

Bits of Bytes

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

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Issue 12



The Prez Sez

by Cary Quinn,
President,
P*PCompAS

I hope you all had a safe and satisfying Thanksgiving. I look forward to seeing you at our next general meeting on Dec 12th, where we will try out our new sound system and presentations. ☺



Meeting Minutes

by Toni Logan,
Secretary,
P*PCompAS

President Cary Quinn called the 7 November 2015 meeting to order at 9:00 am. He announced that coffee is free to 1st time guests and a dollar donation for all others. The coffee is compliments of Starbucks at the Citadel Crossing. Stop in and say thanks.

The minutes of the last meeting as printed in the newsletter were approved.

OFFICER REPORTS

Membership Chairwoman Anne Titus reminded the members that it is time to renew their membership for the next year.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan reported that the deadline for the next newsletter is the weekend of November 28.

APCUG Representative Joe Nuvolini reported that he had renewed our APCUG membership

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 12 December 2015

No topic has been announced at this time.

ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE DECEMBER MEETING.

and will mail a check for \$50.00. He also said that it was a worthwhile cost to belong to APCUG. News of APCUG is sent to members via e-mail.

OLD BUSINESS

We are still looking for a place to have our volunteer's luncheon. One suggestion was Old Chicago which has a buffet pizza. Later in the meeting there will be a presentation on new microphones.

NEW BUSINESS

Officer elections will be held at the next meeting in December. There are candidates for President, Vice-President, and Treasurer. If you are interested in running for any of the offices, please speak up at the meeting. Volunteers are needed for Newsletter Editor, Librarian, Media Representative, and coffee maker.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

As we are nearing Veterans Day, the President wanted to thank all veterans for their service. The next meeting will be on Saturday, December 12. NOTE: This is a change from the usual day. The breakfast remains on the third Saturday, December 19 and the Country Buffet needs to be notified for the next year.

NOTE: The Secretary had to leave early, so there is no information the program or the drawing. ☺



PROGRAM

The time normally spent for the monthly program was devoted to showing the membership various options for a new sound system. Each option was discussed, and ultimately the members got to decide whether to proceed with a purchase. As you can see from the Prez Sez comments, we will have the opportunity to see this new system at the December meeting. The purchase was made locally, so we have the ability to deal with a local business if the need arises. ☺

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P*PCompAS

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Nybbles and Bits

by John Pearce, P*PCompAS

Upgrading to a new smart phone has challenges similar to upgrading to a new PC. The general process is to install applications, configure settings/options, and transfer data files. I recently upgraded to the Galaxy S5 cell phone and I was not looking forward to the hassle of moving apps and data from my Galaxy S3 phone.

My initial plan was to backup the S3 using the Samsung Kies application then restore to the S5. When I started Kies, there was a pop-up about Samsung Smart Switch™ replacing Kies. After a little checking, Smart Switch seemed like the way to go because it would transfer data directly from the old phone to the new one.

From the Samsung website: "Samsung Smart Switch™ seamlessly transfers contacts, photos, music, videos, messages, notes, calendars and more to virtually any Samsung Galaxy device." The program performs transfers from iOS, Blackberry, and Android devices to most any Samsung Galaxy smart phone. More information on Smart Switch is available from the [Samsung website](#) or from [Google Play](#).

The new phone already had Smart Switch installed so I installed it on the old phone. I double checked the options were correctly set then started the transfer. It took about five minutes for the transfer to complete. It sure looked like everything transferred just fine. But looks can be deceiving. It was a day later when I discovered not everything had transferred.

Contacts, music, picture gallery, documents, Wi-Fi settings and the installed applications all transferred. However, application data like user names, passwords, and settings did not transfer. It was necessary to open each application and enter that information. I also had to manually move the database for the password manager KeePass2.

I don't know if my initial plan to use Kies would have produced better results than Smart Switch. At this point, I am not interested in doing a factory restore on the S5 and doing the Android 5.0 upgrade again just to find out if using the Kies restore produces better results than Smart Switch. ☺



In Memory of Dick Stienmier

24 June 1936 - 16 November 2015

Long-time P*PCompAS member, Dick Stienmier, passed away peacefully at his home in Castle Rock last month. Dick was in the medical business for 50 years. He entered the Army in 1962 and retired as a Colonel in 1982. Until recently, he attended our meetings regularly, and was an active listener.

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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.

