

Bits of Bytes

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

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Issue 6



The Prez Sez

by Toni Logan, President, P*PCompAS

I can't believe that the year is almost half over and we have had such good meetings with interesting programs mainly by our own members. We also have to thank Cameron at Starbucks at the Citadel Crossing for donating coffee again for our meetings.

If you attended the last meeting, where I told the story about my Echo ordering an item from Amazon for me without my asking, you'd know that I own an Echo voiced by Alexa. I found that unknowingly I had enabled "voice purchasing," which was a big mistake. Evidently, "Alexa" can respond to voices on the TV as well as our voices. We still have fun with it even with these problems. Now, Amazon has come up with "Echo Show," which brings everything from Alexa, but now you can see things. You can watch YouTube, see music lyrics, photos, weather forecasts, etc. What will they think of next?

Last month we enjoyed the program from John Pearce on VPNs. He went over how to set up a private network. If you weren't at the meeting or wish to know more, he will have another column on the subject in this newsletter. In June, our program will be on astronomy and the eclipse in August. See you all at the meeting. ☺

Next P*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 3 June 2017

Astronomy might be the topic.

Meeting Minutes

by Ann Titus,
Acting Secretary,
P*PCompAS



The 6 May 2017 membership meeting was called to order by President Toni Logan at 9:00 am. Coffee is compliments of Starbucks at the Citadel Crossing. Joe Nuvolini gave a mug to the new server at Starbucks. Donuts are free for guests and donations are suggested for members.

It was announced that member Dorothy Bagenstos had surgery this past week.

OFFICER REPORTS

Program Chair Cary Quinn is researching Eclipse and 3D printing for future meetings.

Treasurer Bill Gardner sent in a report that as of 30 April 2017 we received interest of \$0.45. No checking changes, with a total of \$6,021.92.

Editor Greg Lenihan passed out copies of this month's newsletter and announced that the deadline for next month will be the 20th of May.

APCUG Rep Joe Nuvolini had no additional information this month.

Hospitality Rep Pat Kreiger had no comments.

Membership Chair Ann Titus introduced new member Bill Byrd and welcomed him with a mug.

OLD BUSINESS

Peter Rallis and Toni Logan met this past month to review the club's rules and determined that no changes are needed at this time.

NEW BUSINESS:

The monthly breakfast will be on May 20th and the next meeting will be June 3rd.

AROUND THE ROOM

Audio of Around the Room is on the Society's website.

PROGRAM

John Pearce presented an excellent review of **Security for Unsecured WiFi**, which included a review of what is expected when securing with WEP (not secure), WPA (not secure), WPA2personal (best choice), and a discussion of the use of passwords, encryption, etc. He also discussed VPN, which

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Nybbles and Bits

by John Pearce, P*PCompAS



There are several different ways to use a VPN (virtual private network). Let's discuss how to use a VPN as security for unsecured WiFi. This article is about simply protecting your WiFi communications from eavesdropping or from being intercepted and routed to a malicious website when using an unsecured WiFi at a coffee shop or airline terminal.

In this discussion, the VPN creates an encrypted connection between your device and a server that is operated by the VPN service. The VPN service decrypts your website traffic and sends it through the public Internet service. Between your device and the VPN server, no one can see the content of your website traffic until it exits the VPN and enters the public Internet.

To get started, you first need to pick a VPN service. PC Magazine has an article titled [The Best VPN Services of 2017](#) published May 15, 2017. I recommend reading the entire article because it is loaded with good information. The article lists PC Mag's ten top VPN's. I was pleased to see TunnelBear in the list. That is the VPN I selected in 2015 to use in case of emergency during an overseas trip. However, several popular VPN's are not in the list, e.g., CyberGhost. You could also start with an Internet search for a VPN service.

Once you have selected a VPN, you need to install the software on your device. For Apple devices, go to the App Store, or for Android

devices, go to Google Play. Installation should be straightforward.

