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

## July 2020

# General Meeting
## Tuesday, July 14, 2020
## 7:00 PM

**Confined by the Quarantine?
Have a Friend in Need?
TeamViewer to the Rescue!**

**Presenter: Curt Trout**
## Via Zoom

While we've been stuck in our homes by the current COVID-19 pandemic, we've received more and more calls from our friends and family for computer support. While Zoom has been a great help, what if we can't use Zoom because those needing our help can't install it, or don't have the equipment, e.g., a webcam (don't even think about buying one now) to run it? What could we do? Use TeamViewer!

Curt Trout is going to demonstrate how we can use TeamViewer to take control of another computer, remotely, to provide aid. We'll have plenty of time for questions.

The link for you to join this meeting and Tech Topics will be in an email sent to members and on the TC/PC website, www.tcpc.com .⌨

**Tech Topics with Jack Ungerleider  via Zoom at 6pm before the General Meeting.**

**Note: Saturday SIGs will be virtual meetings this month. Check tcpc.com for links to connect.**⌨

# The Digital Viking

## Advertising

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Contact Sharon Walbran at:: SQWalbran@yahoo.com

Deadline for ad placement is the 1st of the month prior to publication. All rates are per issue and for digital or camera-ready ads. Typesetting and other services are extra and must be requested in advance of submission deadlines.

Payment must accompany order unless other arrangements are made in advance. Place make checks payable to: **Twin Cities PC User Group**

## TC/PC 2019-2020 Board of Directors

Meets once or twice per year. All members welcome to attend.
Visit www.tcpc.com for meeting details.

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**Editor Sharon Walbran**

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# How Has AI Changed Your Life?

**By Stephen D. Ambrosini, CLU ChFC**
**20/20 Financial Advisers of Cardiff by the Sea, LLCsambrosini (at) 2020fa.com**
**From Drive Light, the Under the Computer Hood UG newsletter**

When I find myself at social events, I like to ask a question to start a conversation with those around me. The question is: " Tell me how Artificial Intelligence (AI) has changed your life. What are your experiences?" Then I sit back and listen.

I started asking this question after attending a few seminars and reading books about the topic. Everyone has a story. Recently I asked my dental hygienist that question. She immediately became very tense and anxious. She denied it was affecting her at first, but after a few moments, she proceeded to tell me about a few new devices that will clean your teeth. They're available on Amazon of course and are Bluetooth compatible. You charge this dental retainer type device, then you pop it in your mouth. Fifteen minutes later, your teeth are cleaned. That's one less dental visit.

This week I asked a journeyman electrician how his life is changing. His answer: homes and offices being built today have less copper wire. It's not needed anymore since everything is wireless. They still have to run some copper to the lights, but nowhere else. That's a huge savings in new home construction. Also, the power companies are putting in controls that let them dim our lights when needed. So instead of black or brownouts, the power company can dim our lights from their location to save power.

From the books and articles I've read, I came across the name Jim Dator, an author and Professor at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. One of the Dator Laws is: "Any useful idea about the future should appear to be ridiculous." Think about that for a moment. Things that we mocked, saw on TV, laughed at in movies are now modern-day. Star Trek communicators, Dick Tracy watches, "Back to the Future" hoverboards, "Beam me up, Scotty", it's here. They seemed ridiculous at the time, yet they are as real as the Apple Watch you're wearing.

If it's scary, and it is, it's because change is hard. It's rarely accepted or appreciated. We're all stuck in our ways and want to leave it like that. However, we must accept the change because it's happening whether we want it or not. The banks didn't ask us if we want to now withdraw money from a machine and replace the friendly teller. They just did it, and we adjusted. As a result, many of us haven't been inside a bank for years. This week I needed to refer a friend to a personal banker. I couldn't, I don't have one. Those days of walking in, saying hi, asking about the kids and work, are gone. AI has taken that away. And you know, that's okay. We all have adjusted very well to that change.

So, let's not be afraid of these changes. Let's instead open up our eyes to see what's coming. How can we benefit from them? How will it improve my life?

