TC/PC Exists to Facilitate and Encourage the Cooperative Exchange of PC Knowledge and Information Across All Levels of Experience

April 2012

**General Meeting:
Tuesday, April 10, 7PM**

General Meeting

Tuesday, April 10, 2012 at 7:00 PM

Compose Your Own Music
Presenter: Irv Elliott

**Location: Summit Place
8505 Flying Cloud Drive
Eden Prairie, MN 55344**

Irv will create some music for us at the meeting and take us through Finale software. He will also play for us some of his music creations. Finale allows you to experiment and create; and then listen as you create. Your music. Your way. In an instant you can move measures, change keys, or perform dozens of edits to capture, arrange, perfect, and print anything you can imagine

A separate presentation will be made by TCPC members Jack Ungerleider and Jim Grotz will go through some data mining tips and sites. Please bring your friends, this will be a meeting to stir your creativity now that Spring is finally here.

Be sure to read the news from the Board regarding your annual membership dues on page 2 of this newsletter.🖳

Last Month's Meeting: Bill Ryder-Using Computers in the Real World
By Sharon Walbran, SQWalbran (at) yahoo.com

At TC/PC's March meeting, member Bill Ryder walked us through the steps involved in manufacturing plastic parts, in this case a key for a computer keyboard, from design to finish using high-end software. Bill is an engineer who runs his own business. He showed the steps in using a CAD program to design the keyboard key from a basic shape to a 3-dimensional model with a molded letter on top, with all the dimensions necessary to be manufactured. Then he showed pictures and diagrams of the different types of injection molding equipment used to make the finished product. The molds are created according to design specifications, then plastic pellets are fed into a hopper and then into a heated barrel where they liquefy. A reciprocating screw forces the liquid plastic into the mold which is kept under hydraulic pressure to prevent the liquid plastic from escaping.

Bill gave us some insights into the manufacturing industry. For example, he explained that the idea that "everything today is made in China" is not true; less than 10 percent of plastic molds are made in China for a number of reasons. The cost of products from China has risen with the demands of its workers for better wages and benefits. Chinese manufacturers will not ship without full payment in advance. The time involved in shipping from China to the west coast and then trucking from the west coast to the Midwest is less attractive than having products made locally.

The audience members were full of questions for Bill and he did a great job of responding with lots of interesting stories and examples. Thanks, Bill, for a wonderful presentation.▤

New Annual Membership Fee Set by TC/PC Board

The TC/PC Board met on Saturday, April 7th, and made some significant changes that affect members. The new annual membership dues rate will be $18.00 per year or $1.50 per month, down from the current rate of $36.00 per year. The new rate was unanimously approved by a voice vote. This new fee will go into effect as of July 1, 2012, which is the beginning of our fiscal year. Those members who have already paid the $36.00 annual dues for this year will have their membership renewal date extended for an additional year on a prorated basis. The reduction in the fee is primarily the result of converting the newsletter to an electronic version and eliminating printing costs. Although printing costs were the major part of the budget, ongoing club expenses include equipment maintenance, website hosting fees, APCUG membership annual fee, office supplies, food and beverages at annual pizza party, prizes, honoraria for outside presenters, etc.

The Board also appointed David Van Dongen to the board to assume one of the unfilled positions. David has been an active attendee at Saturday SIGs and meetings and will be a welcome addition. His appointment was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

Ross Held was appointed to be the APCUG Coordinator for the club and, in that capacity, will keep the club up to date on APCUG activities and resources through communications in the newsletter and/or on the website.

Curt Trout is working on revising the website to incorporate more content and to eventually allow for annual membership fee payment through PayPal.

The Board had a vigorous discussion of improved ways of publicizing club meetings and using social media to get the word out about the club's role as an educational networking exchange resource. Jim Grotz will be recruiting an individual to tackle publicity of TC/PC on a regular basis.

