

Bits of Bytes

Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, Colorado Springs, CO

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Issue 2



The Prez Sez

by Cary Quinn,
President, P*PCompAS

Did you know the first CES was a spinoff of a music conference? It was an early attempt to bridge electrical appliances like washers, dryers, and refrigerators with the world of radios and phonographs. Now, some forty-seven years later, we live in a world of digital electronics; where we bridge bits of bytes and Internet access with everything from washers and dryers, to cars and even ourselves. I am looking forward to Nuvo's reporting on how far we have come along that bridge. ☺



Meeting Minutes

by Toni Logan,
Secretary,
P*PCompAS

The newly elected President, Cary Quinn, called the 3 January 2015 meeting to order at 9 am. He reminded everyone that coffee is free for first-time guests and a donation for all others. The coffee is donated by Laura at Starbucks at Citadel Crossing. Cary also thanked Stanley Rapaport for bringing in a bunch of fresh pineapples for giveaway.

The approval of the minutes as printed in the newsletter was made and seconded and passed.

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 7 February 2015

Joe Nuvolini will give a presentation on CES 2015.

OFFICER REPORTS

Vice-President Harvey McMinn, as head of the program committee, reported that today would be an expert's panel. It was also noted that the Pikes Peak Library now has the Lynda.com videos available.

Treasurer Dennis Conroy reported that we have received a dividend of \$.49 and received \$162 in dues for a total treasury of \$6939.73

Membership Chairwoman Ann Titus reported on the dues paid for this year.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan reported that the deadline for the next newsletter is January 24, 2015.

Hospitality Co-Chair Pat Krieger reminded us again to ask our friends to visit the club meetings.

Board of Directors Chair Toni Logan announced that a meeting of the BOD would be held at the next breakfast meeting at Country Buffet.

OLD BUSINESS

A financial review committee to review the books was appointed, consisting of Dennis Conroy, Peter Rallis, and Cary Quinn.

NEW BUSINESS

The members were asked to think about a gift to the church for the coming year. Last year we gave them a Kitchen Aid mixer. Also, the membership committee asked if anyone needed new nametags.

President Cary Quinn approached the idea of more social media presence for the club, such as Facebook and others. He mentioned Meetup.com which

could set up an avenue for reaching potential members.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The breakfast meeting will be on Saturday, January 17, at the Country Buffet, and the next meeting of the club will be on Saturday, February 7, 2015. The program for the meeting will be on CES by Joe Nuvolini.

AROUND THE ROOM

The Around the Room portion was abbreviated due to the coming expert's panel.

PROGRAM

Several members participated as "experts" and there was an energetic discussion of several subjects headed by Cary Quinn.

DRAWING

O'Reilly coupon—Dennis Conroy
O'Reilly coupon—Norm Miller
Photo Studio Expressions—Carol Stanton
Movie Studio—Bob Blackledge
A spotlight—Peter Rallis
Radar Detector—Pat Krieger ☺

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Publicity: Harvey McMinn

Nominating: Vacant

Board of Directors

Toni Logan

Norm Miller

Bob Blackledge

Warren Hill

John Pearce



Nybbles and Bits

by John Pearce, P*PCompAS

Here's are few miscellaneous tidbits for your consideration. Windows 7 is now in extended support phase. This means just security fixes until extended support ends in 2020. You can check out the complete Windows lifecycle information at <http://windows.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/lifecycle>.

Microsoft held their big Windows 10 consumer event on January 21st. The big news coming from that presentation is that the Windows 10 upgrade from either Windows 7 or 8.1 is free for the first year after launch. Sorry, Windows XP and Vista users. There is no upgrade pricing for you. Microsoft has not announced a launch date, however it is widely expected to happen this year (2015).

There are a number of sites where you can read how Windows 10 bridges the gap between desktops, notebooks, tablets and smart phones. C|Net, TechRepublic, PC World, Life Hacker and others have written about the changes. Use your favorite search engine and search for "Windows 10 features."

