

# Bits of Bytes

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

Volume XLI

February 2021

Issue 2



## The Prez Sez

by John Pearce,  
President,  
P\*PCompAS

The annual Consumer Electronics Show was totally a virtual presentation this year. It seems like there are hundreds of recorded presentations created by the vendors to show off their new and improved products. Vice President and Program Chairperson, Cary Quinn, is planning to use a selection of these presentations for our February meeting. I think Cary and Joe Nuvolini might have collaborated on the selection.

Based on comments at the last Digerati breakfast, it seems like people in the age 70 and above group are getting COVID-19 vaccinations. In my opinion that is great news. Maybe we will have the pleasure of resuming monthly meetings at Springs Community Church later in this year, probably with a hybrid format. I think it all depends, in part, on the comfort level of members to resume in person meetings. Based on what the medical community has said, it appears the need to wear a face covering is not going away until summer at the earliest. ☺



## Meeting Minutes

by Greg Lenihan,  
P\*PCompAS Secretary

President John Pearce opened the 2 January 2021 membership meeting at 9 am via Zoom.

**Next P\*PCompAS meeting: Saturday, 6 February 2021**  
See highlights from the Consumer Electronics Show and Keynotes this year as we stream into the new roaring 20's.

## OFFICER REPORTS

Vice-President Cary Quinn was not present at the beginning of the meeting but after joining said he hoped to continue the tradition of presenting some of the CES highlights at the February meeting. If you see some CES clips you like, send them to Cary.

Treasurer Chuck Harris reported we have \$2224.95 in savings and \$1021.29 in checking. Money was moved from savings to checking to write checks.

Membership Chair Ann Titus had nothing to report.

Newsletter Editor Greg Lenihan announced the next deadline as 23 January.

Librarian Paul Godfrey had nothing to report.

APCUG Rep Joe Nuvolini said the website is a little behind.

Board of Directors Chair Paul Godfrey had nothing to report.

OLD BUSINESS: None

## NEW BUSINESS:

John Pearce said we need to give a gift to the church and asked Joe Nuvolini to get with the church as to their needs.

John Pearce asked for two volunteers to audit the club financials. Cary Quinn and Toni Logan will meet with Chuck Harris.

## AROUND THE ROOM

Chuck Harris received a new microphone from his son. It is called a Touch. Chuck got a new iPhone 11 and it took over a week to figure it out.

John Pearce reported that Nuvo is trying to leave rehab at Centennial on 4 January so he can go to McKenzie Place, where they are due to start receiving the Covid-19 vaccine the following day.

Jeff Towne was notified by UCHealth about getting the vaccine. He signed up, but when he tried to sign up his wife, they were out of slots. He finally got her an appointment at Highland Ranch. Chuck Harris complained about getting popups from UCHealth, but no one else has been having issues. Some think he is having a browser problem.

John Pearce said that the \$600 stimulus payment was being distributed.

Greg Lenihan received an e-mail from Acronis that offered Truelmage 2021 for \$20 with a perpetual license. When he clicked on the link there was nothing in writing about the license, so he passed. Cary

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**Librarian: Paul Godfrey**

**Membership: Ann Titus**

**Committees**

**Audio: A.J. Whelan**

**Hospitality: Vacant**

**Programs: Cary Quinn**

**Publicity: Cary Quinn**

**Nominating: Vacant**

**Board of Directors**

**Paul Godfrey**

**Ann Titus**

**Harvey McMinn**

**Jeff Towne**

**A.J. Whelan**



**Zoom screenshot of the 2 January 2021 membership meeting**



**Zoom screenshot of the digirati attending the 16 January breakfast meeting.**



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## The Best Apps to Help Seniors Enjoy Their Golden Years

Suzanne Humphries, reprinted with permission from [ReviewGeek.com](https://www.reviewgeek.com)

Original article at: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/65846/the-best-apps-to-help-seniors-enjoy-their-golden-years/>

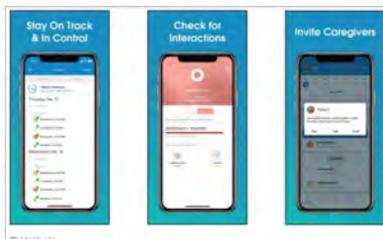
Smartphones aren't just for the younger generations—they have plenty to offer seniors as well, like apps that are helpful and entertaining. We've rounded up an exciting variety of apps to help seniors stay social, manage their health and money, find enjoyable movies and podcasts to help fill the time, and to make life a little easier.

