

# Bits of Bytes

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

Volume XL

July 2020

Issue 7



## The Prez Sez

by John Pearce,  
President,  
P\*PCompAS

We might have a combined physical and virtual meeting on July 4th depending on Joe Nuvolini's availability. More on this below. The presentation is scheduled to be on Project Gutenberg.

If Joe is available, he will set up the club computer and projector at the church and join the virtual meeting. I will conduct the business meeting via Zoom. Cary Quinn will do the presentation via Zoom. By sharing the desktop of the computer used for the presentation, everyone should be able to watch the presentation whether at the church or via Zoom. There may be sufficient bandwidth at the church to support multiple Wi-Fi Zoom sessions there. A tablet or cell phone using cellular service (not Wi-Fi) would be fine.

Remember we are guests at Springs Community Church and we must follow the guidelines they issued. The guidelines are reprinted on page 4 in this newsletter.

Joe may not be available to have the physical meeting at the church on July 4th. I will send a meeting reminder Friday evening, the 3rd, and tell you if Joe will do the physical meeting.

Take good care of yourselves. ☺



**Next P\*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 4 July 2020  
(via Zoom and possibly at the church also)**

A presentation could be on Project Gutenberg.

## Meeting Minutes

by Greg Lenihan,  
for the P\*PompAS Secretary

President John Pearce began the 6 June 2020 Membership Meeting via Zoom at 9:01 am. Joe Nuvolini was at the church testing out a Zoom connection to see if it worked okay from there.

### OFFICER REPORTS

Vice-President Cary Quinn said his friend Eli was having bandwidth issues and would not present this month. Cary is looking into a "pre-prepped" video for a future meeting, but for this month he worked with Ann Titus for a presentation.

Treasurer Chuck Harris said we currently have \$3223.33 in savings and \$81.29 in checking.

Membership Chair Ann Titus asked if anyone knew where Stan Rapaport was living.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan announced the next deadline as 20 June.

Librarian Paul Godfrey had nothing to report.

Board of Directors Chair Peter Rallis had problems hearing the meeting (low volume), but otherwise had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

John Pearce sent out a survey to the club, asking who wanted to go back to physical meetings (following church guidelines) or

virtual meetings. Of 18 responses, 7 wanted to go back to the church, 9 wanted to continue Zoom meetings, and 3 were undecided. John proposed a combined physical church and Zoom meeting. There was a motion to approve the plan and the vote passed.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next social breakfast Zoom meeting will be 20 June at 9 am.

The Golden Corral will open on Thursday, 11 June, but there will be social distancing and they will serve the customers. The consensus was that we could not interact well (unless we texted each other with cell phones).

### PRESENTATION

Ann Titus showed videos on the new Microsoft Edge browser, using MS Quick Assist, Feedly, Focus Assist, Cortana, and Windows 10 sign-in options. ☺

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**Hospitality: Ilene Steinkruger**

