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

March 2023

General Meeting
Tuesday, March 14, 2023
7:00 PM

CES 2023:
Virtual Visits

Via Zoom Only

CES, Consumer Electronics Show, the biggest electronics show around, was back in person in Las Vegas this year, and it was full of exciting surprises—some new products just as concepts like the color-changing BMW, and some that you can purchase and use now. We will take a look at CES through the eyes of several reviewers on YouTube. The innovations range from automobiles to TVs to Roomba-type lawn equipment to healthcare devices to home appliances, lighting, and security and a protocol you need to know about called Matter. It's good to see what the trends are and what's cool among the nerdy crowd. Hope you can make it! ⌨

Note: All TC/PC Meetings and SIG Groups will be virtual until further notice. Visit tcpc.com for info**.**

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

The Digital Viking

Advertising

TC/PC 2022-2023 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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Desktop Publishing

By Dick Maybach,
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Modern word processors have extensive formatting capabilities, but if you produce posters, newsletters, or brochures, you may need a competent desktop publishing program such as Scribus, https://www.scribus.net/. You begin with the text, created by a word processor, and graphics, created by a graphics program, and use the desktop publisher to organize them into a poster, leaflet, or newsletter. Scribus is open source and free; you can easily experiment with it to see if it fits your needs. Regardless of your desktop publishing software, you will still need a good word processor for its spelling, grammar, style checking, and graphics programs to generate artwork and edit images. A desktop publisher is strictly for layout; it provides little help in developing content.

Desktop publishing is a complex process, and learning to do it well requires considerable effort. So here, I'll only introduce Scribus to help you decide if you need such a tool. The first example is a poster, shown in Figure 1; the detailed directions are in the Scribus Quick Start Guide section of its help document or at https://wiki.scribus.net/canvas/Help:Manual_Quickstart.

Figure 1. Scribus Poster.

Figure 2 shows the Scribus window for the same poster. Note the black rectangles, called "frames," that enclose its elements. Selecting one will highlight it and allow you to make changes, for example editing its content, adjusting its size, or moving it. Each frame also has a level. Here the lowest level frame is the gray background, and the next higher is the portrait. As a result, the portrait hides the portion of the background that it covers.

Figure 2. Scribus Window for the Poster.

Learning to use Scribus can be challenging since you must unlearn some word-processor habits you've used for years. If you look carefully at the menu bars, you'll see that they resemble those of an image processor, such as GIMP, more closely than those of a word processor, such as LibreOffice. This isn't surprising, given the tasks performed by a desktop publisher. It takes text and images created by other tools, modifies their properties (sizes, fonts, colors), and places them on a canvas.

Many tools are accessed from auxiliary windows such as the one shown in Figure 3, which shows the frame's properties that contain "Painting the Dutch Golden Century." Frames can be sized and placed by dragging, but it's more accurate, if slower, to enter the numbers in the property window, where you can also define other attributes.
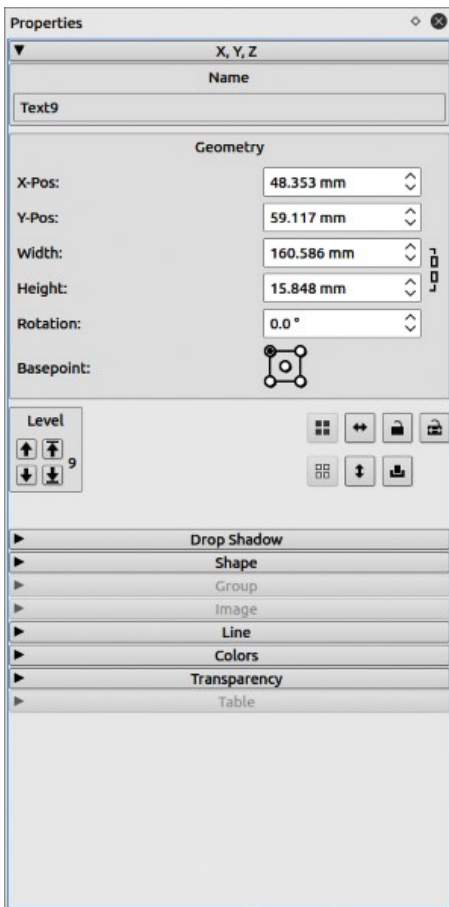
Figure 3. Properties of the "Painting the Dutch Golden Century" Frame.

