CAEUG — Computers Are Easy User Group

Confirmed meeting dates

2022

July 23
August 27
Hybrid
Board Room
in person
OR Zoom

:: ::

Check website for dates and meeting info

:: ::

Mailing address:
CAEUG
P.O. Box 3150
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138
:: ::

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PER GLENSIDE Library <u>Late breaking news</u>
meeting Board Room is available to meet. Masks are optional.

INFORMATION for Saturday July 23rd meeting
The start time at the library is 9:30am or Zoom is 10:00am.
This will be a hybrid meeting. We will meet at the library Board Room and use Zoom video conferencing software.

In person meeting Board Room OR where you get to stay at home and view meeting via Zoom **The library may close due to the covid level in DuPage County.**

There will be a meeting invitation e-mail Thursday evening before the Saturday meeting.

Our Presenter for Saturday An APCUG video by Don Arrowsmith titled **Learn all about a VPN** in the Board Room also on ZOOM.

REMINDER:
$20.00 Membership dues for 2022 are due.
Mail dues to CAEUG, P.O. Box 3150,
Glen Ellyn, IL 60138
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Join CAEUG meeting in Library or from Home,
Stay Safe! Stay tuned for updates

Lamp Post 248
July 2022
by John Spizzirri

At Katmai National Park, Alaska the salmon run is just starting to get underway. The bear sows with very young cubs are showing them the river for the first time **(1)**. The bear fishing can be very graphic and bloody. This is real life and death.

1) https://is.gd/5XSkeR

Larry Bothe, our former president, treasurer, and frequent ARI... contributor, wrote me an e-mail about an article I had in the April Lamp Post. It was about junk or unused files taking up space or using resources on your PC. Getting those files off your PC increases you PCs speed and responsiveness. Larry was concerned about the files that Microsoft **(MS (1))** puts on the machine that do not seem to have any function. Larry wrote, "I'm always reluctant to delete things from MS because they are "part of the operating system". But do I really need all this stuff? For example, there are 17 separate entries for Microsoft Visual C++ Redistributable, with various years from 2005 up to 2017, and some marked x86, and others x64. Are they all necessary? Another group has to do with Xbox, 6 separate program listings. I'm not a gamer. Could I safely delete Xbox stuff? Should I? How about MS Silverlight (didn't I read something about Silverlight being obsolete?), MS Pay, MS Sticky Notes? I don't use any of that stuff, and yet it's all there." I agree with Larry that ARI... readers would like to know what MS files can be dumped safely, so I started to do some research. Trying to find the right questions to ask was the main problem. Once I found the right combination of words, there were many web sites that had quality recommendations. Starting with the ZD-Net **(2)** article; "Which are worth keeping? Which ones should you dump?" I found from my reading that MS has thoroughly confused the issue by creating a Windows 10 and Windows 11 just a little different for various segments of their clientele. How do you log into you Win machine? Must you be connected to the Internet? Can you login locally? Is you version Home, Pro, or Enterprise? The answer to each of those questions changes the what MS has dumped on your machine in an effort to "monetization opportunities" or as I like to put it abuse customers. I can start off with the advise that if it is on the main menu and it has and uninstall button available, you can safely uninstall it. All the third party games, music, and video software that MS added to Win 10 and 11 can be safely uninstalled. Decrapifier **(3)** can still be used for that purpose even though it is no longer maintained by the original designer **(4)**. For those of you who are more venturesome and technically minded, Ask Woody **(5)** has some advise on what to remove but advises first to have a "full disk image backup and a separate file backup of your User data" before you do anything he recommends. For those who are more conservative Chris Titus (not the comedian) is a long time tech veteran. His Youtube "Making Windows Faster without Tools" **(6)** will help you make the PC faster. He actually goes through the list of files and gives reasons why you may not want them. Chris has a script to remove bloat,

"Speed up Windows 10 with One Command" and a Youtube to explain the script **(7)**. Chris has also developed an open source tool that includes the Windows bloat remover. The tool adds the functionality of Ninite **(8)** and some other Windows functions. He explains the tool on Youtube **(9)** and on a written web site **(10)**. To get to the tool you will need Internet access and administrator user privilege. Open Powershell (as administrator) and type

'iwr useb http://christitus.com/win | iex'

without the quote marks then press enter. The tool launches and installs. I am including a number of the web sites that I found that describe methods of getting rid of superfluous MS files. I have various levels of confidence in the accuracy of all the advice in these web sites. The sites previously mentioned are the ones that I trust the most, the other sites I trust less, however, most say the same things as ZD-Net, Ask Woody, and Chris Titus with varying amounts of complexity. The sites I found are Technipages **(11)**, The Windows Club **(12)**, DataNumen **(13)**, Make Tech Easier **(14)**, Win 10 FAQ **(15)**, How-To Geek **(16)**, WindowsReport **(17)**, and Laptop Mag **(18)**. There are a few Youtube videos that I found helpful as well: Create a Clean and Fast Windows 10 Install **(19)**, How To DEBLOAT Windows 10 for Better Performance! *SPEED UP WINDOWS* **(20)**, Update! Remove Bloatware From Windows 10 (2021) | Windows 10 Debloater **(21)**, De-Bloat And De-Spook Windows 10 With a Few Clicks **(22)**, and We fixed Windows 10 - Microsoft will HATE this! **(23).**

