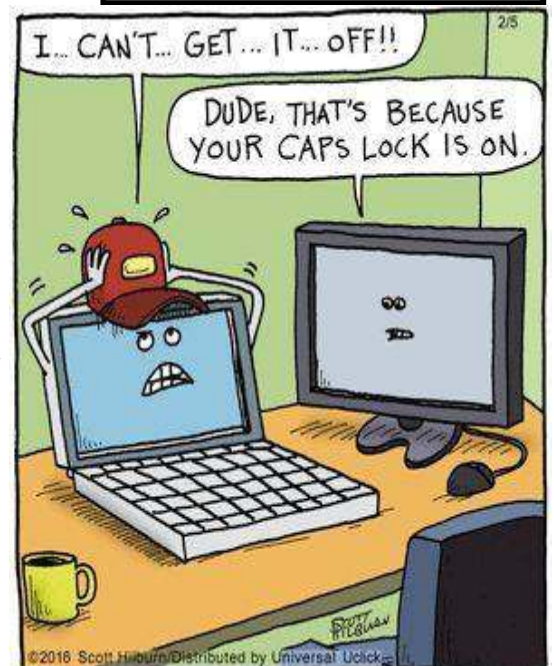
Need to get cabinet door locks for small kitchen to store club items after locker/cabinet consolidation.

Future Programs: March program will be videos of Consumer Electronics Show presented by Neal.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted by Nancy Rich, Secretary

Joke from Web



15 years of Google Maps—(Re)Discovering the world the digital way

By Seven Krumrey

A few years ago, I needed to get to Hamburg urgently. I didn't know my way around the city so I depended on my navigation device—and was thoroughly disappointed. The display stayed black and has remained this way ever since. In my distress, I turned to **Google Maps**, for the first time, and boy was in for a shock. The app sucked by battery dry like an electric blanket and I ended up in some shady harbor district, with even more *shady characters eyeballing my factory-fresh rental car*. The whole time, Google Maps advised me to turn around. Eventually, I was just as lost as the navigation service. It was a friendly local who ultimately came to my rescue. A lot has changed since then. Google Maps is now celebrating its 15-year birthday and, what started as a digital map, has become a **powerful exploration tool**.

Years after my Hamburg trip, I visited the wonderful Iceland. By then, the service was mature enough to guide me through the country *without a single hiccup*. I navigated safely through lava fields and unpopulated areas, even unusual town names like Sauðárkrókur, entered without the special characters, posed no issues.

And when I encountered traffic circle after traffic circle in Reykjavik, Google Maps kept its cool—and has been **my route planner of choice** ever since. The service is kind of a joint effort. Every cellphone with location services enabled contributes to the overall reliability of the system by transmitting its velocity and location at regular intervals, helping Google Maps quickly detect and signal traffic jams among other things. An artist recently fooled the system by manually hauling a handcart with 99 GPS-enabled cellphones through a street. Google apparently considered the affair a traffic jam. If you don't like your location being constantly tracked, you can *disable location services* on your device. However, this means Google will receive less data and nifty features like route planning, personalized maps, recommendations based on recently visited places or real-time updates on commuter traffic will be unavailable to you. **It's either more privacy or more comfort**. The decision is yours!

Google Maps has become so much more than the simple map we used to have in our cars. The built-in route planning, which supports various modes of transport

from using a car to walking, is constantly improving. Traffic news are always up to date, unlike many rival products, and the service has turned into somewhat of a *tour guide for many*. On top, information on public transport networks is readily available for multiple countries. Aside from normal and topographic view, Google Maps also features a zoomable satellite view to give you a bird's eye view of your surroundings. Add to that the 3D and Street View functions and you're looking at what is arguably **the most comprehensive digital representation** of our world. Street View in particular has met with fierce criticism in the past because of the many Street View cars that roam the world taking photos of their surroundings, including private homes and residents. Over the years, various countries with strict privacy laws have forced Google to blur so many parts that the service has become almost unusable in some regions.

But there's also an economic impact to Google Maps. Its **rating and recommendation system**, targeted at restaurants, stores and even government institutions, allows users to rate the

quality of said places. If you're in an unfamiliar location and looking for a place to eat, Google Maps will instantly present you with a list of restaurants in your vicinity. Naturally, places rated five stars are more likely to attract visitors than less fortunate establishments. The service can be a big help but it's also prone to abuse, e.g. *fake reviews and ratings*, especially for low-digit entries. Many a one restaurant owners have encouraged their friends and family to provide euphoric ratings and reviews—and there have also been cases of mud-slinging by competitors or unfavorable manipulation of opening hours. Nowadays, Google Maps is big enough to decide the economic fate of a business, which is why the court cases will keep coming. Here's a simple self-experiment: **Would you visit a hotel after you've read about rotten food and bed bugs** in the reviews? Remember, the information could be false! Google even try to *guess your future needs*, based on detailed knowledge of

