

***THE
GIGABYTE
GAZETTE***

The Monthly Newsletter
of the
***SUN CITY SUMMERLIN
COMPUTER CLUB***

<https://www.scscclub.com>

September, 2021

Table of Contents

President’s Message	3
General Membership Meeting	4
September 2021 Printable Calendars	5
SCSCC Board of Directors Actions	5
Submissions Welcome	5
Welcome New Members	5
Special Interest Groups and Kaffee Klatches	6
Seminar Offerings	8
Tom’s Tech-Notes	9
Kretchmar’s Korner	13
APCUG Guest Article	16
Lab Monitor Schedule	19

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Jeff Wilkinson	Dorothy Fitch



President's Message

Some Useful Technology

by Jeff Wilkinson

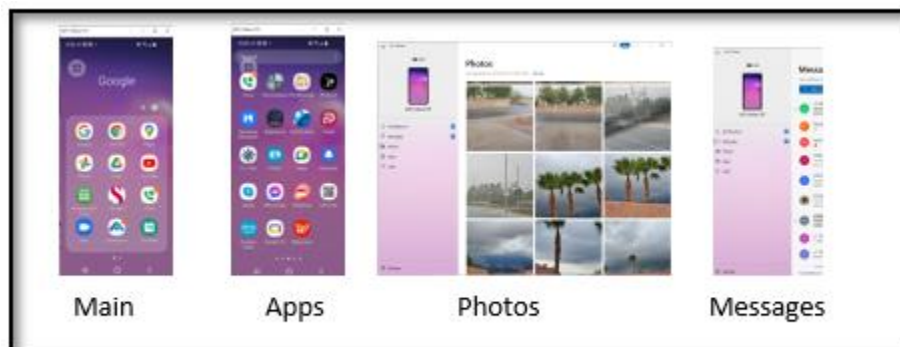
I recently decided to put music on our patio for an upcoming party. While we do have an intercom station on the patio, the sound was not acceptable for music. So, I decided to upgrade. I investigated various methods, from wired extension speakers for my existing stereo, multiple Amazon Echo's, and a few other complex or pricey solutions. Since I had recently "ripped" a whole series of my favorite music CD's and loaded them on a Plex server along with a number of downloaded music selections, I wanted access to that growing music collection. In addition, I had compiled multiple playlists for use in different situations, party, easy listening, smooth jazz, 60's music, etc.

A sale on the Echo Smart Speaker, 4th generation, prompted my purchase of two with the intention of using the multi-room music feature to sync them together. I could locate them on the patio since I had conveniently placed electrical outlets available. The Echo Smart Speakers sounded good and were perfectly acceptable for a party with multiple conversations and ambient noise. I placed the Echo Smart Speakers on the patio, and they worked fairly well, although there appeared to be some syncing problems.

About that time, I came across a BOGO (Buy One Get One) offer for Santana Samba 20-watt wireless speakers and thought I would give them a try. I was totally surprised at their performance. The sound was excellent, the pairing via Bluetooth to a single Echo Smart Speaker was easy and I was able to pair the two speakers together for excellent sound given their small size. With my new configuration I was able to play music from my Plex server with a simple command to Alexa: "Ask Plex to play ..." virtually any song title, artist or playlist in my growing collection. I can also access Sirius radio and Amazon music, offering me a wide choice of streaming music.



The example above shows a practical use of some of the amazing technology we have available to us today. Here's another ... I recently started making use of a Windows 10 feature, "Your Phone". With a little setup and configuration, you can mirror your Android or iOS smartphone to your PC screen. With this app installed on your phone you can manipulate your phone via your PC keyboard, open and run phone apps, view your picture gallery, virtually anything you could do on the phone! I find it much easier to type and send a text message from the PC keyboard!



Windows 10 monitor view of **Your Phone** app

While many of us didn't grow up immersed in technology, much of it is very useful and can add a new dimension to everyday tasks. Your computer club strives to help users explore existing features and introduce new technology to our members.