Treasurer Sheri Trout reported that checks are submitted electronically now so if members receive check copies from their bank they will have to request a copy of TC/PC check from their bank.▤

Adding Disk Space to Windows 7

By Dick Maybach, March 2012 issue, BUG Bytes, Brookdale Computer Users' Group, NJ,
www.bcug.com, n2nd (at) charter.net

When buying a new PC, it's usually wise to equip it with the largest possible hard disk.

Despite this, it's not uncommon to find that eventually it becomes uncomfortably full, leaving you with four options:

1. save all your user data on an external disk, replace the system disk with a larger one, install Windows and all your applications from scratch, and restore your user data from the external disk,
2. make an image of the current disk on an external drive, replace the current hard disk, and restore the image to it,
3. add a hard disk and move some data folders to it, or
4. enable dynamic disk management, which makes multiple disks appear as one, thus increasing the available space.

If your Windows 7 installation is corrupted by file system errors or malware, you must use option 1. If your system is working well, use option 2 (using the Windows 7 *Backup and Restore* tool), which is substantially easier and faster than 1. If your current system is working well, option 3 looks attractive, but there are significant issues, which I discuss below. I don't have the resources to test option 4, and I've learned from sad experience not to write about things I haven't done. If you are interested in dynamic disk management, see a good book, such as *Window 7 In Depth* by Cowart and Knittel. However, this approach appears to be complex enough to make it useful only in a professionally-staffed computer center. I don't recommend it for home users.

Option 3, add a second hard disk and move some of the data folders from our home folder to it, looks attractive. Here, some data will reside on a different drive, call it D:, and unfortunately, some programs, for example *iTunes*, cannot access data on it. You can edit *iTunes*' preferences to declare that, *iTunes Media*, the folder that holds its music, resides on D:, but *iTunes* apparently doesn't look outside your home folder. There are probably other applications with similar flaws.

A procedure called *grafting* appears to offer a solution. It maps all the files on an auxiliary disk into a folder in your home folder, and any files you later add to that folder are stored on the grafted disk. The basic procedure is as follows:
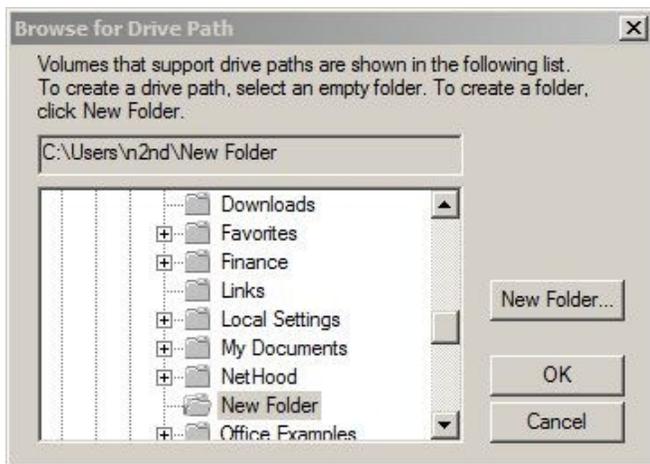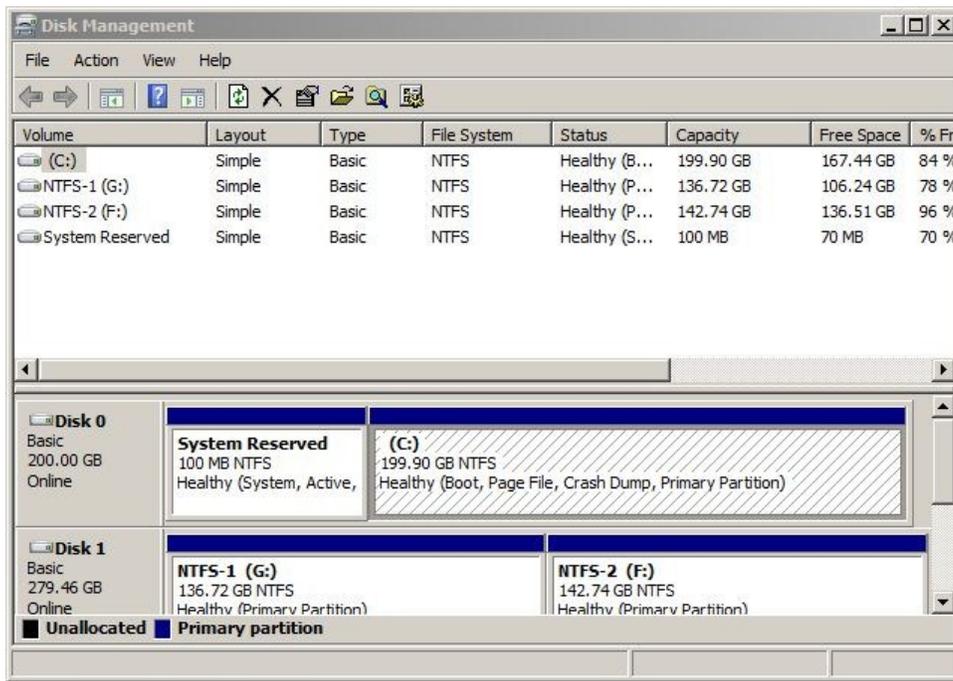
1. copy all the files in the selected folder to the auxiliary disk;
2. delete the selected folder on the main disk; and
3. graft the auxiliary disk to a folder on main disk.