For PC devices, you will need to download the application from the service provider. Installation should also be relatively easy. As part of installation, or the first time you run the VPN, you will generally need to enter an e-mail address and a password. If you are using a paid service, you will need to enter payment information.

When you run (activate) the VPN, you will need to select an end point or exit point for your VPN. For this discussion, the end point should be the same as the country where you are located. If you are in a coffee shop in Denver and you want to connect to your Wells Fargo bank account, it does not make sense to select the end point in Germany due to the overhead and time delay involved in moving the IP packets.

If you want to verify the VPN is working, use the website [What Is My IP Address](#) to check your IP address and location before and after activating the VPN. The two sets of information should be different. You may be shown an IP v6 address, however if you scroll down the page just a little, you will see the location of the IP address.

Two reminders: For added safety use HTTPS:// to access a website, and terminate (deactivate) the VPN when you are finished. ☺

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Navigating Nextdoor: Social Media Gets Neighborly

by Kim Komando (tip from 3/10/17)

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You may have heard about Nextdoor. Perhaps your friend down the street mentioned it, or you received a postcard or an e-mail inviting you to join. You might have thought to yourself, "Oh great. Another social network." But Nextdoor is different. It focuses solely on your neighborhood (and your surrounding neighborhoods) and aims to connect neighbors online to share news, events, and recommendations. It doesn't suck up time the way Facebook does or fly by at the breakneck speed of Twitter.

Nextdoor is a haven for all sorts of neighborhood chatter. You can expect to see lost-dog pleas, found-dog notices, garage sale ads, recommendations for roofers, and news about block parties and special events. If that sounds interesting to you, then it's worth giving the network a tryout.

Get Oriented

Once you've signed up for [Nextdoor](#), you will see a list of posts laid out in a typical online forum style with more recent news feed

discussions near the top. A list of categories runs down the left side of the page.

Note: Nextdoor also has a free app for both [Apple](#) and [Android](#) users.

Sell to your neighbors

The classifieds section won't replace Craigslist, but it can be a good spot to notify your area of an upcoming yard sale or list a room for rent. You may also find local freebies, like landscape fill dirt or requests for bartering trades, though there is a separate section on the site dedicated to "Free items." You may also find entrepreneurial neighbors offering their pet sitting or gardening services in the site's classifieds.

Keep an eye on crime

Now let's turn our attention to the Crime & Safety category. This is where a sort of virtual neighborhood watch kicks in. Crime & Safety is typically one of the most active topics of conversation on Nextdoor. Neighbors might share information about package thefts, stolen cars, surveillance camera footage, or

suspicious behavior here. It's not all bad news. This is also a place for notifications of crime prevention meetings, organizing neighborhood watches, and sharing home security tips.

If you're new to Nextdoor, the Crime & Safety news may feel a little overwhelming, but it can also be a great reminder that your neighbors are looking out for each other.

Round up recommendations

It's raining hard outside. You look up and see water rolling down your living room wall. It's time for a new roof, so you might as well ask around about your neighbors' experiences with roofers. There are a couple ways to approach this through Nextdoor. Start by heading directly to the Recommendations category, which is organized by the type of business. You will see everything from dog groomers to roofers. Click on a particular category to access more detailed reviews of each business.

If you want more specifics,

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It was Saturday, 20 May, and Armed Forces Day, when the digerati met for brunch at the Country Buffet. There may have been a few war stories recollected, but mostly the topics related to tech and common life hacks.



How to Make Windows Troubleshoot Your PC's Problems for You

By Chris Hoffman, reprinted with permission from HowToGeek.com

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/260248/how-to-make-windows-troubleshoot-your-pc-problems-for-you/>

Windows includes a variety of “troubleshooters” designed to quickly diagnose and automatically solve various computer problems. Troubleshooters can't fix everything, but they're a great place to start if you encounter a problem with your computer.