Jeff Wilkinson, President
(702) 527-4056 pres.scsc@gmail.com

General Membership Meeting

Our next General Meeting will be held at **2 PM on Thursday, September 2nd via Zoom**. The meeting link can be found on the Computer Club home page at <https://www.scsc.club>. Our speaker will be **Corey Enus, from the Las Vegas Valley Water District**, who will provide the latest drought update, clarify some common misconceptions around water use and dive into new efforts being made to help our community conserve this precious resource.

For Club information: go to www.scsc.club, contact Jeff Wilkinson, President at (702) 527-4056 or email him at pres.scsc@gmail.com.

September 2021 Printable Calendars

To view this month's classroom and lab calendars, click the following hyperlink:

http://www.scscclab.com/Calendars/scscclab_calendar_2021-09Sep.pdf

SCSCC Board of Directors Actions

The Computer Club Board of Directors took the following actions on August 11, 2021

Cuck Wolff made a motion that the **minutes of the June 9, 2021 Board Meeting be approved as submitted**. The motion was seconded by Howard Verne and unanimously approved by the Board.

George Lobue made a **motion** that the meeting adjourn. Chuck Hagen **seconded** the motion, and it was unanimously **approved** by the Board. The meeting was adjourned at 9:55 AM.

Submissions Welcome

We are always looking for new information to share with our club members. If you have computer or technical information you would like to share with members of the club, send your articles to editor **Tom Burt** at tomburt89134@cox.net. Thank you to everyone for your contributions.

Welcome New Members

The following new members have joined the Computer Club from July 28th to August 28th.

Betty Crawford
Loretta Donnolo
Barbara Holmes

Twillia McGlone
Mike Rynas

As of August 28th, the club has 568 paid memberships for 2021.

As of December 31, 2020, the club had 614 paid memberships.

Special Interest Groups and Kaffee Klatches

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) provide a forum for general discussion on a specific computer related subject. Admission to all SIGs is on a first-come, first-seated basis and is subject to the maximum allowed by fire code regulations. <W>, <L>, <M> or <H> indicate whether a SIG would be of interest to a Windows, Linux, MacOS or Hand-held Device user.

Apple Q&A One on One Help <M/H> *Live in the Classroom* *Advance Reservations Required!*

Gail Weiss (702-355-6220)

Saturday September 18th, 9 a.m. to noon

Bring your Apple iPhone, iPad, Watch or MacBook to get one on one help with your questions about how to use any Apple device and popular iOS or MacOS apps.

Repair SIG <W/L/M> *Live in the Classroom*

Chuck Wolff (702-233-6634) and Chuck Hagen (702-418-2614)

Every Tuesday, 12:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

The Repair Lab provides **CLUB MEMBERS ONLY** with no-cost assistance for those having upgrades and / or hardware and software problems with their computers. Bring in only your PC tower, your Mac or your laptop and your problems. Our TECH team will give you our best effort. ***Be sure to mark your cables so you can re-connect when you get home.***

Internet Investing <W/M/H> *via Zoom*

Tom Burt (702-341-7095)

3rd Thursday, 9:00 a.m. in even months

Next meeting: October 21st

The Internet Investing SIG provides a forum for members interested in using Internet resources for researching and managing investments to meet, discuss, and learn more about the topic. The SIG's target audience is members with intermediate computer skills and investment experience, but all members are welcome.

Kaffee Klatch <W/M/H> via Zoom

Jeff Wilkinson (702-527-4056)

Every Tuesday, 8:30 a.m.

This Kaffee Klatch is an open, free-form discussion group for all users, from beginning to advanced. KK discussions are not restricted to any one subject, computer platform or computer-knowledge level but should be computer or technology related. We will try to answer your questions, help you keep your systems updated and provide some useful “tips and tricks.”

Windows 10 SIG Live in the Classroom

Bill Wilkinson (702-233-4977)

First and Third Saturdays at 9:30 a.m.

Suspended (DARK) in September due to COVID restrictions.