This indeed works on Windows 7, and after I did it, iTunes was able to find its files on the auxiliary disk, but operations were so flaky (see below) that I wouldn't do this on a PC that I actually used.

If you would like to experiment (not on the PC you use for TurboTax please), here is the procedure. Log into an account with administrator privileges, and open the *Disk Management* tool. (The easiest way is to tap the *Windows* key or click on *Start*, type "disk manage" and select *Create and format hard disk partitions*.) The screenshot below shows the result.
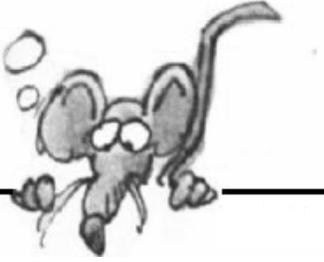
In this example, I graft NTFS-2 (F:) onto a folder in my home folder. Right-click on NTFS-2 (F:) and select *Change Drive Letter and Paths …* . Click the *Add …* button, select *Browse …* , navigate to the folder where the original folder appeared (in my case C:\users\n2nd), click the New Folder button. The result is shown below.

Click the *OK* button and the *Browse for Drive Paths* window will close, then click *OK* in the *Add Drive Letter or Path* window, and close the *Disk Management* window. The disk NTFS-2 (F:) is now grafted on the folder *C:\Users\n2nd\New Folder*. If you had to log in as a different user to obtain administrator privileges, log out and then log back into your home account, in my case n2nd.

This seems straightforward, but there are several traps. The Disk Manager is quirky and not well documented. I needed several attempts to make the above procedure work, which isn't good for a tool that modifies your folder structure. Since you can graft an entire disk only to a single folder, if there are several large folders, you must partition the auxiliary disk and graft a separate partition to each folder. This is unfortunate, because you can't graft your entire home directory, as it contains system files that are always in use. Most disturbing is that when I finished and tried to make a full backup, including a system image, the procedure failed. Even if it had succeeded, I'm not sure I could have restored my system. Would the software try to put everything on the original (now too small) C: disk, or would it be smart enough to restore to both C: and F: and graft F: to a folder? This isn't something about which you want to be surprised when you have to restore your files.

My conclusion after all this is that Windows 7 is designed to operate from a single disk, as are some of its applications. In this respect, it's made a step backward from XP, where you could locate your *My Documents* folder on any disk, and even *iTunes* could find its files there. You can add additional disks to a Windows 7 system, but accessing files on them will be somewhat less convenient than if everything resided in your home folder. As a result, if you run out of disk space on a Windows 7 PC, the best course is to replace the disk with a larger one and port your system to it.▣