Example: the BMW dealership contacted me recently because my car sent them a message informing them that an oil change is overdue. Now I'll be bringing the car in for service. That's a good thing, it's extending the life of the vehicle.

# Desktop vs. Laptop

**Author: Dan Douglas, President, Space Coast PCUG, Florida**
**December 2019 issue, The Space Coast Journal**
**www.scpcug.org, datadan (at) msn.com**

At a recent learning center meeting, the topic of what was better to get, in my opinion, a desktop or a laptop?

We agreed to include various other devices in the category of 'laptop' - tablets, Chromebooks, netbooks, notebooks, etc. Let's take a look at the various factors that should influence your decision.

Performance – This used to be the biggest differentiator between laptop versus desktop decisions, but this is not true any longer. The modern CPU (Central Processing Unit) chip designs have greatly reduced the heat generated and thereby eliminated one of the biggest problems with portable devices; the need to cool down the CPU effectively in a limited space within the case. The latest Intel and AMD CPUs are available in basically the same speeds and formats across both desktop and laptop motherboards.

However, the smaller size of laptops does command a premium price over that of desktops due to higher manufacturing costs for the same performance, as a general rule. SSDs (Solid State Disks) are available for both and their performance will be similar in either PC.

Storage Capacity – This is the other major area that has dramatically changed. Desktops typically have had larger capacity hard drives for storage – a 3.5" width hard drive case is still the standard in desktops while laptops standardized on a 2.5" width form. Large capacity drives (1TB+) are cheaper and were only available in the desktop size until the last 2 years or so when SSDs became available at a competitive cost to traditional hard drives. When fitted into a desktop case, newer cases have drive bays sized for the 2.5" SSD case, while cheap brackets are available for fitting them into any 3.5" case opening.

The latest developments are to move away from both 2.5" and 3.5" sizes to a "stick" SSD. There are several sizes in use today; one of the most common is called m2. These SSDs clip into a slot directly on the motherboard, similar to how a memory stick would This saves significant space that would otherwise be used by the storage drive in either a desktop or a laptop case.

Currently, only traditional 3.5" drives have very large capacities available (4TB+), but as time goes by, SSDs will become cheaper and a much better alternative. Check out my journal article earlier this year where I compared the two for full details. Display – This is an area where desktops can be a better value for the flexibility to connect to whatever size display you have. Whether it is a 4K UHD 75" panel or a 24" desk LCD panel, either will work on a desktop. Now, many laptops offer HDMI or other ports to connect to displays, but if the reason for the laptop is portability, then the size of the laptop screen is what you'll be using

most of the time, typically 13" to 17". The larger the screen, the weight will also increase proportionally on a laptop.

Graphics – Without a doubt, desktops are better suited for gaming due to the flexibility to replace and upgrade the video card. Some laptops, such as those from Alienware, do offer several video card options to compete with the best desktop offerings, but these are limited and more costly. For non-gamers, the basic video in either laptops or desktops is sufficient 95% of the time.

In the December 2019 issue of Consumer Reports, there just happens to be an article about this very topic. They report that in a survey taken in 2009, about 72% of the households have a desktop versus the 52% reporting having a laptop. Jump forward to 2019 and the number is now reversed with more households reporting laptops than desktops in almost the same ratio – about 74% laptops and 52% desktops now. Check it out for their recommended models and other factors you may want to consider.

If you have suggestions for topics that you would like to see explained, please let me know!
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**Open Source Lab**
## Linux Mint 19.3
**Author: Cal Esneault, Former President and leader of many Open Source Workshops & SIGs, Cajun Clickers Computer Club**
**January 2020 issue, Cajun Clickers Computer News**
**www.clickers.org, tsa70785 (at) gmail.com**

Linux Mint is a distribution based on Ubuntu LTS versions. The latest series is the Mint 19.x family (based on Ubuntu 18.04 LTS). There are three desktop choices: Cinnamon, Mate, and XFCE. Recently, Mint 19.3 was released. Below is a list of the 19.x series.

| Mint Version | Code Name | Released |
|---|---|---|
| Mint 19 | Tara | June 2018 |
| Mint 19.1 | Tessa | Dec 2018 |
| Mint 19.2 | Tina | Aug 2019 |
| Mint 19.3 | Tricia | Dec 2019 |

It is possible to upgrade directly to Mint 19.3 from any previous 19.x versions. These "in-place" upgrades do not affect personal files or bookmarks. As usual, only software maintained by Mint itself is changed for a "point release."