Save Money by Buying "Open Box" Goods

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

WEBSITES:

<http://www.cowboom.com>

<http://www.techforless.com>

http://www.amazon.com/s/ref=nb_sb_ss_i_1_8?url=search-alias%3Daps&field-keywords=warehouse+deals+by+amazon

I like bargains, and I like to save money while shopping. While the granddaddy of all bargain days, Black Friday, and its younger cousin, Cyber Monday, will be here in the next few weeks, some people might like the selection and opportunity to take advantage of bargains at times other than these mega-shopping events. For those who might be willing to forgo a little personal vanity, some of the familiar retailers have websites devoted to often deeply marked down items that have been returned, had shipping damage, or had been refurbished to like-new condition, sometimes with the same warranty that the same new, unopened item may have had. Consider the fact that both brick and mortar local retailers, and the large online retailers, sell massive amounts of merchandise; it is inevitable that a percentage of that merchandise will be returned for a variety of reasons ranging from a refused delivery, to shipping damage to the outer package, to the item being defective and returned for replacement. Reputable sellers will always clearly disclose the reason for the markdown, present an accurate description of the current condition of the item, guarantee the description, state if the item has been refurbished to "like new" condition, disclose

any warranty, and typically offer free (shipping paid) returns if the consumer is not satisfied with the marked down merchandise.

In recent weeks, I ordered some merchandise that was posted on these reputable "open box" websites ranging from a factory refurbished Lenovo laptop (not the latest model) that was marked down to about 70% off retail, as well as some mundane items such as some new premium brand wiper blades which were in perfect condition, but had some damage to their outer packaging, thus were available for two-thirds off the regular price. While I have been a regular buyer of these marked down goods when they are available, over the past year I have had two returns. In separate transactions months apart, I had a factory refurbished laptop (not the one that I recently purchased) that came with the same warranty as a new laptop, but had a battery that would not hold a charge; the seller immediately sent me a prepaid shipping label, and issued a full refund as soon as the return was received by the shipper. The second item that I had to return was purchased "Open Box" from a different major seller, and was a combination keyboard and case for an iPad, which would not link via Bluetooth with the iPad; again the seller sent me a prepaid shipping label, and provided an immediate refund when they received the item back. While anecdotally these were two

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It was the week before Thanksgiving when the digerati convened for an all-you-can-eat breakfast at the Country Buffet. Everyone left satisfied, not only from the meal, but from the sharing of good conversation.



Open Box (Cont. from page 3)

“Open Box” items that were returned, considering all of my online purchases, the return of these two items was not out of proportion with my returns of absolutely “New in the Box” items, which I have also had to return in recent times.

The national chain BestBuy, known primarily for its electronics, media, and computer sales, is no different from any other big box retailer, in that a percentage of items sold are returned for a variety of reasons. While BestBuy sometimes has some clearly labeled and marked down “Open Box” items on the shelf in the stores, it also has an online outlet store that often has a wide selection of often deeply marked down outlet style goods. BestBuy’s online outlet is “CowBoom” (cowboom.com), and has a prominently posted policy, “The Great Deals, No Bull Promise, Closeout pricing everyday.” According to the CowBoom website, “CowBoom offers quality new, refurbished and pre-owned products at everyday low prices. Our products are in top condition, with each pre-owned and previously out-of-box item personally inspected by CowBoom’s technicians. Expect big savings by shopping at CowBoom.” In order to reduce the hesitation and risk of purchasing its merchandise, CowBoom states, “15-day money-back guarantee. At CowBoom we want to make sure you are completely satisfied with your purchase. Any product we sell can be returned for a refund within 15 days of receipt. We offer pre-paid shipping labels so your return is hassle-free.”

CowBoom continuously has a very large, and ever changing inventory of computers, audio and video equipment, televisions, mobile and cellular phones and accessories, cameras and camcorders, household electronics and a variety of other merchandise for home and office. Among the recognized name brands represented by the assortment of merchandise at CowBoom are



The screenshot shows the CowBoom website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like DealCov Says, Computers, Gaming, Audio & Video, Mobile & Cellular, and Camera. Below that is a 'HOLIDAY GIFT SHOP' banner. The main content area features a 'Deal of the Day' for an Amazon Fire HD Kids Edition 6in 8GB - Black/Blue tablet. The tablet is shown in a blue protective case. The price is listed as \$149.99 (was) and \$39.99 (now). A star rating of 4.5 is visible. Below the price, there's a brief description: 'With best-in-class parental controls, this Kids Edition Amazon Fire HD allows you to manage your child's usage. More than 33 million movies, TV shows, songs, book, Android apps and games help keep your little one entertained.' A 'More Info' button is located at the bottom of the product listing.