Like others, I have a Windows XP machine that I use for certain applications. I recently started the XP machine and there was a pop-up for a Java update. Long story made short, the update attempted to install Java 8 which is not officially supported on Windows XP.



Java 7 support terminates at the end of April, 2015 unless you have a paid support contract. See https://www.java.com/en/download/faq/java_7.xml for information.

If you have Comcast as your ISP, have you received an insert in your bill about doubling the download speed for certain tiers including the Performance tier? I did. I immediately ran a speed test using <http://speedtest.comcast.net/> and the results were unchanged: 25 MB up and 5 MB down. I followed the directions on the insert to restart my cable modem then ran the speed test again. The results: 49MB down and 5 MB up. Most of the tests I run are with Comcast's speed test server in Denver. Testing with other Comcast servers produces similar results. Tests with servers outside Comcast's network are somewhat slower as might be expected. Then other days, 10 MB download speed is the best Comcast can do. ☺



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P*PCompAS welcomes any comments, letters, or articles from members and non-members alike. Please send any articles to the editor (see last page for address). The editor reserves the right to reject, postpone, or edit for space, style, grammar, and clarity of any material submitted.

Not a lot to report this month. I did have a huge Acronis True Image save this month. My primary desktop with my life on it started acting up a couple of weeks ago. It would lock up each day at an unspecified time. I would have to reboot it the next morning. It appeared to be a hard drive problem. I ran chkdsk /r on all four partitions and found them all to be okay. I also checked the drives with Acronis Drive Monitor and they appeared to be okay. I tried to restore from a backup image but it hung in the middle. I decided to replace the primary drive. I had an old 160 GB drive, so I partitioned it into C & D, and then I restored my backup image. When I tried to boot the program, chkdsk, found a problem. It hung after running chkdsk, so I rebooted. It asked if I wanted to boot in the Safe Mode. I gave it a try but it hung as well. On the third reboot attempt, it booted, but was acting very sluggish. I tried another reboot and voila! It booted normally and worked fine. I did get a message that Windows had recovered from a serious problem which I reported to Microsoft. It has been running continuously since then; a great Acronis save.

Gene Barlow will be giving us a presentation at the March meeting on True



Nuggets from Nuvo by Joe Nuvolini, P*PCompAS

Image 2015. There will be no product available at the meeting. He will send me a form that I will replicate to pass out to attendees so they can order online. This should make things a lot simpler, at least for Ilene.

I'll be giving a rundown on CES this month. It may not be quite as organized as in the past as I was a bit distracted by some health issues just before I left. I took a number of videos with my still camera while interviewing folks about their products. Unfortunately, the microphone is not too sensitive so you may not be able to hear it too well. There was a lot of emphasis on TV video as always. Samsung has SUHD with Tizen. LG added 4K to their OLED for an amazing picture. There were also some 8K units on display. 3D printing was very big and had their area in the Sands this year.

Steve Immer, who I met at the airport on the way to the show, is the Western Regional Manager for 3DSYSTEMS and has agreed to give a program for us in April. It should be really interesting. Steve e-mailed me the first evening of the show and invited me to drop by the Sands the next morning for a tour of the company's area. It was really great. I could go on but I will cover more at the meeting, so be there! ☺

Minutes of Board of Directors Meeting, by Toni Logan, Chairman BOD

A meeting of the PPCOMPAS Board of Directors was held on Saturday, January 17, 2015 at the Country Buffet. In attendance were Chairwoman Toni Logan Chairman and members Norm Miller, Bob Blackledge, and John Pearce.

We discussed whether we have complied with our Articles of Confederation and our Bylaws. We have paid our APCUG dues and will be filing our tax information. The membership has looked into our gift to the church for this year. We also discussed the fact that the Vice President is in charge of programs, but that he/she may appoint a committee to help. No change to the Bylaws is needed.



We made a recommendation to remind the President of PPCOMPAS that the Executive Committee should meet quarterly.

No other business was needed, and the meeting was adjourned.

☺

At left, there was a sizable turnout of digerati at the January breakfast. It was a combination of a great deal and great company.