The majority of the apps are available for both iOS and Android devices, and can be downloaded on all compatible smartphones and tablets. We also tried to find as many free apps as possible, so you won't have to worry about spending all of your money on them either.

### Managing Health

Health is important at every age, but especially for seniors. Luckily, these convenient apps should make it easy to find discounts on prescriptions, remember to take pills on time, and immediately contact someone to get help in case of an emergency.

### Remember to Take Your Pills: Medisafe

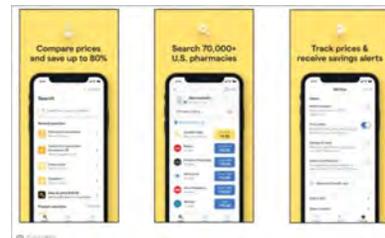


It can be tricky to remember to take all of your pills every day (or multiple times a day), but with [Medisafe](#) (Free, with in-app purchases), it

doesn't have to be. The easy-to-use app has an extensive drug database, so you can program in your exact OTC and prescription medicine names and dosages along with the specific times you need to take them. You can also program an alarm to go off when it's time to take your pills, then mark it as taken once you do. This makes it easy to see if you've taken your meds for the day, or if you skipped a dose.

The app has tons of other helpful features, too, like a drug-to-drug interaction checker, refill reminders, time zone detection, health measurement tracking for various medical conditions, and support for complex dose schedules. Medisafe has family and caregiver support via the "Medfriend function" and can send a trusted person a notification if you forgot to take a dose. And of course, the app is also HIPAA and GDPR compliant, so your information is safe.

### Find Prescription Discounts: GoodRX



Prescription costs can add up quickly, but [GoodRX](#) has some tools that'll let you compare pharmacy discounts, find coupons,

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### Meeting Minutes (Cont. from page 1)

Quinn said that Gene Barlow still sold Acronis products at [www.ugr7.com](http://www.ugr7.com).

Bob Kotz bought a Win10 computer and he hasn't used Win10 up to now. He had a Win7 computer, and Judy Taylour said you can search for things in Win10 that you want to do.

John Pearce uses Smart Switch to back up his Samsung phone.

Toni Logan did something where

she somehow selected half her icons with her mouse at one time. Some people confirmed that they believed it was a mouse problem.

### ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next social breakfast Zoom meeting for the digerati will be Saturday, 16 January, at 9 am via Zoom.

Our next membership meeting is on 6 February (happy birthday, Prez).

### PRESENTATION

Judy Taylour from the APCUG presented "Ideas for Revitalizing Your Tech." Clubs are suffering from a lack of volunteers, officer burn-out, and retiring personnel, but seniors still need help. Judy encouraged clubs to think beyond computers, like genealogy, library services, ambulance services, weathermen, digitized medical records, and the Microsoft store for presentations. ☺

### Best Apps for Seniors (Continued from page 3)

and try to save a little money on the medicine you need. The app's price comparison feature shows you which pharmacies offer fills or refills for under \$4 each (or even where they're available for free). The app excels at finding current cash and sale prices, savings tips, and coupons for thousands of prescriptions, both name-brand and generic.

All you have to do to use the app is get your prescription from your doctor, open the app to find a pharmacy with the best discount, drop off your prescription there, and show your coupon to the pharmacist. The app has a few other handy features, too, like refill reminders and custom prescription lists (so you can manage all of the pills you're taking). It's compatible with local pharmacies like CVS, Costco, Walgreens, Kroger Pharmacy, Rite Aid, and more.

### Get Help in an Emergency: Red Panic Button



The [Red Panic Button](#) app (Free, with in-app purchases) is straightforward in what it offers: A red panic button you can press in an emergency situation that'll send a panic SMS, email, or tweet with your current location. This is handy to have if you fall or are otherwise hurt or in a bad situation. You have two ways to interact with the app: by opening it up, or by placing a widget on your tablet or smartphone.

The app offers a free tier alongside a paid tier, which costs \$4.99 and is worth the upgrade. The free tier enables you to send a limited number of panic SMS, emails, and tweets with the address of your current location (and the latitude and longitude). The paid tier gets rid of ads, eliminates message limits and contact options, and gives you the ability to make emergency calls and quick SMS responses. It also lets you create and send photo, audio, and video panic emails, which can provide your contacts with a little more context to a situation.