Troubleshooters are built into the Control Panel on Windows 10, 8, and 7, so practically all Windows users can take advantage of them. On [Windows 10's Creators Update](#), most troubleshooters are now available through the Settings app.

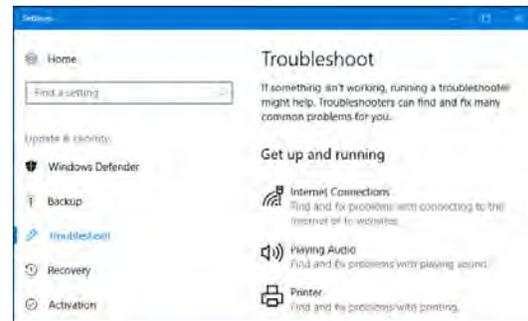
Windows 10

If you've installed Windows 10's Creators Update, you'll find these in Settings. Navigate to Settings > Update & Security > Troubleshoot.

As of the Creators Update, the following troubleshooters are available here: [Blue Screen](#), Bluetooth, Hardware and Devices, HomeGroup, Incoming Connections, Internet Connections, Keyboard, Network Adapter, Printer, Playing Audio,

Power, Program Compatibility Troubleshooter, Recording Audio, Search and Indexing, Shared Folders, Speech, Video Playback, Windows Store Apps, and Windows Update.

If something isn't working properly on your PC, the associated troubleshooter may find and fix the problem for you.



Select the troubleshooter you want to run and click “Run Troubleshooter.” Many troubleshooters will run automatically and fix problems they find, while some troubleshooters will suggest various

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Nextdoor (Continued from page 3)

need newer information, or have a very particular project in mind, then you might want to ask for fresh recommendations. There's an option at the top of your news feed page to post a message. You can choose which neighbors to include, select the Recommendations category, and get more personalized responses.

The Recommendations feature isn't just for home projects. It can also be a good way to get neighborhood restaurant tips, find a qualified auto mechanic, and learn about local small businesses.

Follow your neighborhood through e-mail

You don't have to constantly lurk on Nextdoor to keep up with the Joneses. The easiest way to follow your neighborhood news and happenings is through the site's e-mail newsletters. Click on your

profile button in the upper corner and go to settings to access the delivery options. The Daily Digest sends you a once-a-day update on the day's top posts. A quick preview of each topic appears in the email, so you can decide if you want to click on it and go read or contribute to the in-depth discussion. This is also where you can adjust your other e-mail options, such as receiving e-mails when someone replies to one of your posts.

A dark side to Nextdoor?

Though it may have a local focus, Nextdoor is still a social network and it can be prone to some of the same problems found with its big brethren, Twitter and Facebook. Occasionally, discussions may not be very neighborly. Tempers can run high about controversial issues and disagreements or rude comments can crop up in the forums. When

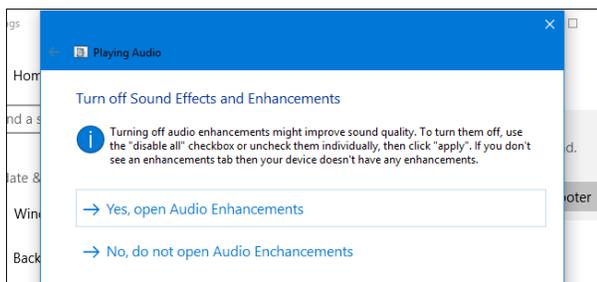
this happens, it's a good time to exercise restraint and step away from the conversation if it bothers you.

If Nextdoor isn't for you, you don't have to stick around. You're also under no obligation to participate. You might just enjoy lurking on the edges, reading the notices, and getting the daily e-mail newsletter to see what your neighbors are talking about.

