



THE COMPUTER CONNECTION

SAUK COMPUTER USER GROUP

OCTOBER 2020

VOLUME THIRTY
NUMBER TEN

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The Whiteside County Senior Center will not open in October for meetings. We had 13 people at the September meeting with the Zoom app from APCUG. We will have to have another remote meeting in October.

Neal will host a few help sessions to answer questions you may have. Please try one, it's not that difficult if you have a camera and microphone. The times are all for 7:30 PM... Fri. Oct 2nd and Fri. 9th.

Joe Fornero

**September
SCUG BOARD
MEETING
MINUTES**

**DATE:
09/16/2020**

Meeting was called to order by Vice President Neal Shipley.

Attending the meeting were: Neal Shipley, Joe Fornero, Joe Schmitt, Janice Maves, Nancy Rich and Jim Maloney.

Treasurer's report was presented by Joe F.

Discussion Highlights:

Whiteside County Senior Center will

not reopen in October
Next meeting will be on Zoom
Next meeting is 10/10/2020

Future Programs:
Neal will present a couple of instructional videos topic to be determined.
Meeting adjourned.

*Respectfully submitted by
Nancy Rich,
Secretary*

Club Information

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An International
Association of Technology
& Computer User Groups

The Next Drawing

Well, the Coronavirus has us isolated at home instead of at work. Some people, so I've heard, are tackling tasks they've deferred for the proverbial "rainy day." I've often said to myself that I would scan that box of photos I rescued from my departed uncle's home before its contents were sold at an estate sale. I intend to distribute the images to my relatives. The issue is ... identifying the people in the photos. Genealogical research can be a tedious task. Just such a task for a time like this. If you are interested in creating a family tree, or simply learning more about your ancestors, there are many websites where you can conduct genealogical research. Some of these websites are interactive and allow you to share photos and communicate with distant relatives. Bob Rankin at AskBobRankin.com provides a list of useful sites for Genealogical research:

1. Ancestry.com – perhaps the best-known website for genealogical research. It is a subscription-based service that costs \$199/year or \$99 for six months. A 14-day trial will

allow you to evaluate the service. For an additional fee, the "World Explorer" package

adds the ability to search internationally.

2. Cyndi's List – is a free, "... categorized & cross-referenced index to genealogical resources on the Internet. Over 335,000 genealogical sites are linked from this website.

3. Family Search – is run by the LDS Church. It provides access to over a billion records worldwide at no cost. The LDS Church also provides personal assistance and access to some of the paid sites via local family history centers. A local family history center is located at 20 Boscobel Rd Fredericksburg, VA 22405 (540) 361-7494.

4. Roots Web – is the oldest and perhaps the largest genealogy site on the internet. The Roots Web site has genealogy search engines and message boards where you can obtain help from budding but more experienced genealogists.

5. USGenWeb – provides lists of genealogy resources by state and county.

6. WorldGenWeb – is similar to USGenWeb. Bob Rankin says, "WorldGenWeb is a nonprofit

The regular drawing for next meeting whenever that happens, will be \$50 gift certificate from Candlelight, a \$25 gift card from Pizza Ranch and a local family restaurant and a 1Tb flash drive, a USB flashlight plus some misc. items.

Copy of link used for September Meeting on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX160bcMFuA>

volunteer organization that is dedicated to the free use and access of public domain genealogical information."

Mr. Rankin notes several other websites and the resources that are provided in the article linked above (i.e., at AskBobRankin.com). He also provides links to genealogy software.

*By Frank Fota, Secretary &
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FPCUG Notes for April 2020
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Make Windows 10 Faster

By David Kretchmar

Support for Windows 7 is now history. Support for Windows 8 will last for 3 more years. Windows 8 mostly consisted of intermediate steps (and missteps) toward Windows 10. In 2020 I can think of no reason for any user to be running Windows 8 instead of Windows 10, especially since Windows 10 is superior and is a free update to Windows 8. So, if you are one of the few users still running Windows 8 there is no better time than now to upgrade to Windows 10.

Most of us have used Windows 10 for a few years now; Windows lacks the flexibility of the flavors of Linux, and the slick user interface of Mac's Catalina, but is the operating system installed on the majority of home computers now.

Windows 10 is Microsoft's best operating system so far but is not perfect. However, it is virtually infinitely customizable and I'm going to make a few suggestions that will help you get the most out of your windows 10 system.