your habits and preferences. That's why the recommendation for that Italian restaurant always pops up just as you're within walking distance. **Google Live View**, on the other hand, is relatively new and meant for navigating cities on foot. You first create your route on your cellphone and then switch to "Live View". Once you rotate your device, Google will use the built-in camera to recognize your surroundings and add arrows and pointers (augmented reality) to guide you to your destination. It works quite well, but has the downside of you having to hold up your cellphone the entire time—and *looking like an idiot in the process*. The software also supports custom maps with your favorite locations based on prior saved addresses or individual commutes. It will even notify you when it's time to go or point out obstacles along the way. Other noteworthy features include details on charging points for electric vehicles, busy hours for restaurants or places of interest and, privacy advocates take notice, a **detailed movement profile**. Once a map has been downloaded, Google Maps also works offline—a significant advantage in dead zone-ridden areas.

Once you're logged into your Google account on your PC, *you can transfer your route across device boundaries*, provided the target device is linked to your account. This makes planning your next vacation so much more stress-free. There's no 100% feature parity across devices though, e.g. **Google Flights** is only available on PC. But did I mention everything is fully voice-controllable or that there are even indoor maps available for various major buildings and malls, including parking garages? Calling this extensive package a map service is a major understatement. It has evolved into a full-fledged navigation and shopping companion—**provided we let it access various aspects of our lives**. Whether you use Google Maps, simply admire the technology or shudder at its scope, a lot has happened over the past 15 years. I'm positive the next feature enhancements and disruptive synergies are only a few months away.

By Seven Krumrey
Ashampoo Blog
2020/02/11

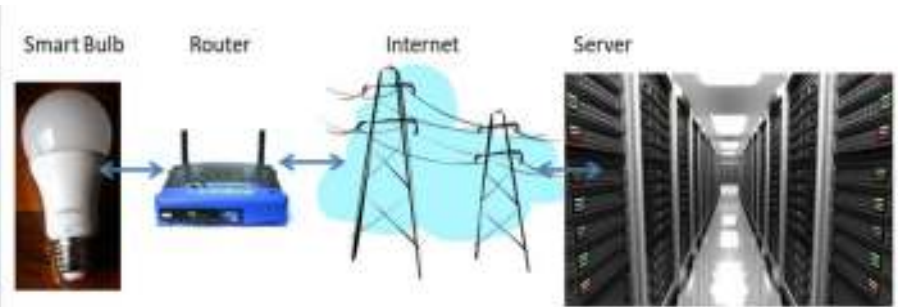
Smart Devices in the home – With voice control

By Phil Sorrentino

There are a whole host of smart devices available for use in the home now. Some of the most basic and least expensive ones are smart bulbs, smart plugs and smart cameras. (Yes, I know cameras can be expensive, but there are some fairly inexpensive indoor-only cameras.) First of all, what makes these devices smart? Well as I have alluded to in previous articles, it's all about Client – Server technology. The devices have some limited intelligence in them. Read “intelligence” as basic processing power, downloadable firmware, and wi-fi electronics. This allows them to be able to communicate with a local wi-fi router, which in turn allows them to access the internet. Once they can access the internet, they can take advantage of the servers on the internet (sometimes referred to

as “in the cloud”). The intelligence in the accessed server is where all the magic happens. Here read “intelligence” as very fast, very powerful, server computers capable of handling millions of requests for service per second. So it's the combination of the smart device, the internet, and the server that really makes the smart device: smart.

installation will be the App from the specific smart device manufacturer. So for example, if you have a TP-Link smart bulb, you would have to get the TP-Link App for your smartphone. In this example that would be the “Kasa” App. Similarly, if you have a Wyze smart bulb you would use the Wyze App for the installation. These



Once you have your smart device ready for installation, it is the App on your smartphone that takes over and steps you through the installation process. (Yes, a smartphone is required for the installation, either Android or Apple.) The App that you will use for

Apps are free and are intended to work with the servers from the specific manufacturer. (So just as an aside, think about this. If the company that operates the server, the smart device manufacturer, goes under and the server goes away, your smart device will no longer

be smart. The bulb may not even be able to be turned on if there is no server to command it to turn on.)

The installation process is usually pretty easy; after all, it's the App that is doing all the work. The first thing you have to do is get the device ready for installation. The App will usually start this by having you select something like "add a device," or "add a product", or maybe you just have to select the "+" on the screen (as found on the Kasa App) to add a device. You will have to let the App know what type of device you are adding. This is usually done by just selecting the device type from a list of device types manufactured by that specific manufacturer. Once the device type is selected, you are ready to go into the setup mode. The App will give you instructions for getting the device into the "Setup" mode. On a smart plug with a