At its best, Nextdoor strengthens neighborhood connections online. It helps lost dogs get back home, puts you in touch with a last-minute babysitter, and finds you a reputable roofer to fix that leak. The idea here is to foster a sense of community that transfers back out into the real world. Depending on your neighbors' participation, your mileage may vary, but it's certainly an intriguing take on the concept of social networking. ☺

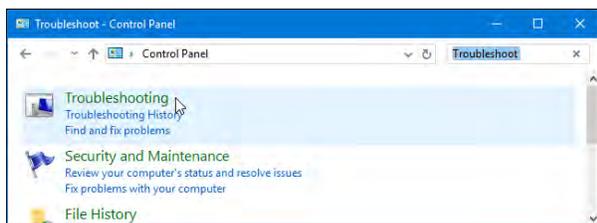
Win Troubleshooting (Continued from page 4)

fixes you can choose whether to apply.



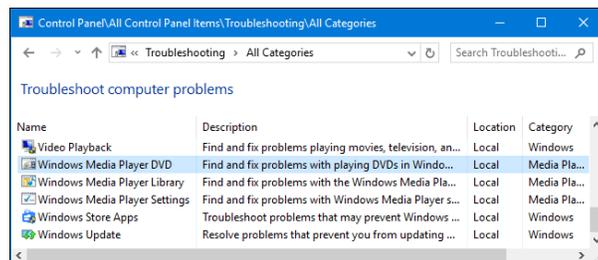
The Settings interface doesn't list every available troubleshooter. For example, it omits the Background Intelligent Transfer service, Windows Media Player DVD, Windows Media Player Library, and Windows Media Player Settings troubleshooters.

These are still available if you need them—they're just buried in the Control Panel. To find them, open the Control Panel, type "Troubleshoot" into its search box, and click the "Troubleshooting" icon.



Click "View all" at the left side of the Troubleshooting pane and you'll see a full list of

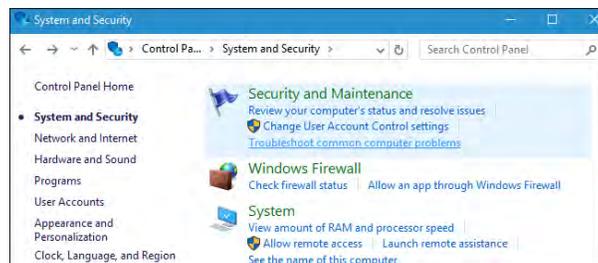
available troubleshooters.



Windows 7 and 8

You'll find these tools in the Control Panel on Windows 7 and 8. You'll also need to use the Control Panel if you're using [Windows 10's Anniversary Update](#) or an earlier version of Windows 10.

Navigate to Control Panel > System and Security > Troubleshoot Common Computer Problems. On Windows 7, click "Find and Fix Problems" instead.



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Meeting Minutes (Continued from page 1)

offers an additional layer of security. John recommended turning off cookies and browsing history within your browsers; turning off auto dating over public WiFi; moving HTTP to HTTPS; preventing super cookies; and asking for the SSID in hotels, etc.

John cautioned about programs such as Air Crack, Wire Shark and Man-In-The-Middle that might be used to access your Internet activity. He gave an interesting demonstration of Tunnel Bear VPN, which he used on a trip to Australia.

John will send links mentioned in his presentation and can be contacted via his e-mail.



John Pearce presenting at the May meeting



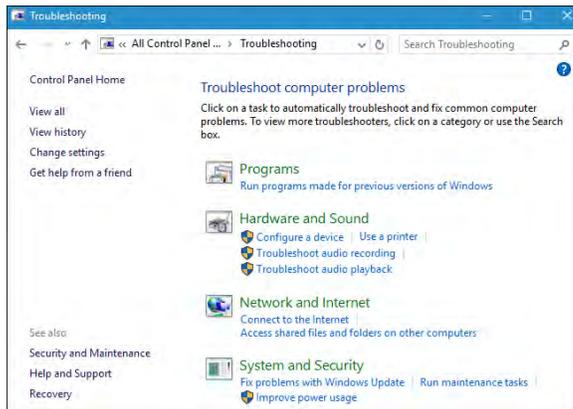
Membership Chair Ann Titus mugs new member Bill Byrd at the May meeting.