Google Chromecast—Inexpensive Competitor to Cable and Satellite Entertainment

Published with permission from Ira Wilsker, Golden Triangle PC Club, columnist for The Examiner, Beaumont, TX

WEBSITES:

<https://www.google.com/chrome/devices/chromecast/index.html>
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Chromecast>
https://www.google.com/intl/en_us/chrome/devices/chromecast/index.html
<http://www.google.com/intl/en/chrome/devices/chromecast/index-opt-a.html>
<http://finance.yahoo.com/news/streaming-chromecast-passes-apple-tv-150024539.html>
<http://www.cnet.com/products/google-chromecast/>
<http://www.pcmag.com/article2/0,2817,2422300,00.asp>
<https://www.google.com/chrome/devices/chromecast/apps.html>
<https://support.google.com/chromecast/?hl=en#topic=3447927>
<https://support.google.com/chromecast/answer/2998336>
<https://www.google.com/chromecast/backdrop/>

You may have seen the recent TV commercials for a new device from Amazon called Fire Stick, which is so new that it is just starting to be shipped. Another device which recently came on the market with great fanfare is the Roku Streaming Stick. Several other comparable devices are in development, or recently came on the market creating a crowded field of competitive products. One that has been on the market since the summer of 2013 is Google's Chromecast, which has become well established with "millions" sold, according to a July 2014 statement from Google. One may wonder what all of the buzz is about, and why so many companies are developing or producing these items. How did Google manage to sell "millions" of Chromecast devices (their words) in the first 12 months that it was available? The answer is simple - these relatively inexpensive items have become an entertainment tool that for many users, can somewhat compete with satellite or cable TV at a fraction of the price.

One of my daughters recently "cut the cable," even though she was on a very good fiber optic system with hundreds of TV channels, dozens of movie channels, and other features, because in her eyes the monthly cost was becoming prohibitive. She also has a separate very high speed internet service which she believed could be better utilized for entertainment purposes, as well as providing a reliable connection for her chosen digital telephone service. She and her husband like streaming movies, sports, music, features, and other entertainment; living in the Dallas area, all of the local TV stations, both local and network, are available over the air for free,



using an inexpensive digital antenna hooked up to the TVs around her house. By connecting her TVs to the Internet, using some of the readily available and inexpensive devices, she has found that there is nothing that she is really missing from her former expensive cable service, other than a large monthly bill. By her calculations, she believes that she is saving about \$150 per month using these alternative devices to connect her TV to the Internet in her home. Some of the newer "smart TVs" that recently came onto the market do not need external devices to connect to the Internet, as they are already capable of receiving alternative Internet-based entertainment through an Ethernet or Wi-Fi connection. Since she does not (yet) have a new smart TV, one of the devices that she uses is the Chromecast device from Google.

A Chromecast device, which Google refers to as a digital media player, looks very similar to a common USB flash drive, and is about the same size and weight, but has an industry standard HDMI plug, rather than the USB plug found on a typical flash drive. Specifically a Chromecast device is 2.38" long, 1.38 inches wide, and 0.47 of an inch thick, and weighs 1.2 ounces. Inside, where the magic takes place, is a Nexus Q microprocessor (CPU), with 512 MB of fast DDR3L RAM, and 2 GB of storage. Power is supplied through a standard micro USB plug and power source (included), similar to the chargers and plugs used on most of today's smart phones. The standard HDMI plug on the end of the Chromecast

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Chromecast (Cont. from page 4)

plugs directly into an available HDMI port on the TV (most newer TVs have multiple HDMI inputs), and Chromecast receives the digital media through Wi-Fi utilizing the common 802.11 b/g/n protocols at 2.4GHZ. Obviously, the user needs to have a decent home Wi-Fi system in order to utilize the Chromecast. The device itself is readily available in the big box stores, discount stores, online retailers, and direct from Google, and carries a suggested retail price of \$35. Bargain shoppers can currently find the Chromecast on sale online for as little as \$22 including a bundle of digital media streaming services.