I was running Mint 19.2 (Cinnamon). As part of the normal updates, I received notice to refresh the update manager itself. After this, It alerts users if they are missing a language

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package, a multimedia codec, etc. It also has a good system description and record of any system crashes (see below).
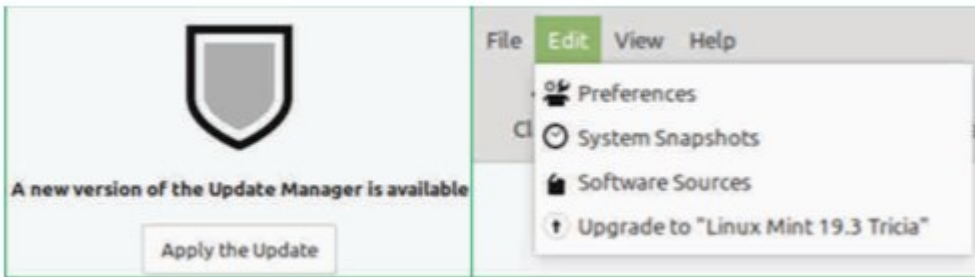


Linux Mint has focused on making recovery from any regressions during the upgrade as easy as possible. It is recommended that users precede upgrade with a "*Timeshift*" session for back-up and to read the installation notes. In this release, they go a step further by introducing the "*System Reports*" tool. It alerts users if they are missing a language package, a multimedia codec, etc. It also has a good system description and record of any system crashes (see below).



*Celluloid, gnote, drawing,* and *neofetch* were added to Linux Mint 19.3 as future defaults. For in-place upgrades, you have to do this manually (note: they are present in the iso download if you do a fresh install). Celluloid is a replacement for *Xplayer* (*Celluloid* is more efficient for playing movies on your system).

*Gnote* is a replacement for *Tomboy* (not much difference here). *Drawing* is *Gnome-Paint* renamed (a simple bit-map editing program).

*Neofetch* is a command line tool that can "fetch" all sorts of information about your system, from the Linux kernel version number to how long it's been running ("uptime"). See a short screenshot of *neofetch* below.

```
OS: Linux Mint 19.3 Tricia x86_64
Host: Latitude E6430 01
Kernel: 4.15.0-72-generic
Uptime: 10 mins
Packages: 2603
Shell: bash 4.4.20
Resolution: 1366x768
DE: Cinnamon 4.4.5
```

