Video Conferencing for Clubs

Author: Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer User Group, NJ

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

Many clubs have periodic general meetings, often with refreshments, speakers, and perhaps demonstrations or hands-on activities. The social interactions here, including the welcoming of prospective members, are vital for the organization's health. Equally important are the committee meetings that support the organization. Here, much smaller groups, whose members know each other well, plan the club's activities, and it may be more efficient to conduct some of these as video conferences, which would eliminate the associated travel. There is a major caveat: teleconferencing is ineffective if there are tensions within the group. Meet in-person to discuss a controversial issue.

There are two popular free services suitable for meetings of small groups: Facebook Messenger (http://www.facebook.com/messenger/) and Skype (http://www.skype.com/en/). Both require that participants register for the respective service, and all can be accessed from Linux, Windows, and Mac computers as well as Android and iOS devices. (These free services are provided by for-profit companies, and the usual caveat applies; they can be changed or discontinued any time their owners determine they aren't sufficiently contributing to the bottom line.) If your club outgrows the scope of the free services, most vendors offer for-fee variants with more capabilities. You might also consider inexpensive paid services, such as EZTalks (http://www.eztalks.com/video-conference/) and Zoom (http://zoom.us/). Neither requires that users other than the moderator register for a service, but participants need to install the software. Both have trial versions that limit conferences to 40 minutes, which is certainly adequate for testing.

I'll use Skype as an example, only because I already use it for one-on-one calls. Microsoft is refreshingly open about what it considers fair use (http://www.skype.com/en/legal/fair-usage/). In particular, "Group video calls are subject to a fair usage limit of 100 hours per month with no more than 10 hours per day and a limit of 4 hours per individual video call.

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

c/o Group Ambassador

"J.J." Johnson

News Journal

The LCACE News Journal is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions which will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Send articles to editor@lcace.org Permission is granted to reproduce any or all parts of this newsletter in other User Group publications, provided that credit is given to LCACE and the individual author (s). Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

Membership

LCACE membership is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are $20.00 per individual/family. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club hotline, and are now available on our web site at http://www.lcace.org.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Newsletter Submissions

Club members are welcome to submit classified ads, reviews, tips and other articles for publication, to our newsletter editor in Microsoft Word format (.doc). **Publication deadline is the 20th of the month for all ads and articles.** Please do not use tabs or special formatting.

Newsletter Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - $25, Half page - $15, Quarter page - $10, Business Card - $5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 15th of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

Notice

LCACE WILL NOT CONDONE or knowingly participate in copyright infringement of any kind. The *LCACE News Journal* is published by and for LCACE members. Opinions expressed herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinion of LCACE, the membership, the board of directors, and/or our advertisers.

Phil's Ramblings

Last month I offered some thoughts and information about the new Coronavirus pandemic and its associated disease, COVID-19. Now that we have another month under our belt, it's time to take a look at our likely future. I'll offer some thoughts of my own, and then invite you to share your experiences and view of the future.

First and foremost, most of our LCACE members are likely to fall into the most vulnerable COVID-19 category because of our age and/or possible medical issues. While governors, county executives and mayors may loosen the restrictions on businesses, religious services and so on, Americans like us would be well advised to continue to avoid crowds, minimize visits to stores and/or other public spaces, wear an effective mask whenever we are away from home, faithfully observe social distancing and otherwise minimize our interactions with others.

In reality, many Americans fall into a high-risk category because of age and/or preexisting health conditions or because the nature of their work forces them into close contact with others. In addition, younger, healthier individuals also need to be wary about becoming infected - lest they bring the virus to vulnerable family members, co-workers, clients, friends, etc.

While firms and institutions around the world are working diligently to develop effective COVID-19 vaccines, current estimates suggest that it is likely to be at least a year until we have sufficient quantities of an effective vaccine to inoculate everyone. The fact that researchers are already seeing mutations in this virus is concerning; if this virus continues to mutate, whatever vaccine(s) are developed may provide only partial immunity.

What all this boils down to – at least for me – is that our current lifestyle modifications and precautions will need to continue for the long haul. We have learned to live with influenza, thanks to a combination of high-dose flu vaccine (modified each year) and "herd immunity" built up in the general population through decades of exposure to the flu virus. It will take years for these same protective factors to become pervasive for our novel Coronavirus.