If you are a novice or near-beginner computer user, or if you just want some refresher information together with a refreshing cup of coffee, then jump-start or recharge your computing knowledge by attending these Win 10 SIG / Q&A sessions. At each session, attendees will explore several topics of interest to beginners and near-beginners. The topics are always announced a couple of days in advance via e-mail to SCSCC members who have subscribed to the club’s SCSCCNews mailing list. Each topic is presented in a step-by-step manner and is supported by “how to” notes that can be easily and conveniently downloaded from the SCSCCBKK.org web page. Following each “up front” presentation of one or more topics (approximately 60 minutes in duration), an informal open-ended Question and Answer period takes place for those who wish to participate, listen, reflect, or inquire.

Seminar Offerings

The club's Seminars, SIGs, Q&As and Kaffee Klatches are being conducted either as Zoom webcasts, live in-person or a hybrid of the two. Check the weekly calendar on the website to see which mode the session is using. Unless explicitly stated, advance registration is not required for Seminar sessions.



How to Take Better Pictures with Your Smart Phone

Wednesday, September 15 at 1 PM

Presenter: Mary Miles

Location: Zoom Webcast

Mary will review tips and techniques to assure you take better pictures when using your smart phone's camera. She'll also review lenses that you can buy to enhance the optics of your smart phone's built-in camera lens.



Windows 11 – An Early Look

Wednesday, September 29th 9:30 AM – 11:00 AM *via Zoom*

Presenter: Tom Burt

Location: Zoom Webcast

In late July, Microsoft announced that they are planning to release a major update to Windows 10 and are calling it Windows 11. The announcement was made via a streaming webcast.

This 1½ hour seminar will feature a tour of a preview release of Windows 11 and will demonstrate what's new or changed. Notable changes are in the Start menu and in the Settings interface, but there are many subtle changes as well. We'll also allow plenty of time for your questions.

All members are welcome. The presentation notes will be available about September 25th at: <https://www.scscclb.club/smnr>.