Search/Filter by Date
In the Start menu Search field:
If you're searching for a file and you know the timeframe in which it was created or modified, type in 'datecreated mm/dd/yyyy' or 'datemodified mm/dd/yyyy.' 'Date Accessed" is another one, as well.
You can also filter the list of installed programs in the add/remove programs menu- simply click on the arrow on one of the boxes along the top (for example, 'installed on') and it'll bring up an additional dialogue with which you can filter the list.
From PCMech ezine

Leave Your Computer On or Turn It Off
The primary consideration in deciding whether to leave your computer on all the time is cost. It will cost you about $65 dollars per year to leave your computer on all the time as opposed to $21 per year if you shut it down over night. Sooo... if you got money to burn - leave it on. If you want to save your dough - shut it off.
Please note: Laptop computers have a higher likelihood of heat related problems, so it is not recommended to leave laptops on constantly.

Autoruns for Windows v11.22
This utility, which has the most comprehensive knowledge of auto-starting locations of any startup monitor, shows you what programs are configured to run during system bootup or login, and shows you the entries in the order Windows processes them. Read about how to use it here:
http://technet.microsoft.com/en-us/sysinternals/bb963902

Zamzar
Zamzar is dedicated to helping you transform your songs, videos, images and documents into different formats. Our mission is: *"To provide high quality file conversion for as many file formats as possible"*
http://www.zamzar.com/manage/

Store Your Shoes in a Hotel Safe to Help You Remember Your Valuables
The fact you probably don't keep a lot of your daily-use valuables in a safe at home means it's easy to forget when you toss them in a hotel safe when you're travelling. The Wall Street Journal suggests putting the shoes you plan on wearing for the flight home in your safe to help you remember to clean it out.

XP Support Endsin April2014

It's a safe bet that come April 2014, hackers will specifically target XP knowing that many installations are no longer being patched or protected as Microsoft will have dropped support for XP.

ICANN

Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, or ICANN, is the international group that keeps Internet addresses up and running. What exactly does ICANN do?
http://discovermagazine.com/2012/jan-feb/50

NAT Router Security Solutions

The "Network Address Translation" (NAT) performed by the router allows multiple computers (machines) connected to the LAN behind the router to communicate with the external Internet. It provides several advantages to the user. Read about it here: http://www.grc.com/nat/nat.htm
Another good place to learn about networks and network security: http://www.dedoimedo.com/computers/router_security.html
Contributed by Harris Mallory

How to Get A Printable List Of Everything In Your Start Menu

In Windows Vista and 7 Launch a Command Prompt by clicking Windows Logo, type CMD and click OK.
Execute the following command:
DIR /S "%PROGRAMDATA%\MICROSOFT\WINDOWS\START MENU" > "%USERPROFILE%\DESKTOP\START-MENU.TXT"
(Note: You can click/drag over the line above to highlight, copy and paste into your Command Prompt by right clicking inside the Prompt and click "Paste".)
After pressing Enter it will appear as if nothing has happened, but something did. You'll have a file called START-MENU.TXT on your desktop containing a list of everything in your Start Menu.
More info and Windows XP instructions here: http://tinyurl.com/7reh86r

Plastic to Oil

Only 7 percent of plastic waste in the United States is recycled each year, according to the Environmental Protection Agency. A startup company in Niagara Falls says it can increase that amount and reduce the country's dependence on foreign oil at the same time. http://www.npr.org/2012/03/19/147506525/startup-converts-plastic-to-oil-and-finds-a-niche?sc=emaf

Microsoft Bob

In early 1995 Microsoft released a software program called "Bob" designed to replace the desktop of Windows 3.1 and 95 with an interface designed mainly for novice users. It failed big time but was fun and easy. They should reintroduce it now. http://toastytech.com/guis/bob.html

The Tweets ARE Paved With Gold

A team at the University of California has created a computer model which allows them to 'predict the future' of the stock market by scanning the social network. It has up to 11 per cent more accuracy than other computer models. Read more: http://tinyurl.com/6p2tgee

MDCU

Microsoft Digital Crimes Unit

Creating a Survey Form in Microsoft Word 2007

By Nancy DeMarte, Regular Columnist (Office Talk), Sarasota PCUG, Florida
March 2012 issue, Sarasota PC Monitor, www.spcug.org, ndemarte (at) Verizon.net

It's a well-known fact that being faced with a task or problem is the best motivation for learning new skills. I have found this to be true for mastering the advanced features of Word 2007 (and 2010). So let's pretend you belong to an organization that wants to conduct an online survey of its members. This article explains how the average Word user can create this type of survey using features introduced in Word 2007.

