

# Bits of Bytes

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

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Issue 10



## The Prez Sez

by Joe Nuvolini, President, P\*PCompAS

We had 15 members at the September meeting. I can't blame those who did not show up as neither the newsletter nor the Web site announced the program. That's because neither Greg nor I was notified of any program. Cary had something planned but I made the decision that if no program is announced in the newsletter or Web site, there will be none. We still have no slate of officers for next year. 'Nuff said about that. I won't reiterate my message from last month.

We do have a program for October. Jeff will be conducting a Webinar using Zoom software with Bob Gostischa and the subject is "Protecting your Digital Life." Also, thanks to member Jim Miller, Dr Kacy Hooten will be giving a presentation at the November 2nd meeting entitled "Hearing Loss and NEW Technology." Unfortunately for me, I will be recovering from knee surgery so I'll miss the latter presentation. Hope to see you all at the October meeting. ☺



## Meeting Minutes

by Cary Quinn, P\*PCompAS Secretary

President Joe Nuvolini called the 7 September 2019 Membership Meeting to order at approximately 9

## Next P\*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 5 October 2019

The presentation will be on "Protecting Your Digital Life" via a Webinar through the APCUG.

am. We got Starbucks coffee for the second to the last time. Coffee is a buck for members and free to first-time guests. The minutes from the previous month were approved.

## OFFICER REPORTS

VP Jeff Towne was out of town on family leave. President Nuvolini said the October meeting should be an APCUG security presentation over a Zoom conferencing platform.

Secretary Cary Quinn had nothing to report.

Treasurer Chuck Harris was out of town, but President Nuvolini reported \$3640.44 in checking and \$157.33 in savings.

Membership Chair Ann Titus had nothing to report.

Editor Greg Lenihan passed out some newsletters and said the next newsletter deadline is 21 September.

Librarian Paul Godfrey was not present. Our book is safe.

Hospitality Chair Ilene Steinkruger was thanked for bringing the doughnuts.

BOD Chair Joe Nuvolini had nothing to report.

We are still looking for someone to take over the Nominations Committee.

## OLD BUSINESS:

President Nuvolini warned that if we don't have officers to run, and we lose our 501(c)3 status, we will have to forfeit all our money and equipment.

## NEW BUSINESS:

Joe Nuvolini discussed a lot of old club documents he put on

a thumb drive. The original BOD was a lifetime position, which was changed. The projector we first bought was part of an agreement with the church.

After recent Windows updates, the volume on our club PC won't go above 37%. (Addendum: President Nuvolini reported the problem seemed to be fixed with later updates.)

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Social Breakfast is on September 21st.

Our next Membership Meeting is on October 5th.

President Nuvolini will not be at the November meeting due to knee surgery.

## PRESENTATION

There was no presentation because the president and editor were not notified of a topic. ☹

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### P\*PCompAS

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**Editor: Greg Lenihan**  
**Librarian: Paul Godfrey**  
**Membership: Ann Titus**

## Committees

**Audio: A.J. Whelen**  
**Hospitality: Ilene Steinkruger**  
**Programs: Jeff Towne**  
**Publicity: Jeff Towne**  
**Nominating: Vacant**

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**Peter Rallis**  
**Paul Godfrey**  
**Ann Titus**  
**Harvey McMinn**

## Try These Advanced Search Engine Tips

By Bob Rankin, <http://askbobrankin.com>, published through the APCUG

The Web is a window to a world of information. But as the amount of online information grows, finding what you want in search engines is getting harder. A casual search for a keyword or phrase can produce millions of hits, and they are not ordered by relevance exclusively. On the other hand, search engines can quickly tell you things that you wouldn't expect a search engine to know. Here are some easy ways to get more out of search engines, or less if that's what you need...

### Search Engine Tips and Tricks

Are you getting too many hits when you search on Google or Bing? Restricting the scope of a search helps to reduce irrelevant results. Here are some helpful tips you can use on most search engines to limit the number of results, and zero in on what you want to find.

**Exact phrase:** By putting quotation marks around a set of keywords, you create a phrase that becomes a single keyword. Search engines will show you only results that contain ALL of the phrase's words in the EXACT ORDER you specify them.