Apple, Canon, Nintendo, Bose, Nikon, Hewlett Packard, Sony, Samsung, and other well-known manufacturers. CowBoom also offers a daily e-mail with the deal of the day, which is a deeply discounted, often name brand item; today (as I type this), it is an “Amazon Fire HD Kids Edition 6in 8GB - Black/Blue, Was \$149.99 Now \$39.99 + Shipping.” This ruggedized tablet for children has a four and a half star rating from its users, strong parental controls, and access to Amazon’s extensive library of age appropriate movies, TV shows, music, books, Android apps, and games. While much of the content available for this tablet is free from Amazon, if anyone in the family has an Amazon Prime account, all of the content then becomes available at no additional charge. Since this Amazon tablet is a “Daily Deal,” a different product will likely be available on other days. For those looking for some potentially exciting deals on CowBoom, the website also has a selection of name brand goods that are being auctioned to the highest bidder.

One of the best kept secrets about online bargain hunting is Amazon’s Warehouse Deals. According to Amazon, the Warehouse Deals shopper can “Find deep discounts on open-box, like-new, and pre-owned products.” As I type this, Amazon is listing 541,866 items in its warehouse store, and states that, “Every item (is) hand checked and graded, Available for Prime & Free shipping, Backed by Amazon Customer Service, (and has a) 30-Day Return Policy.” Currently listed on the Amazon Warehouse Deals website under the heading “Our Best Deals”, includes a new, \$250 all leather briefcase style laptop bag marked down to \$59 with free shipping, and a new \$160 7” Android tablet for \$39. Other “Best Deals” include a 42% markdown on select “Open Box & Used Laptops”, up to 59% off of “Open Box Wearables” including smart watches, half-off select open box digital cameras, up to 48% off of a selection of open box and used unlocked cell phones, up to 67% off of open box and used smart phones, 45% off of coffeemakers, and dozens of similar “Best Deals”. By category and quantity, the largest selections of products available from Amazon Warehouse Deals includes books (83,756 books available in the Warehouse Deals), electronics (60,384 items), automotive (47,796 items, not including the windshield wiper blades that I recently purchased), tools and

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Catch and Stop Neighbors Stealing Your Internet

by Kim Komando (tip from 11/14/15)

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You're ready to stream the latest episode of your favorite show. The popcorn smell permeates the room, you're settled in your favorite spot and everything

is perfect. When you fire up Netflix, frustration sets in. The video is fuzzy and keeps pausing.

Perhaps your Internet connection hit a temporary speed bump or is it something else? Could your neighbors be tapping into your Internet connection, sucking up valuable bandwidth and leaving you and your gadgets with just leftover crumbs of capacity? How do you

know which it is? And if someone is stealing your Internet, what can you do about it?

Catch the Internet thief

Start by taking stock of your network. Log in to your router and check the section that shows what gadgets are connected to the network. Check your router's manual for instructions on logging in. If you can't find your manual, download a digital copy.

If you want an easier solution, you can grab the aptly named Wireless Network Watcher. This



free program gives you a list of gadgets connected to your Wi-Fi network.

Once you have the list of connected gadgets, identify the ones that belong to you. Your computer should show up in the list using its name, for example. Your tablet or smartphone should have the manufacturer or operating system name in there somewhere. You'll also see streaming video gadgets and video game consoles.

If you can't make heads or tails of the list, simply turn off each gadget one by one (or just disable the gadget's Wi-Fi) to figure out what is what. Take a screen shot or write it down for future reference. When you find a gadget connected to your network that doesn't belong to you, there's the culprit.