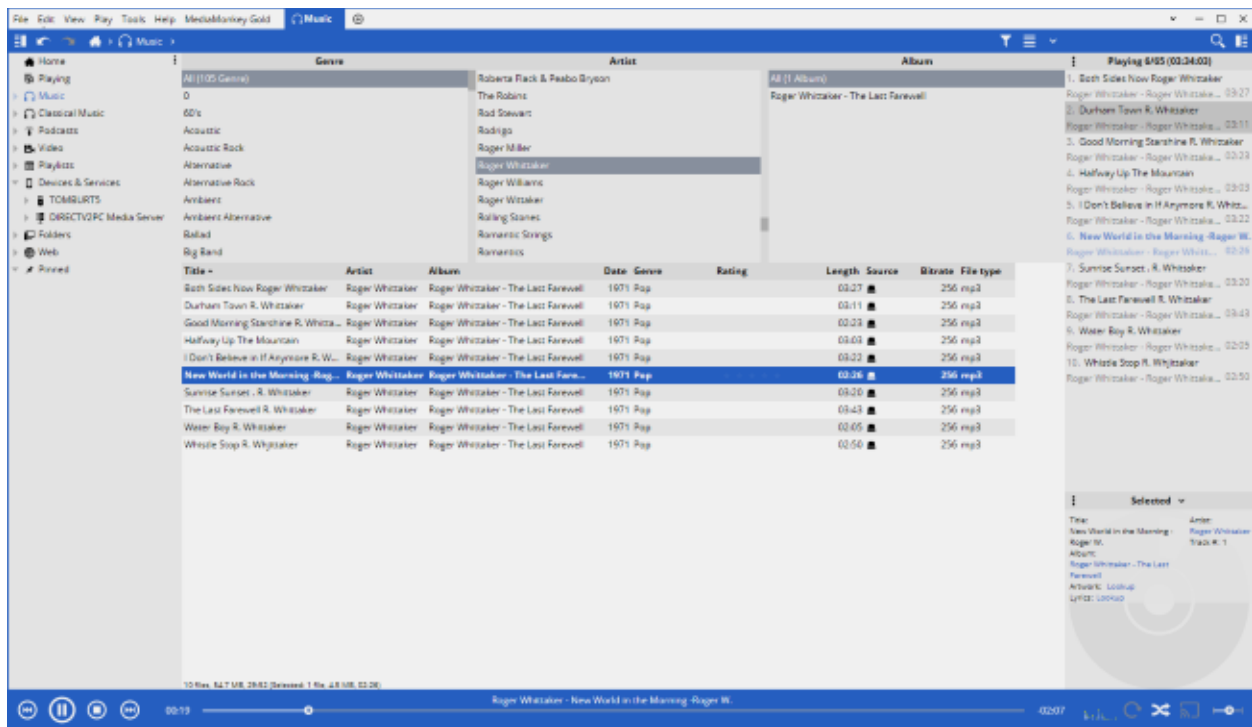
Tom's Tech-Notes

Ripping Audio CDs Using MediaMonkey 5

I first wrote about the MediaMonkey 4 media player/manager tool in October 2019. At that time, I was interested in MediaMonkey as a replacement for Apple's iTunes media player and found it to be very capable, plus it had a free version that did everything I was looking for.

Recently the MediaMonkey developers released an upgrade to version 5. Also, for Father's Day, 2021, one of my sons sent me a box set of the Complete Albums Collection of Simon & Garfunkel. I decided to "rip" all 12 CDs to convert them to music files in my music collection. To achieve the maximum sound fidelity, I decided to convert all the CD tracks to the open-source FLAC (Free Lossless Audio Codec) format. The output FLAC files are fairly large compared to the MP3 format but should sound *identical* to the original CD tracks. iTunes has no support for the FLAC format, so I again turned to MediaMonkey.

First, for those who may have missed my October 2019 column, here's a screen shot of the MediaMonkey 5 main screen.



MediaMonkey 5 Main Screen

MediaMonkey's main screen (Music View) can be configured to be very similar to that in iTunes. It features a 3-column hierarchical browser (Genre, Artist, Album) that can be used to filter a list of song titles displayed in a table pane below the browser columns. Along the bottom are controls for playing, pausing and skipping, a progress bar with time played and time

remaining and some buttons for special features like shuffle and enabling the equalizer. The left-hand pane allows choosing between major views, including Playlists. The right-hand pane displays a list of the songs queued up for playing. At the lower right is a small pane with the detailed information about the current song that's playing.

Along the top are a menu bar and a toolbar that together provide a rich set of functions for setting options, importing tracks into the song library, building playlists, ripping CDs, burning discs, converting file formats and syncing to external devices.

Importing Existing Music Files

When first launched, MediaMonkey offers to import your music files into its music library. You can specify which folder(s) it should scan. MediaMonkey reads each music file in the designated tree of folders and extracts the ID1 and ID2 tag information into fields in its library database. It imported my 6000 file (22 GB) collection in about five minutes. Each record in the library database points back to the actual path\filename of the music file.

You can use the File menu to add additional music files to the library. You can also have MediaMonkey rescan previously indexed folders to update the music index. This might come into play if you used another program like iTunes to update tag information.

PlayLists

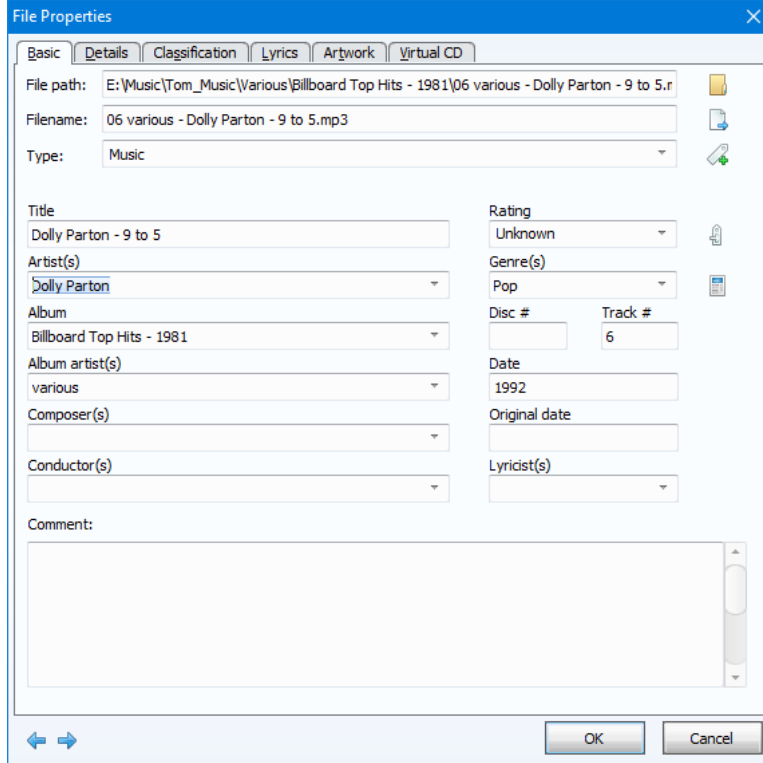
A playlist is a named ordered list of music files, typically a subset of your entire collection. Examples might be "My top 100" or "Favorite Instrumentals" or "Christmas Music" or "Party Mix". In MediaMonkey, you can start a new playlist by right-clicking on the Playlists item in the left-hand (View) pane, and then clicking New Playlist. A small dialog will open asking for the name of the new playlist. Type in a name and then click OK. Your new playlist will appear in the listing under the Playlists item.