Creating an interactive survey in Word involves three tasks: generate the content, choose a format, and add response tools. The content of even a simple survey includes not only the questions you want answers to, but also a few demographic questions so the data you collect can be analyzed. When considering format, you may decide to base your survey on one of the Survey templates available through Word. Click the Office button – New -- Microsoft Office Online. Click the Forms category -- Surveys. While these formats may not fit your need, they provide ideas about layout and other survey features. Another option is to start with a blank page, which is the Normal template in Word. Adding response tools in the form of placeholders (controls) involves a surprise. There is a hidden tab for the Word ribbon called the Developer tab; to complete your survey, you need to display it on the ribbon. Click the Office button – Word Options -- Popular and click the box next to "Show Developer tab in the Ribbon." You will be working with commands in the Controls and Protect groups on that tab.

Creating the Survey

Let's assume you have chosen to base this survey on a blank document. You have added the content and saved the survey with an appropriate name. Now you are ready to add the controls:

The **Controls group** on the Developer tab gives you a group of controls or placeholders which can be added to gather information interactively. You could decide to include a Date-Picker to record when the respondent last attended a club meeting or the date he completed the survey. Click in the spot in your survey

where you want this to appear. Then click the date-picker icon (bottom row) to insert a date-picker. Clicking this control will reveal a calendar where the respondent may click a date. You can also include instructional text to make clear what information is being sought. With the date-picker selected, click Design Mode -- Properties. Here you can type a Title for the date picker, such as *Last Meeting Attended*, and choose a format for the date. Click OK to save your changes.

Next, you might include a few Drop-Down Lists to record other bits of demographic information, such as age range or gender. Using age range as an example, click in the survey, then click the drop-down list icon (middle row) to insert this control. With the drop-down list selected, click Design Mode -- Properties. Next type *Age Range* in the title box. In the Display Name section, select the phrase, *Display Name,* and click Remove. Then add age ranges, such as 51 - 60, one at a time, clicking after each one. Finally, click "Content Control cannot be deleted" to lock this feature in place. Now deselect the Design Mode button, and you have a drop-down list where respondents merely click a choice.

In the main section of the survey, you have listed possible presentation topics the club could feature for the coming year. To get feedback on these ideas, you might insert Check Boxes next to each topic. For example, you can add a row of four check boxes so respondents can indicate their level of interest in the activity: *No Interest, Mild Interest, Strong Interest, Very Strong Interest*. To add a check box, click the Legacy Tools icon (bottom right) and then the check box icon in the top row. The boxes can be lined up neatly under the response headings to create a grid-like structure by setting Tabs. Don't think you've made an error if you can't click in a check box right after you insert it; the checkboxes can only be filled after the survey is protected, which will be the last step.

Finally, you might add a Text Control so members can type comments or answers to open-ended questions. Click in the survey, then click the Text Control icon (Aa -second from left, top row). To title it, select the placeholder, then click Design Mode -- Properties. Type *Comments* in the title box, lock it, and click OK.

Now deselect the Design Mode button and try all the controls you have added to make sure they work as expected before you move to the final step.