Without quotes, results will include pages that contain any (but usually most) of the specified keywords. Try searching for the phrase **autonomous vehicle crash** or **digital camera photography** with and without the quotes to see the difference in the results.

**Keyword exclusion:** You can omit from your results all pages

that include specific keywords or phrases. The Boolean operator NOT (which must be capitalized) may be used on Bing, but on Google the shortcut for NOT is the minus sign. For example, **-lithium batteries** will return results that contain the keyword **batteries** but not the word **lithium**. You can exclude quoted phrases by putting the minus sign immediately before the first quotation mark, e.g., **-"made in China"** will exclude results that contain that phrase.

**Wildcards:** If you're not entirely sure how a keyword is spelled or what words should be in a keyword phrase, try using the asterisk (\*) to allow any number of any characters to fill in a blank in your memory. For instance, **the rain in \* falls mainly on the plain** will return all the countries in which rain falls on the plain. You can get some pretty oddball results this way, but some will probably contain what you're really seeking.

**Time/Date:** Both Bing and Google allow you to narrow down your search results by time and date. On Bing, click the **Any time** dropdown just above the first search result, and then select All, Past 24 hours, Past week, or Past month. On Google, click the Tools button (after performing your search) then you'll see the **Any time** dropdown. In addition to day, week and month, Google adds Past Year, or Custom range to the list of options. Handy especially if you know something appeared online very recently, or at some specific date in the past.

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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.

## How to Change the Screen Resolution in Windows 10

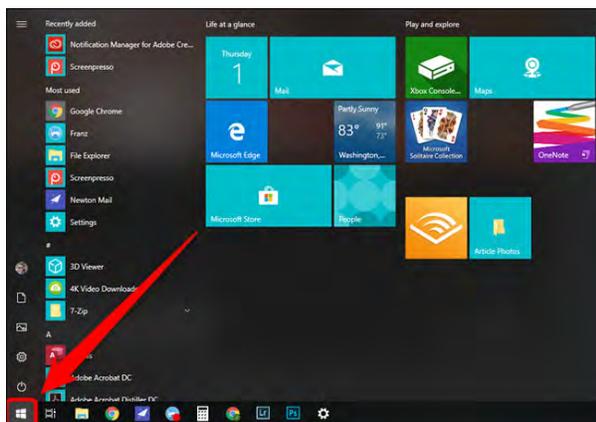
By Justin Duino, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](http://HowToGeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/435794/how-to-change-the-screen-resolution-in-windows-10/>

Is your Windows 10 computer's screen looking a bit wonky? Did you plug in a new monitor that isn't working as intended? You might need to adjust your screen resolution. Here's how.

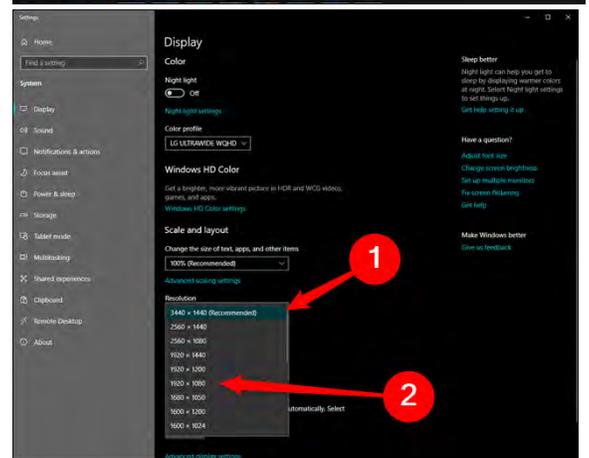
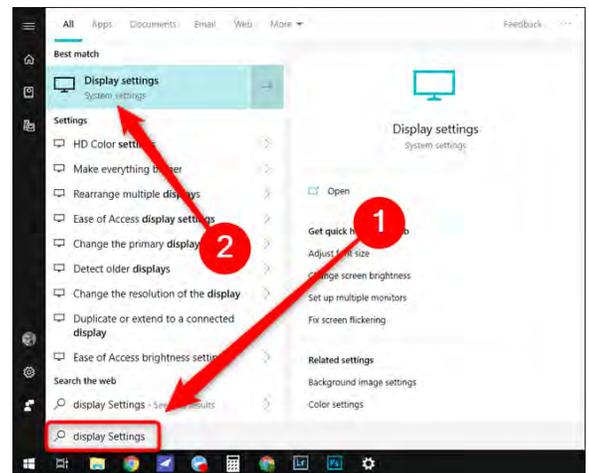
To get started, click on the "Windows" button located in the bottom left of your desktop. If the [taskbar has been moved](#), the button might be found on one of the other edges of the display.