DRAWING

Lois Weikart won the copy of Acronis True Image 2017 ☺

Win Troubleshooting (Continued from page 5)

You'll see a list of the most common troubleshooters you might need.

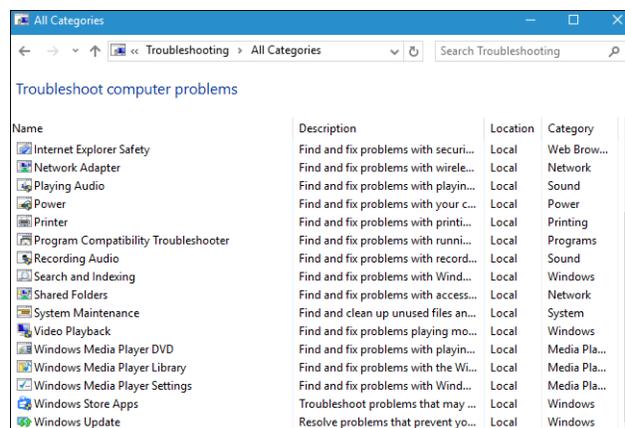


These aren't the only available troubleshooters. Click "View All" in the sidebar to view a full list of troubleshooters. Here's a list of the troubleshooters you might find, although not all versions of Windows include the same troubleshooters:

- **Background Intelligent Transfer Service:** Finds and fixes problems with the Background Intelligent Transfer Service, which Windows Update and some other services use for background downloads.
- **Hardware and Devices:** Checks your computer for issues with hardware devices. If a hardware device—particularly a recently installed one—isn't working properly, this troubleshooter can find and fix problems with hardware detection and drivers.
- **HomeGroup:** Looks for problems with your HomeGroup network and file-sharing settings.
- **Incoming Connections:** Checks if the Windows Firewall is blocking incoming connections you need and help you unblock them.
- **Internet Connections:** Detects and fixes problems with your Internet connection and loading websites.
- **Internet Explorer Performance:** Identifies problems that can slow down Internet Explorer and fixes them.
- **Internet Explorer Safety:** Identifies settings that can cause security and privacy problems in Internet Explorer and fixes them.
- **Network Adapter:** Finds and fixes issues with your Wi-Fi adapter or other network adapters.
- **Playing Audio:** Scans for problems that can

prevent sound from playing properly.

- **Power:** Identifies and fixes problems with power settings to increase your computer's battery life.
- **Printer:** Checks for and fixes problems with printers and printing.
- **Program Compatibility Troubleshooter:** Helps you choose the [best compatibility settings](#) for running programs designed for older versions of Windows.
- **Recording Audio:** Scans for problems that can prevent microphone audio recording from working.
- **Search and Indexing:** Fixes problems with Windows Search and the indexer.
- **Shared Folders:** Identifies issues that can prevent shared network folders from functioning.
- **System Maintenance:** Finds and fixes broken shortcuts and performs and system maintenance tasks, including checking if your clock is the correct time.
- **Video Playback:** Detects problems that can prevent videos from playing back properly and fixes them.
- **Windows Media Player DVD:** Fixes issues that can prevent DVDs from playing in Windows Media Player.
- **Windows Media Player Library:** Fixes issues with Windows Media Player's media library.
- **Windows Media Player Settings:** Fixes issues with Windows Media Player's settings.
- **Windows Store Apps:** Repairs problems that can prevent Windows Store apps—in other words, Windows 10's new Universal Windows Platform apps—from working properly.
- **Windows Update:** Identifies and fixes issues that can cause Windows Update to not work at all, or fail to install some updates.