KEEP WINDOWS UP TO DATE



Windows is issuing updates on a weekly basis and these are important not only for the operating system and peripheral issues corrected but also for keeping your security malware definitions current. Go to Update Settings and confirm that updates are current. Hit Check for Updates to verify this. This is also where you can learn if your system is running the latest update to Windows 10 (1909) and possibly complete this process (as is required in the dialogue box shown). Under Advanced Settings you can make sure auto-updates is checked.

DISABLE CORTANA



She needs to just shut up. For most users, Cortana is just an annoyance built into Windows 10. She mostly gives users annoying pop-ups, she is constantly gathering data, and does little more than try to force us into Bing searches. In this day of actually useful voice assistants, such as Google or Alexa, Cortana seems oddly dumb. I have learned to disable Cortana during the installation of Windows but if you have not

had this opportunity shutting her off is easy. Go to Cortana under Settings and toggle all sliders off.

Go back to the main Settings window and under Privacy Settings you can turn off the sliders for speech and inking and typing to reduce the amount of data Cortana gathers on your computer usage. You can also block Cortana from accessing your microphone and camera on the privacy page. This is also a good time to review all your privacy settings to make sure you are putting as little information as possible out there.

DISABLE NOTIFICATIONS



Many users are unaware of why they are constantly getting popups from the Notifications icon on the lower right-hand corner of your Taskbar. These popups use system resources and can be a pain when they interfere with your computer use. Go to Settings, System, Notifications, and actions and toggle off Notifications. Like magic, they will no longer appear! You will still have many web pages offering notifications, but you can just say "NO!" by hitting "Block" or "Don't Allow".

DISABLE STARTUP APPS

Go to your Task Manager Startup tab and disable any programs you do not need running immediately every time you go into your operating system. Microsoft OneDrive and speech recognition are a couple of major resource hogs. Toggle off anything you do not need running all the time. Remember, you are not removing any programs and you are not preventing them from firing up when you need them.

LOG-IN FASTER



The Windows 10 log-in screen is an excellent example of a worthless “improvement”. Having to swipe up or down or hit “Space” is a step Microsoft somehow felt was necessary; typing in your password takes even more time. Most users prefer to use a four-digit PIN; just enter 4 digits and there is no need to even hit Enter. To set a PIN go to Settings, then Sign-in options. Click on Windows Hello PIN and set your 4-digit PIN. Note

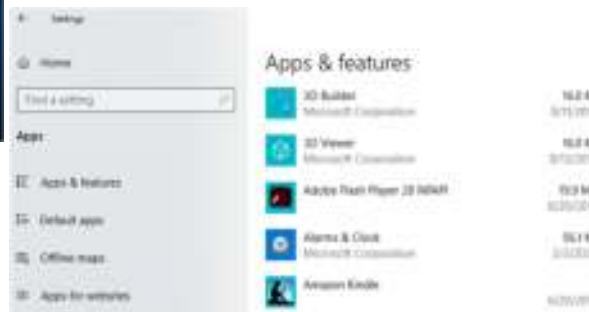
that a little further down on this page you can disable the requirement for a sign-in after you’ve been away from your computer for a while.

If you want to *remove* the sign-in password requirement, type “NETPLWIZ” in the search box then use this application to disable the password requirement for your computer.

DISABLE BACKGROUND APPS

This is not necessary on a new powerful system, but if yours is older you might want to look at these under Privacy/Settings. With an older system performance might be improved by unchecking anything you don’t need running.

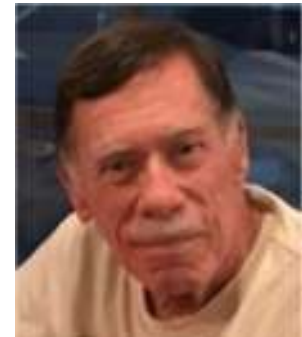
UNINSTALL UNNEEDED PROGRAMS



Talking about unnecessary stuff included with Windows 10, there is a ton of “Bloatware” included on most new store-bought systems you can just ditch. Right-click on Start and click on Apps and Features. Scroll through the list and you will see a lot of programs on your system that you never use. Games such as Candy Crush and security programs such as Norton or MacAfee are major offenders in

this area. Here is where you can simply uninstall the unused applications, freeing up room on your hard drive, and ensuring these programs will not try to load and take system resources in the future.