### Staying Social

Staying in touch with loved ones doesn't have to be difficult, no matter how far away you are. With so many [video chat apps](#) to choose from, you'll only ever be a few taps away from enjoying a nice video

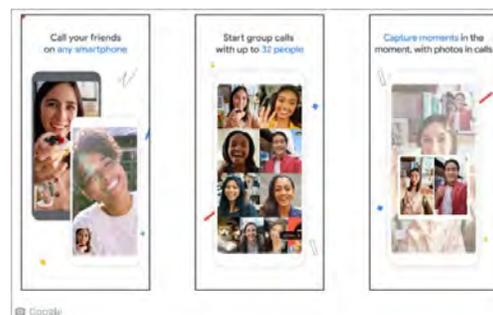
call with anyone you want, like your grandkids or old friends.

### Video Calls for iOS Users: FaceTime



If you own an iPhone or iPad, you might prefer to use [FaceTime](#) (Free). Apple's proprietary video call app enables you to make both video and audio calls. You can invite your current contacts to a call, or type in a specific phone number or email address. You can make one-on-one calls or host up to 32 participants at a time, so it's great for large groups of friends or family. In FaceTime calls, you can use stickers and other effects during your call to make them a little more fun as well.

### Video Calls for Both Android and iOS Users: Google Duo



[Google Duo](#) (Free) is a simple video chat app that's compatible with both iOS and Android, so you won't have to worry about device compatibility issues between you and anyone else you call. You don't need an account to use it—in fact, the app only needs your phone number. Duo can host up to 32 participants on a single call, which means it's a great way to get your entire family together for a chat (though you can make one-on-one calls with it as well).

The app has a few other nice features worth taking advantage of, too. You can send voice and video messages, photos, notes, or emojis to contacts if they don't pick up when you call

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**Best Apps for Seniors (Continued from page 4)**

them (or if you don't have a lot of time). You can also snap a photo of your video calls if there is a fun moment you want to remember. Duo also has a low light mode, which ensures your video call still looks great even if you aren't in a well-lit area.

**Money & Organization**

Mobile apps make it incredibly easy to stay on top of all kinds of things, from money to organizing tasks and ideas. We found a few apps that'll give you a nice variety of coupons and discounts, help you manage your finances and create a budget, and make it easy to jot down a note or grocery shopping list.

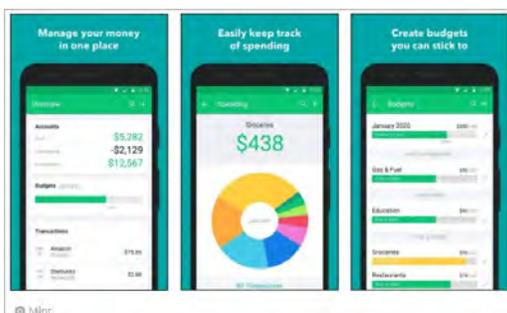
**Save Money While Shopping: Senior Discounts & Coupons**



Whether you're on a fixed income or are simply trying to spend conservatively, it's always nice to save money. With Senior Discounts & Coupons (Free), you can browse the latest coupons to your favorite stores for food, services, shopping, and more. There are even AARP discounts (though you'll need to be a member to snag them).

The app's entire database is easy to search, plus there's an age filter so you can see which specific discounts you're eligible for. Senior Discounts & Coupons has coupons for grocery stores, travel, cell service providers, lodging, restaurants, entertainment, snacks, and more.

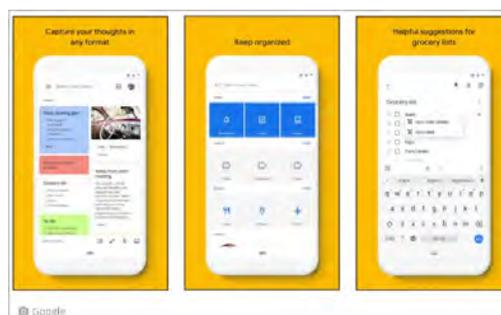
**Manage Your Money: Mint**



Nobody likes tackling their bills or creating a budget to stick to, but Mint (Free, with in-app purchases) makes it pleasantly easy. The easy-to-use app centralizes all of your accounts and tracks all of your spending, so you can keep an eye on your finances at a glance. The app also uses tons of simple colorful charts to help you visualize your budgets and your overall monthly spending.