Alternatively, you can press the "Windows" button on your keyboard.



Next, type in "Display settings." Click on the option that appears under "Best match."

Near the bottom of this menu, you will find a section labeled "Resolution." Click on the arrow next to the resolution that's currently set to see a drop-down of available options. Select the resolution that you believe best fits your needs.



Note: Windows does its best to detect the optimal resolution for the monitor that's plugged in. The operating system marks this resolution as the "Recommended" option. 😊



It was sitting room only for the digerati at the September breakfast. There were rumors that our old breakfast location may have a new restaurant opening, but everyone seemed happy with the selection at the Golden Corral.



## How to Fix the 7 Most Irritating Windows 10 Features

by Vince Pontorno at Komando.com (tip from 9/22/19)

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Windows 10 is one of the best and most versatile operating systems available today. However, even the [best platforms can come with their share of irritating problems](#).

Windows 10 users have been complaining about annoying features for quite some time now. Untimely updates, automatic defaults to an unwanted search engine and annoying password logins are only a few examples.

If this is all sounding a little too familiar, keep reading. We have a few tips to help you fix the seven most irritating features and keep them from creating further annoyances. No need to take your whole system apart, just a few little tweaks in your settings menu should do the trick.

### Stop inconvenient software update reboots

It's probably happened to you at least once, twice, or 10 times by now. There you are right in the middle of completing an important presentation for tomorrow or streaming your favorite series and it happens. Windows begins to automatically install a new update and suggests that you reboot your computer right then and there. How convenient.

Thankfully, there are a couple of ways for you to keep Windows 10 from updating on your

precious time. First, if you go to your **settings** menu you can set time parameters with the '**active hours**' feature for updates as they come in. That way your computer will not be able to automatically update itself during those busy hours.

Or, you can always pause them altogether. Yes, you can put a halt on these updates for up to 35 days if you so desire. Simply go to your **settings** menu, choose the **Windows updates** field and go to the **advanced options**. From there, you can toggle the **Pause Updates** option and switch it to **On**.

### Cortana is compromising your security



*Continued on page 5*

### Search Engine Tips (Cont. from page 2)

#### Location, Location, Location (and other handy search tips)

**Location:** By default, search engines search the contents of all the Web sites they've indexed. If you are pretty sure the article you want appeared on a specific site, you can search just that one site by specifying its name immediately after the operator **site:** –

i.e., **site:askbibrankin.com faxing** will return only articles on my site that mention faxing. This is especially useful on sites that don't have an integrated search feature.

**File type:** Search engines don't just index text in HTML files (Web pages). Google and Bing

also index words inside PDF, PowerPoint, Word and other types of files. You can limit your search to a specific type of file, e. g., **batteries filetype:ppt** if you remember seeing what you seek in such a presentation. This trick is also useful for finding **inspirational** JPGs or GIFs with which to annoy your Facebook friends.

People are seldom looking for keywords; they're usually looking for answers to questions. Here are some natural-language ways to get just answers instead of Web pages with lots of irrelevant data.

**Definitions:** If you're playing Scrabble and need to prove that a word has a definition, a quick

search using the **define:** operator should do the job. Often, simply typing **what is** will do the trick.

**Conversions:** The syntax **X to Y** will convert X into Y where both are currencies, temperature scales, systems of weight or measurement or area, and more. **How many hectares in 24.76 acres** also works surprisingly well, as does **What is \$36 in British pounds**.

