

The Computer Club At Willow Valley

Inside this issue:

Coming Programs	2
The Equipment Corner	8
The Mission	8
The Leadership	8

The President's Pen by Sid Paskowitz

Reminder The Club does not have meetings in July or August. Information to the contrary is incorrect.

Membership As of this writing, your Computer Club has 523 paid members of the Club including 246 who have signed up as Lifetime members.

Need Contact Information Please make sure your email address is correct on Club records so we can send you important emails on topics such as malware threats, Computer Club Newsletters, computer update information, and unusually helpful information about computers and the Internet. Those emails only go to Computer Club members for whom we have a good email address. When I recently sent out a survey

asking Club members how they access the Internet, 11 of those emails could not be delivered so those members were not included in our analysis of what kinds of programs at meetings and what kinds of classes would most benefit our Club members. Please let our Treasurer, Charlie Trumbo, know if your email address has changed or if you don't get a future Newsletter.

Survey Results And speaking of the email survey results, we now have greater insights into the use of computer-related devices by Willow Valley Residents. We are seeing higher levels of usage of smart TVs and smartphones and other handheld electronic devices than we had seen

(Continued on page 2)

Just a Little Privacy by Al Williams

An Update You've read the stories about companies tracking you as you browse the Internet so that they can present ads crafted for you. You've read that what they learn is passed on to data mining companies (they're called data brokers) who now have so much information about you that to print it would require 500 pages.^{1,2} And now you're learning that the World Privacy Fo-

rum has issued a report, *The Scoring of America*³, that describes how organizations are using the mined data to predict what you will do in the future.

This April 2, 2014 report states, in part, that scores which are created mostly from data brokers, and other

(Continued on page 5)

Coming Programs

July 2014	August 2014	September 4, 2014
No Meeting	No Meeting	Tony Poulos, Resident <i>Buying Your Next Computer: When, Why, What</i>

All programs are held in the Theater at the Cultural Center on the 1st Thursday of the month at 2:00 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

President

(Continued from page 1)

in the past. In the past, we focused on things you could do with a PC or a Mac. We are now thinking more about other technologies and where those technologies are going. You will see these changes in the classes we will be offering and in programs at Computer Club meetings.

A related finding from our survey was that Willow Valley Residents, as represented by Computer Club members, possess and use an unbelievable range of tools to access the Internet. Different devices (i.e., hardware), models of those devices, operating systems on those devices, applications on those devices, uses of those devices, and individual's knowledge and capabilities of those devices present an impossible problem in putting together a one-size-fits-all set of classes and programs to meet Residents' needs. Bob Scala, our Vice President, is working on programs for Computer Club meetings, and Ralph Beedle, our Training Committee Chairperson, is working on classes, that they believe will BEST fit Resident wants and needs. Please let them know if you have suggestions that will help them in their efforts. I want to officially thank them for their hard work in helping to improve the quality of life for Willow Valley Residents.

Information Central For those of you who are not familiar with Information Central (the Computer Club icon on the Resident Computer Kiosk Home Page) and the Computer Club Newsletter archive, you can access an archive of Newsletters and an index

to topics in those Newsletters at [http://](http://resident.willowvalley.org/kiosk/cclub/p/Newsletter.pdf)

resident.willowvalley.org/kiosk/cclub/p/Newsletter.pdf. The Newsletter index page is also available by left-clicking on Newsletter in the left column in Information Central. If you think you remember a topic covered in an earlier Newsletter article and you want to review that article, or you want to see if an earlier Newsletter discussed a topic of interest, check out the Newsletter subject index link on the Newsletter page in Information Central. Another benefit of the Newsletter archive is that if you are a Club member and decide not to have an email address but still want to read the Club Newsletters, you can still read them online by visiting Information Central and clicking on the Newsletter link.

In case you hadn't noticed, below the number 2 at the top of the Information Central Home Page are links to the Computer Club External Website and to an index of topics covered in Information Central. Those links are highlighted to facilitate access to the powerful information sources available from the Computer Club.