Scribus has a simple text editor called a story editor, Figure 4, with similar but simpler tools as in your word processor. However, it's not quite WYSIWYG, as text effects don't appear in the editor window but only on the main display. You will import most text from a word processor document and use the story editor only for very short items, such as titles.
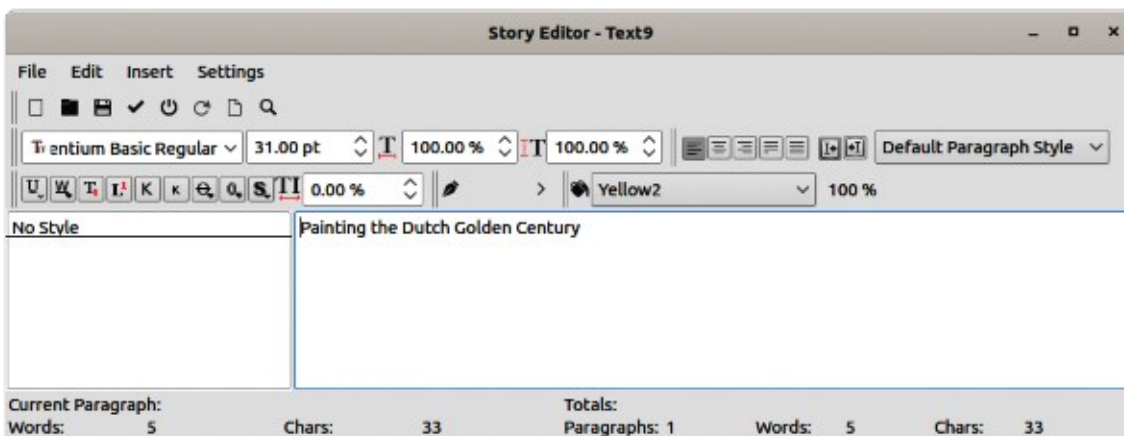

Figure 4. Scribus Text Editor.

This poster could also have been created with a photo editor, such as GIMP. You would probably crop and touch up the image as a first step, and adding some text using the same tool wouldn't be

difficult. Someone familiar with both tools would probably find it easier to use a desktop publishing program for the latter, but you could obtain comparable results using only GIMP.

Our following example is a brochure, described at http://archive.flossmanuals.net/_booki/scribus-2/scribus-2.pdf. Again, this is a single sheet, printed on the front and back, and folded into thirds, so that you see a cover with a title and a graphic, which you open to see three columns of text, with a fourth on the back, Figure 5.

Figure 5. Brochure.