To add tracks to a playlist, go to the Music view, leaving the Playlists item open, so that the individual playlists are visible. Select one or more music files and then drag the selection onto the name of your new playlist. Repeat for all the music files you want added to the playlist.

Under the Playlists view item, click to select your new playlist and all the song files it contains will be shown in the file list pane. To play a music file, just double click it. You can also turn on the shuffle mode to randomly play the tracks in your playlist. To change the play order, select any track in the main list pane and drag it up or down in the list.

You can right click on a playlist and choose "Send to" which offers various options including "Burn to CD/DVD" and "Copy to Folder". Either of these will copy the music files in the playlist to the specified target. "Copy to Folder" can be used to copy a playlist to a flash drive for playing in your car's entertainment center or taking to a party.

Editing Music File Information



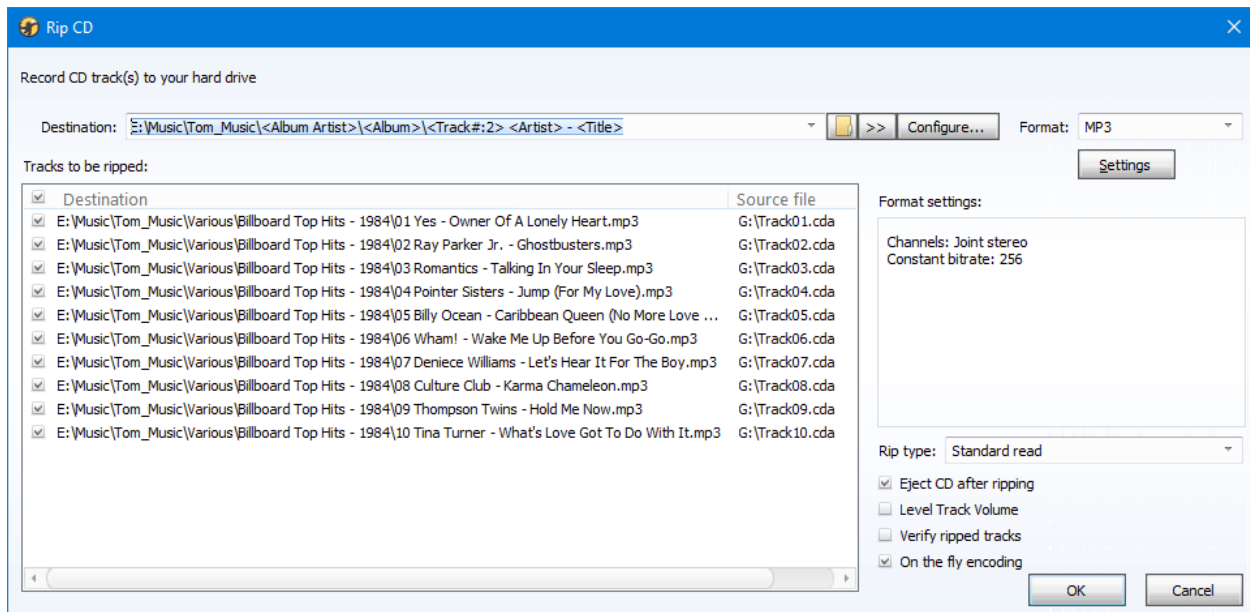
To modify the tag information for a music file, right-click it in the file list pane and then select Properties. An editor dialog will display with fields that you can edit. Change the field values to suit and then click OK to save the results.