**Programs: Cary Quinn**

**Publicity: Cary Quinn**

**Nominating: Vacant**

**Board of Directors**

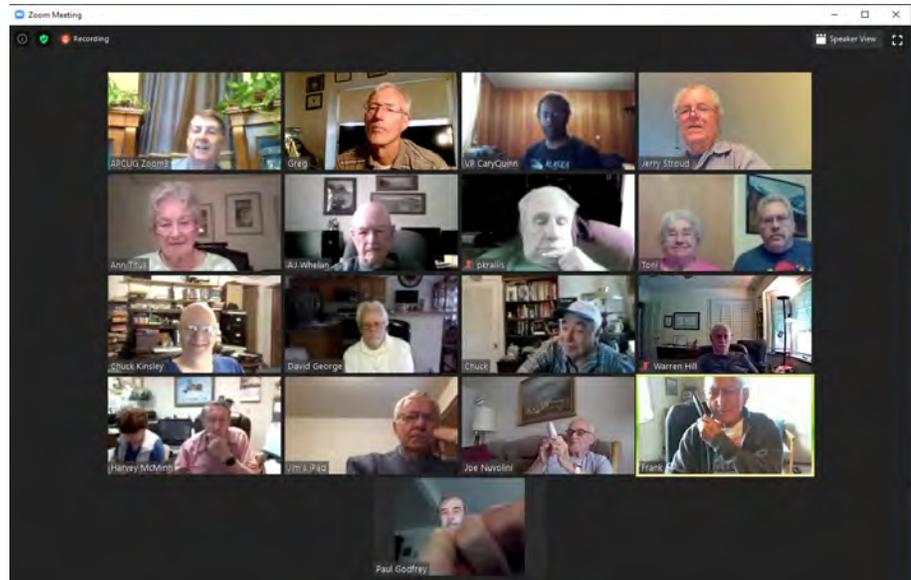
**Peter Rallis**

**Paul Godfrey**

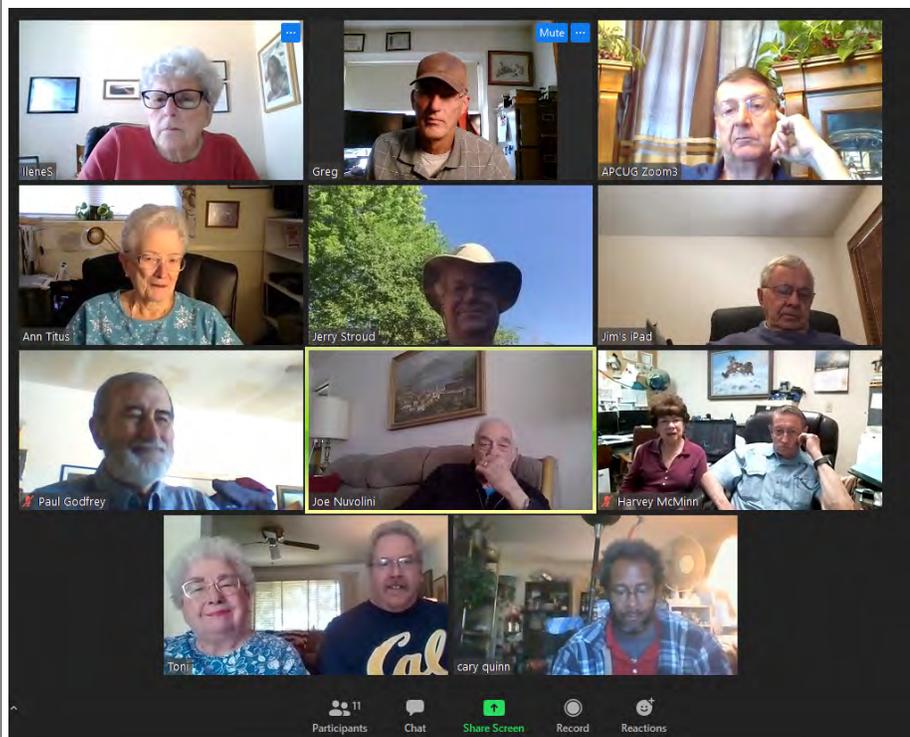
**Ann Titus**

**Harvey McMinn**

**Jeff Towne**



**Zoom screenshot of the 6 June membership meeting.**



**Zoom screenshot of the 20 June breakfast meeting.**

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## Why Notepad Is Still Awesome for Taking Notes

By Ben J. Edwards, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.howtogeek.com/672710/why-notepad-is-still-awesome-for-taking-notes/>

In a world where fancy, hyper-connected, note-taking apps litter the landscape, one app stands alone in its lightweight simplicity: Windows Notepad. Here's why it's still a great choice for taking notes.

### The Benefits of Notepad

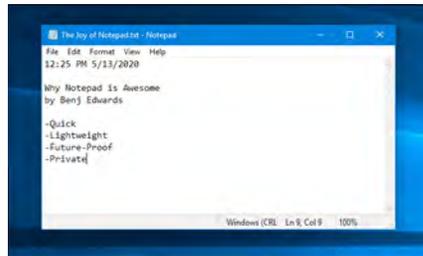
The humble Windows Notepad has been with us for 35 years now, tucked into every version of Windows since [Windows 1.0](#). It has a simple job: To easily view, create, and edit text files, which are one of the most [fundamental building blocks](#) of modern computing.