Figure 6 shows Scribus with the brochure open. Note the arrows linking the text frames, which means that the overflow continues in the next frame when a window fills.
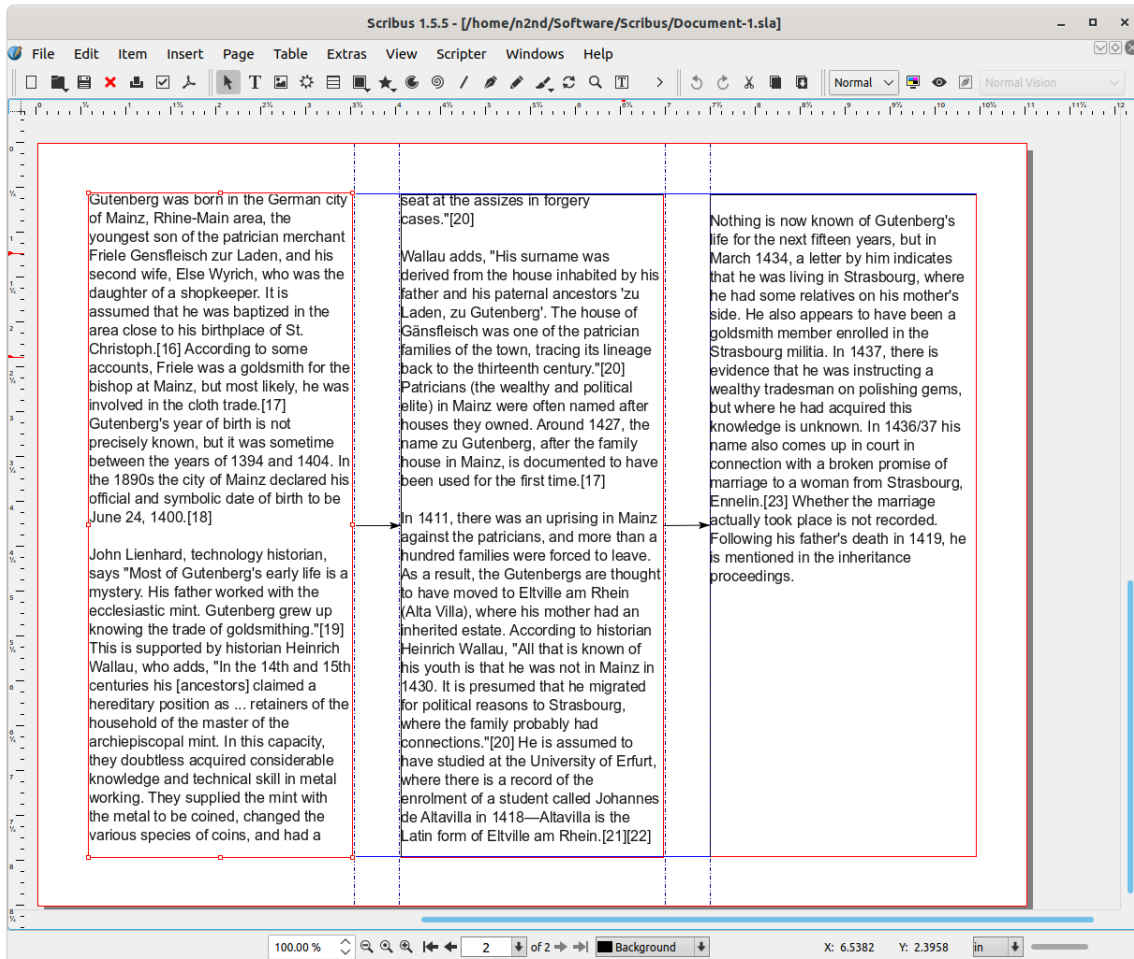
Figure 6. Scribus Editing a Brochure.

You could create this using a capable word processor, such as LibreOffice, although formatting the pages would be a bit tricky. Someone comfortable with both programs would probably choose to format the brochure using desktop publishing.

The above two examples could have been developed using an image and a word processor. However, let's now look at one that requires desktop publishing, described at https://wiki.scribus.net/canvas/Get_Started_with_Scribus. This is a six-page brochure with a complex mix of images, text, and graphics, Figure 7.

Figure 7. Six-page Brochure.