Protecting the Survey
Once you have finished creating the survey, it is important to protect it. Deselect the Design Mode button. On the Developer tab in the **Protect group**, click the Protect Document button and then click "Restrict Formatting and Editing." This opens a pane on the right. Click the checkbox under Editing Restrictions which says, "Allow only this type of editing in the document." From the drop-down list, select "Filling in Forms." Finally, click "Yes, Start Enforcing Protection." Now your survey is protected and, unless you want to add a password to it, ready to use. To further ensure that its format is preserved, your might want to save your survey as a template. The survey template will remain in its original form and saved in your My Templates folder no matter how many times it is used. Click the Office button – Save As – Word Template (.dotx). Save it in Microsoft Word – Templates (top of the left pane in the Save As window). To find it, Open Word, click the Office button – New -- My Templates.⌨

Windows 8 – Exciting and Challenging
By John Pearce, Member, Pikes Peak Computer Application Society, CO,
March 12 issue, Bits and Bytes, http://ppcompas.apcug.org, glenihan (at) comcast.net

The Microsoft Development Team for Windows 8 has been writing a blog about its development. The first post was in August, 2011; the frequency varies from a few days to a few weeks. I have often wondered why certain design decisions are made in the Windows OS. The blog attempts to discuss some of those issues as related to Windows 8. < http://bit.ly/xlUCi8 >
Based on what I have read in the Microsoft blog and in the computer trade press, I think Windows 8 will be both exciting and challenging. Windows 8 will run on legacy x32/64 hardware as well as the ARM processor found in tablets. The blog posting related to the ARM processor called this Windows on ARM or WOA.
You will have your choice of Windows 8 on a desktop, laptop, net book, ultra book, or tablet.
The look and feel of the Metro interface will be the same across all the hardware platforms. The difference is the physical control of the interface. If you want to use the touch interface with your desktop PC, you will need a touch enabled screen, otherwise you will still use the mouse. You can also revert to the old style desktop if you must.
In some ways, Windows 8 reminds me of the transition in Windows that happened with Win 2000. A benefit of melding the Windows 98/Me product line with the NT 3/4 product line was a way to run games that wanted to have direct control of the display screen. The dark side of the Win 2K release required new drivers for devices because Microsoft changed how drivers interact with the OS.
Windows on ARM generally requires new code. Porting most of the existing applications is not allowed because the ported applications would negatively affect battery life and would require more system resources than programs developed specifically for WOA.
And there is the issue of designing the interface for Metro rather than the traditional Windows desktop.
The Windows Consumer Preview (otherwise known as a Win 8 beta release) was available by the end of February. The release is reported to be open to anyone who wishes to download and install the software. The hardware used to run the preview must meet the minimum requirements for Windows 7.
Microsoft is saying there is lots of work to do before the first release candidate is ready. There are few hints about the Windows 8 release schedule. It appears Microsoft is aiming for a grand slam event with Windows 8 on tablets (ARM processors) and on x32/64 hardware.⌨

April

1	2	3	4	5	6	7 9:30 Board Meeting
8	9	10 **General Mtg** **7:00 PM Summit Place** **6-7PM Web SIG**	11	12	13	14 **Linux and Open Source on Saturday*** **9:00-Noon**
15	16	17	18	19	20	21 **Windows & MS Office (including Access) on Saturday*** **9:00—Noon**
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

May

29	30	1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 **General Mtg** **7:00 PM Summit Place** **6-7PM Pic Perf SIG**	9	10	11	12 **Linux and Open Source on Saturday*** **9:00-Noon**
13	14	15	16	17	18	19 **Windows & MS Office (including Access) on Saturday*** **9:00—Noon**
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

New Google Play Offers Single Source Entertainment
by Ira Wilsker

WEBSITES:
http://play.google.com
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cloud_computing
https://play.google.com/store

I cannot imagine any internet user that has not at least heard of Google. Despite being in a competitive environment against the likes of Microsoft's Bing, Yahoo!, and other powerful competitors, Google has become somewhat synonymous when people think of internet searches, email (Gmail) , and other popular internet services. In the past, I have written columns here on Google Books, Google's shopping bot (formerly called Froogle), Gmail, Google's SMS (text messaging) services, Google Translate, Google's full length movies (on YouTube), Google's new social networking service Google +, and Google Phone. Now Google is going head-to-head with such services as iTunes, Amazon Cloud, and HuLu to become a single source for online entertainment and related services.