Even in this day and age, Notepad is still a useful tool for making quick notes on your computer. Sure, there are [specialized note-taking apps](#) that support more sophisticated formatting, data structuring, or cloud-based synchronization between platforms. But for some people, the extra features just mean extra baggage that they'd rather not deal with. Here's why Notepad is still great.

### It's Quick and Lightweight

When you want to write something down, you want to do it quickly while the idea is still fresh. In that way, Notepad shines. Click the Notepad icon and the program pops on-screen in a flash. There's no waiting for libraries and fancy features to load into memory before you can use the program. When inspiration strikes, every moment counts, and Notepad is ready and waiting to capture your ideas.

By the way, if you want a quick way to timestamp your notes with Notepad, just hit F5, and the current date and time will be instantly inserted into your file.



### It Uses a Future-Proof Storage Format

Text files are as old as personal computers themselves (older, in fact), and as long as Windows writes its text files to an industry-standard format like [ASCII](#) or [Unicode](#), it's very likely that you'll be able to read your notes on any computer platform far into the future. Other programs write their specially formatted notes in proprietary file formats or even databases that [may not be easily readable in the future](#).

**RELATED:** [What Are Character Encodings Like ANSI and Unicode, and How Do They Differ?](#)

### You Stay in Control

Notepad lets you save your notes (as text files) exactly where you want them, and you have no one but your operating system to answer to about how you organize, copy, or back them up. You can migrate your notes to another app by opening them in any app that understands text files.

If you use a note-taking app, your notes might be locked behind a paid subscription account and stored in the cloud. The company storing the data is the gatekeeper of your ideas.

If the app stores data locally in a non-obvious location on your hard drive in a proprietary format and some future disaster recovery

scenario has you picking through the ashes of your data, trying to find and recover your actual note data in File Explorer will be tricky.

### Privacy and Security Are Up to You

With cloud-synchronized note-taking apps, your notes get pushed out over the internet and are viewable on any device with the app. That means there are more potential ways to access that data outside of your purview, including accidentally by family or friends who may borrow your device from time to time.

Also, your cloud-synchronized notes are often stored on remote servers behind a publically accessible login, which means your credentials can be stolen and your data accessed from anywhere on Earth. One security breach in your account and all of your potentially sensitive or private notes are open for them to see.

With a text file in Notepad, the data is completely in your hands, stored on your local device. As long as you follow safe computing habits and keep your machine secure, the text file is not going anywhere unless you copy it first.

### Dealing With Notepad's Drawbacks



We love Notepad, but we can't say it is always the best solution for everyone. For overall convenience, you might choose another app.

*Continued on page 5*

# Springs Community Church (SCC) Guidelines for In-Person Meetings

Based on recommendations from the CDC and El Paso County Health Department Variance Approval.

## Room Use

In order to properly disinfect our building and equipment after every group, it is important that you notify Natalie Yungner, Director of Operations for Springs Community Church, at 590-1705 or [natalie@springscommunitychurch.org](mailto:natalie@springscommunitychurch.org) if your meeting times change in any way. Please adhere to the following guidelines when meeting at SCC.

1. Please only use the room that has been designated for your group. If you need additional rooms for your meeting, contact the Director of Operations in advance. This is to ensure that all rooms that have been utilized are properly disinfected.
2. Please arrange any chairs and tables to allow for 6 feet of distance between group participants.
3. Do not tear down or put away any chairs or tables after your use. Our janitorial staff will need to disinfect them before the next group's use.
4. Please do not provide any food or drinks for your group. Individuals are welcome to bring their own.
5. Collect contact info for every person in attendance at every meeting. I realize anonymity is important for some groups, so it can be as simple as first name, last initial and a phone number. This is a requirement set by the county in case we have to follow up with anyone, should someone who has been in our building be diagnosed with COVID. I am not asking you to turn that list into me, but trust that you will adhere to the guidelines set by our county on your own.
6. Please refrain from using any shared materials.
7. All physical touch between group members is strongly discouraged, to include hand-shaking and hugs.
8. Please bring and wear a mask at all times in the building.
9. Please provide hand sanitizer for your group.
10. Encourage any members who might be among the at-risk population, have been feeling ill or exposed to someone that's ill, to skip your meeting. A "best practice" is to take your temperature before leaving, any reading that is elevated (100.4 degrees) is considered a fever.