Figure 8 shows the Scribus view of page 4, which has several text boxes. Note the arrow coming into the two-column box on the right, showing its text continued from a previous page. The page header is a text box overlaying a second one filled with red. The lower left box forces the one on its right to wrap around it. It uses different styles than the others. The upper left box also has its own style. The page could be formatted with a word processor, but it's much easier with desktop publishing.
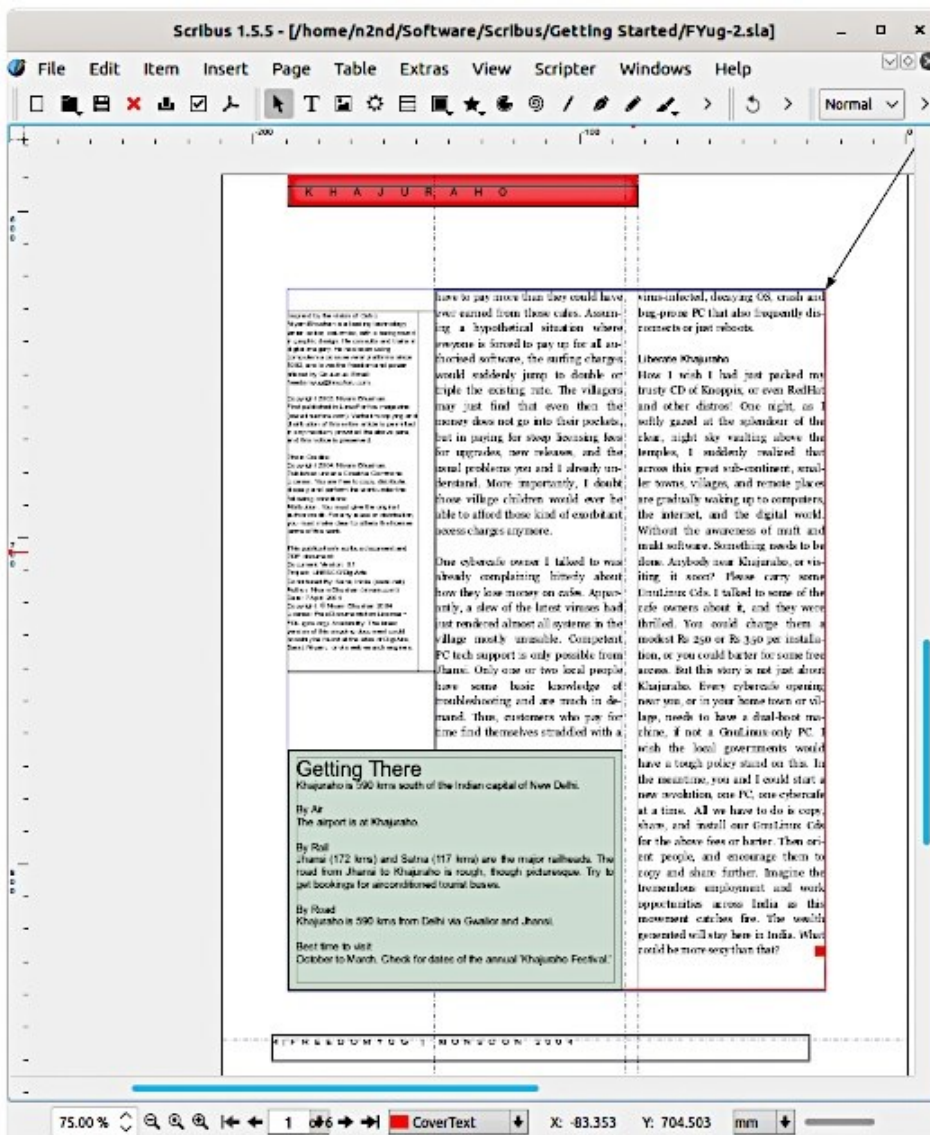
Figure 8. Brochure, Page Four.

The "Getting There" box at the bottom left illustrates another difference between Scribus and a word processor. Text in a Scribus text box has no margin space. So this is really two boxes, a rectangle with a tinted background and a slightly smaller text box to set the margins. The same technique was used on page three to set the white space around the graphic at the bottom right, which a slightly larger box behind it to create some space.