You can also select multiple files, right click the selection and choose Properties. In this mode you can edit properties that would be common to the selected set.

Ripping Audio CDs

A common way to add to your digital music collection is to convert audio CDs you own or borrow to individual digital music files on your PC's hard drive. This process is known as **ripping**. MediaMonkey makes ripping very easy. With MediaMonkey running, insert an audio CD into your PC's CD/DVD drive. In MediaMonkey click your CD/DVD drive in the left-hand (view) pane and then click the Rip Audio CD button in the toolbar. A CD Ripping dialog (see below) will appear, listing the tracks on the CD with the song titles, the folder to which the ripped music files will be written and the file name layout.

The track information displayed is looked up in the Internet FreeDB database, which is a comprehensive listing of every commercial audio CD produced by the music industry. Take a few moments to configure the various settings. Click the Configure button to set the destination folder into which the ripped music files will be copied and the format for the file names. I like the folder hierarchy to be Album Artist > Album Name. I like the output file name to be Artist – Song name. The file extension depends on the output format you choose, such as MP3, FLAC or OGG.



MediaMonkey Rip Audio CD Dialog

Also click the Settings button to choose the sampling bit rate and other values for the selected format. Usually, I choose MP3 format, Constant Bit Rate, 256 kilobits. This is the same as what most commercial digital music is now encoded to. For my Simon & Garfunkel project, I chose the FLAC format and left other Settings values at their defaults. Once set, your settings will be remembered for future CD rips.

Finally, click the OK button and MediaMonkey will read each audio track from the CD and convert it to a music file in the selected format, stored in the specified folder with the specified file name. For each ripped file, the music library database will have a record added pointing to the song file, with all the tag information (Artist, Album, Genre, Title, Year, Play Time, etc.) Typically, it takes 2 to 3 minutes to rip an entire audio CD.

Results

The FLAC files ripped by MediaMonkey sounded extremely good when played by MediaMonkey and by Windows 10's built-in Groove music player. As an experiment, I had also ripped one album to MP3 format using the maximum sample rate of 320 Kbits/sec; I wanted to compare the sound quality and file sizes between FLAC and MP3-320.

As an example, from Simon & Garfunkel's "Concert in Central Park" album, for the track "Late in the Evening" (time 4:07), I got the following file sizes (including a prior rip to MP3 at 256 Kbits sampling): **FLAC: 25.9 Mbytes** **MP3-320: 9.7 Mbytes** **MP3-256: 7.8 Mbytes**

In MediaMonkey, the FLAC file sounded sharper and brighter than the MP3-320, but the difference was quite small. I also tried playing the MP3-320 track in iTunes and it didn't sound as clear. It appears MediaMonkey's music player is better at reproducing sound than iTunes.

That's all I have space for. MediaMonkey seems to be a great alternative to iTunes and it's free. Give it a try!



Kretchmar's Korner

The Sunk Cost Fallacy

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician

Updated from December 2018

In 2017, Richard Thaler, a professor at the University of Chicago, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Economic Sciences for his contributions to behavioral economics.



One of Thaler's main themes is that market-based economic models are incomplete; he is quoted as saying, "conventional economics assumes that people are highly-rational —super-rational— and unemotional; they can calculate like a computer and have no self-control problems. In reality, we all are susceptible to a wide array of routine biases that can lead to an equally wide

array of embarrassing blunders in education, personal finance, health care, mortgages and credit cards, happiness, and even the planet itself."

One of the biggest factors that cause humans to make irrational decisions is known as the Sunk Cost Fallacy.

A **sunk cost** is any cost that has already been paid and cannot be recovered. The sunk cost fallacy reasoning states that further investments or commitments are justified because the resources already invested will be lost otherwise. Therefore, the sunk cost fallacy is a mistake in reasoning in which the sunk costs of an activity are considered when deciding whether to continue with the activity. This is also known as "throwing good money after bad."