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Com
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puter Club
April 2020 Gigabyte Gazette



It's all in the mind, y'know

By Frank Petrie

You pay close attention to what and how much you eat and drink. You work out religiously several times per week. How often do you exercise your grey matter?

Three years ago, I found there's an app for that. I've have been dutifully using it ever since and the app keeps getting better and better. I thought it well worth a revisit.

> Elevate is a new type of cognitive training tool designed to build communication and analytical skills. Elevate has been selected by Apple as the App of the Year. Since launching in May 2014, Elevate has been downloaded more than 25 million times on the App Store and Google Play.

[Elevate](<https://www.elevateapp.com>) runs your brain through a range of exercises from grammar to math and all variations in between. There are dozens of exercises with a game-like quality that will keep on challenging you, raising the bar as you improve your skillset.

You can customize your daily training focus, choosing between 3 to 5 games from a stable of 35+ games. If you'd like, you can measure your performance against yourself and others. Immediately, it doesn't take long to separate your weaknesses from your strengths.

Elevate collaborated with an independent research company and an independent analyst in four key skill groups.

Elevate users trained using our app during a four-week period, after which the Elevate users and the control group took identical post-tests.

Our analyst found that Elevate users improved 69% more than non-users, and the more they played Elevate, the better their results.

Over time, I have found that my strength lies in grammar but (although not terrible) I need to work on my mathematical aptitude.

The first thing that you'll notice is that the exercises are challenges yet simultaneously feel like games. Not in a Mario Bros. sense but sophisticated. This owes in great part to the different and inventive UIs for each exercise. And they challenge you more as you grow more proficient in any particular category.

Example: One of the math challenges has you calculate the average of two numbers, at first. As you become more proficient, the app ups you to three numbers, and then four. Then they toss you a curve. Instead of just whole numbers, they figure decimals into your calculations.

The one math exercise that I felt had the most interesting twist was Subtraction. I struggled at first but the app points out the easiest method to obtain the correct answer after it has detected a pattern to what you're doing wrong. What was fascinating was that for the first several months, the equations were laid out vertically, like this:

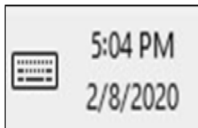
1945
-732

It was easy to concoct methodologies to arrive at your answer speedily. But then came the twist. Once you became proficient with this arrangement, they then presented the equations horizontally:

$$1945 - 732 = ?$$

Surprisingly, it tossed me for a loop. I had to ditch all of my previous visual cues and start anew. You wouldn't think it would be that hard but it was returning to square one.

I have recently discovered another category: punctuation. The first exercise dealing with commas, when they should be removed and where they should be added.



The same can be said for their grammar exercises. They'll provide you with two sentences with a word or two missing. You're presented with the choice of two options to complete the sentences. But once you've become competent at spotting the correct or incorrect phrase competence at that level, the options are upped to three.

Another grammar exercise requires you to decide whether a phrase is correct or not. In the beginning, they highlight the phrase to make it easier to focus on. Once you have proven agile at recognizing a phrase is proper or improper, they then remove the highlighting and you have to focus on the entire paragraph.

At the end of each exercise, Elevate tells you how your performance ranked overall of all the times you trained with that exercise.

After a session of five games, you will receive a brief overview of how you are progressing in those categories, how you compare to all Elevate users in a specific topic such as grammar, and how many consecutive days you have completed.

All-in-all, Elevate is a challenging collection of exercises that will help you achieve your top form mentally. And the developers keep on introducing new ones.

Elevate is available for free on the iOS store. There are in-app [various subscriptions](<https://apps.apple.com/US/app/id875063456/?platform=ipad>) you can purchase. Unfortunately, you're told the fees but not which apply to which devices or their duration (one month, one year, lifetime, etc.).

Still, if you are as serious about staying in shape mentally as physically, I still encourage you to give Elevate a bash. You'll bash it at least twice if you're smart or want to be.

By Frank Petrie
<https://ympnow.com>
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Connecting to Friends and Family Members

By Dorothy Fitch

There are many ways to communicate electronically with people these days, keeping a safe distance. This article explores ways to communicate with lots of people at the same time.

By Email

You can create a group of contacts in your email program. Then you can create and send a message to that group and they will all get your message.

Use the BCC (Blind Carbon Copy) line for the group so that all the email addresses aren't visible to everyone. This protects the privacy of the recipients.