Getting A New Computer? As we have been saying for several months, Microsoft announced that on April 8th, they would stop supporting XP and some other older software such as Office 2003. Well, it didn't quite happen that way. Because of the Heartbleed problem, Microsoft has continued to put updates on its Web server and I was recently able to download updates for an XP computer. Bottom line, if you have and want to continue using an XP computer, but where you are at increased risk, check

(Continued on page 3)

President's Pen

(Continued from page 2)

for Windows updates periodically just in case Microsoft has added some protective software. There have also been reports of ways to get around the cutoff of support, but I have seen these kinds of things in the past where individuals have figured out ways to outsmart Microsoft, only to have Microsoft change Windows where it stops working completely and nothing can be done to restore the operating system. If your computer is not connected to the Internet and you do not expose it to risky external media such as thumb drives or hard drives, you shouldn't be concerned. However, if you have XP and connect to the Internet or external data sources, your computer can become increasingly at risk. The program at the May 1st Computer Club meeting presented a video on Windows 8.1 Updated, the latest Microsoft operating system in case you are considering getting a new PC. As mentioned below, that video is available on the Computer Club external website at www.wvrccc.com.

Computer Club's External Website I recently received a request that we have a Computer Club program on setting up a Gmail account. That request reminded me that I need to remind Club members (and non-Club members also) that the Computer Club has an Internet website at www.wvrccc.com where we have put video tutorials on topics of possible benefit to Club members but where we could not put that content on Willow Valley's servers (i.e., on the Resident Computer Kiosks). One of those video tutorials discusses Gmail. Another tutorial covers Windows 8.1 Update. You can watch those tutorials from home or on a Kiosk and you can watch them as many times as you need to make sure you get the answers you want. Email us at wvcomputerclub@gmail.com to let us know if you have suggestions for improving our video tutorials on our exter-

nal website. The website also contains a list of keyboard shortcuts that you might want to print and keep next to your computer. They can save you time when you want to do things like cut-and-paste rather than having to look for links or icons in applications.

Useful Icons And speaking of Information Central and our external website, I once again suggest you put icons on your desktop or Bookmarks/Favorites on your computer to help you more easily locate information sources that you have found to be beneficial and to remind yourself that there ARE helpful information sources, besides Google or Yahoo or Bing.

Zap2it At the April Computer Club meeting we showed a video tutorial about Zap2it, the online TV guide that displays the WVComTV (Willow Valley Communities TV) channel lineup. The video is available on the Computer Club's external Website at www.wvrccc.com. Be advised that the video was recorded prior to Tribune Media making a major change to Zap2it.

As of the writing of this Presidents Pen, Zap2it is not taking new registrations; a six-hour option in lieu of a three hour display window is not available; and channel favorites (known as faves) cannot be identified and displayed at the top of the channel listings. On the other hand more selections (Genres) such as movies or sports can be highlighted in the listing. I have received an email from Zap2it that they do plan to re-open registrations in the near future and to restore the 6-hour display window option and favorites. Stay tuned. As stated in the tutorial video, expect changes and (hopefully) improvements.

Personal Protection Ok, now it is time for me to get on my soapbox AGAIN and repeat and re-emphasize information about personal computers and the In-

(Continued on page 4)

President's Pen

(Continued from page 3)

ternet. I'm going to call it Personal Protection, because that is what it is! I don't care what kind of computer you have or what kind of protection your computer has, no computer can be 100% protected from malicious software. There are "bad guys" all over the world who spend their lives finding ways to infect your computer. Every time a company comes up with a way to help protect you, the "bad guys" look for ways to neutralize or get around those protections. Tony Poulos has put together a slide show that we display before Computer Club meetings. Watch the screen and learn how to protect yourself.

If you get a popup advising you that an update is available such as for Firefox or Yahoo or Adobe or Java or Windows, or anything else, don't click on the popup. Use Alt-F4 to clear the popup, then go to the Website for that program by clicking on Help in that application or go to the company's Website and check for updates. The "bad guys" can create popups that look exactly like a legitimate notification; however, when you click on their popup, it takes you to their Website where your computer becomes infected.

Keep your software current, especially Adobe and Java, if you use them. Software companies try to fix the vulnerabilities in their software but they always lag the problem. Avoiding updates will subject you to risks from vulnerabilities that they have already fixed. It is bad enough that they always lag the problem, but you should not compound the problem by lagging it even further.

If you only use your computer for basic email and you don't open unexpected emails and you don't click on popups, having Malwarebytes anti-malware and Microsoft Security Essentials or Windows Defender on your computer should be enough to give you basic protection. You probably

don't need Java or other special software. The fewer the number of special applications, the fewer number of exploitable vulnerabilities the "bad guys" can take advantage of.