Installation of the Chromecast is a simple and fast three step process; Google says, "Plug in and Play" which consists of plugging the Chromecast into an available HDMI port on the TV and powering the device through the included micro USB plug, connecting the device to the home Wi-Fi, and then "Enjoy - Cast apps from your mobile device to the TV." Casting apps is the process of selecting entertainment channels using any compatible smart device attached to the home Wi-Fi, such as a phone or tablet, including Android tablets and smart phones, iPhones and iPads, Chrome for Windows, Chrome for Mac and Chromebooks. In effect, the hand held smart device becomes the remote control, and the apps are the selected streaming media sources.

The list of streaming media apps that are available for the Chromecast is extensive, and includes a large selection of both free and paid subscription services. Google has an updated app directory at google.com/chrome/devices/chromecast/apps.html and as to be expected from Google, is totally searchable, or content can be displayed by genre'. Among the category headings

are Featured, New, TV & Movies, Music & Audio, Games, Sports, Photos & Video, and "More." Selecting a media source from these app directories connects directly to the appropriate download; if it is a paid or subscription app, such as Netflix, that information is clearly displayed prior to any purchase. Among the more popular casting apps are HBO GO, Netflix, Watch ESPN, Just Dance Now, Showtime Anytime, YouTube, and the large assortment of digital media available from Google Play.

The "Featured Apps" include the most popular apps, and includes in addition to the more popular apps listed above, Nickelodeon, Hulu Plus, Comedy Central, Sesame Street, Pandora, game shows, Disney, Starz, Encore, iHeart radio, Major League Baseball, Crackle, NPR, Vudu, and dozens of other apps. The "Music and Audio" lists hundreds of domestic and international streaming music sources, including some local and international radio stations. Personally I am not into digital games, but the "Games" section lists about 75 streaming games that can be played on the Chromecast.

I would expect that one of the major uses of Chromecast would be to watch sports, and the "Sports" selection may satisfy fans of most major sports. Included in the Sports apps are, WatchESPN, UFC.TV, MLB.TV Premium, MLS MatchDay, NFL Game Pass, MLS Live, Red Bull TV, a high school sports channel, and several foreign sports channels.

The "More" category includes dozens of casting apps including PBS for Kids, TED Chromecast, UDEMY (online classes), ABC News, Funny or Die, FM radio stations, a baby

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You, too, can join in the yearly fun when volunteers meet at Bambinos the week between the NFL divisional playoffs and the Super Bowl. Be a volunteer and partake in some Italian cuisine for free. Bring a spouse and you can think of it as a date where you get "buy one get one for free."



Chromecast (Cont. from page 5)

monitor, QVC, iFood TV and Recipes, religion channels, local and international TV news stations, and many other apps.

Often, we may see something online or on our smart phones that we would like to view on the big TV screen; Chromecast can handle that. According to Google, "Whatever you're listening to or watching -- you can cast it straight from your Windows, Mac, or Chromebook directly to the TV. To cast from your laptop, just add the Google Cast extension to your Chrome browser." Owners of Android smart phones or tablets can broadcast directly from their screen to the TV using the appropriate app.

Chromecast devices are popular, with users receiving over 400 billion programs in the first year (source, Google). According to the news site Gigaom, in an article dated December 7, 2014, "Streaming on Chromecast passes Apple TV, Amazon Fire TV in US", the author Kevin C. Tofel explains, "What happens when you offer the combination of a simple user experience, a growing choice in streaming apps and a low cost? You sell a lot of that product and people use it. That's what happened in 2014 to the Chromecast according to Parks Associates, who say that Google's \$35 streaming stick now trails only Roku players in the U.S. when it comes to streaming content." While Roku released a competitive stick device during the summer of 2014, larger Roku streaming players have been on the market much longer than the Chromecast.