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Open Box (Cont. from page 4)

home Improvement (44,935), home and kitchen (44,597), sports and outdoors (37,161), and clothing and shoes (29,179). Amazon Warehouse Deals can be located directly by entering "Amazon Warehouse Deals" in the search box on any Amazon page, and then utilizing the "Deals" page menu or search system. While that method may be totally adequate to satiate the bargain hunter, my personal preference to locate "Warehouse Deal" priced items is to perform a routine Amazon search for a particular product, and then from that product's page click on the link that shows alternate sources for that product, including any under the "Used" tab; if there are any Amazon Warehouse Deals for that particular item, they will be listed under the "Used" heading. My personal preference when buying items under the "Used" banner is to purchase those listed as Amazon Warehouse Deals, rather than from unknown third party sellers; while sometimes slightly more expensive, I know that Amazon has inspected and rated the individual items, the description and

condition is most likely accurate, I can get free shipping (I have an Amazon Prime account), and that Amazon will stand behind the purchase.

Another excellent resource for open box and refurbished items is "Tech for Less" (techforless.com), a Colorado-based seller with a large selection of these discounted products. Tech for Less specializes in open box and refurbished goods from major manufacturers, with a 30 day money back guarantee, and a comprehensive "low price guarantee." Tech for Less will price match both before and after the sale, if a lower

tech FOR LESS

Easy Returns – 30 Day Money Back Guarantee

- We inspect and test all of our products to ensure it meets the manufacturer quality standards. We have a 30 Day return policy and every product has the Manufacturer Warranty against defects. If there does happen to be an issue, we will work with you to make it right!
- 30 Day Money Back Guarantee in case of defects. Tech For Less will give you a full refund on defective items and will arrange for and pay all shipping costs associated with authorized, defective returns.
- Lowest Price Guarantee. If you find a lower price at another reputable merchant within 24 hours of your purchase, we'll refund the difference. If you find a lower price for the same item on TechForLess.com within 30 days of purchase, Norton Shopping Guarantee will refund you the difference. [Read details](#) and for the list of merchants we match price to and some exceptions.

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Stealing Internet (Cont. from page 5)

You might need to check back a few times if the Internet slowdown is random. The culprit might only be using your Internet infrequently.

Stop an Internet thief

Even if you spot a rogue connection, however, you won't be able to tell exactly who is connected. You could barge into your neighbors' houses to check their gadgets' names and MAC addresses. For the record, I don't recommend doing that.

Fortunately, it doesn't matter. Encrypting your Wi-Fi network will usually be enough to keep intruders out. In fact, you should secure your Wi-Fi network no matter what. There are too many horror stories of criminals or perverts using someone else's Wi-Fi in hacking attacks or trading illegal images. As the owner of the Wi-Fi, you're going to have to straighten things out with the police, and it won't be fun.

If your network is already encrypted, and someone still snuck on, change your password immediately. Then, keep an eye on things to see if they manage to get on again.

If they do, it's possible they got into your router and set up a backdoor. Reset your router to factory settings (check your manual for instructions) then set it up again from scratch. That means changing the default password, enabling encryption, picking a new SSID and turning off any remote management features.

Note: If you change your encryption password, you will need to update the password on all your gadgets before they can connect again.

Other causes of a slowdown

If you go through these steps and don't see an unauthorized connection on your Wi-Fi, and your

Internet is still slow, then you'll need to do more troubleshooting. Test your Internet speed to see if it matches the speed that you're paying for. Try running the speed test a few times with your computer both plugged directly into the router and over Wi-Fi.

If your Wi-Fi speed is way slower than your Internet speed, disconnect all but one of your gadgets and try it again. It could be that you have too many and they're bogging down the network. If that's the case, you might need to upgrade your router to a newer model that can handle more traffic.

Otherwise, call your Internet provider and express your concerns. You might be due for a modem upgrade or there could be another problem on the line. If you do need a modem upgrade, learn a handy buying trick that can save you money in the long run. ☺

Open Box (Cont. from page 5)

price is found on most other online and physical stores, including BestBuy.com, Overstock.com, TigerDirect.com, Newegg.com, Staples.com, OfficeDepot.com, Target.com, HomeDepot.com, Lowes.com, Amazon.com, Frys.com, Apple.com, Microcenter.com, Sears.com, OfficeMax.com, Rakuten.com, Dell.com, Crutchfield.com, HP.com, Walmart.com, and others. In order to get the difference rebated from Tech for Less, "Just send us an e-mail with your order number, a link to the lower price, and a note that you'd like to apply our Lowest Price Guarantee."