1) **https://www.microsoft.com/**
2) **https://is.gd/2JvR3x**
3) **https://is.gd/MZ9IFK**
4) **https://www.pcdecrapifier.com/**
5) **https://www.askwoody.com/?p=2372689**
6) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GOz_foQcPcY**
7) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dO30OnTsJhk**
8) **https://ninite.com/**
9) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPRv-ATUBe4**
10) **https://christitus.com/windows-tool/**
11) **https://is.gd/iPlNGy**
12) **https://www.thewindowsclub.com/?p=170246**
13) **https://is.gd/Cl2sKH**
14) **https://is.gd/BtLwrO**
15) **https://win10faq.com/?p=2756**
16) **https://is.gd/a6RCrx**
17) **https://windowsreport.com/?p=49521**
18) **https://is.gd/3blOes**
19) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhY3Y39xeEg**
20) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9a_BHAMrdsw**
21) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7SdtxrsZN8k**
22) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NhitETZb8s0**
23) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AAC0Jb4YRc0**

Another method to run faster is to use an altered version of Windows. I found Tiny 10

(1) and Windows 10 Ameliorated Edition (Wind 10 AE **(2)**). Neither of these seem to be approved by MS. Tiny 10 is on the DVD of the Month. Win 10 AE is to big for the DVDoM so I put the web sites on the disk. You can build your own Win 10 AE with instructions from the web site. There are Youtube videos explaining both editions **((3), (4), (5), (6))**.

1) **https://is.gd/Zy5Z3i**
2) **https://ameliorated.info/**
3) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8Bl6rUNx8w**
4) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YKi2q2PzNjE**
5) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nwkiU6GG-YU**
6) **https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9nGi0nUIYM**

Steve Gibson of the Gibson Research Corporation (GRC **(1)**) has cooked up a web browser cookie tester **(2)**. When you go to this site, it tests how your browser handles cookies. It warns you about bad browser behavior. It is another tool to help you stay safe on the Internet.

1) **https://www.grc.com/**
2) **https://is.gd/18Xu7Z**

The multi-state lottery game, Mega Millions **(1)**, has announced that since it has had very large prizes a number of bunco scams have come to light on e-mail and telephone **(2)**. Mega Millions does not contact anyone about winning a prize. If you bought a ticket, it is your responsibility to take it to the retailer of the Mega Millions office to redeem any winnings. Do NOT fall for any e-mail or phone come-ons.

1) **https://www.megamillions.com/**
2) **https://is.gd/f0QaWM**

Between you, me and the LampPost, that's all for now.

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Who's Watching You?
By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, CKCS Newsletter
October 2022 Issue
https://ckcs.org/
lextown2 (at) gmail.com

More Internet users are relying on VPNs – apps called Virtual Private Networks – that keep your Internet activity from prying eyes – than ever before. As more of us pay our credit card bills online, buy tickets from online travel agencies, and read our email, it's clear online privacy is getting much more attention.

Most Americans are unaware that in 2017, Congress passed, and the president signed a bill trashing an F.C.C. rule.

That rule would have required Internet providers to get permission from customers before selling their web browsing history and other private information to advertisers, ad agencies and others.

Instead, Internet providers are free to sell your personal data, despite your objections. Isn't this backwards? Shouldn't you be able to decide who sees your browsing habits, your email, the banks with whom you do business, and your Social Security number?

Personal information such as which illnesses you've searched in a web browser, where you bank, where you shop, and potentially even where your child or grandchild goes to school can now be accessed by the company you pay for Internet service.

To prevent this, more and more of us are paying for VPNs to keep prying eyes away. The COVID–19 pandemic is having a major impact on VPN use.

"When the pandemic hit in 2020, VPN demand skyrocketed, driven by the increased use of internet-based services at home, and the evolution of remote work. During the first two weeks between March 8th and March 22nd alone, VPN usage in the USA increased a massive 124%," reports Findstack.

A blog called The Cornwall Seeker writes, "A decade ago, Only a third of Americans and 20% of the people in the U.K. knew what a VPN was. Now, 68% of all adults in the U.S. use a VPN according to security.org."

A just–released poll by Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and Meritalk reveals that most Americans believe their personal online information is not at all secure.

Most polled believe social media activity such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram is not very or not at all secure. 50% say private text conversations lack privacy.

In addition, many are not satisfied with the federal government's total lack of action. Nearly 75% of those polled support establishing national standards for how companies can collect, process and share personal data.