Amazon, who is no slouch when it comes to introducing and implementing new technologies, will be shipping by the time that you read this its new \$39 Fire TV Stick, as a direct competitor to Chromecast and similar devices, but offers improved Wi-Fi connectivity, more internal memory, a more powerful dual-core processor, and other technical enhancements. Basically, the Fire TV Stick offers much the same content as Chromecast, but adds the hundreds of thousands of movies and TV shows currently available at no additional cost to Amazon Prime subscribers (currently \$99 per year) which for many users is price and selection competitive to Netflix, plus offers a lot of benefits in addition to streaming media, such as free second day delivery of most items from Amazon. The Fire TV Stick also includes a separate remote control device, or the user can use a free smart device app as a remote control. In terms of disclosure,

I pre-ordered an Amazon Fire TV Stick at a greatly discounted price, and will review it when it arrives. Since I already have an Amazon Prime account, I will be able to utilize Amazon's massive video and TV library when the Fire TV Stick arrives.

One suggestion that many readers might find helpful if considering using one of these Wi-Fi connected stick devices to provide digital content to a flat screen TV; if the TV is physically located in close proximity to the Wi-Fi router, such as in the same room, signal strength should be fine. An easy way to roughly figure Wi-Fi signal strength is to connect a smart device to the Wi-Fi, and note the signal strength (bars) precisely at the location where a stick device would be connected. In my house, our bedroom TV is a distance from the Wi-Fi router, with several walls in between, giving only a "3 bar" Wi-Fi strength where the Chromecast is currently connected to that TV. To improve the signal strength, I purchased a deeply discounted, factory refurbished, major name brand "Wireless-N Range Extender," and mounted it on the stand directly below the HDMI port on the bedroom TV; now my phone shows all 5 Wi-Fi signal strength bars, indicating a very strong signal, which has dramatically improved the performance of the stick device.

Either as a replacement for, or as a substitute to cable and satellite TV service, these stick devices may be a very cost effective way of "cutting the cable" as my daughter did. As inexpensive as these stick devices are, and with the entertainment capabilities that they provide, one of these new stick devices may be a worthwhile investment. ☺



Stan Rapaport was back at the January meeting with pineapples in tow. All in attendance got to take home at least one pineapple courtesy of Stan.



Yes, Every Freeware Download Site is Serving Crapware (Here's the Proof)

By Lowell Heddings, reprinted with permission from HowToGeek.com

Original article at: <http://www.howtogeek.com/207692/yes-every-freeware-download-site-is-serving-crapware-heres-the-proof>

When we wrote about what happens when you install the top ten apps from CNET Downloads, about half of the comments were from people saying, "Well you should download from a trusted source." The only problem is that there *isn't* a freeware download site that is free of crapware or adware. And here's the result of our investigation to prove it.

We were unable to find a single freeware download site that isn't listing bundleware awfulness, and while a few of them attempt to do the right thing and alert you when something is bundled, it's just not good enough. Nobody reads the fine print, just like nobody reads the installers when they are clicking through.

And some of these installers are extremely tricky. They move the buttons around. They change the text or, in some cases, they make it look exactly like a terms and conditions screen. They hijack browsers, insert ads, and they even use hidden services with deep dark API functions. The latest trend is pushing lookalike copies of Google Chrome with adware bundled directly into them.

We're just going to go through the list of all the top sites and illustrate all of the crappy adware awfulness that is being bundled. Because the fact is that everybody is doing it to some extent by providing downloads that include this nonsense — the worst offenders are adding their own install wrapper to make sure that you get punished. Note that we aren't talking about Ninite (which we do [recommend](#)) in this article because that isn't so much a download site as it is a service to install software while skipping the crapware.

Freeware isn't actually *free* software, and we're all paying for it now.

Download.com / CNET Downloads



We don't really need to include this since we already covered what happens when you download from them, but hey, it was a [fun trip through the mire of awfulness](#). They still remain the kings of bundled nonsense. We hear they might challenge John Edward and Justin Bieber next year for the [biggest douche in the universe award](#).

Tucows



This site is an abomination and should be removed from the Internet. It's actually probably worse than Download.com — almost everything in their top downloads list is a scammy fake scareware application that screams about your PC being broken even though it's a fresh install.