Mint appears to be backing-off from having so many in-house "Xapps." Mint 19.2 is a refined version of Linux Mint and is recommended for current users. Upgrade here is a minor event but look for major changes when shifting to Mint 20 next year. 🖥
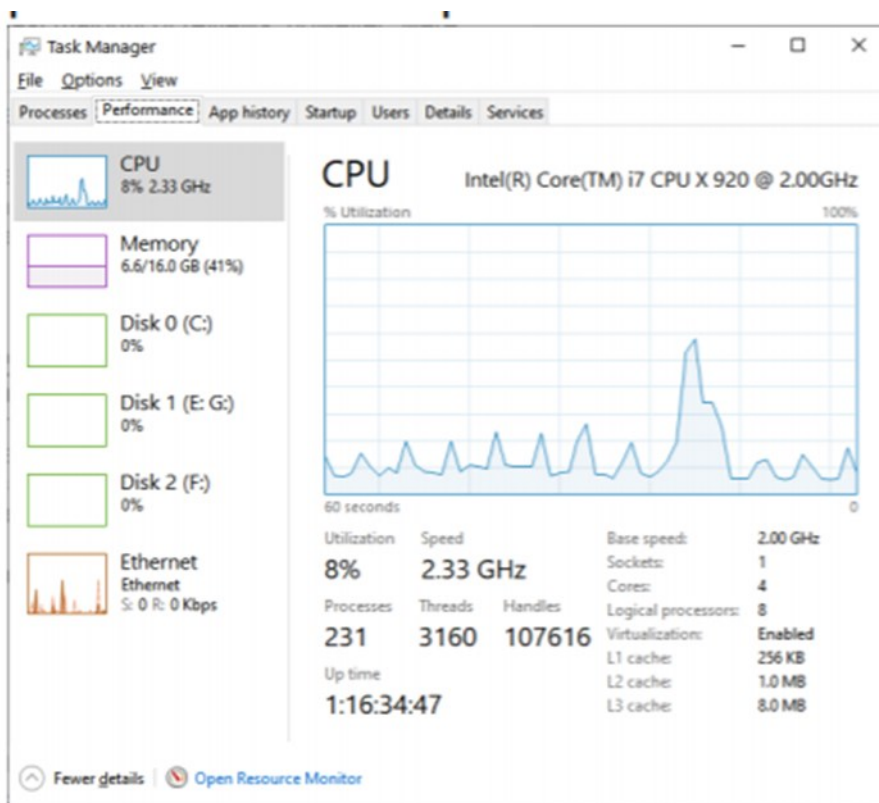
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## System Monitoring Tools
**Author: Frank Fota, Newsletter Editor, Fredericksburg PCUG, MD**
**November 2019 issue, FPCUG Notes**
**www.fpcug.org, Fotafm (at) gmail.com**

Have you ever wanted to view the impact a program has on your computer's performance? A quick internet search reveals that there are other many monitoring tools available. Some are freeware and others require payment. Resource monitoring tools are also bundled with system utilities (e.g., Norton Utilities®). Microsoft Windows has a "Resource Monitor" that can be run from a Command Prompt or via the search box by typing, "perfmon.exe." Windows Resource Monitor is extensive but, difficult to configure. A quick look at resources can be found, however, by opening the Windows Task Manager (i.e., Ctrl-Alt-Del

then click on Task Manager). Click on the Performance tab in Windows Task Manager and it's easy to see the effect that a program has on CPU, Memory, Disk, or Network performance.