During the past year, from Tech for Less, I purchased an Epson all-in-one printer (refurbished), three extra handsets and bases (all in new condition) for my cordless phone, and a refurbished modem for my broadband service. Being a careful shopper, I compared prices, warranty, and shipping costs, finding that for these items, Tech for Less had the best deals. Tech for Less sells almost all of the major brands, including Apple, Canon, HP, Panasonic, Sony, and others. They carry a good assortment of laptops, desktops, monitors, TVs, portable

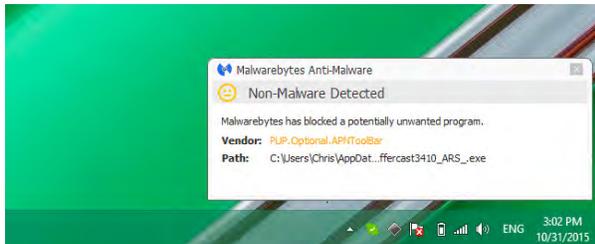
audio and MP3 players, printers, digital cameras, camcorders, drives and other storage devices, tablets, servers, and many other products. Most items sold by Tech for Less have the same warranty as a new item, but are available for up to 75% off of the retail price for the same new item. The consumer can often choose the degree of the discount for many of the items by choosing a combination of "condition and pricing," as an example a particular Toshiba laptop that I was considering is available with free shipping in many "conditions" such as "New - Inner Seals Intact Condition," "New - Open Box," "Factory Refurbished (Restored to manufacturer condition, may show limited signs of use, manufacturer warranty)," and "Refurbished - with manufacturer's warranty." Each lower condition is available at a lower price, which allows the potential buyer to balance the condition with the price, but regardless of condition, all of these laptops had the manufacturer's warranty.

If hunting for bargains, there may be no need to wait for Black Friday or Cyber Monday. If willing to accept a deeply discounted open box or refurbished item, often with the same warranty as a new item, that may be the way to go. ☺

PUPs Explained: What is a 'Potentially Unwanted Program?'

By Chris Hoffman, reprinted with permission from HowToGeek.com

Original article at: <http://www.howtogeek.com/232791/pups-explained-what-is-a-potentially-unwanted-program/>



Antimalware programs like Malwarebytes pop up warnings when they detect “potentially unwanted programs” you might want to remove. People call PUPs many other names, including “adware” and “crapware.” You almost certainly don’t want these programs on your computer, but they’re categorized differently for legal reasons.

Malware is a type of malicious software that infects your computer without your permission. “Potentially unwanted programs” often arrive bundled with other software and often have a EULA you probably clicked right through. PUP developers can argue their programs aren’t malware.

What is a Potentially Unwanted Program, or PUP?

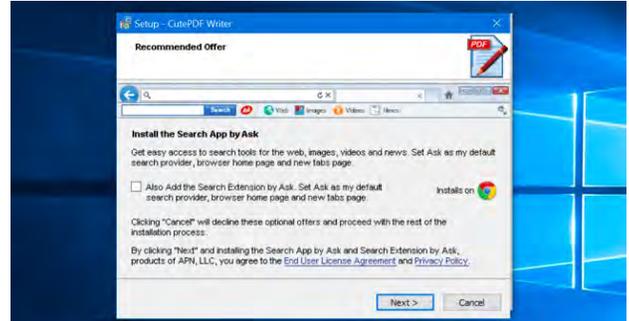
The quick answer is that “potentially unwanted program” isn’t the best name. Instead, these programs should really be called “almost certainly unwanted programs.” In fact, if someone does want one of these “potentially unwanted programs” installed, there’s a good chance that person doesn’t fully understand what that program is doing on their computer.

These are programs which don’t really do anything good for you. For example, [browser toolbars that clutter your browser](#), track your web browsing, and [show additional advertisements](#) to you are “potentially unwanted programs.” [A Bitcoin-mining program like the one uTorrent once included](#) is a “potentially unwanted program.”

Note that these programs do absolutely nothing good on your computer — they slow it down, track you, clutter the system, and show you additional advertisements.

The key difference is how a potentially unwanted program arrives. “Malware” is

malicious software that arrives without your express



permission. “Potentially unwanted programs” are programs that arrive along with a EULA that tricks you into installing them.

Why They’re Called PUPs and Not Malware

There’s a lot of money in crapware. [All the big free Windows software download sites bundle crapware](#) — [even SourceForge does!](#) And it’s now become normal for [Mac freeware download sites to bundle potentially unwanted programs](#), too. If you download and install this stuff, your computer wasn’t infected against your will — you agreed to some fine print and gave the company permission to run this stuff on your computer.