I personally use a Resident Computer Kiosk unit to access my emails and do Internet searches. I also restart the Kiosk computer when I begin my session so it clears anything that someone using the computer before me may have done, and I restart the computer when I finish my session so someone using the computer after me cannot do anything to access what I have done. Even taking these actions, if you get a Kiosk unit infected during your session, the actions you take during your session will be at risk, but at least when you restart the computer after you session, the malware will be removed and later users will not be adversely affected by your actions.

A repeated reminder: if you get an unexpected popup, use Alt-F4 to clear it. If you click anywhere on the pop-up (and sometimes if you even put your cursor arrow on the pop-up), you could cause malicious software to run on your computer. There will be times when Alt-F4 will close a program you are running, but that may be better than causing malware to infect your computer. Don't open spam email or other suspicious emails!!! Use a Resident Computer Kiosk to open suspicious emails or to visit unfamiliar Websites. I was pleased to see in responses to the email survey we sent out, how many Residents are using the Resident Computer Kiosks to access the Internet. And a new reminder: you cannot use your own computer to access the Kiosk displays and get the same protection you get by physically using a Resident Computer Kiosk. You have to use one of the Willow Valley Resident Computer Kiosk units.

Thank You My thanks to all of you who volunteer your time and knowledge to help other Residents. We need more volunteers! •

Just a Little Privacy

(Continued from page 1)

sources as well⁴, are being used by “businesses, health care providers, financial institutions, law enforcement, retail stores, federal and state government and many other locations.”⁵ You’re not certain how these scores work but you see that the report includes a statement that there are Health Risk Scores which are used, in part, to predict the future health care costs of an individual. There is no need to access actual patient records to determine those costs.⁶

You’re concerned. You’re careful about your browsing. But you would like a little privacy. You’d like to be able to browse the web looking for information about your friend’s cancer or some other subjects but you don’t want that added to the dossier that the data mining companies keep on you because you’re concerned about how your dossier will be used by others. Maybe such browsing would have an undesirable impact on your scores. Is a little privacy possible?

A Clarification When you are asking if privacy is possible, you are asking two questions: can I be anonymous on the Internet? Can my searches, my communications, be secure such that no one else can read them?

A Solution Yes, provided that you select software that supports a high degree of anonymity and you use that software *properly*. Secure communications is also possible and much easier to do than anonymity.

Here is why anonymity is harder. Because of the way the Internet is built, it is easy for someone who can monitor your computer’s Internet connection to know that you are connected to something on the Internet. That means that you (your computer) are not anonymous. To become anonymous and stay anonymous you must select appropriate soft-

ware that hides you and you must use that software appropriately. Note that there are several software choices to make it very difficult for someone who is monitoring you to know what web site you connected to.

Here is one choice which provides a simple and easy way to do searches on the Internet: use software that acts as a proxy for you. There are two popular and reputable proxies available for free that are operated by the StartPage company in the Netherlands. The StartPage proxies have been certified as providing privacy by an agency of the European Union because StartPage does not collect or share any personal information. This is an important component of maintaining anonymity but other features are also required.

The two proxies are StartPage and ixquick. ixquick searches for information using many popular search engines but not Google. StartPage, instead, searches using only Google. The StartPage search page is at <https://startpage.com> and the ixquick search page is at <https://www.ixquick.com>. You enter your search terms into the text box just like you do when using Google. If you prefer, there are StartPage and ixquick apps for iPhone, iPad, iPod, and Android devices.

If you want guaranteed secure communications so that no one can see what you are searching for and the search results, use StartPage. If you do not need guaranteed secure communications and want to see the results from other search engines, use ixquick. Both StartPage and ixquick provide a high degree of anonymity but not perfect anonymity. If you want even better anonymity than these proxies provide, such software is available but describing it is a tale for another time.

If you would like to have secure communications and a high degree of anonymity when visiting a

(Continued on page 6)

Just a Little Privacy

(Continued from page 5)

page found by the search engine, click on the View by proxy link. Doing so causes both proxies to copy the desired web page to the StartPage company servers and then present the web page to you. In this way none of your personal information is given to the page you want to visit. But, it is very important that you not click on any links in that page. Doing so will take you to that new page and expose your identifying information. Instead, initiate a new search using terms that will find that new page and then use the View by proxy link to go to the page.