Not surprisingly, this will mean ongoing changes for how LCACE functions. The Grayslake library is continuing its meeting restrictions, so we will plan to meet online again in June. I just received word from the State Bank of the Lakes that their meeting room is off-limits indefinitely; unless something changes in the interim, we do not have a place to meet for our July picnic. We'll take this one month at a time, but we should anticipate online meetings for the foreseeable future.

On a personal level, this Coronavirus has meant becoming familiar with video-calling as a replacement for face-to-face family gatherings and visits, social dining with friends (and LCACE meetings). So far, depending on what device(s) each of us has, I've learned to use Google Duo, Facebook Messenger, Apple FaceTime, Google Hangouts and Zoom well enough to get by.

With an occasional early morning visit to nearby

Stephanie Risinger

Linda Koudelka

Judy Dunham

grocery stores that offer "senior" shopping hours and the kindness of a neighbor, we've been able to keep the larder stocked. And, we have increased our restaurant dining (via pick-up), to help local restaurants survive. Marge has made masks for us from an online pattern, so we are "legal" (and protected) on the few occasions that we go out.

We've also made greater use of Amazon and other online shopping sites than in the past, purchasing some items that we typically would have sourced from nearby "bricks and mortar" retailers. Second-hand book purchases, online library services like Hoopla, RBdigital, Flipster and Press Reader and our Amazon Prime membership have provided a steady source of entertainment.

How about you? What changes have your made in your life as a result of our novel Coronavirus? Do you see any of these as possibly permanent changes or do you expect that you will drop them as soon as you are more confident about your safety (and those with whom you come in contact)? Please drop me an email (president@lcace.org) to share information, concerns, tips, questions, etc. I'll summarize your responses in our June newsletter.

To quote a famous line from the "Hill Street Blues" TV series, "Be careful out there!"

Best,

Phil

to introduce to your organization. Expect your first conference to be awkward; even those accustomed to one-on-one video calls may find it confusing. You will most likely want to hold practice sessions, but the effort is worthwhile as there is much to gain. Replacing a face-to-face meeting with a video conference means a 20-minute meeting lasts just 20 minutes, instead of 30 to drive there, 20 to meet, and 30 to drive home, perhaps in ugly weather or traffic.

Windows 10 Power Toys: A cheat sheet

Users are always searching for ways to make their computing lives better– the Windows 10 PowerToys are made specifically for this purpose.

We need a good laugh!

Is The Quarantine Causing You to Gain Weight?

TWO VIEWS ARE BETTER THAN ONE.

How to set up a second screen for your computer.

Once these limits have been reached, the video will switch off and the call will convert to an audio call." See the above URL for the other, quite reasonable, limits.

Skype's interface varies with its version and your hardware and software; as a result, what you see may differ somewhat from the screenshots here. Figure 1 shows Skype's opening screen, after the user has selected the *Chats* icon toward the upper left, and it shows one of Skype's puzzles for new users. My name appears at the upper left, but you must contact me by my Skype name, which is "skype,alias" and appears towards the bottom right of the welcome screen in the sentence, "You are signed in as skype.alias." (If you are not on the opening screen, find your Skype name by selecting the three dots to the right of your name at the top of the left panel, and then "Settings" followed by "Accounts & Profile.) Skype names are unique, but a search on a person's given name will likely produce dozens of hits.
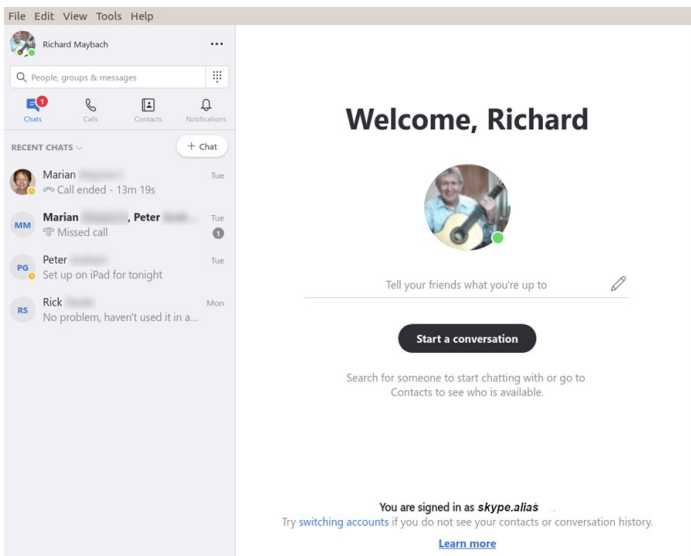

Figure 1. Skype Opening Screen.