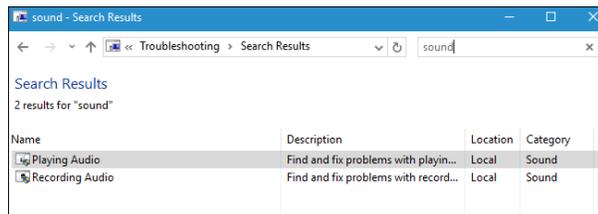


To run a troubleshooter, just click it in the Troubleshooting pane. To quickly find a relevant

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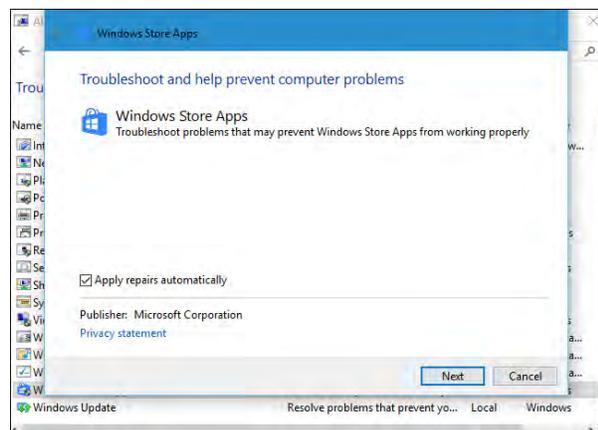
Win Troubleshooting (Continued from page 6)

troubleshooter, you can perform a search from the Troubleshooting window.

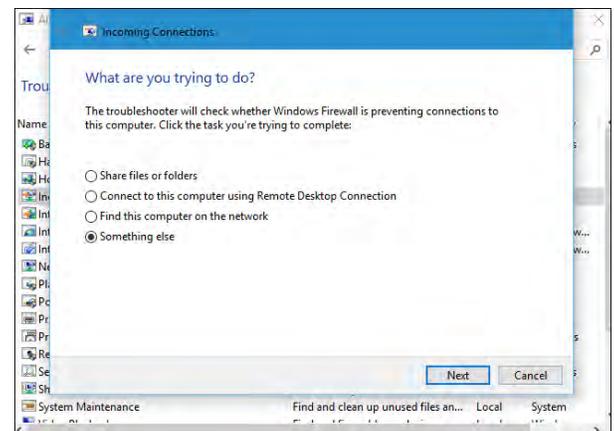


The troubleshooter will launch after you click it. Just click “Next” to begin troubleshooting.

Most troubleshooters will run automatically, looking for problems and fixing any issues they find. To prevent the troubleshooter from automatically making changes to your system, click the “Advanced” link at the bottom left corner of the troubleshooter window and uncheck the “Apply Repairs Automatically” option. You’ll be prompted with more information before the troubleshooter makes any changes to your system.



While most troubleshooters run automatically, some troubleshooters will give you options you need to click. For example, the Program Compatibility troubleshooter will walk you through choosing a program that isn’t working properly and changing its compatibility settings. The Incoming Connections troubleshooter will ask you what you’re trying to do so it know what type of incoming connection to troubleshoot.



That’s about it. There isn’t a troubleshooter for every issue you’ll encounter, and the troubleshooters that do exist won’t be able to fix every problem. But troubleshooters are a good place to start when you encounter a problem with something. ☺

Google Search Tricks

By Melanie Birnbaum, Century Village Computer Club, Florida, <http://cvcomputerclub.com/>

You use Google Search every day, but still all you know is how to search. However, the search engine has plenty of tricks up its sleeve.

