

Willow Valley Computer Club

March 2024 | Newsletter | Volume 25, Issue 2

Programs are at 2:00 pm the first Thursday of the month (except July-August) in the Cultural Center unless otherwise noted.

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Computer Club Leadership

- President: Al Williams
- Vice President: Susan Culbertson
- Secretary: Gary Staton
- Treasurer: Lee Wermuth
- Previous President: Sid Paskowitz

Committee Chairpersons

- Apple SIG: Dick Beidleman
- Computer Room: Lee Wermuth
- Newsletter: Susan Culbertson
- Publicity: Ann Willets
- SmartLife: Al Fulvio
- Training: Bill Skelly
- Webmaster: Sid Paskowitz

Director

- CCTC: Ann Willets

Advisors

- Bruce Mawson
- Tony Poulos
- Bob Scala
- Cathy Thorn

President's Pen by Al Williams

Welcome to the Computer Club's March Newsletter!

In this issue is an article about a topic that we've never covered before. It's about using publicly available information in unusual ways.

We encourage you to use the Computer Club's website to find resources. For example, you'll find topics and schedules for training classes and monthly presentations. Also, there's a Get Help section that lists our volunteers who can help you. Go to wvcomputerclub.org.

We also need three volunteers. Kristin Everhard, Recreational Therapy Supervisor, is looking for a volunteer to help with monthly Storytime presentations. The Computer Club is looking for a Newsletter Layout Editor and a Deputy Director for the Computer Club Technology Center. The details for these positions are in this newsletter on page 5.

Do you have a question or want to provide feedback? Please contact us at wvcomputerclub@gmail.com.

~Al Williams

The Frugal Genealogist: Free Online Resources
Joint meeting of the WV Computer Club & the WV Genealogy Club

Monthly Program
March 7 @ 2:00 pm
Cultural Center Theater

Using Publicly Available Information on the Internet

by Al Williams

Did you know that when you Google to find information that you are using open-source intelligence skills? Let's assume that you need to find a doctor with a specialty. Your primary care provider has given you a recommendation. You don't want to drive too far, so you determine where the practice is. You would like the doctor to be in a large practice, so you search the practice's website for the number of doctors. You want to be certain that the doctor has experience in your area of need, so you search that doctor's bio. You want to learn the opinions of others about that doctor, so you look at reviews. Finally, you consider everything you've learned and make a decision.

The *skills* you used to find information about the doctor are skills that you use all the time. For example, you use those skills to find news articles, check your bank account balance, and find products that you will order at Amazon or other online retailers.

The Internet information you used is *open-source* which means that it is publicly available and accessible to anyone. You used free information but that does not necessarily mean that the all publicly available information is free. Some public information requires a subscription or fee to access. You used online text information but additional publicly available information is online as images, audio, videos or other multimedia. Some publicly available information is offline and is available in books, magazines, court house records, or other sources. Regardless of the source, open-source information is legally accessible with no requirement to obtain special permission or authorization.

In the example of finding a doctor, you practiced *intelligence*. How? To answer the question as to whether or not the recommended doctor would be an appropriate choice for you, you collected publicly available information which you used to gain insight into the doctor. You determined that the doctor's practice was sufficiently close, that the doctor had appropriate experience, and that the doctor was in a large practice. You assessed your confidence in the sources of the information and the veracity of the data. You then had information that you could act upon. (Actionable, or usable, information is known as intelligence.) You then made an informed decision.

You used your skills while you were sitting in your home using your computer. You did not have to go a special location to do your searching.

If you are willing to learn deeper level skills, you will be able to find information that you currently would have trouble finding. Also, you would be prepared to work within one of many online communities to help find answers to their questions.

For example, you could use your computer to help desperate people. There are women who want to escape domestic abuse, relatives who want to find a missing loved one, and people who have been forced into sex and human trafficking.

You could use your computer to find and track criminals, track the movement of illegal goods, or track the movement of criminal finances. You could use your computer to do even more. All it takes is your willingness to learn how and to devote some time.

To get started, you could search for open-search intelligence which is also known as OSINT. You'll find a lot of information. I suggest that you start by listening to discussions about OSINT by people who have been practicing OSINT for years.

David Bombal recently interviewed two open-source intelligence (OSINT) practitioners who discussed how to get started in OSINT. They had multiple recommendations. The recommendations included finding a community that is a good fit, taking training (especially free training), and exercising skills as you learn them. The video is at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=izR7BMVJEh0>

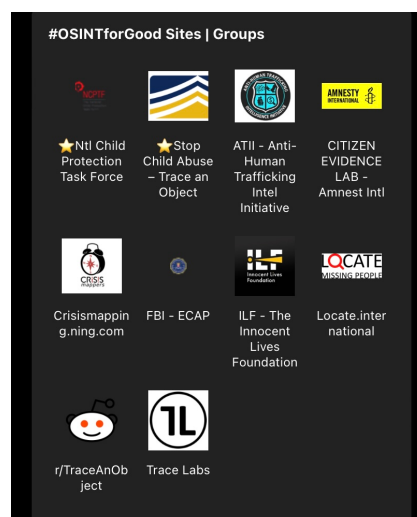
David Bombal has also interviewed other OSINT practitioners who discuss the practice of OSINT. You'll find that list of four videos in the description of the above video. For your convenience, these are the URLs:

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lmWJgDQ-ek>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OsY32K1s51Y>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6l2Bmh7Dq4>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dxinBYvkvU8>

During the first David Bombal interview, the OSINT practitioners talked about a free OSINT training course at <https://www.myosint.training/courses/introduction-to-osint>. I took the course. The course's objectives are to:

- Understand what Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) is and what it is not
- Know how to conduct an OSINT investigation
- Understand Operational Security (OPSEC) issues that you may need to address
- Gain an appreciation for the OSINT tools people use
- Know what types of content goes into an OSINT report
- Understand what additional OSINT resources are available on the Internet

One of the instructors of this course, Griffin Glynn, has an OSINT resources website that is available to anyone. He lists communities that may be of interest to volunteers in the section labeled *#OSINTforGood Site / Groups*. He also lists resources such as *News & Blogs*, *Tool & Resource Collections*, *OSINT Books*, *Training / How-To / Guides*, *Podcasts*, *Webcasts / Videos / Playlists*, and more. The website is at <https://start.me/p/DPYPMz/the-ultimate-osint-collection>.



Griffin Glynn

One of the OSINT books recommended on Glynn's website is a 2023 book by Rae Baker titled *Deep Dive: Exploring the Real-World Value of Open Source Intelligence*. The book is not technical. I think this book is a good resource for anyone interested in OSINT. The back cover provides an overview:

"In *Deep Dive: Exploring the Real-World Value of Open Source Intelligence*, world-class maritime intelligence analyst Rae Baker delivers an in-depth discussion of the tradecraft used by open-source intelligence gathering specialists. In the book, you'll learn to gather publicly available data, understand the intelligence life-cycle, and translate data into actionable intelligence for individuals, entities, and national security teams. The real-life cases included within will help you understand the data collection and analysis process, as well as the strategies you should implement when hunting for open-source information."

In the book, Baker provides foundational OSINT skills and then moves to advanced skills. The advanced skills include:

- Subject Intelligence
- Social Media Analysis
- Business and Organizational Intelligence
- Transportation Intelligence
- Critical Infrastructure and Industrial Intelligence
- Financial Intelligence

If you'd like to get involved in OSINT, I suggest using the resources I've identified in this article or using other resources identified on Griffin Glynn's website. I would love to dialog with you if you have questions or choose to get involved.

WVCC mission:
"to provide the means
to educate beginners or
interested non-users
on how to use a
computer"

WVCC mission:
"to provide a forum for
interchange of
computer information
among members"

WVCC mission: "to
arrange for speakers
to talk about subjects
of interest to those
with some background
and experience in
computer use"

Computer Club Technology Center

NOTE: The Computer Club Technology Center (CCTC) is open on Mondays only, from 10 am to 4 pm. The CCTC is located on the 5th floor of Manor North 'J' building. The door may be closed, but with a sign indicating *Please Knock*.

Apple Items Available: See Bruce Thompson in the CCTC.

Recent Center Activity (weeks of Feb 5 and Feb 12)

Apple Issues - 3

Windows Issues - 10

Phone/Misc - 3

Donations from Residents - 9

Product Requests - 8



Willow Valley Computer Club Volunteer Opportunity

Volunteer Position Title: Deputy CCTC Director

Description of Role: The Deputy CCTC Director assists the CCTC Director as needed to accomplish the objectives set forth by the Willow Valley Computer Club's Executive Committee.

Training: The CCTC Director will provide training as needed for the Deputy CCTC Director to successfully accomplish their assignments.

Reporting: The Deputy CCTC Director will report to the CCTC Director.

Time Commitment: A minimum of four hours per week is needed. The candidate must be able to work during hours acceptable to the CCTC Director

Qualifications: Prior operations experience is desirable. A willingness to learn is imperative.

Willow Valley Computer Club Volunteer Opportunity

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#### Newsletter Layout Editor

The Computer Club publishes a bimonthly newsletter and an occasional special newsletter. Articles are written by the president of the club, various members of the executive committee, and other experts.

We are in need of a newsletter layout editor. This person is responsible for creating an attractive layout for the content submitted for the newsletter. Familiarity with desktop publishing software such as Microsoft Publisher, Apple Pages, or Adobe InDesign is needed. Please contact [Al Williams](#) or [Susan Culbertson](#) if interested.

### WV Computer Club Volunteer Opportunity

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Volunteer needed to help Kristin Everhard, Rec Therapy Supervisor for The Glen PC and Meadow Ridge. Kristin helps Debbie Mink who offers a monthly Storytime presentation for those residents. The process involves scanning and PowerPoint. If interested in helping Kristin and Debbie with the current process or helping them find a more streamlined approach, contact Kristin: keverhard@willowvalley.org

Contact Information

For more information about the Computer Club, please contact Al Williams via email at wvcomputerclub@gmail.com.

Please keep your email address on Club records current so we can send you important emails. Send email corrections or updates to Lee Wermuth at lwermuth582@gmail.com.

Bill Skelly is the Willow Valley Computer Club Training Coordinator. We are always looking for residents qualified to teach computer-related topics. We want our classes to support your needs. Contact Bill (whskelly@aol.com) to volunteer or to offer ideas on topics needed.