This is all completely legal, of course. Blocking such an application and labelling it “malware” would open up a company to lawsuits — at least, that appears to be the feeling across the industry. Antivirus companies like Avira have even been [sued](#) just for labelling software programs like these as “potentially unwanted programs.” Avira won that particular lawsuit, but they might have lost had they gone farther and labelled that program flat-out malware.

By classifying these programs as just “potentially unwanted programs,” antimalware software creators are attempting to shield themselves from legal action while detecting software most people don’t want on their computers.

Whether an antimalware — or antivirus — application chooses to flag and detect PUPs is up to that individual engine. Some security software makers are more focused on malware, while others — Malwarebytes, for example — are more serious about detecting and removing PUPs.

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Google's New Spam-Fighting Tools

By Bob Rankin, Ask Bob Rankin July 23, 2015 Column, Bob (at) rankin.org, Reprinted with Permission
http://askbobrankin.com/googles_new_spamfighting_tools.html

Google estimates that nearly 60 percent of all e-mail it processes is spam. But like most Gmail users, I rarely see any spam in my inbox. Google claims that Gmail now blocks 99.9 percent of all spam. Read on to learn how you can get near-perfect spam filtering, even if you don't use Gmail...

Machine learning, an application of artificial intelligence, has been part of Gmail's spam filter program since Gmail's inception. On July 9, Google announced three new improvements to Gmail's spam filter.

Every time a user clicks the "Report Spam" or "Not Spam" button on a message, Gmail learns

something that helps it filter spam better. But now, Gmail is attempting to learn on its own, without the user's clicks.

The spam filter now uses the same artificial neural network that Google Now and Google Search use to detect and block the "especially sneaky" spam that sometimes slips past users' radar.

What's an "artificial neural network," you ask? The oversimplified answer is, a lot of computers connected to each other in an attempt to simulate the interconnections of human brain cells. It's expensive to build an artificial neural network; most are tiny, with 1 to 10 million

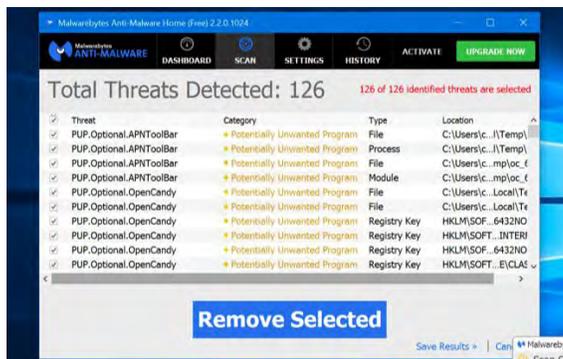
connections.

Google has built an ANN with over one billion connections using the processors in its vast and far-flung empire of data centers. That sounds awesome, until you learn that the human brain contains several trillion connections! None the less, Google's ANN is capable of rudimentary human-like self-learning. That means you don't have to teach it what spam is.

In one experiment, Google's ANN was fed millions of still images of cats culled from YouTube videos. The images were not labeled as "cats" and programmers did not

Continued on page 9

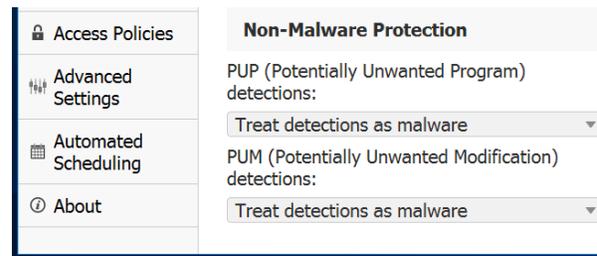
PUPs Explained (Cont. from page 7)



What Do PUPs Do, Exactly?

So what does it take for a program to be considered a PUP? Well, Malwarebytes offers [a list of behaviors](#) that will cause Malwarebytes to flag a software program as a PUP. Advertising that obstructs content or interferes with web browsing, pop-up windows, pop-under windows, search engine hijacking, home page hijacking, toolbars with no value for the user, redirecting competitors' websites, altering search results, replacing ads on web pages — these are all actions that will cause a program to be flagged as a PUP.

While this all may be arguably legal, this is all the sort of nasty stuff most people just wouldn't want on their computers.



Should You Remove that PUP?

You almost certainly don't want that potentially unwanted program installed — remove it. If you're curious, perform a web search for the detected PUP's name to see more information about it.