## If You Get Sick

If any member of your group becomes ill within the 14 days after attending a meeting at SCC, please notify the Director of Operations immediately.

## *Trouble Seeing Your Computer Screen? Here's Help*

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

Aging eyesight affects everyone eventually, diminishing the pleasure and productivity of computing. Various adaptive technologies are available to compensate for loss of visual acuity. Some are built into Windows. But these options all have limitations, and using them in certain combinations can actually make it more difficult to make sense of what's before your eyes. Read on for a look at Windows' display settings and how to use them to best advantage...

### Getting Windows Display Settings Right

Before trying to improve the display, it's best to reset it to default values so you know how the manufacturer intended things to look. Defaults also provide a baseline against which tweaks can be compared.

Open the “**Change Display Settings**” desktop app by right-clicking anywhere on the desktop and selecting “Display settings” from the dropdown menu, or by typing “display” in the search box and double-clicking on the app in the results. On Windows 10, you will see a page with the word Display at the top.

Set the following items to the values indicated to restore your display to its defaults:

- Night Light: Off
- Size of text, apps, and other...: 100%
- Resolution: “recommended,” the highest your display supports
- Orientation: Landscape

On some devices you may see a Brightness

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### *Notepad (Cont. from page 3)*

But there are also ways to address Notepad's shortcomings.

#### No Fancy Text Formatting

It's true: if you need text formatting features, such as bold, italics, or changing font sizes, Notepad is not the solution. You can, however, use symbols and punctuation for simple formatting. Asterisks make great bullet points, tabs can form indented lists, ALL CAPS serve as good headers, and repeated dashes or equal signs make great line separators. And, don't forget the classic `_adding emphasis_` using the underscore character.

If you really can't live without bold text, try [WordPad](#). If you need fancy pagination, try a word processing app like Microsoft Word. **RELATED:** [What's the Difference Between Notepad and WordPad in Windows?](#)

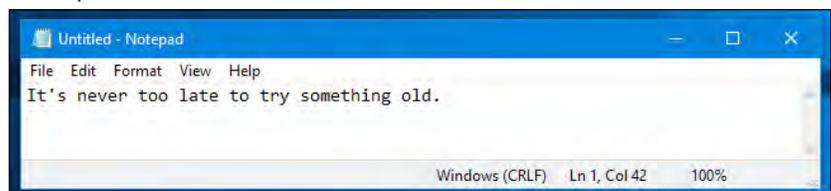
#### No Cloud Syncing or Backup

If you prefer to work in the text format medium and also want cloud backup or synchronization

capabilities, store your Notepad text files in a cloud file service like [Dropbox](#) or [OneDrive](#). Every time you hit save in Notepad, your changes will end up on every device that uses the cloud app.

#### No Encryption or Account-Based Security

Sure, text files aren't locked away behind an encrypted account by default—unless you store them in an encrypted file partition managed by something like [VeraCrypt](#) or [Microsoft's BitLocker](#). And if you prefer to restrict access to your notes by password, [there are other ways](#) to keep the notes private, including not letting people you don't trust use your computer.



#### Lack of a Search Feature

Sure, you can search within a text file with Notepad by hitting `Ctrl+F` to open the Find dialog. But

what if you have 500 text files and you need to find information in one of them? In that case, [Windows Search comes to the rescue](#), letting you search within as many text files as you want.

#### No Organizational Features

If you like to organize your notes by concept or date, [create a logical folder structure](#) in File Explorer, and copy your text file to the appropriate location.

#### How to Use Notepad to Take Notes

Why not try out Notepad right now? It's easy: just click your “Start” button, type “Notepad,” hit enter, and you're ready to go.

You might be surprised at the ease at which you can jump right into note-taking any time you like. ☺

*Computer Screen (Cont. from page 5)*

control in the Display Settings panel. I recommend setting it at 50%, or as close as you can get it with the finicky slide control. (Some monitors have physical menu buttons on the front, side or underneath, that let you fine tune the brightness, hue, scaling, and other aspects of the display. If yours does, check those settings and set them to default values as well.)