And then they are wrapping their awful crapware wrapper on top of it, which hijacks your browser, injects ads everywhere, and installs even more crapware.

Somebody should be ashamed. Maybe Download.com will have some competition for that award after all.

FileHippo



Sure enough, the first thing we downloaded off FileHippo included bundled nonsense [and the awful Ask toolbar](#), and then the next screen tried to install some Search App, and the next one a weather checker, and the next one tried to install the same scammy fake registry cleaner that Download.com tried to stick us with. That's four pieces of crapware for the price of one! Why couldn't they just [stick us with the horrible Trovi adware](#) and get it over with?

The really annoying thing with this particular one is that on every screen, they changed the order of the buttons and what they said, so you not only had to really read carefully and uncheck things, but you had to do something different on each page.

Softpedia



We had a bunch of people tell us that Softpedia is a good place to download stuff from. So we clicked on a link for Unlocker from their

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Crapware (Cont. from page 7)

homepage, and immediately we were told that the Delta Toolbar is popular and it makes browsing and searching faster and easier! Boy are we missing out on something.

To be fair, wayyyy down at the bottom of the page they do tell you that it's ad supported and that you should be careful. Because we all like to read every single word on a page before clicking to download that app that we really wanted. Oh, so this page is copyrighted for 2015? Good to know. All rights reserved? Now we can safely close the tab.



Weirdly that Delta toolbar failed to install, even though we tried to. Which is a pity, because I wanted to see how terrible it is.

SnapFiles



We were pleasantly surprised that SnapFiles puts a notice higher up on the page — once you click to download the application — but just like the rest, there are loads of crapware bundling apps to be had.

This one installed all sorts of stuff, but the kicker was a Chrome lookalike called "Safer Browser" that is literally a version of Chrome that isn't actually Chrome and forces your homepage and search to Yahoo. Anybody that forces you to use the lousy Yahoo search is basically peddling malware.



We've noticed that the latest trend is creating fake versions of Chrome with adware being bundled with them.

FreewareFiles



This site is weird because they don't really provide downloads, they just link to the direct download links on other sites. So they have no way of ensuring quality at all, because that site could just replace the files with crapware installers.

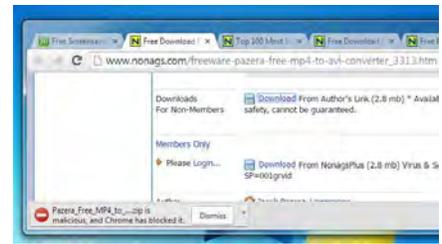
The other problem is that half the downloads don't have any installer... it's just a .JAR file or a .XPI file or something. So while they aren't providing crapware on every single thing, they also aren't really very user friendly either.

NoNags



NoNags is a software download site that goes to great lengths to provide spyware and adware-free downloads... for their paying members. For everybody else, you have to click a link to download from the original website, which will often be replaced with crapware bundling nonsense.

We'll have to commend these guys, because as we were browsing around we noticed that they actually took down a lot of the download links for stuff that has gone to the dark side. But it didn't take very long to find something that is bundling crapware.



So if you want to pay for a membership, you can get some freeware that has been checked for spyware. Or you could just spend money on quality paid software and help a programmer pay his bills.

SourceForge



Like everybody else, SourceForge has now joined the dark side, and they are providing downloads with bundled nonsense under a program they call DevShare. Thankfully it is opt-in so the project owners must agree to do it, and we can be even more thankful that not everybody has done so, but based on what we've seen elsewhere, it's only a matter of time. The people behind FileZilla don't have the open source spirit, apparently, because they decided to opt in to crapware ads.

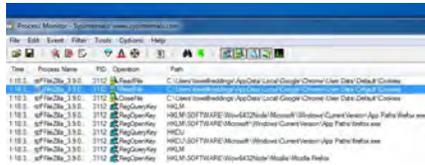
They also claim to filter through the offers and only offer non-malware, but based on what we've seen, the definition of malware is a gray area.