Available basically for free (with charges for some services and content), Google recently rolled out the public release of Google Play (play.google.com), which integrates movies, music, apps, games, and books under a single banner. One interesting feature of Google Play is its "Play Anywhere" feature, where the user can access content from any internet connected device including computers, tablets, smart phones, compatible video games, internet connected televisions, and other devices. According to Google, Play puts " All your entertainment in one place". Using Google Play as a single source for content, the user has access to " ... over 450,000 apps, millions of songs and books, and thousands of movies." Almost all items in Play can be sampled for free, as well as free access to ratings, reviews, screenshots, and movie trailers.

Google Play utilizes the latest in cloud computing, where computing is used as a service, rather than a product. In cloud computing, a process mastered by Google, resources, software, and information are shared and provided to computers and other devices over a network (typically the Internet), rather than being installed on individual computers. In non geek-speak, this means that subscribers to Google Play (basic subscription is free with a common Google registration and logon) can access any of their entertainment anywhere they have internet access, using any internet capable device. Some examples cited by Google include new books purchased through Google Play, similar to the way they are purchased for reading on Amazon's Kindle, Barnes & Noble Nook, and other commercial reader devices. The books purchased on Google Play can be read interchangeably on an Android phone or tablet, and then on any internet connected computer or other device using any operating system and browser; no special software is required, and no syncing of devices is necessary. This means that if a book is being read on a tablet, and then bookmarked, when accessed later on any compatible device, such as a home computer, the reader picks up precisely at the bookmark, without the need to synch or otherwise connect the devices. The same applies to movies rented on Play; they can be rented on one device, and played on any other compatible device, including smart phones and other computers. It is no different for music albums; purchased through Play, they can be played at home, work, or anywhere there is a compatible device, regardless of the type of device used for the initial purchase. Using Google's free cloud service and Play, the purchased or rented content is available anywhere there is internet access, without any required special or proprietary software.

Google Play also integrates a degree of social networking where information, comments, evaluations, and content may be exchanged using Google's social networking service Google +, email, and text messaging. Much of the content, including music, books, and apps can be shared using Google Play and Google +, where friends (circles on Google +) can discuss and chat about the different modes of entertainment. Music purchased on Google Play can be shared with friends on Google +, giving them a "free listen" (Google Play's term), and any music that your friends purchased on Play can likewise be shared with you, giving you a "free listen".

While Google Play has a massive library of millions books, movies, music albums and tracks, and apps for sale, there is also a huge library of content that is totally free to registered users. Any and all content,

either purchased or free, is automatically stored in the cloud in the user's personal library, and can be accessed anywhere by computer, Android smart phone, tablet, or other device with internet access. The content of the personal music library cannot just be streamed over the internet to the user, but can also be "pinned" to a mobile device for offline playback in circumstances where the user is not online, or does not otherwise have internet access at that time or place.

It is common for many users to have large, existing music libraries, with content from sources other than Google Play; that is not a problem, as Google Play offers free cloud (online) storage for up to 20,000 songs already owned by the user. This personal music collection can be organized in the cloud along with the content obtained from Google Play into a single library accessible anywhere and anytime with internet access via the cloud. This free storage of personally owned music can also be used as a backup, freeing up storage space on the user's computer, or otherwise having redundant copies of a valuable collection.

It is not just music that demonstrates the power of Google Play, as it also includes access to the four million books available digitally from Google Play. Google claims to have the largest selection of eBooks in the world, with millions of titles, of all genres' available for free, and others available for a fee. In terms of books, Google Play is a direct competitor to such companies as Amazon, and offers the latest releases and best sellers for sale, with the digital books going into the user's library in the cloud. As is done with music on Google Play, any books, free or paid, added to the Google Play library, are available to any connected device without any special software, and include dynamic bookmarking without the need to synch between devices, as the bookmark information is stored with the digital books in the user's Play account in the cloud. Since people enjoy reading in places without good internet access, such as on a commercial flight, Google Play provides for offline reading, where the content can be stored on a device for access while offline. With interactive and automatic bookmarking, the user can start reading a book on one connected device, continue reading offline on another device, and then read more later while online, each time picking up precisely where the reader left off on the previous device, without the need for any manual synching between devices. One nice feature of reading using Google Play is that the reader has complete control over the appearance of the text including brightness and contrast, day or night mode, landscape or portrait orientation, font, text size, line height, and other appearance features.