If any advanced display settings are in effect you will see a notice to that effect. If you do, follow the instructions to disable them. You will be logged out and will need to sign in again to see the default settings take effect.

On a Windows 7 system, there are fewer controls. Click Start, enter “display settings” and then click the item “Change display settings.” Set your screen resolution to the highest your display supports, then click Apply. Next, click the “Make text and other items larger or smaller” link. Choose the “Smaller - 100%” option. Finally, click “Adjust ClearType text” and follow the instructions to get the sharpest-looking text on your display.

### Moving Beyond Default Display Settings

Most likely, things will look smaller, crisper, and move faster. Using default display settings has a positive effect on overall system performance because few resources are diverted to accommodating custom display settings.

**But default display settings may be hard on your unique eyesight. So now let’s see what we can tweak to make the screen easier to view and navigate.**

One of my favorite tweaks is very easy. **Hold down the Ctrl key while rolling the mouse wheel** forward, away from you. All text in browsers, word processors, PDF readers, and other document display apps gets bigger! Reverse

the wheel’s motion and everything gets smaller. A page’s left and right edges will expand or contract accordingly. This trick gives you pretty fine control over text size, and text size can be different from one window to another.

If you don’t have a mouse with a wheel, **you can do the same thing by pressing Ctrl and the “+” or “-” keys.** I prefer this method, because I can quickly return to the default magnification setting by pressing Ctrl and “0” (zero).

But you will notice that parts of the screen do not change size. Menu bars and other fixed objects that surround text remain the same size. In some apps, the window that confines text will not change size and enlarged text overflows the edges of the window, getting lost from sight.

### More Tweaking the Windows Display Settings

To avoid this problem, return to the Windows 10 “Change Display Settings” app. (For Windows 7, use the “Make text and other items larger or smaller” option described above.) **In the “Scale and Layout” section you will find the option to “Change the size of text, apps, and other items.”** The dropdown menu allows settings of 100% of the default (recommended), 125%, and 150%. Play with those, logging out and back in after each change.

Notice that as you enlarge things they may no longer fit on your screen entirely. The bottom of the display settings page drops down out of sight beneath the edge of the screen. You will need to PgDn to see what you are missing, which may include important options for the app you are using.

The menu bars and text on them still remain at their tiny default sizes. **In early versions of Windows 10, there was an “advanced sizing of text and other items” option** that allowed

you to change the size of the menu bars, text in title bars, icons and other fine tunings. That option was removed in the April 2017 Creators Update. I’ve read that if you [start your computer in Safe Mode](#) this option becomes available, and any changes you make will still be in effect when you exit Safe Mode. I’ve not tried that, so I can’t verify that it works.

**The brightness and “night light” options** on the display settings page change the hue of light, mostly by adding or removing some of the blue spectrum. A warmer, less-blue hue is often easier on the eyes and can help prepare your body for sleep, so try the “night light” toggle switch. Click on “Night light settings” to see how finely you can control the warmth of light.

Back up under “Scale and Layout” you see **“Advanced scaling settings.”** Toggle on the switch that promises to **“Fix scaling for apps.”** It can make text look less blurry when it’s enlarged or shrunk. Custom scaling percentages can also be set on this page; they will be indicated back on the main page when they are in effect. Don’t neglect to click on the “Apply” button at the very bottom of this page or your custom settings will not take effect.

**The resolution of your display** should be left at its recommended maximum. If it’s changed, there will be fewer pixels available and everything will look less sharp, blurry. The advantage of using a coarser resolution is that those tiny border items will look bigger, but blurrier. Leave “orientation” alone unless you switch to a monitor that is taller than it is wide.

**The multiple displays section** is for those who have more than one monitor. Writers, programmers and gamers often have dual display systems, but they

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## *What to Do With an Old Computer You've Been Given— What I Did With Mine*

By Leo A. Notenboom, <https://newsletter.askleo.com/>; published under the Creative Commons License

*When I'm given an old computer, there are a few things I do for the safety of the original owners, myself, and the planet.*

A couple of weeks ago, I described how [I got my wife and a friend new computers](#).

Each got a [Google Pixelbook Go](#), and so far, everything's been working well.

What I didn't tell you, however, is what happened to their old computers. I took them. I'll review what I did immediately, and what my plans are for these old computers.