Here’s an overview of some of the more useful Google search tricks:

- Use quotes to search for an exact phrase. Searching a phrase in quotes will yield only pages with the same words in the same order as what’s in the quotes. It’s especially useful if you’re trying to find results containing a specific phrase.
- Use an asterisk within quotes to specify unknown or variable words. Here’s a lesser known trick: searching a phrase in quotes with an asterisk replacing a word will search all variations of that phrase. It’s helpful if you’re trying to determine a song from its lyrics, but you couldn’t make out the entire phrase (e.g. “imagine all the * living for today”), or if you’re trying to find all forms of an expression (e.g. “* is thicker than water”).
- Use the minus sign to eliminate results containing certain words. You’ll want to eliminate results with certain words if you’re trying

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How to Use a VPN on a Public Network

by Kim Komando (tip from 10/5/16)

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Public Wi-Fi networks at coffee shops, fast food chains, and airports can be lifesavers when you're in a pinch. You can check social media sites and e-mail, browse the Internet, shop and communicate online without putting a dent in your cellular data plan. [Use this free app to find Wi-Fi anywhere you go.](#)

Unfortunately, if an opportunistic hacker is on the same network, it gives them a good chance of snooping on what you're doing or even taking over your accounts.

Aside from hackers, the government and Internet service providers can also monitor your connection to see where you go, and, if they want, what you do. If you aren't a fan of that, and few people are, there is a way you can keep these parties out of your business.

If you're on public Wi-Fi, consider using a Virtual Private Network (VPN) to secure and encrypt your connection.

What is a VPN?

In the business world, VPNs let remote off-site employees create an encrypted connection with their company network so they can work safely.

Windows and Mac both have VPN features built in for this purpose. However, for the average home user or traveler, these aren't very helpful because you need a network to connect to. That's where a third-party VPN service comes in handy.

A VPN service lets you create an encrypted connection with one of its servers, and you use that server to browse the Internet. The connection is encrypted through the server, so the VPN can't see your traffic either. OK, it's a bit more complicated than that behind the scenes, but that's the result.

To start, you need to choose a program or service to use. There are dozens that offer a

variety of security features, privacy options, server locations and other considerations.

Note: If you're searching for VPNs, you'll see VPN services and "proxy" services. A proxy service can disguise your computer's identity, but it doesn't necessarily encrypt your connection. Always go with a VPN for security.

For the average user, it's important to make sure the service has U.S.-based servers, know how much bandwidth you can use per session or month, and to know that it doesn't keep logs of your activity. Paid services will require some personal information and payment information, naturally, but you can find one that minimizes what it needs to know.

Some services will accept prepaid cards and alternative payments that are more difficult to trace back to you. However, even if you give the service your information, as long as it doesn't keep logs of what you do with the service, then it doesn't matter so much.

For PCs, Macs, and Android smartphones and tablets, [CyberGhost](#) is a popular free option that has strong encryption, unlimited bandwidth and doesn't store logs. If you decide on a paid plan, there's an Apple app as well, plus you get access to more servers around the world.

[Hotspot Shield VPN](#) is a good app for Apple and Android gadgets and has more than 300 million downloads. You get to choose your server location, and it also blocks viruses and phishing attempts before they get to your gadget. There are also Windows and Mac versions; however, the free software has ads.

Exclusively available for Apple MacOS and iOS is another VPN service called [Cloak](#). With this application, just mark certain networks as "trusted" and it will automatically secure your connection whenever you're not in one of them. Cloak's service is not free; it offers two monthly subscriptions: a 5 GB mini plan for \$2.99 and an unlimited data plan for \$9.99. You can try it out for free for 14 days.

Using a VPN

Once you've installed your VPN of choice, fire it up and let it establish a connection. You can then browse the Internet like you always do. The traffic will flow to your computer, tablet, or smartphone over the encrypted connection from the VPN's server.

This means any unencrypted sites you visit

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VPN Cont. from page 8)

will be safe from prying eyes and encrypted sites will basically have double encryption. As a side bonus, if you're at home, your Internet service provider will no longer be able to see what sites you're visiting. It will only see your connection to the VPN.

The sites you're visiting also won't know where you're coming from. They'll just see the connection from the VPN. That means the government will have a harder time tracking what you're doing as well.