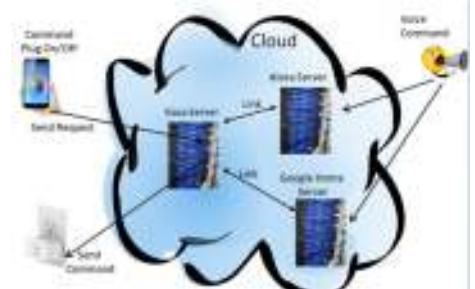
push-button switch it is really easy because pushing the button as directed by the App will get the smart plug ready for installation. With a smart bulb, usually you quickly turn the power on and off maybe three times and the smart bulb goes into the Setup mode. You will know the device is in setup mode when whatever you were watching changes. With a smart bulb, the light may start to pulsate slowly, with a smart plug, the small light on it may blink or change color. Once the device is in the setup mode, it will need to know the name of your wi-fi network and the password for that network. (Note: some devices only support 2.4 GHz networks only; not 5 GHz networks.) You may have to use your "Settings App" on the smartphone during the setup; just follow the directions from the App. Once you enter

the wi-fi network name and the network password you may see a timer count down for a few seconds till the installation is complete. Finally you will be asked to name the smart device; something like "desk light" or "bedroom plug". (Keep in mind that each manufacturer's App will be a little different, this is just a general example.) The installation may seem complex but after you have done it once or twice it will probably become automatic. However, you might want to keep those instructions that you get with the device in a safe, convenient, place because you might have to go through the whole process again. (Before I lose the instructions, I scan them into a file and place the file in a "Home Automation" folder so I can review the directions when I

have to do another installation. This was recently necessary when I changed my router and the new wi-fi network had a new name and new password. This forced me to reinstall every device that used the house wi-fi. At the time, I had 7 smart devices that had to be reinstalled.) So now with the smart device installed you can control it from your smartphone App. Typically, you can turn it on and off and maybe even set up a schedule. Once the device is installed and working, it's time to move on to voice control. Voice control is supported by Amazon's Alexa and Google's Google Home. You can use either of these or both. Amazon calls the link between Alexa and smart devices "skills." Google Home refers to them as links. In either case you need to have the appropriate App on

your smartphone; the "Amazon Alexa" App for Alexa, and the "Home" App for Google Home. Again, the Apps are free and available for Android and Apple. Once you have the appropriate App, you just have to follow the instructions to link your smart device. Typically you will have to select the type of device and the device manufacturer. On Alexa this is started by selecting the "+" on the "Devices" screen and then selecting "Add device," and then the type of device, and then selecting the manufacturer of your device from a list of manufacturers. To make sure you are linking "your Alexa" to "your smart device," the App will require the Username and Password for the manufacturer of your smart device. (So, as a general rule, make sure you know the Usernames and

Passwords for all of the manufacturers of the smart devices that you use.) Once you have authenticated yourself with your Username and Password, a link will be made between the Alexa server and the smart device manufacturer's server. And now you can control the smart device, at least to the extent that the skills allow, by voice control. Now enjoy the feeling of power.



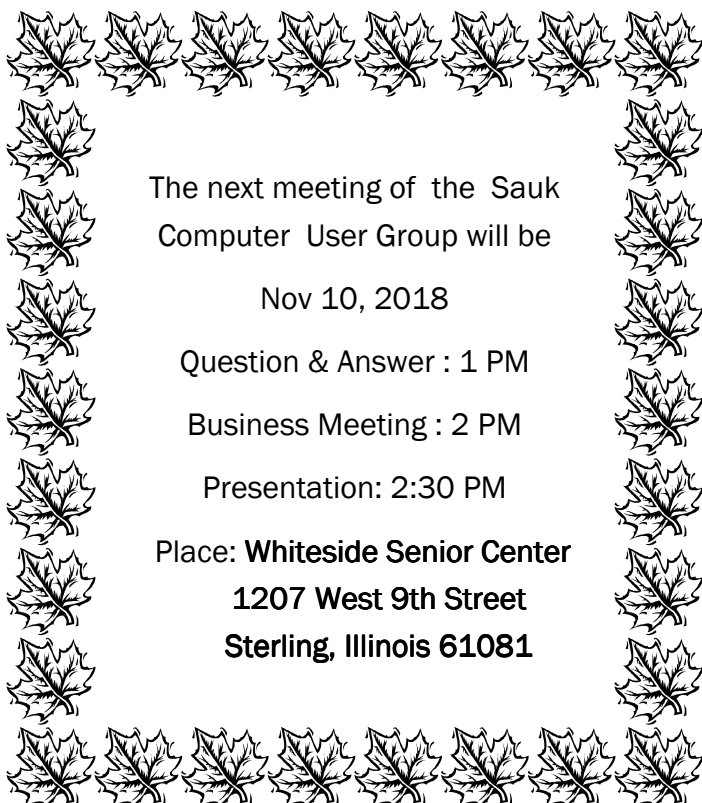
*By Phil Sorrentino, Contributing
Writer*

*The Computer Club, Florida
September 2019*

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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

March 14, 2020

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Business Meeting : 1:30 PM

Presentation: 2:00 PM

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

**Neal Shipley will be doing the March presentation with
videos from the 2020 Las Vegas Consumer Electronics Show**