If you need more details about the hardware on your PC (e.g., the effect a program has on CPU or GPU core temperatures), I recommend Speccy®.
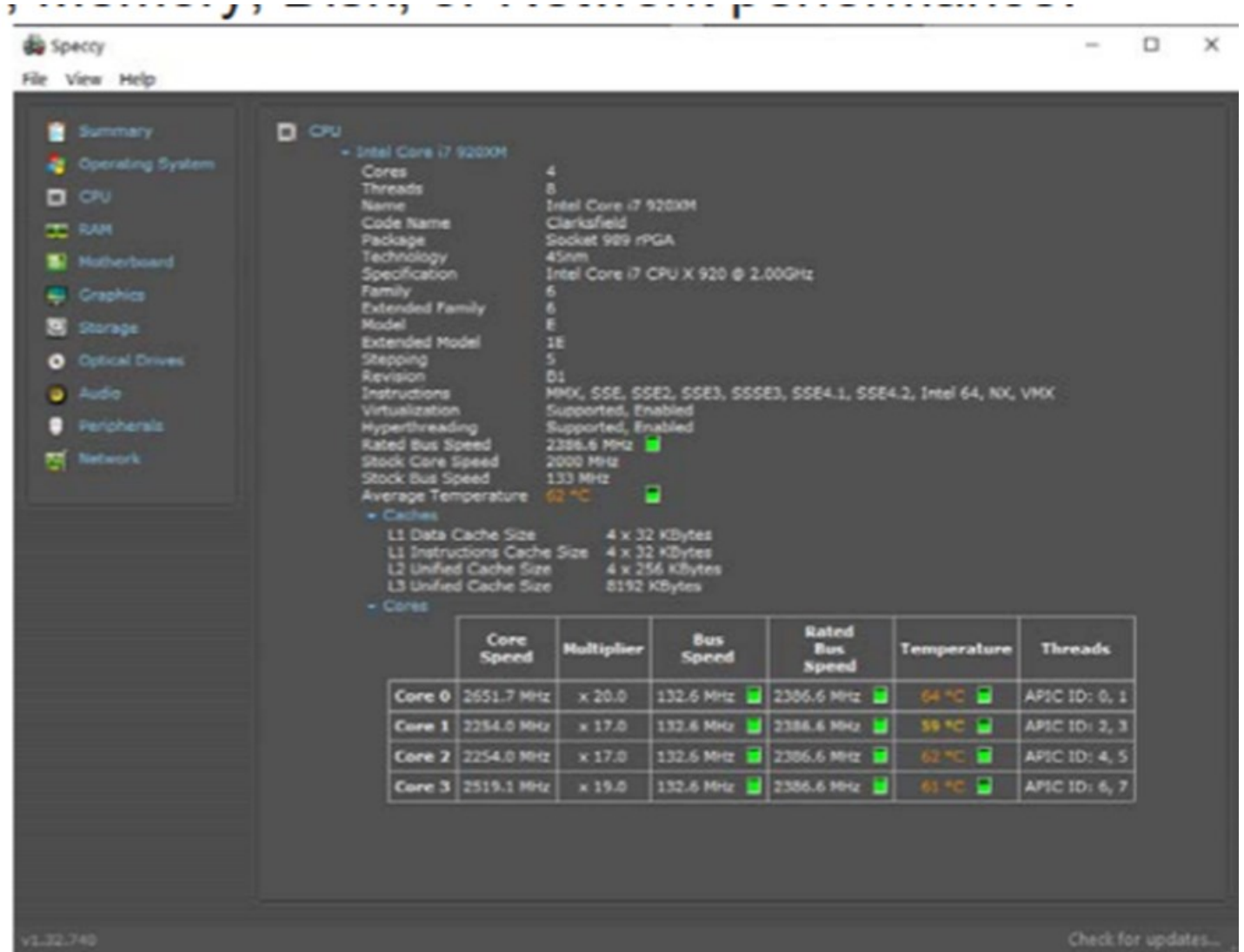


Speccy® is written and published by Piriform (now owned by Avast); the same company that developed CCleaner®. According to Jeffrey Wilson, Lead Analyst for PC Magazine, "This utility serves up a wealth of data about your PC's operating system, attached peripherals, memory, storage, and much more."

If you are looking for a program that will overlay hardware statistics on top of a running game, you can install MSI's Afterburner program. It's compatible with both Nvidia and AMD's Radeon graphics cards.

💻

# Why Is My Computer So Slow?
## *(Updated from April 2017)*
**David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club**
**November 2019 issue, Gigabyte Gazette**
**www.scscc.club, dkretch (at) gmail.com**

There are plenty of computers being used that are performing much more slowly than they should. One of the quickest ways to turn a fast, new computer into a slow system crippled by malware is to start downloading what you think is good software from the wrong sites, or by downloading the wrong software from what appears to be the right site.

Newer computers being slowed by unwanted programs is a bother, but the damage done by PUPs (Potentially Unwanted Programs) can be much more serious; PUPs can be responsible for programs that lock up your system and make it impossible to access any of your files, or otherwise ruin your system.