Disclaimer: While the government will have a harder time seeing your activity, it isn't impossible that it can find out what you're doing. So, keep what you're doing legal.

I strongly recommend using a VPN when you're on public Wi-Fi. Wi-Fi makes it easy for hackers on the same network to snoop on what you're doing. The VPN encryption should stop them.

Even then, you shouldn't do anything too sensitive on public Wi-Fi, like online banking. Save that for home on your secure Wi-Fi network, or use a cellular connection on the go. Even with cellular, you might want to use a

VPN in case you wander in range of a government StingRay. [Learn what StingRays are and why you want to avoid them.](#)

More things to know

Using a VPN is a good way to increase your security, but it does have a cost. While most VPN services claim otherwise, it can slow down your connection. That's because your traffic is making more stops between you and the site you're using. If you find that your browsing is sluggish, you can turn off the VPN while using sites that aren't critical.

You could run into obstacles if your VPN hooks you up with a server in another country. Some online activities, like streaming online videos, are often region locked. So if you find YouTube, Netflix, or another site refusing to play videos because it says you aren't in the U.S., you'll need to adjust your VPN settings or find one with more U.S.-based servers.

Similarly, some sites that you use regularly might say they don't recognize you. You might need to go through security procedures to prove you are who you say you are before you can log in.

While the VPN will hide your surfing from your ISP and the sites you're visiting, your computer, smartphone, or tablet are still recording your browsing history. If you don't want that recorded, you'll need to browse in private or incognito mode. [Learn how to activate that in your browser.](#)

A VPN is just about the connection between you and a website. If you choose to store personal information on a website, it can still be lost in a data breach. So, as always, be conscious of what sites you choose to trust with your information.

While a VPN encrypts your connection between you and the VPN server, the connection between the VPN server and the site you're visiting isn't necessarily going to be secure. While the odds of a hacker breaking in at that point are minimal, it's still possible.

Always be sure to check your browser's address bar to make sure you see the "https://" before sending any sensitive information to a website. If a site doesn't offer an encrypted connection for sensitive information, then you probably don't want to be using it, VPN or not. ☺

Google Tricks (Cont. from page 7)

- to search for a term that's generating a lot of results that aren't of interest to you. Figure out what terms you're not interested in (e.g. jaguar -car) and re-run the search.
- Search websites for keywords. Think of the "site:" function as a Google search that searches only a particular website. If you want to see every time TIME.com mentioned Google, use the search "Google site:TIME.com".
- Search news archives going back to the mid-1880s. Google News has an option to search over 100 years' worth of archived news from newspapers around the world.

The address is <https://news.google.com/newspapers?hl=en>

- Compare foods using "vs". Can't decide between a burger or pizza for dinner? Type in "rice vs. quinoa," for example, and you'll receive side-by-side comparisons of the nutritional facts.
- Filter search results for recipes. If you search your favorite food, and then click "Search Tools" right under the search bar, you'll be able to filter recipes based on ingredients, cook time and calories. It's the perfect tool if you have certain dietary restrictions.
- Use "DEFINE:" to learn the meaning of words—slang

- included. Streamline the dictionary process by using, for example, "DEFINE: mortgage." For words that appear in the dictionary, you'll be able to see etymology and a graph of its use over time alongside the definition. Google will even sift the web to define slang words or acronyms. Try out "DEFINE: bae" or "DEFINE: SMH".
- Play Atari Breakout by searching it on Google Images. The legendary brick breaker game is available for easy access on Google. Just search "Atari Breakout" (without quotes) on Google Images and enjoy. ☺

P*PCompAS Newsletter
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Coming Events:

Next Membership Meeting: 3 June beginning at 9 am (see directions below)

Next Breakfast Meeting: 17 June @ 8 am, Country Buffet, 801 N. Academy Blvd.

Newsletter Deadline: 17 June

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