By Phone

Did you know that you can set up a conference call with all your friends and family for free?

[Freeconferencecall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com) is a free service that allows an unlimited number of people to call a phone number, enter an access code, and talk with all the other people on the line. The phone number to call isn't local, so long-distance charges may apply. However, most people have unlimited long distance for calls within the US these days.

Freeconferencecall.com also offers free screen sharing and video conferences. [Compare their services to others on their website \(scroll down to see the chart\).](#)

By Video

There are many options for face-to-face communication using video. Your computer or device would need to have a camera.

In addition to [freeconferencecall.com](https://www.freeconferencecall.com), noted above for audio meetings, there are also these other apps that are free (or very low-cost).

[Zoom](#) is a popular video conference application. The free version allows for unlimited 1 to 1 meetings, 40-minute sessions for 3 or more people, application sharing, and collaboration. [Click to read about all their offerings.](#) They are offering added support and training during the pandemic. [Click for more information.](#)

[Skype](#) is a free video communication tool that you can use to connect to other people who have Skype accounts. Software downloads are available for Windows, Mac, and Linux desktops and Apple and Android mobile devices. [Click for a list of features.](#) Skype

also offers free video conferences and conference calls that anyone can join even if they don't have a Skype account; no special software is required. [Read more about this feature.](#) (Skype is a product of Microsoft.)

[Group FaceTime](#) allows you to communicate with up to 31 other people at the same time. [Here is how to get started.](#)

[Google Duo](#), for Mac and Android devices, allows you to connect to up to 12 people (now up from 8) on phones, tablets, and computers.

Here are a few articles comparing these tools and tips for using them.

[Compare Zoom vs FaceTime](#)

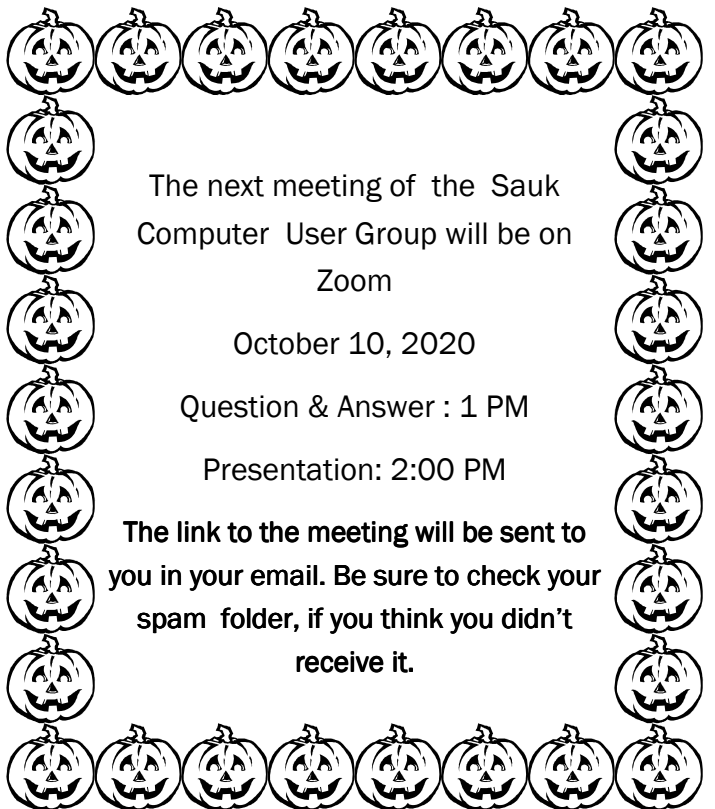
[Zoom vs. Skype vs. Discord vs. Facetime vs. Google Hangouts \(for Video Conferencing Calls\)](#)

[Using Zoom? Here are 10 tips to get the most of it](#)

[Google Duo's group video limit rises to 12 people just at the right time](#)

*By Dorothy Fitch, Green Bytes Editor,
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There will be a Question & Answer Session starting at 1 PM on Zoom. Bring any questions you have about your computer or problems you may be having. It will be conducted by:
Neal Shipley



The next meeting of the Sauk Computer User Group will be on Zoom

October 10, 2020

Question & Answer : 1 PM

Presentation: 2:00 PM

The link to the meeting will be sent to you in your email. Be sure to check your spam folder, if you think you didn't receive it.

Neal Shipley will be host an online Zoom meeting with a Question & Answer time and a video presentation.