Every time you download anything from the Internet you first issue permissions that enable the opening of a conduit between the Internet and your computer. The series of complex events is mostly invisible to you, except for your clicking on that virtual button that starts the whole process.
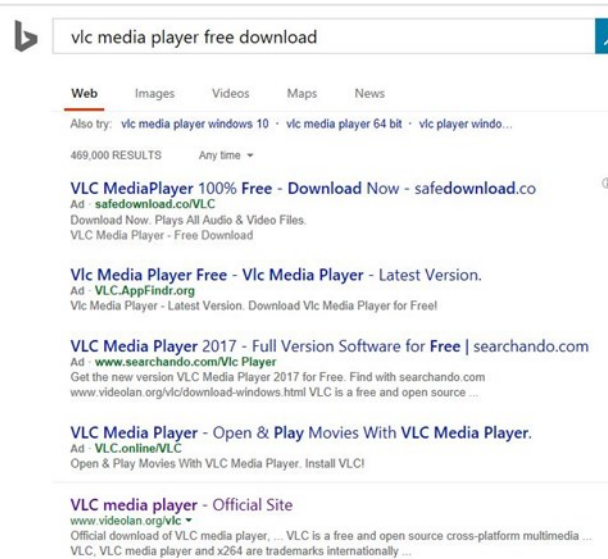


Bing and Google searches often can take you where you don't want to go. When searching for popular software, sponsored search results (which result in unwanted programs) often appear at the top of the search results page, along with links from the actual software source sites. Often those ad links try to install software on your computer that you do not want. It could be anything; it could be a fake driver update program or a scam system cleaning program. Note that my Bing search for VLC media player (left) first showed 4 sites NOT associated with VLC – places that have a high potential for providing bad software.

## Testing Misleading Advertisement links

How bad is it? To find out, I installed a fresh Windows 10, plus all Windows updates, on a freshly formatted hard drive. I downloaded and installed the free version of Avast! Antivirus software that brought a hitchhiker of its own - Google Chrome. OK, I wanted Chrome, but not every user would so I considered this an invasive act by a program I downloaded for protection.

I used Edge, Firefox, and Google Chrome and started using Google and Bing search engines to start searching for popular free programs. The programs I sought are often the first programs that get installed on a PC; Firefox, Google Chrome, OpenOffice, iTunes, Adobe Flash, Java, Adobe Acrobat, VLC, and WinZip. Then, I carelessly clicked on ad

results, which appeared above or on the same first page as "real" search results. These paid ads were identified by notes and highlighted in a very pale color to differentiate them (slightly) from the actual search links that appeared nearby.

The ads didn't appear after every search and the ones that appeared varied among searches and were different for different browsers. Sometimes, the first paid ad link actually took me to the software's true source site (i.e. searching for Google offered www.google.com first). Often Avast would block a download it recognized as harmful, but Avast did not catch many problems.

For all of the searched for programs, I was able to bring up more questionable sponsored search results within seconds of repeated searching. Misleading results showed up in all search engines and I could not determine that any browser offered better or worse protection than others.

For each ad link, I clicked through and installed the respective programs via the link or button provided. Instead of delivering just the application I was looking for, all of the paid links attempted to tack on unwanted programs. In some cases, if I was careful to read all of the fine print and uncheck boxes, I could get the files I was looking for without a bunch of extra "added value" software, but it was very difficult.

For the purposes of this article, I acted as an inexperienced user (or an experienced user who's not paying attention) and clicked my way through ads and dialogue boxes that looked like the End User License Agreement (EULA) we're used to seeing through when installing software.