Mint breaks your accounts, budgets, and recent transactions down on the home page of the app. It lets you allocate a certain amount of money to each of your budgets (so, for groceries, restaurants, gas & fuel, etc.) and shows you how much you've spent versus how much you have left for each. The app also enables you to check your credit score and set up reminders for upcoming bills or when your funds are running low, so you won't have to worry about being overdrawn or dealing with late fees.

**Create Simple Lists and Notes: Google Keep**



Along with the rest of Google's fantastic suite of free apps, Keep is easy to use and super versatile. You can use it to create notes and checklists (like for groceries or your to-do list), as well as set time and place reminders. You can even add other collaborators if there's something you need to share with others.

Google Keep supports voice dictation, and can automatically transcribe anything you say into a note if you toggle that option. You can also attach drawings or photos and color-code or label notes to keep everything organized. It's the perfect app for storing lists, quick notes, phone numbers, links, recipes, and pretty much anything else. Plus the app automatically syncs across every device you use it on, so you can access them anywhere.

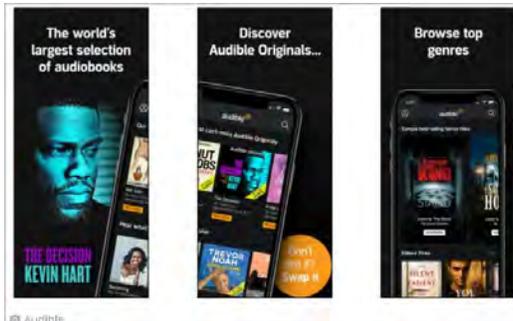
**Find Some Good Entertainment**

Life's too short to waste on bad entertainment or expensive shows. Find the best picks for all

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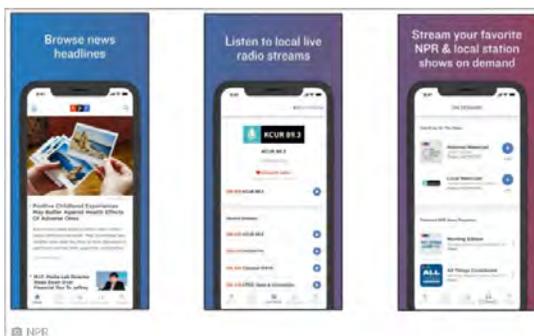
**Best Apps for Seniors (Continued from page 5)**

kinds of content from audiobooks and podcasts, to music and movies with these exciting and easy to use apps.

**For Audiobooks: Audible**

**Audible** (\$14.95 per month) hosts an enormous collection of audiobooks and podcasts, including both classic and popular new titles. Audiobooks make for great company when you're exercising, cleaning, driving, or just relaxing. Plus, if you've got a [Kindle device](#), you can easily switch between reading and listening as needed without missing a beat.

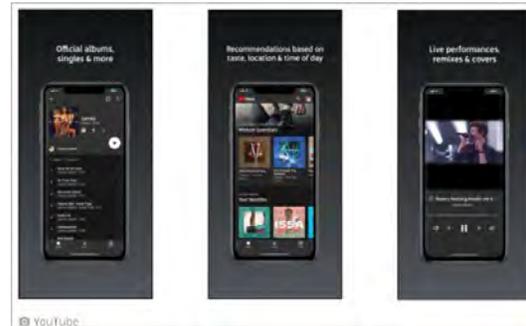
The fantastic service includes access to thousands of titles, like *The Stand* by Stephen King, *Can't Hurt Me* by David Goggins, *Becoming* by Michelle Obama, *Untamed* by Glennon Doyle, *The Summer House* by James Patterson, *Dune* by Frank Herbert, *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, the entire *Harry Potter* series, and more.

**For News-Based Stories and Programming: NPR**

**NPR** (Free) is a great place to read or listen to the latest local, national, and international news, and enjoy podcasts or other curated content. The app lets you stream local public radio stations and enjoy other on-demand programming. You can also tune in for hourly newscasts, breaking news alerts, and more.