- Back up the data carefully and immediately.
- Erase the hard drive, either by reformatting with a subsequent install or some other way.
- Repurpose working and otherwise capable machines.
- Consider removing the hard drive of broken machines, or those no longer powerful enough for repurposing
- Recycle broken machines or leftover components.

### Back up the old computer

This probably seems completely counterintuitive, since by definition the old computer is no longer needed, but my first step is always to create an image backup of the hard drive if possible.

In my experience, people often don't realize what they have until it's gone. Only then do they realize there was some important document or other information on it they *really* wish they'd kept.

Yes, in an ideal world, the computer's

previous owner would have done this step, but I do it anyway.

In the case of my wife's old MacBook Air, I simply made sure to let Time Machine run to completion, and then saved the external [hard disk](#) in a desk drawer. After enough time has passed, I'll repurpose the drive.

For my friend's old Dell laptop, I booted into a Macrium Reflect recovery [USB](#) stick (created on my main computer), and used that to create a [backup](#) image onto an external hard disk. I then copied that image file to my collection of old machine image files for safekeeping.

With that out of the way, what happens next depends on the machine.

### Working machines

Assuming the old computer is functional, my next step is to install an operating system.

Most importantly, this step erases what's on the hard disk. This isn't what I'd call a "forensic" erase — I'd turn to something like [dban](#) if that were needed — but a simple erase that will make most of what's on the hard disk unrecoverable to any but the most dedicated sleuth.

The other reason, of course, is that running the newly installed operating system may be the beginning of the old computer's new life.

In the case of my wife's Mac, I used its built-in reinstall function to reinstall the operating system from scratch, and brought it up to the latest supported edition of macOS: Catalina. It'll probably get used as an occasional travel laptop

*Continued on page 8*

### *Computer Screen (Cont. from page 6)*

can be a blessing to the visually impaired as well. You can control the settings of both types, and even specify an app to be used to test graphics settings.

I want to mention one more option that can help if you are visually impaired. **The Magnifier (on Windows 7/8/10) can make any part of the screen**

**larger.** Press and hold the Start key and the plus (+) sign to activate the Magnifier. Move the mouse to the portion of the screen you want to magnify. You can adjust the magnification level if desired.

These are the basics of Windows display settings. Things get more complicated when you begin using display settings built into apps such as Chrome, in addition to the Windows settings.



I recommend avoiding that. Do the best you can using Windows display settings alone. ☺

## The New Chromium-Based Edge Browser Rolls Out to All Windows 10 Computers

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

Original article at: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/44232/the-new-chromium-based-edge-browser-rolls-out-to-all-windows-10-computers/>

Months after [its initial launch](#), Microsoft is rolling out the new Chromium-based Edge browser through a Windows Update. According to a [Windows Support document](#), all computers running Windows 10 version 1903 and higher will receive the update, along with the faster, redesigned Edge browser.

The Chromium version of Edge hit the scene in January,

but users had to download it manually [from Microsoft's website](#). Since then, the browser's seen some major improvements, including compatibility with [Chrome extensions](#), a [built-in webpage translator](#), and a [crapware blocker](#). Microsoft continues to work with Google to improve the Edge browser. But in our experience, the new Edge is already a serious alternative to

Chrome or Firefox. It's fast as hell, it looks great, and it has better tab controls than the competition. Now that it's on your computer, you might as well try it.

You should see a new Windows Update for your computer today or tomorrow. If you're in a rush to try Edge, or you don't want to download a Windows Update, then you can grab a copy of the browser [from Microsoft's website](#). ☺

### Old Computer (Cont. from page 7)

due to its small size and weight.

I decided to use the older Dell, a 15" Inspiron 3531 originally shipped in 2014, as a testbed. I installed [CloudReady](#), a version of Chrome OS that can be installed on PCs, which is free for personal use. Time will tell if this is a viable setup for this machine or if it's not up to the task.

### Anemic or non-working machines

If an old computer isn't up to the task of running a current operating system — either because it's under-powered by today's standards or it simply doesn't work and isn't worth repairing — it's time to scavenge and recycle.