The Associated Press quotes Sarah Blick, a professor of medieval art history at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, northeast of Columbus as saying, "I feel there is little to no security whatsoever."

Earlier this year, the college's human resources department told Blick that someone fraudulently applied for unemployment insurance benefits in her name. As we spoke about during the September Tech Night Zoom session, VPNs can keep your online activity secure – but only if you use them on all of your Internet devices.

If you missed Tech Night, check out A Beginner's Guide to Understanding VPNs.

If you're ready to choose a VPN, see what Top10VPN considers its best VPN services.
Tom's Guide lists its top choices in the best VPNs.

Because so many Americans (and Internet users all over the world) are currently considering a VPN, it's a very competitive market.

As I mentioned during Tech Night if you can afford it, you can get better pricing if, rather than buying a VPN for six months or one year, you pay for a two- or three-year period.

What To Look For In a VPN

Security & Privacy: As one website says, "A VPN is only as good as its ability to keep you and your data safe."

Speed: Since a VPN is rerouting your Internet connection through its own private servers, if there aren't enough servers your speed can suffer. The best VPNs have vast networks all over the world. If you cannot connect to one server because too many people are connected at the same time, you simply choose another server.

Ease of Use & Customer Support: It should be as simple as moving a slider

button on your phone or double clicking a tab on your Mac or PC to activate a VPN. If you have trouble with a VPN – or questions – the company needs to provide customer support. Period.

Performance & Server Locations: The more servers there are, the better chances you have to connect to your VPN if there's congestion. If you cannot connect to a server closest to you, then there should be one fairly close by. (Connecting to a VPN server in St. Louis or Virginia rather than St. Croix or Germany or Australia will typically give you faster Internet speed from your computer, phone, or iPad in Kentucky.)

Price: Find a VPN that you can afford. Avoid free VPNs. Many of them generate revenue by displaying plenty of ads. So, as you're trying to use the Internet, you're constantly disrupted by ads. Free VPNs often have few servers, and it might be a challenge to find one located near you. What you might not know is that many free VPNs use your computer's processing power when it's not in use. In addition, your activity might be tracked, your browsing details may be sold, and your Internet connection is often slow. Also, it's been discovered that China owns a number of free VPNs. Do you really want your personal Internet data going to Chinese authorities?

No Logging: The best VPNs will not track your web browser visits, your email, your social media usage, or other Internet activity. VPNs that do track your activity usually have one goal in mind: Making money. They want to sell your personal data.

"One quarter of all Internet users have accessed a VPN in the last month," wrote Rob Mardisalu on the thebestvpn.com website in January 2020.

Here's a breakdown by device:
Desktop: 17% (had used a VPN in the last month as of Jan. 2020.) Mobile: 15%

Tablet: 7% For some, using a VPN was as common as washing their hands. bestvpn.com reports in early 2020, 35% of desktop computer users and 42% of mobile users (phones, laptops, iPads) had used a VPN every day.

VPN Users by Age (source: thebestvpn.com)
55-64 years old: 4%
45-54: 9%
35-44: 19%
25-34: 33%
16-24: 35%

The Asia–Pacific region has the highest number of VPN users (30%), while North America and Europe lag with far fewer VPN users (17%).

It turns out retaining anonymity (and keeping personal data private) is the strongest motivator to use a VPN in: the USA, Sweden, Canada, France, Japan, Germany, and South Africa. In other countries, folks use VPNs to stream TV shows and movies that have not yet been released or are off limits in those regions. In China and Russia, reporters use VPNs to get around repressive, dictatorial Internet restrictions.

Need more details? There are a number of websites that describe VPNs in simple English so that all of us can decide what's best for us individually.

  Here are some links providing details, descriptions, and information about VPNs that are easy to digest:

How–To–Geek   Tricky Enough   Forbes Advisor

July 2022 DVD of the Month

AMEWin10 - Windows 10 Ameliorated Edition web site
ARI - Monthly newsletter
AudioBook - Free audio book
DeCrapifier - Windows cleaning software
DVDOMlists - Contents of CDs and DVDs of the Month

MemberContributions - Things members send me
OldTimeRadio - Old radio audio files
OpenShell - Win 10 menu replacement

SOS Security Suite - Gets rid of Malware, Adware and Spyware
Stop Resetting My Apps - Prevents updates from resetting apps to default
Tiny10 - Stripped down Windows 10-
UVK - Ultra Virus Killer
WAU Manager - Control of the Windows Updates

The Glenside Public Library address is at 25 E Fullerton Avenue, Glendale Heights, Illinois. The meeting(s) are not library sponsored Individuals with disabilities who plan to attend this program and who require certain accommodations in order to observe and / or participate in the program are requested to contact CAEUG president, at least five (5) days prior to the program, so that reasonable accommodation can be made.

Members Helpline
Any member can volunteer to be on the Members Helpline.
Hardware problems, Win 7, Win 10, Linux and Virus Removal
 - John Spizzirri

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