Creating the page of Figure 9 with either an image or a word processor would be very tedious. Of course, it was developed more to show some desktop publishing capabilities than to communicate effectively. Actually, constructing this is simple. There is a single large graphic, a number seven, with some rectangular text boxes layered on top of it, plus a number of text boxes with various shapes, connected by red lines, and finally, the header and footer. This page's layout is different from the others, and it has a separate template.
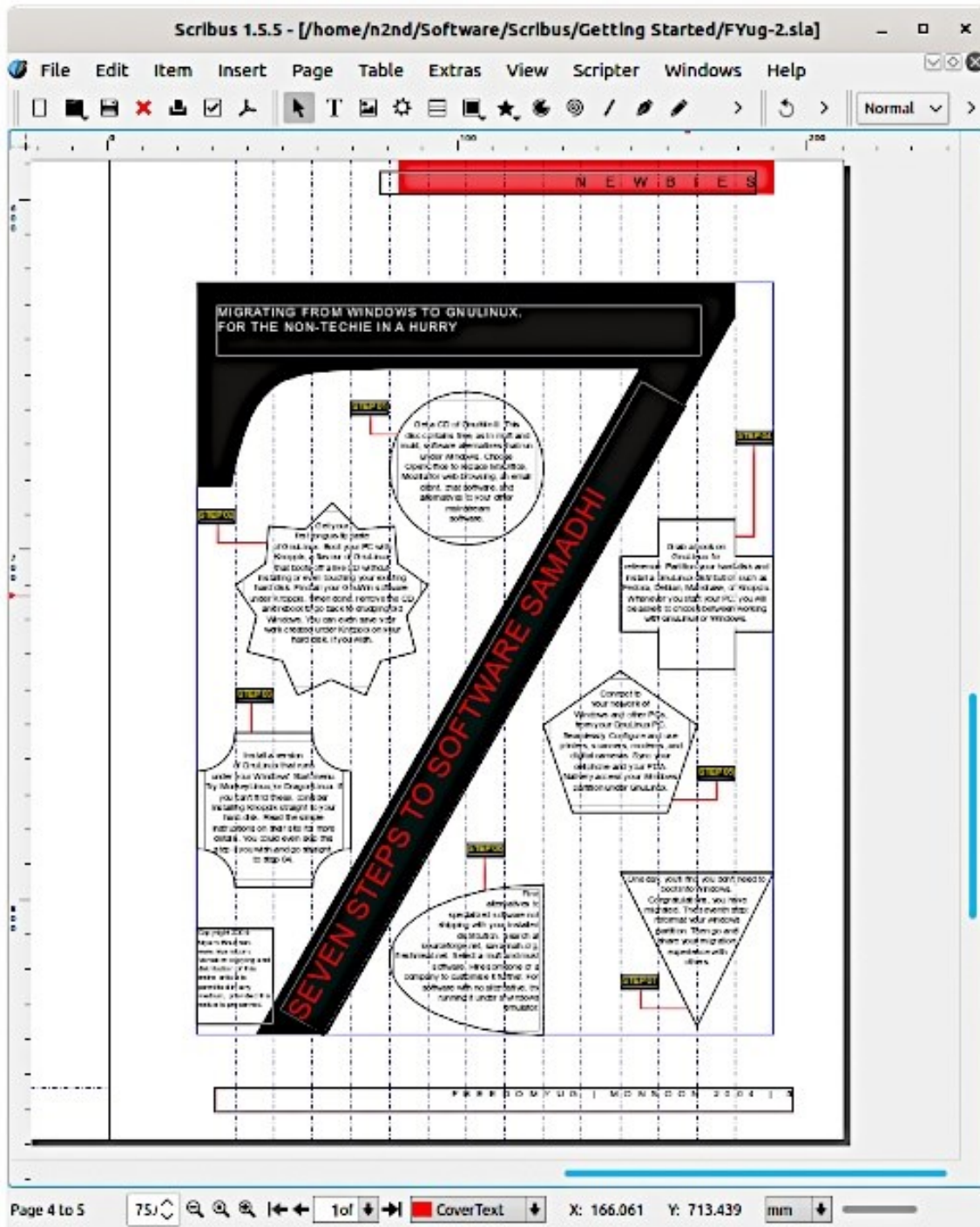
Figure 9. Brochure, Page Five.