Google is rightfully proud of its Android operating system, immensely popular on smart phones, tablets, and other devices, as well as giving Apple and Microsoft some much needed competition. Google Play offers over 450,000 Android apps and games, as well as live wallpapers, ringtones, widgets, and other devices. It is no surprise that by utilizing Play, Android devices develop into comprehensive entertainment systems, portable computers, and organizers.
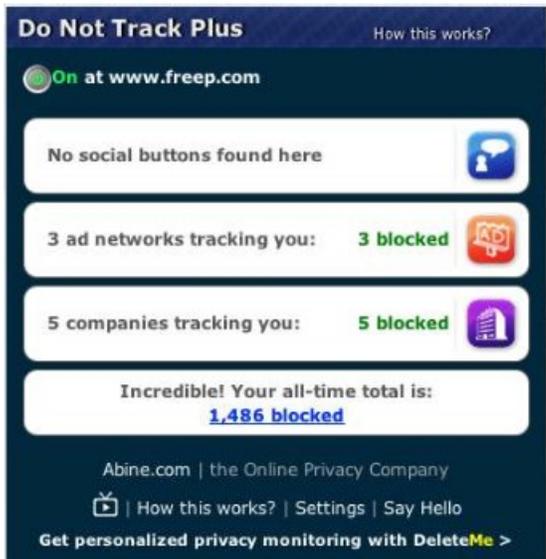
Several months ago in this column, I wrote about the enormous collection of feature length movies available on Google's YouTube, with thousands of full length movies available for free, and countless others available for a nominal fee. Google Play integrates thousands of full-length movies, including the latest releases of movies in HD and other new releases, as well as thousands of classics. Google Play offers thousands of movies for rent which can be viewed instantly via Google play on the web, or downloaded for later viewing using the Google Play Movie app. No different than the other forms of entertainment utilizing Google Play, movies can be viewed at home, in flight, or anywhere using any compatible device, including smart phones, tablets, or computers with internet access. There have already been some articles published about connecting Google Play through a variety of devices streaming to a flat screen TV, and several manufacturers are already offering internet connected televisions that can directly utilize Google Play as an entertainment source.

With the technology, resources, and marketing clout of Google, Google Play may be a major competitive threat to Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Netflix, Barnes & Noble, and other providers of digital entertainment content. I like good, healthy competition, and the choices it gives to me and other consumers. Google Play may just be one of those good choices.▯

Do Not Track Plus by Abine.com
Reviewed by Larry Mobbs, President, Computer Operators of Marysville and Port Huron, MI, March 2012 issue, COMP Communicator, www.bwcomp.org, Lmobbs (at) comcast.net

A new program offered free from Abine software allows you to block websites you visit from tracking where you browse. Many sites, and Facebook.com is one of the worst, want to track every site you visit so they can match up your preferences to the items they want to display on you wall for advertisers.

In the software industry there is a movement to have the browsers include a plugin that prevents this action but as of yet it is not ordered and may never be. Browser publishers may take this on from their own volition but they will be pressured by advertisers not to.

One must remember that many sites depend on you or others visiting the links they place on their pages in order to pay for the website.

When you run Abine it puts a small icon in your browser and it displays a number with each site you visit, telling you how many attempts are made to track your visit and what type of tracking company is making the effort. They also keep a running grand total of how many blocks they have made. In the first few days of my use on one machine they blocked 1600 attempts.

Installation following the quick download is painless and there is virtually no setup. While writing this article I loaded Firefox, downloaded the software and ran it as a plugin.

This is required for each browser you use. After restarting Firefox I visited cnn.com and Donottrack Plus reported blocking 13 attempts to track my browsing on their site.

It looked like this (see right).

The program came highly recommended by Cnet.com, which is where I read about it. It can be downloaded from Abine.com.