The bundle installer also weirdly accesses all of your browser cookies from all of your installed browsers. We're not sure what's up with that.

So if you see "Installer Enabled" on a SourceForge download, it means you are about

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Crapware (Cont. from page 8)

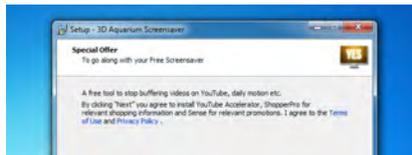


to be punished for something.



Note that the screenshot in the first picture was taken a while ago and the at the time of writing of this article, the installer didn't have any current offers to show, although we're wondering if that's because we are running in a virtual machine. We'll keep testing.

MajorGeeks



We had more geeks write in defending MajorGeeks as a trusted source than any other site, so we were really hoping that they would be the one site that doesn't allow any bundled crapware. Sadly, that's not the case. The first thing we downloaded — some stupid screensaver — included four pieces of really terrible crapware, including two that had adware like ShopperPro and [BoBrowser](#) that just take over your system.

It's worth noting that if you know where to look, MajorGeeks does actually tell you which items contain bundled crapware, as they put the license as Bundeware for those terrible items. They also have a notice in red text in the description of the item that it contains adware, although just like Softpedia, it's too far down on the page.

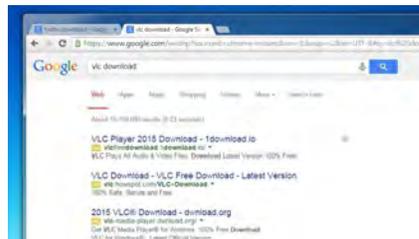


We actually talked to the owner of MajorGeeks about this, and he said that if he only listed freeware downloads that *don't* contain bundled crapware, he'd have almost no downloads to list and would just have to close up shop. So he makes sure to mark things as containing bundled crapware, and there's a notice at the bottom. We wish the notice was bigger, and more prominent, but we'll have to give him credit for at least trying to do the right thing. And for testing every single thing that they put on the site before they put it up there.

You Should Download from the Official Site!

One of the most common responses to our article was that people should just download from the official site. And as everybody knows, you use Google to find anything.

Ohhh... that's unfortunate.



Sadly, even on Google all the top results for most open source and freeware are just ads for really terrible sites that are bundling crapware, adware, and malware on top of the installer.

Most geeks will know that they shouldn't click on the ads, but obviously enough people are clicking those ads for them to be able to afford to pay the high per-click prices for Google AdWords.

So if you absolutely must

download some stupid freeware from somewhere, you may as well punch yourself in the face. And then either find the real site (ignoring the ads) or [use Ninite](#) or [test it out in a virtual machine first](#). Or consider just buying software from a programmer that deserves the money. Or maybe switch to OS X or Linux.

Because like [we told you last time](#), when the product is free the real product is YOU. ☺

Win 8.1 Tips

View Options From The Start Button

The **Start** button is back. It is similar to the Start button found on Windows 7. Left-click on the button (bottom left of the screen) and it will redirect you to the **Start Screen**. If you right-click on it, it will show options for **Run, Search, Desktop, Shut Down, and many more**.

Customize Home Screen Tiles

Besides resizing icons, you can also customize your home screen tiles on Windows 8.1. To **move and group tiles**, just go to your Start Screen and right-click on any of the tiles. After grouping your tiles, you can also name them by **filling in the Name Group** field.

Prevent Apps From Running In The Background

Previously on Windows 8, when you drag a Start Screen app down to the bottom of the screen, it will close the app. However, on Windows 8.1, this action will only make the app disappear — it is still running in the background. To close the app, **drag the app down to the bottom of the screen but instead of letting it go, hold on to it**. Wait until the app card flips over, and only now the app is closed. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:

Next Membership Meeting: 7 Feb, beginning at 9 am (see directions below)

Next Breakfast Meeting: 21 Feb @ 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.

Newsletter Deadline: 21 Feb.

Check out our Web page at: <http://ppcompas.apcug.org>