Like most desktop publishing software, Scribus is complex and requires learning time and effort. In this short article, I can only introduce it enough to help you to decide if it's worth your time to investigate. The program is available from the website listed at the beginning of this article. Be sure you get the stable version, currently 1.4.8, as it will best match the available documentation. (The examples in this article used 1.5.5, a development version, which added some adventure to its writing.) Working through the three examples above will get you started, provided you download the source material and create the documents. Stay flexible, as most tutorials are fairly old, and you will find some differences between them and the current program.⌨

Most Wished-For New Tech
By Greg Skalka, President, Under the Computer Hood Use Group
www.uchug.org, president (at) uchug.org

We seem to have so much technology in our lives - how could we want more? But, I'm writing this on President's Day, and I wonder, if George Washington could be transported in time to today, would he be able to cope in our world? Beyond the social and economic changes he would face, would he be able to deal with our technology? Cars, trains, airplanes, radio, TV, cell phones, space travel, nuclear bombs - would he be able to understand any of it, or would he want to hide up in a cherry tree? There is a saying: Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

If we were able to bring Abe Lincoln to the present day, would he be any better able to understand our world? He would have at least some familiarity with trains and some industrial technology. Since he used the telegraph, he may be better able to cope with our communications tech today. What if we could bring Albert Einstein (who died in 1955) to the present? Would he be astounded by the capabilities of a smartphone?

What new technology would you most like to see introduced this year? This was a question a web app asked my friend's wife. Because she currently has two retirement homes, one in Idaho and one in Arizona, she said what she wanted most was a transporter.

No matter how much tech we have, we still have science fiction, which can drive our desires for more and direct our innovation. For example, everyone has seen Star Trek and its transporter device, a means to "beam" people and materials from one place to another in almost an instant. My friend and his wife have traveled between their homes many times in the last year, so it was understandable that she would like a way to make that trip more quickly.

The Star Trek transporter is generally portrayed as a circular pad connected to a device or console on the floor. A person on the pad is scanned atomically and then de-materialized, with the data representing their physical manifestation sent to a remote location and re-materialized. Matter, to energy, and back to matter. That seems like it could be in the realm of science and not magic, at least for non-living things. If we can have a 3D printer today using elemental materials, who is to say we couldn't one day print in atomic particles, creating atoms and molecules of any kind?

That is likely the science behind the Star Trek replicator, the cousin of the transporter. It can create inanimate objects of great complexity from a data file, with energy as the only apparent input. From "tea, Earl Grey, hot" to complex parts, the replicator could help feed our world and solve many problems, as long as you could solve the problem of where to plug it in. Of course, Star Trek tech would have to include a powerful green power source like a fusion reactor.

We are starting to take some steps toward the food replicator concept. For example, I've read about a company trying to "grow" animal tissue that can be 3D printed into burgers or steaks. This would provide "cruelty-free" meat that perhaps requires fewer resources than our current agricultural methods.

The Star Trek replicator only made food and parts; it seemed incapable of creating a living object, making it more plausible. Many people, myself included, have concerns about the apparent "destroy, then re-create" operation of the transporter in Star Trek. There were a few episodes in which a character's information was trapped in the device's "pattern buffer" (presumably memory) for years or decades before someone found a way to re-materialize them. In one episode, a transporter malfunction created a second instance of a character. This would have obvious religious implications in the real world, but apparently not in Star Trek.

My preference for quick and distant travel would be by stargate, from the movie "Stargate" and its derivative TV series. In this sci-fi franchise, stargates are devices created by ancient aliens that can connect with a wormhole (a "tunnel" through spacetime). Anything passing into a connected stargate

instantly passes through the wormhole and out the stargate at the other end. These seem more supported by science than transporters; now, we need to find those aliens to show us how to build them. Perhaps those aliens in the movie "Contact" could help. If only they'd send us the plans.