The sunk cost mistake is often made for the worst possible reasons. People hate to admit that they have made a mistake and will go to great lengths to avoid that admission, even when they have ample evidence that not admitting a mistake will lead to even greater losses. Politicians, highly paid corporation executives, and others in the public eye do not like to admit they made poor decisions.

The Concorde Fallacy



The Concorde fallacy has routinely been cited as a perfect example of the sunk cost fallacy. The Concorde fallacy refers to the fact that both the British and French governments continued funding the project even as they knew there was no economic case for the aircraft. They knew it was a commercial and environmental disaster, but political decisions made it impossible for either government to pull out.

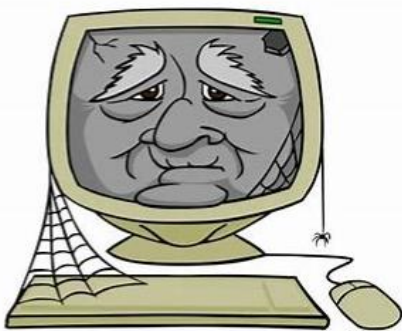
I don't feel this example is cut and dried because of other factors such as possible harm to Anglo- French relations, the loss of tens of thousands of jobs when the world's economy was weak, and consideration of "national pride". What appears to be a perfect example of the sunken cost fallacy today in retrospect looked very different in 1972.

Other Examples

On a much smaller personal scale have you ever over-eaten at a buffet, even if the food was not very good, because you had already paid for "all you can eat"? Have you seen someone refuse to quit a slot machine because of all of the money they had already "invested" in it? Have you held on to an investment for much longer than you originally intended because you were reluctant to sell at a loss? All are examples sunk costs and the false belief that non-recoverable expenditures have some value, leading to poor decisions.

The Old Computer

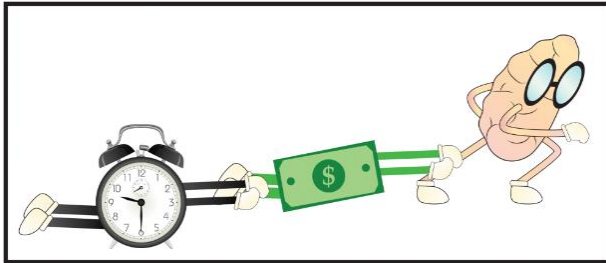
In our everyday lives the all too human tendency to place a value on something that has no value often leads to poor decision. Some individuals are using computers well beyond their expected useful life, which is about six years. Some computers, especially if they were originally above average systems, can provide good service for well over 6 years. However, time takes its toll on electronics just like it does on people. Computers tend to get slower with age, and with age computer users will get more and more "Not responding" popups and other annoyances.



Rather than replace a computer it is amazing how much slowness and other problems some users will endure. After a computer reaches a certain age, even major upgrades, like replacing a mechanical hard drive with an SSD, will only delay the inevitable. Even after installing a new SSD the system's other components are still old and nearing the end of their life. The wise course is for the user to bite the bullet and buy an adequate new computer.

Conclusions

Any time you allow the sunk cost fallacy to influence decisions, you're actually going to make it harder and harder on yourself to let go in the future. Essentially, falling victim to sunk cost bias not only means you're making a poor decision now, but increases the chance you'll continue to make a bad decision in the future because at that point you'll be even more invested.



Are you spending time or money on something because of the time or money you already have invested? If so, I urge you to step back from what you're doing, and evaluate the situation logically by asking yourself, "Is this the best use of my time, or money at the present moment?"

This is a bigger problem than many of us realize, and it's negatively impacting our lives. Sunk cost fallacy leads to poor decisions, which leads to suboptimal results, which leads to decreased long term happiness.