To communicate with someone you must first add their name to your contact list. Select "Contacts" in the menu bar toward the upper left, then select the + button; enter their Skype name, and select the associated Add button. This will work only if they have enabled "Appear in search results." (Go to Settings as above, then "Contacts" and "Privacy" to make this choice.) Many Skype names have the form "live:.cd.6f73e115260c0804", and sometimes searches using the full name fail, but succeed if you delete the "live:.cd." prefix.

Skype is different in that the moderator places a call to the participants, while other services require that the participants call into a conference. The set-up procedure varies with the version, and in Linux, it's done by setting up a group chat. Select "Chats" in the menu bar toward the upper left and the "+ Chat" button, and finally "New Group Chat." The result is in Figure 2. Select either the round button at top right, or "Select More People" toward the bottom, and add participants from your contact list. Selecting the camera icon at the upper right will start a video conference, and selecting the handset icon a voice conference. As the call begins, you will have an opportunity to ring the participants to alert them, which is probably a good idea.
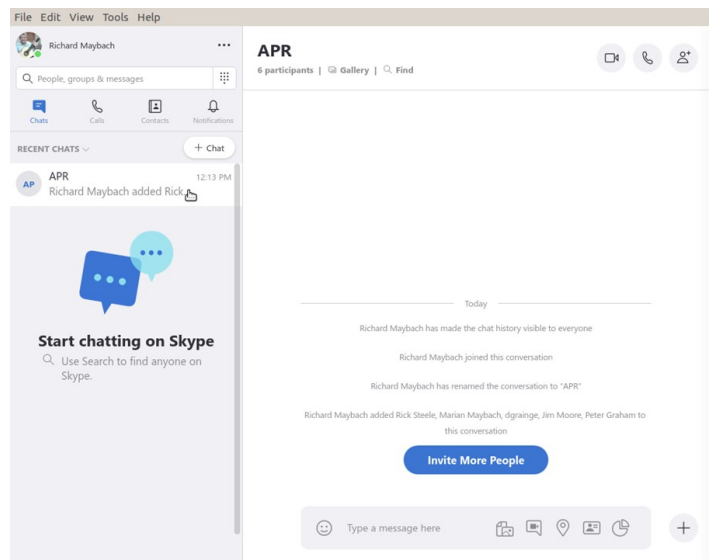

Figure 2. Define a Group Chat.

Although Skype conferences can be as large as 50, at most 10 of these can be transmitting video. This isn't as restrictive as it may sound, as the audio participants still see the video. The screen is tiled, with a pane dedicated to each active video participant. As a result, each added participant reduces the size of all the others. Participants can disable their microphones to reduce the background noise and can also disable their cameras, using icons toward the bottoms of their screens, but these appear only when the cursor is active and on the Skype window. When disabled, a diagonal line appears on the associated icon. There is also a red handset icon here to terminate the call.

Skype's interface varies with its version and your hardware and software, which may make it difficult

Best webcam

for home video calls

The new norm to keep in touch with friends and family is video calling. Over the pass couple of weeks, I've attended several Zoom meetings, and I've notice some of the attendee had very poor video representation on screen caused by the type of webcam they were using.

Some are using their camera phone or laptop, and these are not always the best webcams to use.

Although most laptops have a webcam built in, there are still reason you might want a better position or audio and better video resolution. For those of us with desktops, then we need a webcam to communicate with the world.

I recently read a article from Digital Camera World and they gave me a list of the best webcams for home use.

March 2020 Videos

Windows 7 EOL: What Are My Options?