My favorite "wish-for" tech device is something I've not specifically seen in any science fiction: the temporal cakebox. My concoction solves one of my most vexing problems: how to fully enjoy my favorite food - chocolate cake. We live in a time of food plenty, with a nice chocolate cake available at Costco for a good price. I'm too thrifty to want to pay for cake by the slice, but I can't (and should not) consume a whole cake in the time before it degrades. So what I need is a temporal cakebox.

I envision the temporal cakebox as a device similar to a large microwave oven. When you buy a cake, you would take a slice, put the remaining cake in the temporal cakebox, close the door and activate it by pressing the Reset button. Later (hopefully at least a day or two), you can return to the temporal cakebox and press the Return button. This would return the inside of the device to the time when you last pressed the Reset button. Then, you could open the cakebox door, remove another slice (just as fresh as when you put the cake in), close the door, and press Reset again. This sequence can be repeated over any timeframe until the cake is gone, with the last slice just as good as the first. Since I'm not violating any laws on the conservation of matter (I'm not creating any cake, just doling it out over spacetime) or making any time travel paradoxes (no cake is going back in time to kill my grandfather), I don't see why the temporal cakebox can't work.

The stereotypically expected technology always involves a flying car. Don't you remember thinking as a child that we would have flying cars by the 21st century? We are almost a quarter of the way through it, and still no flying cars. I can't see that we could have flying cars for the masses unless they were self-flying. Since we can't seem to perfect self-driving in two dimensions, flying cars seem like a long way off.

Another slightly related tech item is the personal jetpack. Those appear to be available (as well as wingsuits), though they are relatively expensive, in the $250k to $500k range. Finally, the personal drone is affordable, though I've yet to see any Amazon delivery drones in my neighborhood.

AI, or artificial intelligence, is being worked on today. It may one day drive our cars, fly our planes, find a solution for global warming or rule us as a benevolent overlord. Right now, all an AI can do is win at Jeopardy and predict what we will buy next. It has been eleven years since the IBM Watson computer beat Ken Jennings on Jeopardy; what has it been doing since then? At least Watson is not trying to invade Ukraine. Or is it? [see the article "Watson Sold Off for Parts" at" https://slate.com/technology/2022/01/ibm-watson-health-failure-artificial-intelligence.htmeditor]

If AI could be made safe and effective, one good use for it would be as a robot helper. Having a few droids around the house to help out would be great. Oh, wait! My wife has a Roomba robot vacuum, though she hardly uses it. So, I guess it is no R2-D2 or C-3PO.🖥️

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 **Accord, 1515 Energy Park Drive** for **General Meetings**:
From I-94 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go north on Snelling Avenue about one mile to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.
From I-694 or Hwy 36 in St. Paul, take the Snelling Avenue exit, then go south on Snelling Avenue past Como Avenue to Energy Park Drive. Take Energy Park Drive and take the first left into the driveway to 1515 Energy Park Drive.

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

Meetings start at 7:00 PM (9:00 AM on Saturday) unless otherwise noted. *Virtual Meetings during Covid pandemic.*

	SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
March				1	2	3	4
	5	6	7	8	9	10	11 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
	12	13	14 7pm General Mtg CES 2023 6pm Tech Topics	15	16	17	18 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
	19	20	21	22	23	24	25
	26	27	28	29	30	31	1
April	2	3	4	5	6	7	8 Linux on Saturday SIG 9am—Noon
	9	10	11 7pm General Mtg TBA 6pm Tech Topics	12	13	14	15 MS Office SIG (includes Access) 9am—Noon
	16	17	18	19	20	21	22
	23	24	25	26	27	28	29
	30						

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.)
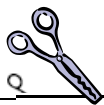
3/23

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

I'm signing up for:

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❍ 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:

Administrative Use Only   Rec'd_____ Chk#_____

March 14, 2023
7:00 pm

General Meeting

CES 2023:
Virtual Visits

Via Zoom Only

341 County Rd C2 W
Roseville, MN 55113

FIRST CLASS MAIL