APCUG Guest Article

QR Codes: What They Are and How to Use Them

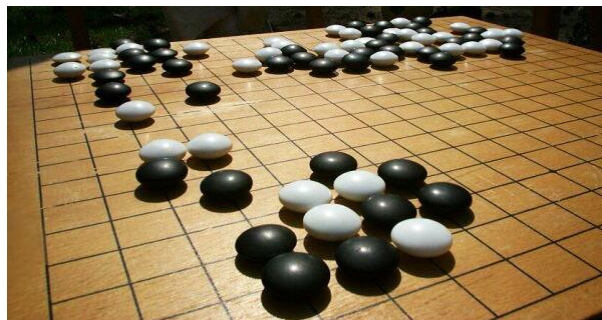
By Dorothy Fitch, Editor, GVR Computer Club, AZ
February 2021 issue, Green Bytes
<https://www.ccgvas.org/> dmfitch (at) cox.net

QR codes are popping up more and more frequently these days, and I began to wonder what they were all about. So, I did some investigating and tried creating and using them. It was a lot easier than I had expected and rather entertaining.

What is a QR code?

Like barcodes on items at supermarkets, a QR code (short for Quick Response) is a two-dimensional way to store a lot of information. Known as a matrix barcode, the QR code was first designed in 1994 in Japan by [Denso Wave](#), a subsidiary of Toyota Motor Corporation. Its goal was to "increase the efficiency in product tracking, item identification, time tracking, document management, and general marketing.... Because a QR code carries information in both vertical and horizontal directions, it can store several hundred times the amount of data carried by a bar code. In fact, over 7,000 numeric characters can be encoded in one QR code." [Read more.](#)

The QR code's design was inspired by Go, an ancient Japanese strategy game that uses black and white stones in a grid. Masahiro Hara, the person assigned to develop a solution for Denso Wave, [had his "aha" breakthrough](#) while playing Go during a lunch break. This led to the invention of the QR code.



Go board with black and white stones that are placed on a grid.
(image from commons.wikimedia.org, a great source for free photos)

A QR code can link to a website, share contact information, send a text message, make a phone call, open a restaurant menu, allow you to check in for an appointment, play a video, and much more.

I created QR codes to link to specific websites that would be difficult to enter on a phone. By scanning the QR codes, you can immediately open the associated web pages. Try them out!

How to scan a QR code:

On an iPhone, use the built-in camera, which can automatically read QR codes. [Read 'Scan a QR Code with your iPhone, iPad, iPod touch' at Apple Support.](#)

On an Android phone, there are several ways to scan a QR code, depending on your specific model. There are many free apps available in the Google Play store that can scan QR codes, but you may not need one. The camera in newer versions of Android (10 and up) can scan them automatically. To check, try this: point the camera at a QR code and hold for a few seconds. If the camera doesn't scan it, long-press the "Home" button, then press the Google Lens icon (shown below), just to the left of the microphone icon at the bottom of the screen. Tap the shutter button to search for its meaning. You should see the URL for the website and link directly to it. I also found I could easily use a free QR code scanner without installing the app. Swipe down from the top of the phone and click the Search (question mark) icon to get to the Finder Search. Type QR, then locate and click the QR Scanner icon. Once it scans the code, press OPEN to follow the link. [Read more about how to scan QR codes on an Android phone.](#)



Google Lens icon, referenced above

How to create a QR code:

I created the QR codes using this free website: goqr.me. All I had to do was type in the web address I wanted the code to take me to; it automatically generated the QR code, which I could then download. Try scanning these QR codes and see where they take you.



What's special about February 8?



Read a good classic book!

In addition to using QR codes to link to websites, you can also create ones that store text: not SMS text messages, but plain text, as in a birthday message or poem.



Can you read this fun limerick?

I've cheated a bit in this article. For those who prefer not to attempt to scan the QR codes, you can just click each image above to access its content. Usually, QR codes are printed, and you couldn't do that!

Here's a challenge for you, though ... create a QR code and email it to a teenager. They will think you are so cool, knowing about QR codes!

Lab Monitor Schedule

The Open Lab session is held once per week: 9 am to noon on Saturdays.

September	Monitor Schedule
Jeff Southwell Linda McMullin	Saturday 9/4/2021
Fred Cohen	Saturday 9/11/2021
John Zuzich	Saturday 9/18/2021
Kathy Kirby	Saturday 9/25/2021