This is how the phrase "potentially unwanted program" is usually used by antimalware programs. But some antimalware tools sometimes include certain system and security-related tools in the PUP category to help their enterprise customers.

For example, a utility that finds and displays the product keys for installed software on your current PC might be categorized as a "PUP" so large businesses can prevent their employees from running this type of software on their workstations. A VNC program for remote-desktop access might be considered a "potentially unwanted program," too. ☺

Spam-Fighting (Cont. from page 8)

tell the ANN what a “cat” is. The ANN figured it out for itself, learning to recognize cats in virtually any image. If it can do that, it can recognize spam with greater accuracy than most humans can.

You don’t have to do anything to use Gmail’s spam filtering - it’s automatic. But you can add your own filters to funnel messages into folders, forward to another address, and other actions. See my article *Tame Your Email With Filters* for help adding filters to Gmail, Yahoo, Outlook.com, iCloud Mail, or AOL webmail. http://askbobrankin.com/tame_your_email_with_filters.html

But the ANN is still not perfect. Just as humans see UFOs in pictures of streetlights, Google’s ANN sometimes sees spam in legitimate messages and mistakenly consigns them to the spam folder. Google claims that only about 0.01 percent (1 in 10,000) of legitimate e-mails are falsely labeled as spam these days. As the ANN learns more about e-mail, that figure should fall even further.

Take a look in your Gmail spam folder, and see how it’s working. If you do find certain messages are being incorrectly flagged as spam, you can create a Gmail filter for them, with a “Never send to Spam” action, so they’ll be delivered to your inbox.

How does Gmail’s spam filter compare to other free Webmail services, such as Microsoft’s Hotmail/Outlook.com and Yahoo? I haven’t been able to find any independent, rigorous studies of this question. I’ll just note that Microsoft seems to think it’s acceptable if less than 3 percent of the messages that reach your inbox are spam.

Another new spam-fighting technique that Gmail is introducing doesn’t really tackle spam, in my opinion. Gmail now attempts to learn individual users’ reading

preferences and filter out even legitimate mail that goes unread. The company gives the example of e-mail newsletters. One user reads them assiduously while another just lets them pile up unread, or deletes them without reading. Why people don’t just unsubscribe from newsletters is one of life’s mysteries. Hopefully, Gmail can distinguish between legit opt-in e-mail newsletters and the ones that just arrive without your consent. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook-com/compare/>

Finally, Gmail is providing help for legitimate, large-volume e-mail publishers whose communications are sometimes wrongly condemned as spam. The Gmail Postmaster Tools will help airlines, banks, credit card companies, and other well-known firms analyze the fate of their e-mails and improve their delivery and reading rates. <https://gmail.com/postmaster/>

Even if you don’t use or like Gmail, you can still use it to filter spam. Here’s one technique that some people use to “pre-filter” their incoming e-mails. Instead of providing your actual e-mail address when asked, give out a Gmail address that you’ve created. Configure that Gmail account to simply forward everything to your actual address. Gmail does spam-filtering BEFORE forwarding, so the messages that do get forwarded are virtually spam-free.

Gmail’s spam filter is so reliable and accurate that I hardly ever check my spam filter for false positives anymore. I get hundreds of e-mails daily, and in 2015, I estimate I’ve clicked on the “Report Spam” or “Not Spam” button less than a dozen times. The spam filter just works.

Do you use Gmail? How is the spam filtering working for you? ☺

Practice Makes Perfect

by Sandy Berger, CompuKISS
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Learning to use a new device can take time because it always takes practice. Sometimes that practice requires trial and error. So here are some tips to get you through.

Trial and error can be frustrating. For instance when working with Siri, Google Now, or Cortana, you might have to try several different ways of saying things to find the one that is understood the best. For instance, if Siri is giving me directions and I want her to stop, I have to say “end navigation.” She simply doesn’t understand other similar command like “stop navigating.” Not only do you have to try different things, but you also have to remember which one worked.

This is a great exercise for your mind, but if you don’t want to give your brain too much of a workout, you can always jot down the commands to help you remember. Whatever you do, don’t get frustrated, everyone has to do this with new devices. ☺



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Coming Events:

Next Membership Meeting: 12 Dec. beginning at 9 am (see directions below)

Next Breakfast Meeting: 19 Dec. @ 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.

Newsletter Deadline: 19 Dec.

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