### And ...They Got Me!
After installing just a few programs this way, I started accumulating browser toolbars (Bing, Yahoo, and Google) and noticed my search engine and home page had been hijacked to something unwanted. As I continued the process, Windows started slowing down to a crawl.
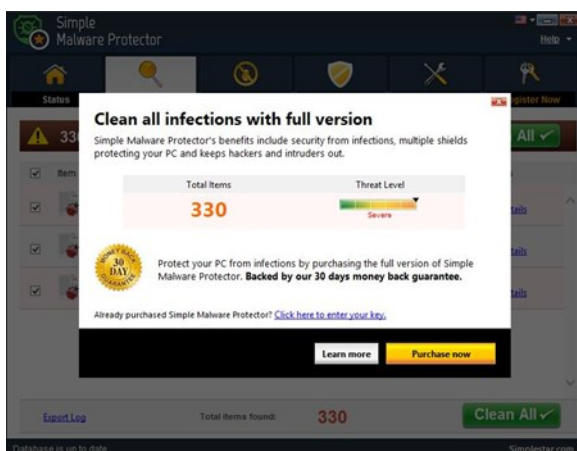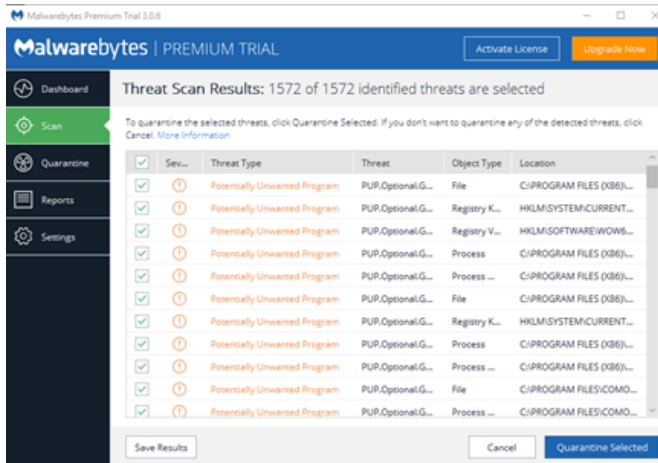


After installing all of the programs on my list, I opened Windows 10's Programs and Features and each browser's extensions and add-ons and counted 39 items that had been installed in addition to the programs I intended to get. On rebooting, three new programs launched popup windows at startup, including two that started running virus/registry scans as soon as they launched, and a couple that flashed warning windows and offered fixes if I registered and/or upgraded to the full paid version.

Remember this was originally a clean install of Windows 10 that needed nothing. Within a few minutes, my computer became noticeably slower, plagued by numerous popups, and was becoming essentially unusable.

A Malwarebytes scan disclosed 1572 unwanted programs were present on my system. I'm sure not all of these were nasty, but if even a small fraction of them were, I would be in real trouble.

## Conclusions and Recommendations

Most of us will occasionally have reason to download and install some third-party (non-Microsoft) software from the Internet. This does not have to be dangerous if you pay attention that the software is being offered from the true home site of that product. NEVER download software from any sponsored link unless the desired software creator is the sponsor.



Do not depend on your anti-malware program to protect you. It will catch some issues, but not all. 💻

# Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

**Most SIGs will meet at Edina Executive Plaza, Conference Room #102, 5200 Willson Road, Edina, MN**
 **Confirm with a SIG group if they meet elsewhere.**
**For more info contact the SIG Leader(s) listed here.**

**Get SIG announcements!**
*Link from www.tcpc.com*

## Board of Directors*
All members are welcome! Check www.tcpc.com for location.
**Selected Saturday mornings**

## Linux on Saturday
This is for the Linux newbie and those trying to come over from Microsoft to a different operating system.
**Second Saturday @ 9 AM-Noon**
**Note: No Meetings June-August**

**Jack Ungerleider        612/418-3494 c**
                         **jack@jacku.com**

## Tech Topics
**Technical presentation/discussion on various technical topics from the following areas:**
- **Web/Internet**
- **Mobile Devices and Apps**
- **Playing with Programming**
- **DIY (3D Printing, R-Pi, other hobby electronics, etc.)**

**Second Tuesday @ 6:00-7:00 PM**
**Every  month**
**Right before the general meeting.**

**Jack Ungerleider        612/418-3494 c**
                         **jack@jacku.com**

## Microsoft Access
All levels. Presentations by expert developers within the group and by MS reps.
**Third Saturday 9:00 AM—Noon**
**Note: No Meetings June-August**

**Steve Kuhlmey             952/934-8492**
                         **skuhlmey@hotmail.com**

## Microsoft Office
Addresses the use, integration, and nuances of the Microsoft Office applications.
**Combined with Systems on Saturday**
**Third Saturday of the Month**
**9:00 AM—Noon**
**Note: No Meetings June-August**