An Overview of How and Why If you want an overview of how the proxies work, why you should use StartPage for guaranteed secure communications, and why perfect anonymity is not possible, the remainder of this article is for you.

Your Internet Service Provider, whether it is Comcast, Verizon, AT&T, any other provider, or anyone else who can monitor your Internet connection, can see when you are connected to StartPage or ixquick. So you do not have anonymity at that point. But, secure https is being used between you and StartPage or ixquick and as a result no one can read what you are searching for or the responses from StartPage or ixquick.

Both StartPage and ixquick pass on your search request to the search engine(s) after removing your identifying information. Therefore, the search engines do not know who you are; they only know that StartPage or ixquick requested information. The requested information is then returned to you by StartPage or ixquick.

Could someone simultaneously monitor your Internet connection and the connection(s) between StartPage and Google or the connection(s) between ixquick and the other search engines to de-

termine which search engine you connected to? Yes, someone with significant capability, such as a nation state adversary, could do that if there were only a few people using StartPage or ixquick.

For example, if you were the only one using StartPage or ixquick, then you would not be anonymous because it is very easy to infer that the communication from StartPage or ixquick to the search engine(s) must be due to your request. However, it is very unlikely that you would be the only one using the proxies. Also, as the number of people using the proxies increases, your anonymity increases because your anonymous communications are intermingled with the other anonymous requests and responses. In other words, when there are a lot of people using the proxies your anonymity is very good but it does not increase to perfect anonymity.

However, it is not possible for someone to break properly implemented secure communications. Because Google accepts only https connections, StartPage provides communications unreadable by others. Because it is not known what search engines ixquick uses, it is not possible to say if all of those search engines use secure communications. Therefore, StartPage is the proxy to use when you want your communications to be secure. •

¹ O'Harrow, Robert Jr., *No Place to Hide*, Free Press: New York, 2006

² Deaver, Jeffrey, *The Broken Window*, Pocket Star Books: New York, 2008

³ The report may be found at www.worldprivacy.com. The report's full name is: *The Scoring of America: How Secret Consumer Scores Threaten Your Privacy and Future*.

⁴ *ibid.* p. 16 and 17

⁵ *ibid.* p. 8

⁶ *ibid.* p. 18

The Equipment Corner by Ed Dahrsnin

Refurbished Systems

None are currently available.

Miscellaneous We have 3 volt CR2023 batteries (suitable for motherboards to keep the system clock running) and a variety of CD-ROM's, floppy disk drives, keyboards, 2-button mice, various power supplies, and assorted cables. Please contact Ed Dahrsnin at 464-6591.

Donations We accept used, *working*, tower and laptop computers (with power units and batteries) from club members along with all software CDs. Used printer cartridges also accepted. You may deliver them to the North's Computer Resource room on the first floor of M building after 1 pm on Monday. No Macs or Mac parts, see JoAnne Phillips or Bob Handler for additional information. •

The Mission

The Mission of the Willow Valley Computer Club is to:

- Provide the means to educate beginners or interested non-users on how to use a computer.
- Arrange for speakers to talk to the Club about subjects that would be of interest to those with some background and experience in computer use.
- Provide a forum for interchange of computer information among members.

For more information about the Club, contact Sid Paskowitz at 464-2127 or wvcomputerclub@gmail.com •

The Leadership

Officers

President: Sid Paskowitz

Vice President: Bob Scala

Secretary: Marge Schmieder

Treasurer: Charlie Trumbo

Community Representatives

Manor: Larry Gallagher

Manor North: Lee Wermuth

Lakes: Gene Simasek

Committee Chairpersons

Program: Bob Scala

Training: Ralph Beedle

Equipment: Ed Dahrsnin

Technical Support: Tony Poulos

Website: Sid Paskowitz

Publicity: Wally Gordon

Newsletter: Al Williams

Mac Interest Group:

Computer Room Coordinators:
Gene Simasek JoAnne Phillips

Microsoft Liaison: Ed Dahrsnin

Past Presidents

Larry Gallagher

Reviewer Acknowledgment

The following individual kindly reviewed this issue:

Sid Paskowitz

Thank you,

Al Williams

Interested in reviewing the Computer Club newsletter before it goes to press, providing advice about the content, or writing an article? Please contact:

Al Williams at atwilliams136@gmail.com