**Set a timer:** If you want to be reminded of an appointment or when to quit surfing the Web, just type **set timer for** into the Google search box and it will pop up a timer console that you can set. Google will then start beeping at you when the time runs out. **Set timer for X minutes** is a shortcut. ☺



## *Playlists—Use Them to Enjoy Your Music*

*By Phil Sorrentino, The Computer Club, FL, [www.sccccomputerclub.org](http://www.sccccomputerclub.org), [philsorr \(at\) yahoo.com](mailto:philsorr@yahoo.com)*

A Playlist is a list of files that can be played back on a media player. If the files are pictures and the media player is a picture viewer, you have a slideshow. If the files are audio files and the media player is a music player, you get music played for as long as the list continues. If the files are video files and the media viewer is a video viewer, you may get an afternoon at the movies. Typically with a play list, the files can be played back sequentially for an orderly experience, or in a shuffled order for a little more excitement.

Audio playlists are a great way of enjoying your digital music. Each tune to be enjoyed must be in one of the music file formats that are popular, .mp3, .wma, .wav, etc. .mp3 is probably the most popular. .mp3 is a lossy compressed format where the resultant files are about 1 tenth the size of the original file. But in the process of compressing the file some of the quality is lost. The quality that is lost is in the higher frequencies, where the human ear begins to attenuate as we age, so many of us older humans may not really be missing that much. (.wav files are lossless, uncompressed files, so if you want all of the quality, you should probably save your music in this file format when you get them; after all, nowadays storage is cheap.) By the way, Windows comes with a great application that you can use to get all of your music from your CDs - it's called Windows Media Player (WMP) and allows you to "rip" your music files from your CDs (which is absolutely legal). It defaults to creating .wma files, so make sure you change this (in the Options) to .mp3 if you want .mp3 files. There is also an adjustment for the audio quality; the higher the number the

better the quality, but the larger the file. So, once you have all of your music stored in a music database, you can start to create the playlists that will use the music files. WMP can also help you in this task. I've used WMP to create many playlists, some of which are called Love Songs, Assorted Favorites, Fun Songs, Songs from an Earlier Period, Folk Songs, Country Songs, etc.

So technically, a playlist is a file with a playlist file type. Many playlist file types have been defined such as .zpl used by the Zune Media Player (probably not many of those around), .wpl defined by Microsoft and used in WMP, .m3u originally created by WinAmp and used in the very popular free WinAmp music player, .vlc, a format used by the VLC Media Player which has the same format as .m3u except for the .vlc designation, .pls a format similar to the Windows .ini file type, and others. Currently, .m3u seems to be the most widely used file type. In my opinion, to keep your playlists most versatile, I would use the .m3u file type; but if you were going to only use WMP then .wpl would be a good choice. (WMP is setup by default to create the .wpl file type. If you want WMP to create a .m3u file type, you can change this after you have put together a list of tunes for a playlist. Right after you click "save list" you will have an opportunity to change the file type to .m3u.) In addition to being versatile, .m3u files can be easily modified, should you want to take on this tedious job. They are just text files with a simple format and can be opened with the "Notepad" word processor. To do this, just go into Windows Explorer and right click the playlist and then choose "Open with..." and choose Notepad. Each line in the

file defines the location of a tune to be played, and comments can be added to the file because text lines that start with "#" are ignored. Any helpful information can be put in the comment line. Keep in mind, the tune file name used in the playlist must be exactly the same (character for character) as the tune file name in the tune database.

Here are a few lines from a .m3u playlist:

```
# John Denver
  \MP3Music\PopMusic\John
Denver - Annie's Song.mp3
# Alabama in Country Folder
  \MP3Music\Country\Alabama -
Give Me One More Shot.mp3
```

The first line starts with "#", so this is just a comment line and essentially nothing will be done. The second line defines the location of a tune. In this example, the tune is Annie's Song and it is by John Denver. (When you "rip" a song from a CD you have choices as to how the tune file will be named. I have chosen to title all of the tunes in my Music database as "Artist" - "Tune Title". This allows me to see all of the tunes from a particular artist in alphabetical order when I look at the Music folders using Windows Explorer.) When the music player gets to this line it will retrieve the file "John Denver - Annie's Song. mp3" from the folder "PopMusic" and start to play (process) it. Note that the "PopMusic" folder is in the MP3Music folder which is the name of the folder that holds all of my tunes. "MP3Music" also holds folders for many other music genres, such as "Country", "R&R", "PreR&R", "BigBands", "Holiday", "Jazz", "Classical"; you get the idea. So this line is like a road map

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## How to Create Desktop Shortcuts on Windows 10 the Easy Way

By Chris Hoffman, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](http://HowToGeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/436615/how-to-create-desktop-shortcuts-on-windows-10-the-easy-way/>

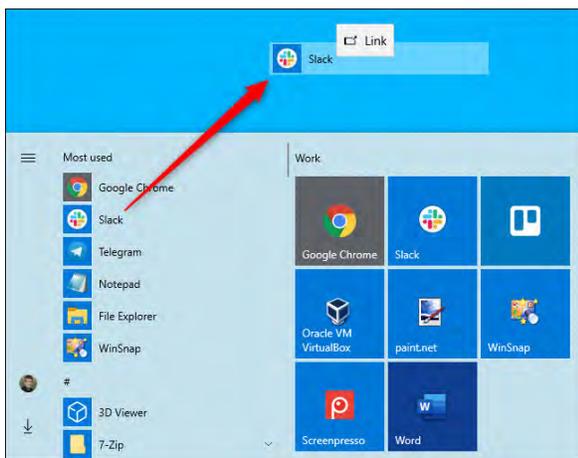


Windows 10 still lets you create desktop shortcuts to applications, files, folders, and even websites. Desktop icons may be a little out of fashion, but they're still useful as part of [a nicely organized desktop](#).

### How to Create a Shortcut to an Application

To do this the easy way, open Windows 10's Start menu. Look for the application you want to use by scrolling through the Apps list at the left side of the menu. If it's in the tiles list at the right side of the menu, you can also drag it from there.

Once you've found it, drag and drop the application's shortcut from your Start menu to your desktop. You'll see the word "Link" appear when you're hovering over the desktop. Release the mouse button to create a link to the program, also known as a desktop shortcut.



### Playlists (Cont. from page 6)

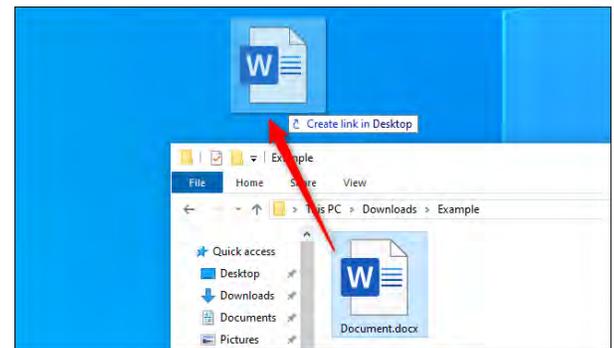
to where the tune can be found. The third line starts with "#", so, again, it's a comment and nothing will happen. But the fourth line is another tune to be selected. This tune is in the "Country" folder which is also in the MP3Music folder. So

when these four lines in a playlist are encountered, first "Annie's Song" will be played and after that is finished, "Give Me One More Shot" will be played. Fortunately, all the hard work of creating a playlist is done for you by the App that you are using to create and play your playlists. WMP is especially easy

Note that you can't search for the application by name in the Start menu. Windows 10 won't let you drag and drop anything from the search results. It should, but it doesn't.

### How to Create a Shortcut to a File or Folder

To create a desktop shortcut to a file, first, locate the file somewhere in File Explorer. Hold down the Alt key on your keyboard and then drag and drop the file or folder to your desktop. The words "Create Link in Desktop" will appear. Release the mouse button to create the link.



Holding down Alt is necessary. If you don't hold down Alt, Windows will show the words "Move to Desktop," and it will move the folder or file to your desktop rather than simply creating a link.

### How to Create a Shortcut to a Website

In Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox, you can quickly create desktop shortcuts to websites. With a web page open, drag and drop the icon to the left of the address bar—it's generally a padlock or an "i" in a circle—to the desktop.

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## ***What is a VPN (Virtual Private Network) And Why Use One?***

By Jeff Wilkinson, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club, NV, [www.scs-cc.com](http://www.scs-cc.com), [pres.scscc \(at\) gmail.com](mailto:pres.scscc@gmail.com)

A Virtual Private Network (VPN) is a connection method used to add security and privacy to private and public networks, like Wi-Fi Hotspots and the Internet. Use of a VPN allows for encrypted data transmission and prevents tracking or monitoring by internet service providers, advertisers and people with malicious intent.

A VPN encrypts your data, and your location and connection are unable to be viewed by anyone. You can use a VPN to prevent your personal data, mobile banking, and social media activity from being stolen by hackers as you search with an anonymous IP address. A VPN operates as a secure messaging tunnel between your device and destinations you visit on the internet.

Your device connects to a VPN server that can be in the

United States, or a foreign country like the United Kingdom, France or Sweden! Your internet traffic passes back and forth through that server. As far as most web sites are concerned you are browsing from that server's geographical location, not your physical location.

While a VPN can't promise total anonymity, it can be very useful for typical users. A VPN also won't do much to keep advertisers from tracking you online. Remember that the website you visit is aware of what you do on its site and that applies equally to advertisers serving ads on that site. There are browser add-ons like Ghostery, Privacy Badger and HTTPS Everywhere that can help with that issue.

How do you decide which VPN service to use? First, it pays to pay when it comes to choosing a VPN

service. Free options exist, but they usually offer a limited amount of bandwidth and or a slower service with limited number of servers. The good news is that perfectly good VPN services cost as little as \$5 per month, when purchased in blocks of months. Of course, you want to avoid services that keep logs of your activity, IP addresses, websites you visit or any other details of your activity.

So how do you set up and use the VPN you have chosen? Most have applications you can download to your PC and mobile devices. You should choose a VPN service that has apps for all the devices you use, allows enough simultaneous connections for your devices, has locations in countries of interest to you, has adequate

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### ***Desktop Shortcuts (Continued from page 7)***



This doesn't work in Microsoft Edge for some reason. Edge won't let you directly create desktop shortcuts. However, you can create them in Chrome or Firefox, and they'll automatically open in your default web browser—even if that's Microsoft Edge.

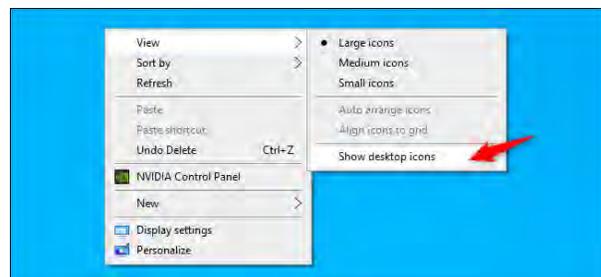
### **Working With Your Shortcuts**

Whatever type of shortcut you create, you can right-click it afterward, select "Rename," and change the name to whatever you like.

You can use all the above methods to create shortcuts in other folders, too. Want to

create a shortcut to a website or application in your Downloads folder? Go right ahead! Just drag and drop it to your desired location instead of the desktop.

If you don't see any shortcuts on your desktop, they may be hidden. Right-click the desktop and select View > Show Desktop Icons to unhide them.



You can also choose the size of your desktop icons from here—large, medium, or small. For more size options, position your mouse cursor over the desktop, hold down the Ctrl key, and scroll up and down with your mouse wheel. 😊

## *A Birthday You Might Have Forgotten :-)*

*By Art Gresham, Under the Computer Hood UG, CA, [www.unchug.org](http://www.unchug.org), 1editor101 (at) uchug.org*

September 19 is the birthday of something you might use every day. At the very least you are familiar with it even if you do not text, write emails, handwritten notes or communicate with other humanoids. In fact, it came into existence before there even existed text messages, the Internet, or email.

Back in 1982, none of our modern digital communication methods, or even the networks that evolved, existed. On university campuses there existed something called USENET boards. USER Network message boards on which the locally connected users could carry out discussions, some scientific, some not as much.

Well... it all started on a Usenet message board on September 16, 1982 because some guy wanted to know how a drop of Mercury would react in a falling elevator. (Evidently the Physics department guys had a strange sense of humor.) After several rounds of remarks, some

of them with attempts at humor, there developed a discussion about how to indicate to the readers that the message should be read as a playful joke, and not so seriously interpreted.

You can read an excellent summary of the message board conversation here:

<https://www.ttlg.com/forums/showthread.php?t=73941>

The key entry was on Sunday, September 19, 1982, by Professor Scott Fahlman of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh

**401298269,0,0**

**19-Sep-82 11:44 Scott E Fahlman I propose that the following character sequence for joke markers:**

**:-)**

**Read it sideways. Actually, it is probably more economical to mark things that are NOT jokes, given current trends. For this, use:**

**:-(**

These symbols, composed of normal keys used in standard text, and available on our keyboard, have long been used, albeit in simpler forms, for a very long time.

A summary discussion of the Emoticon at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emoticon>

An entertaining version, at <https://www.kidscodecs.com/history-of-emoticons/> credits Victor Hugo with perhaps the first digitally transmitted emoticon

*in 1862, Victor Hugo sent a telegram to his publisher with a single character, ?, to ask how his new book Les Misérables was selling. The publisher, equally clever, sent a single character telegram back, !.*

So happy birthday to the smiley face Emoticon :-)

### *What is a VPN? (Continued from page 8)*

servers and IP addresses and supports your speed needs at a reasonable price. IMPORTANT!

Financial institutions and streaming services like Amazon Prime and Netflix will not work with a VPN since their security depends on verifying their customer.

Many VPN services offer free trials and have frequent sales offerings to new customers. Take advantage of the free trial to put the VPN through its paces.

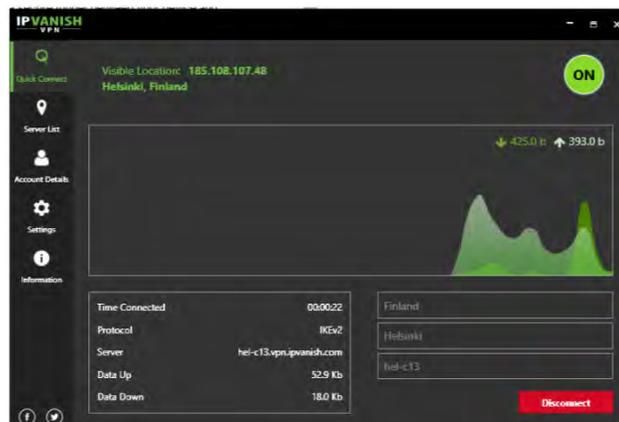
I have been using IPVanish (<https://www.ipvanish.com>) for a little over a year now and it works perfectly on all my devices. Of course, all VPNs will have some speed penalty depending on the VPN server you use. I haven't had any problems.

Here's an example of an experience I had using a VPN. While surfing a web page, an obnoxious ad for health insurance seemed to consume a large amount of a page I was viewing. I wondered, if I were surfing the same page from Boston, would that same ad come up. So, I used

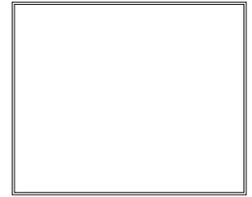
my VPN to surf the same page as if I was located in Boston. Sure enough, same obnoxious ad. I then wondered whether that ad would appear if I were in Helsinki, Finland! Using my VPN I changed cities to Helsinki, Finland.

This time, that ad did not appear; but a smaller ad appeared for a different product.

This is just a quick overview of VPN's to give an idea of what they are and why someone would use one. ☺



**P\*PCompAS Newsletter**  
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**Coming Events:**

**Next Membership Meeting: 5 Oct, beginning at 9 am (see directions below)**

**Next Breakfast Meeting: 19 Oct @ 8 am, Golden Corral, 1970 Waynoka Rd.**

**Newsletter Deadline: 19 Oct**

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