**Steve Kuhlmey             952/934-8492**
                         **skuhlmey@hotmail.com**

Directions to **Summit Place** for **General Meetings**:
Proceed to Eden Prairie Center Flying Cloud Drive . [Flying Cloud Drive runs along the West side of the Eden Prairie Center.]  Once you have driven past Eden Prairie Center (on the left) along Flying Cloud Drive you will come to a stop light at Prairie Center Drive.  The next intersection with a stop light and left turn lane is Fountain Place. Turn left at Fountain Place and go straight into the parking lot. Turn left again to the first covered entry way of Summit Place.  There is plenty of parking in the large parking lot in front of the first Summit Place covered entry way.  When you enter the door at the first covered entry way, ask to be directed to the Performance Room for the TC/PC meeting.  For a map of more detailed directions and *info on Web SIG and Board meeting*, check the TC/PC website.

Directions to **Edina Executive Plaza** for **Systems on Saturday, Access, Word and Picture Perfect SIGs**: Take Highway 100 to the 50th Street/Vernon exit. [If you have come from the north, cross back over Highway 100 to the east side.] Take the first right and go past Perkins [The golf course will be on your left.] and continue on the east frontage road (Willson Road) to the next building—5200 . There is ample parking in the building's lot. Conference Room #102 is on 1st floor.

# Help yourself by helping others!
# Join the team & share your knowledge with others.

**Contact TC/PC at www.tcpc.com**

## July

| SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **5** | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11<br>9am-Noon<br>Linux on Saturdays |
| **12** | 13 | 14<br>General Mtg<br>Team Viewer<br><br>6pm Tech Topics | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18<br>9am-Noon<br>Microsoft Office (including Access) |
| **19** | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| **26** | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 |

## August

| SUN | MON | TUES | WED | THU | FRI | SAT |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2** | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8<br>9am-Noon<br>Linux on Saturdays |
| **9** | 10 | 11<br>General Mtg<br>TBA<br><br>6pm Tech Topics | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15<br>9am-Noon<br>Microsoft Office (including Access) |
| **16** | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 |
| **23** | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 |
| **30** | 31 | | | | | |

# Twin Cities PC USER GROUP
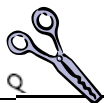
## You have just read an issue of The Digital Viking.

*Would you like to receive this delivered directly to your email or business each month?*

As a member of TC/PC, the Twin Cities Personal Computer Group, one of the benefits
is reading this monthly publication at www.tcpc.com..

As a member of TC/PC, you may attend any or all of the monthly Special Interest Group (SIG) meetings and be eligible for
software drawings. The small membership fee also includes
access to real-live people with answers via our helplines, discounts, and various other perks.

Does membership in this group sound like a good way to increase your computer knowledge?

It's easy to do! Simply fill in the form below and mail it to the address shown.
(If you use the form in this issue, you will receive an extra month for joining now.)

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**Here's the info for my TC/PC Membership:**

Full name_____

Company name_____

Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

❍Home ❍Business ❍Change address: ❍Perm. ❍Temp. 'til _____

Home phone_____ Work phone_____

Online address(es) _____

Where did you hear about TC/PC? _____

❍ I DO NOT want any of my information disclosed.
❍ I DO NOT want to receive any mailings

**Administrative Use Only**   Rec'd_____ Chk#_____

**7/20**

**I'm signing up for:**

❍ Individual/Family Membership ($18)
❍ Business Membership ($100)
If an existing member your # _____
**Make checks payable to:**
**Twin Cities PC User Group**
**341 County Rd C2 W**
**Roseville, MN 55113**

**http://www.tcpc.com**

❍ Check #_____ ❍ Bill me
❍ New member ❍ Renewal ❍ Prior member
I'm interested in:
❍ Training classes ❍ Volunteering
❍ Special Interest Groups: New User, Access, etc.
List here:

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**July 14, 2020**

# General Meeting
# Team Viewer

**Presenter: Curt Trout**

**Via Zoom**

**More info: www.tcpc.com**

*FIRST CLASS MAIL*