My first step is to remove the hard drive, both for security reasons and for potential re-use. If I was unable to access or erase the hard disk with an operating system install, I'll connect it to a different computer if at all possible.

If it's working, I use Windows to format the drive. I don't select "quick format," so the formatting process overwrites the entire drive. If it's of sufficient capacity, I'll either place it into an external USB enclosure for use, or set it aside in my collection of working drives for similar use in the future as needed. If it doesn't meet either criteria, off to recycle it goes.

If the drive doesn't work and I'm unable to overwrite any of the data on it, I add it to my collection of broken drives slated for physical destruction.

### Recycling

It's not as common for laptops, but before I send an old computer off to be recycled, I look it over for components worth scavenging. On desktop PCs, that might include [memory](#) sticks, expansion cards, or even power supplies. With laptops, the options are more limited — often only power supplies and power cords are worth salvaging — but it's still worth a look.

The final step is to take whatever's left to an [appropriately qualified electronics recycler](#). They will also review the machine for repurposing, but most then dispose of the electronics in a responsible manner.

### What I don't do

You may notice there's one thing I don't try to do: keep the existing installed operating system.

There are a variety of reasons, including:

- Security. I have no idea what [malware](#) may be present.
- Privacy. The original owner's files may still be present.
- Legal. Transferring the operating system to a new owner may or may not violate licensing terms.
- Cleanliness. Starting with a fresh OS guarantees the best possible performance from the old computer.

The bottom line? When it comes to an older or [second-hand machine](#), aside from keeping a backup for those "just in case" moments, the hard disk should be erased and you should start over with a clean installation. ☺

## ***ICYDK: Don't Put Your PC on the Floor***

By Michael Crider, reprinted with permission from [HowToGeek.com](https://www.howtogeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/43235/icydk-dont-put-your-pc-on-the-floor/>



If you have a big honkin' desktop computer and a little bitty desk, you might be tempted to simply place your computer on the floor next to it or underneath it. Please don't. That goes double if your desk is in a carpeted room. It's bad. How? Why? Allow me to briefly explain.

Welcome to *ICYDK (In Case You Didn't Know)*, a series where we offer tips and tricks that aren't necessarily new but may have gone under the radar or otherwise not be well known.

Your desktop generates quite a lot of heat from its internal components, especially if it has a powerful CPU and graphics card. In order to cool it down, it circulates air in and out, very much like a car engine. Because your PC isn't constantly moving at 60 miles an hour, it needs to do so with a series of small fans. The circulation fans are what make the "whir" noise when your computer turns on.

If you place your PC on a carpeted floor, then the intake or exhaust fans that face down are obscured. Not every computer uses bottom-mounted fans, but many do, especially for the critical power supply component (the thing that you plug that thick power cable into). Blocking intake or exhaust will mean your computer runs hotter, and therefore, with less efficiency.

### **An intake fan on a desktop PC. Don't block these**

Even if you don't have carpet, you want to keep your computer away from dust as much as possible, and your floor has a ton of dust. Keeping it down there means that you'll have to clean it out more frequently to keep it running well.

If you can't fit your PC on your desk or you simply want the space on top, you can get a small end table to place it on. [A little \\$20 MDF table will do just fine](#), if it can handle the weight and you're not concerned with aesthetics. As long as your PC is flush with the surface, with the legs allowing airflow underneath, it's effective.

If you'd like something a little more discrete or you need your desktop PC to move with a standing desk, then consider mounting it underneath the desk with a "CPU holder." (That's a misnomer, it holds the entire machine and not the CPU, but this office accessory doesn't have a more widely-accepted general term.) You'll need to ensure it's safely attached, but once it is, it makes an excellent and cozy home for your computer. ☺

## **Tip: Clean Copy and Paste**

Since the beginning of time the keyboard shortcut to paste something has been **Command/Ctrl + V**. Not as well known — but should be, for the raging headaches it can cure — is that if you add a third key — the **Shift** — what you paste will be plain text wiped clean of any formatting it might carry from its source. You might say it is a clean paste. ☺

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

**Next Membership Meeting: 4 July @ 9 am, via Zoom at a minimum**

**Next Breakfast Meeting: 18 July via Zoom**

**Newsletter Deadline: 18 July**

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