How to Create a Podcast

Introduction to Home Automation

The Future of Technology

Getting Started in Genealogy

The Browser – Your Most Important App

What will 5G mean to you

Best free music services in 2020

You do not have to spend a lot of money to listen to your favorite music. During this pandemic, many of us are either binge watching Netflix, Hulu or Amazon Prime, but once you've starting re-runs, then it's time to settle down and listen to some of your favorites music.

ZDNet has compiled a list of some of the most popular FREE music you can stream on your faviorte device. Yes, I said **FREE** and we know most of the services you have to pay for, but they also offer free trials, but this list are services that are completely free.

FREE services

L.C.A.C.E. elections are coming in April.

Do your part, **Volunteer** to serve as a board member.

April 25 , 2020

Membership Chairperson
J.J. Johnson

Members: 46
Meeting Attendees: 22

THANKS FOR JOINING
None

THANKS FOR RENEWING
Linda Rohlfing
Henry Henriksen
Thomas Krissek
De-Borah Sirilla
Linda & Roger Busch
Johanna Triggs
Barton & Diane Berndtson
Donna Kalinoski

THANKS FOR VISITING
Dean Berglud WI (MCS)
Judy Taylour CA (APCUG)
Bob Gostischa, NM
Bob Berry

Retro Bluetooth Mechanical Keyboard

A keyboard for nostalgic fun

By Jasmine Blue D'Katz

Like many of us who learned to type many moons ago, we miss the clicking sound of a mechanical typewriter keyboard. Well you can be in awe to see a perfect amalgam of the pass, and future with this classic design with ultra-modern features. The Kymek keyboard will give you specific tactile feedback on the button press and the most accurate and reliable performance that us typist truly appreciated. The adopts Bluetooth 3.0 and has a stainless steel support to securely attach to your phone or table will typing It is powered by a 1,200mAh rechargeable battery which will give you up to 50 hours of typing.

It only comes in black but has a LED backlite. Includes 2 micro USB ports and the keycaps are ergonomically saddle shape.

The Rymek keyboard is compatible with IOS and Android, and comes with a 1-year manufactures' warranty. Price s $179.99 from Knewkey

Q&A

App Store Permissions, Internet Self-Care, New Storage Space

By Bob DeLaurentis SENIOR NEWS

Q. I was tempted by an app on the Microsoft App Store but stopped when I saw the permission list: "Access all your files, peripheral devices, apps, pro-grams, and registry." Do I have to let them breach my security?

A. Any sort of restriction on applica-tions is a new development. Since the early days of personal com-puting, every app had access to everything on the device. Computing devices now record more sensi-tive personal infor-mation than ever before. This new reality imposes fresh challenges for device manufacturers and app devel-opers alike.

To cope with these changes, devel-opers have to justify why each _app needs specific capabilities, and these justifications have to be presented to consumers. Only you can decide if an app's fea-tures are worth its intrusions into your personal life. The system we have now needs to get a lot better.

App permissions often read like a word-salad of tech speak. Users are asked to approve activities with little context about the real-world implications of each request.

Unfortunately, apps need access to private infor-mation in order to function. Drawing the line be-tween what is acceptable and what is not will take years.

About the only reasonable option for most people is choose apps from companies with reputations for hon-esty.

I am hopeful that in the long-term permission lists will help users better protect their privacy.

Q. When the Internet connection in our house stops working, is there any-thing we can do before calling tech support?

A. Despite the wide variety of serv-ice providers, there are some universal steps that will clear up the majority of outages.

When the Internet stops working, check to see if the problem is a single device or all the devices on your home network. Make sure the devices you check are using the house Wi-Fi. Some devices will fall back on a cellular con-nection if the Wi-Fi is una-vailable.

If a single device is acting up, restart it. That fixes the problem in a lot of sit-uations.

Let's assume. the problem is not lim-ited to a single device. That means the problem is the network. Typical residential internet connec-tions use a mo-dem and router. The modem connects the router to the out-side Internet. The router shares the Internet across all the devices in your house. (Sometimes the modem and router are in the same box.)

As soon as you read this, go find those boxes, Look at the lights on the front. Take a picture or a short video for future reference. Awareness of what they look like when everything is working teaches you how to spot prob-lems. For example, my Eero router has a green status light that turns orange if the mo-dem connection is offline.