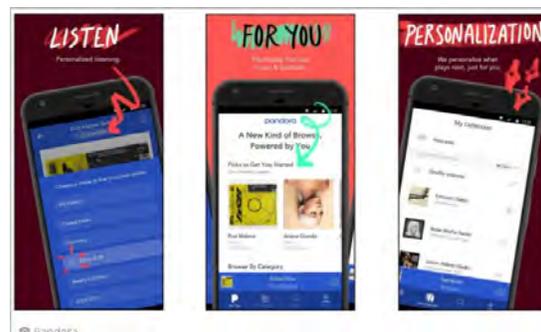
The NPR app also plays host to two award-winning news programs—*All Things*

*Considered* and *Morning Edition*—as well as additional popular podcasts like *Wait Wait...Don't Tell Me!*, *Fresh Air*, *Talk of the Nation*, and *Planet Money*. The app gives you the ability to create a playlist with all of the stories and shows you want to listen to.

**For Music (and Music Videos): YouTube Music**

**YouTube Music** (Free, with paid plans starting at \$4.99 per month) is host to millions of songs from around the world, including hard-to-find deep cuts and international tracks. It also lets you switch between audio tracks and its corresponding music video, to keep things entertaining. The app makes it easy to search for your favorite tracks or discover new ones, and it supports collaborative playlists, so you can build playlists with your friends.

The free version is great on its own, but if you want to get rid of pesky ads and enjoy its playlist features, you'll need to upgrade to [YouTube Premium](#) (which includes YouTube Music Premium). Paid plan options include the student plan for \$4.99 per month, the standard individual plan for \$9.99 per month, or a Family plan for \$14.99 per month (for up to five users). YouTube Music is great for avid music lovers and those who prefer to have more control over their playlists and other music options.

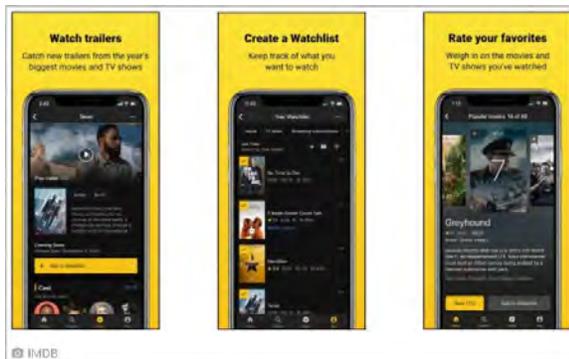
**For Personalized Music Playlists: Pandora**

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**Best Apps for Seniors (Continued from page 6)**

**Pandora** (Free, with paid plans starting at \$4.99 per month) is another streaming music option, and one that's a little less fussy than YouTube Music. It's the ideal choice for anyone who just wants to open a music app, tap on a song, and start listening without extra frills. Plans start at \$4.99 per month for students, and include a standard individual plan for \$9.99 per month among [other options](#).

Pandora focuses on personalized AI-generated playlists that pull from its catalog of songs and podcasts. When you first sign up, Pandora will have you take a moment to tell it the artist and genres you like so it can create a personalized channel for you, kind of like a radio station. You can also go in and tweak this as needed, and Pandora's algorithm will adjust to it. Of course, you'll still have the option to search for music and build your own playlists as well.

**For Free TV and Movies: IMDBtv**

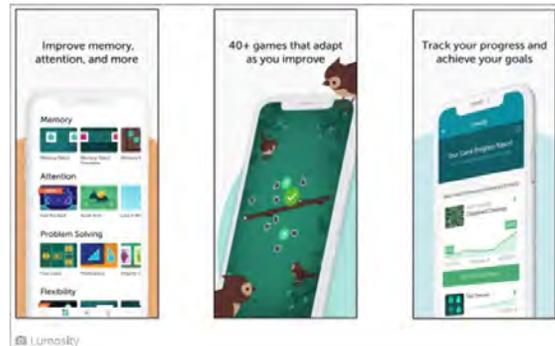
If you're more of a movie buff than a music fan, don't worry, we've got you covered as well. **IMDBtv** (Free) is a streaming video service that's known for its wide selection of classic shows, family movies, and other niche picks. There's also a decent selection of original programming, hidden gems, movies of the week, and others across a variety of genres.

IMDBtv is located within the larger IMDB app, so it's kind of like a one-stop shop for learning about and watching new and classic shows. You can tap on a show to learn more about it or start watching it, but you will need to log in with Facebook, Google, or Amazon to get started. And while IMDBtv has a fun selection of content, there are other sources for [free streaming video services](#) that may better fit your interests as well.

**Engaging Brain Games**

There is plenty you can do to keep your mind sharp, like playing fun games that stimulate

and engage your brain. Keeping your brain active with games is a great way to stave off forgetfulness. And for those who have been diagnosed with Alzheimer's, remember to choose games that are fun but not too frustrating.

**Brain Training Fun: Lumosity**

**Lumosity** (Free, with in-app purchases) is a popular and widely regarded game that focuses on cognitive training. Its science-based games are designed to exercise your attention, speed, memory, flexibility, and problem-solving skills. It includes over 50 activities, with new ones added on a regular basis, as well as a variety of challenges for memory, speed, problem-solving, logic, math, language, and more.

When you first log in, you'll begin with a 10-minute Fit Test to set your baseline scores. This will be your jumping-off point to work against as you play, plus it lets you see how you compare with others your age. *Lumosity* features carefully curated games and personalized tracking of your training habits, so it can better challenge your brain. It also helps you see which areas you are weak in and analyzes them so you can make connections to your daily life and work on strengthening them.

**Competitive Word Play: Words with Friends 2**

Playing games with your friends and family members has never been easier, and **Words with Friends 2** (Free, with in-app purchases) is

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*Best Apps for Seniors (Continued from page 7)*

the perfect lighthearted and competitive word game. It's a Zynga game, so you've probably seen it on Facebook, and it's similar to the board game Scrabble. You can play solo or against your friends, or you can team up with your friends to beat other teams.

*Words* hosts a variety of weekly challenges, in which you can earn badges and rewards. You can earn boosts, which make it easier to earn points in regular gameplay or the mini games. There's even a built-in dictionary with 50,000 new words added, in case you need help thinking of a good word to play with your given tiles.

**Senior-Specific Apps**

We found a few other wonderful apps that didn't necessarily fit into other categories. These two are aimed directly at seniors, and offer different features that'll make your life easier. What's not to like about that?

**Membership Rewards, Events, and News: AARP**

If you're over the age of 50, you're eligible to join [AARP](#) (starts at \$12 per year). The nonprofit organization is dedicated to empowering American seniors and even throws in a free membership for your spouse when you sign up. Once you're a member, you'll want to download the AARP app (Free), as it features all kinds of goodies, from

news stories and community events to exclusive member benefits and rewards.

AARP is a great resource for insurance, finances, health and wellness, travel, recipes, games, and even senior discounts for groceries and all kinds of popular stores. You can even open the app to read fun and interesting stories, catch up on the latest news, and explore hundreds of local events, like career workshops, movie nights, and kid-friendly events, then quickly register for them directly from the app. It's a must-have service (and app) for all seniors.

**See Small Print Easily: Magnifying Glass + Flashlight**

With the [Magnifying Glass + Flashlight](#) app (Free, with in-app purchases), you can easily view tiny hard-to-read text even in low-light scenarios. The app uses the camera on your tablet or smartphone to capture then enlarge text. It even has a high contrast mode, zoom, and a flashlight, so you'll be able to read the fine print, even in the dark.

The app is perfect for reading menus, prescription bottles, serial numbers, books, and other similar types of things whether or not you have your glasses on. It stores all of the photos it takes in your photo library, so you can go back and review them at any time. You can also digitally zoom in on any text you capture, up to five times. ☺

***Tune and Optimize Your Hard Drive***

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

One of the best things you can do to improve the performance of your computer is to keep your hard drive in tip-top shape. When things go wrong, the source of the problem is often in the hard drive. Here are some of the most common tasks that must be done with hard drives, plus some nifty (and free) software utilities that make getting them done a breeze...

**Tune Up Your Hard Drive with Free Software**

Clean-up of unnecessary files and folders helps to keep your Master File Table nice and lean; with fewer files and folders to index, it's easier for the system to find

what it needs at any given moment. File inventory reporting utilities such as [JDiskReport](#) can find duplicate files so one can be deleted, or sort files in order of size to help you figure out where all that disk space is going. I use JDiskReport several times a year, and I always find gobs of files that can be deleted. Backups will also be faster if unnecessary files are eliminated. Another similar disk analysis tool is [WinDirStat](#), which has versions for Linux and Mac as well.

Optionally, clean-up can include deleting traces of your computing and online activity to preserve your privacy. In Windows, "recent files" history lists are kept by

default, and every Web browser maintains histories of the URLs you have visited. If your computer is shared or you're worried about spies, enabling this clean-up option will cover your tracks. [Privazer](#) is my favorite utility for clean-up and privacy purposes; it leaves a computer running like it's fresh out of the box.

If you want to get rid of everything on a drive, in order to donate, sell, or safely dispose of it, try [Eraser](#), a free utility for securely erasing data from a Windows hard drive. It works with all versions of Windows, from Windows 95 through Windows 10. Eraser has a simple name but it erases files

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*Optimize Hard Drive (Continued from page 8)*

completely in several complex ways. It's a good alternative to using a 16-lb steel sledge hammer, a drill, and angle grinder (all of which I have gleefully employed on occasion).

Defragmenting (defragging) and file optimization are related functions that keep data on your hard drive physically organized for the most efficient reading and writing. Generally, the less distance the drive's read/write head has to move, the faster data will be read and written. Optimization finds the pieces of fragmented files on your hard drive, re-assembles them, and places the most frequently used files in places where they can be more efficiently accessed.

Windows Vista, 7, 8 and 10 include a defragger which runs automatically. But word on the street is that it's not exactly best of breed. I recommend [Defraggler](#) from Piriform, which can defrag entire hard drives, individual files and folders, or the free space on your drive. Defraggler will report on the health of your hard drive, and is SSD-compatible.

It's been widely reported that SSDs (solid state drives) should not be defragged, because they do not have mechanical moving parts accessing files on a spinning magnetic platter. The concern was that SSDs may wear out due to the high level of write activity that defrag operations require. However, Windows 8 and 10 both perform defrags on SSDs, and my understanding is that modern SSDs are not prone to wearing out like some older models did.

### Data Recovery and Other Utilities

So-called "undelete" utilities can find and restore files even after the Recycle Bin has been emptied, or recover usable parts of files that have been partially overwritten. Undeletion is a simple example of "data recovery," a term reserved for major catastrophes such as a hard drive that will not boot, or even one that has suffered physical damage. [Recuva](#) is free and can find and undelete files on hard drives, SD cards, MP3 players, and other devices.

[TestDisk](#) is an open-source partition recovery tool intended for situations where a drive cannot be booted. Testdisk saved my bacon once when other tools reported zero files on my C: drive. It scanned the disk, found the partitions and file access table, and patched things back together.

Catching minor read/write errors and "weak spots" on a hard drive before they turn into major disasters is the province of error-checking and testing software. Early warnings of such flaws include a hard drive the "takes forever" to open

or close a file, and an unusually hard-working cooling fan that is trying to chill the drive motor. [HD Tune](#) is a free utility that checks for errors, measures drive performance, securely erases data, and much more. There's also a paid Pro version that does more extensive testing. HD Tune has been updated for Windows 10.

For a quick look at your hard drive's S.M.A.R.T. (Self-Monitoring And Reporting Technology) status, try the free [Speccy](#) utility. In the Hard Drives section of the Speccy results, you'll see some technical gibberish under the S.M.A.R.T heading. If it says "Status: Good" at the bottom, that's about all you need to know. The only other info there you might want to check out is the Reallocated Sectors Count. If that's greater than zero, you may have some defective sectors on your hard drive.

A good benchmark utility can tell you how well your drive performs compared to its factory specs, or even against drives of identical make and model in use on other computers worldwide. Running benchmarks before and after maintenance chores can show how well a maintenance tool does its job. [Novabench](#) has been the leading free benchmark package since 2007.

Dividing one physical drive into two or more logical drives (denoted by letters, i.e., C:, D:, etc.) is called drive partitioning. One use for partitions is to install all of your application software on one partition and use the other to hold ever-changing data. Some users swear by this approach, but I find it simpler to put everything in one large partition. Of course, there's an exception. If you want to run two different operating systems on one computer, each will need its own drive partition. [Paragon Partition Manager Free](#) is a well-established, reliable partitioning tool.

Disk cloning is the process of making an exact, bit-by-bit copy of everything on a hard drive, including hidden system files, boot records, and all else. You should be able to swap a cloned drive for its original and never see any difference. Cloning is a straightforward backup strategy used by many home and business users. [Macrium Reflect Free](#) is a popular cloning utility. It also does disk imaging, which stores the entire or selected contents of a disk in a compressed file that cannot be booted, as a cloned drive can, but is easier to maintain for incremental backups. ☺

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**Coming Events:**

**Next Membership Meeting: 6 February @ 9 am, via Zoom**

**Next Breakfast Meeting: 20 February via Zoom**

**Newsletter Deadline: 20 February**

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