If the Internet is not working, restart the modem and router. If you cannot find a switch, pull the pow-er plug for a few seconds. These devices are de-signed to reset when the power cycles, and they take about a minute to restart.

If restarting the devices does not work, it is time to contact your service provider. Slap a Post-It note on the router with the contact number for tech sup-port today, because locating that number once the Google is inaccessi-ble can be difficult.

Q. The storage on my laptop is nearly full. Is there reliable external device I could use to expand my available space?

A. I'm a huge fan of the Samsung T5 SSD. These range in size from 25GB up to 2TB. The best value right now is the 1TB size, which Is usually available for less than $100.

I have been using several of these drives for nearly two years now, and they have performed flawlessly. The USB 3.1 Gen2 port is very fast. The T5 is com-patible with Windows and Mac. It does not require a separate power cord which is especially convenient. About the only concern I have it that the T5's small size makes it somewhat easy to misplace. The de-vice is not much larger than a couple of SB jump drives.

I suggest you move a category of less-used file onto the T5. That way you do not need to keep the exter-nal drive connected at all times.

Sustainable Safe Recycling

Western Digital is proud to announce Easy Recycle.

Now you can easily recycle your old internal and external HDDs and SSD's—from any manufacture—sustainable and safely with their US recycle program.

Recycle Now

Free Electronic Recycling in 5 Easy Steps

1 — Fill out the online form

2 — Print out a free shipping label

3 — Drop off at your local UPS Store

4 — Wait 5~7 business days

5 — Upon verification, receive a $5 Western Digital Store coupon**

Peep Peep!

If you need an activity to keep the grandkids busy, then Peep and the Big Wide World. It use short videos and simple games to teach science. Best for ages 3-5

peepandthebigwideworld.com

Sharpen Your News Sense

The News Literacy Project is a site dedicated to helping people learn how to evaluate the quality of news.

newslit.org

Over Simplified

Looking for simple answers to complex situations? Try this humor-filled site dedicated to Murphy's famous Law and its countless corollaries.

murphyslaw.com

Laugh, and the world laughs with you. Cry, and you have to blow your nose.

We've talked about password managers at previous meeting, and several members have voiced the ones they use. Everyone needs a password manager to help maintain and secure their unique, and hard to guess password for the sites they visit.

ZDNet features an article on the best Free and Paid/Subscription password manager for 2020.

https://www.zdnet.com/article/best-password-managers/

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Trivia

Which of the following is a real educational institution in the US?

⇒ Meatloaf College

⇒ Frankurter State

⇒ Hamburger University

⇒ Lobster Institute of Technology

How-To Geek

There's nothing like a daily dose of information to keep us abreast of the latest computer and technology.

Join the How-To Geek club...

---

amazonsmile

Shop at smile.amazon.com and Amazon donates to the Lake County Honor Flight!

if you are an AmazonSmile customer, you can now support Lake County Honor Flight in the Amazon shopping app on your Android device! Simply follow these instructions to turn on AmazonSmile and start generating donations.

1. *If you have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, open the App on your Android device.*
2. *View Settings and select AmazonSmile.*
3. *Follow the in-App instructions to complete the process.*

If you do not have the latest version of the Amazon Shopping App, update your App. Click here for instructions.

lakecountyhonorflight.org

Support
Lake County Honor
Flight.

When you shop at **smile.amazon.com**,
Amazon donates.

Go to smile.amazon.com

amazonsmile

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

Do you have computer questions
or need help with your computer,

smartphone or tablet?
WE'RE READY TO HELP!

HELPDESK

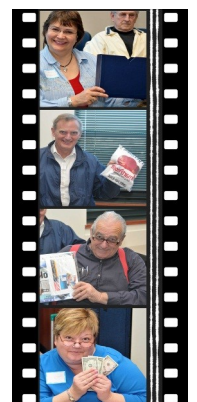## 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Phone: (847) 623-3815

Members

Members Web Sites

e-mail me at editor@lcace.org

www.pegasusphotos.smugmug.com

Take a good look, you just might see yourself.

LCACE Photo Albums

apcug
Member of
The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups