

***THE
GIGABYTE
GAZETTE***

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

<https://www.scscclub.com>

July, 2022

Table of Contents

President’s Message.....	3
General Membership Meeting	4
SCSCC Board of Directors Actions	4
July 2022 Printable Calendars	4
Submissions Welcome	5
Welcome New Members	5
Special Interest Groups and Kaffee Klatches	6
Seminar and Q&A Offerings.....	8
Tom’s Tech-Notes	9
Kretchmar’s Korner.....	14
APCUG Guest Article	17
Lab Monitor Schedule.....	20

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President's Message

Summer Update

by Jeff Wilkinson

As usual, our Monthly General Meetings will be dark during July and August although our lab and classroom will remain active. Consult the [club website](#) home page for the schedule of events which is updated weekly.

Our Monthly General Meetings will resume **Thursday, September 1 at 2 PM**, location to be announced. We are planning an in-person meeting where we can reacquaint ourselves with our fellow members, enjoy some light refreshments and view a presentation on "Cutting the Cord, UPDATE".

In October we will have Corey Enus from the Las Vegas Valley Water District (LVVWD) as our speaker. This timely update should be popular, so remember the date, **Thursday, October 6 at 2 PM**.

See you in September!

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

General Membership Meeting

There will be no General Meetings in July and August.

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

SCSCC Board of Directors Actions

The Computer Club Board of Directors took the following actions on June 8, 2022

Howard Verne made a motion that the **minutes of the May 11, 2022 Board Meeting be approved as submitted**. The motion was seconded by Chuck Hagen and unanimously approved by the Board.

Tom Burt made a motion that the 2022 budget be amended to add \$360 to the Internet Services account to reflect the cost of HostGator web hosting services for 3 years (2022 to 2025). The motion was seconded by Jeff Wilkinson and unanimously approved by the Board.

Howard Verne 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 9:54 AM.

July 2022 Printable Calendars

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

https://www.scscclub.com/Calendars/scscclub_calendar_2022-07Jul.pdf

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 2022 members have joined the Computer Club
from May 27th to June 28th.

Judith Bernstein
Janice Manno
Gina Morrison

Jeanne Parker
Sharon Pritchard

As of June 28th, the club has 478 paid memberships for 2022.

As of December 31, 2021, the club had 618 paid memberships for 2021.
Of those, 17 were new memberships for 2022.

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 iPhone / iPad Lab <M/H> *Live in the Classroom*

Zane Clark 702-332-5747

First Wednesday, 9 a.m. monthly

Next meeting: Wednesday, July 6

The lab sessions will be the usual format, one-on-one help with your questions. Come anytime, leave anytime.

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. monthly

Next meeting: Thursday, July 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. DARK in July

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 and Q&A 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.



Burner Phones

Wednesday, July 20th at 1 PM

Presenter: Mary Miles

Location Zoom Webcast

Mary will discuss some interesting points about the use of burner (throwaway) cell phones.



Introduction to Microsoft Excel

Thursday, July 28th 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM via Zoom

Presenter: Tom Burt

Location: Zoom Webcast

This 1½-hour class will introduce you to some of the features of the Microsoft Excel spreadsheet program. We'll be using Excel 365/2019, but this material also applies to Excel 2010, 2013 and 2016 and Libre Office Calc.

You will learn the basic terminology of Excel spreadsheets and workbooks, how to set up a simple spreadsheet, how to enter data into a sheet, how to create and work with formulas and how to save a workbook.

After getting our feet on the ground, we will also cover three example applications: "Home Financial Analysis", "Contact List" and "Outliving Your Money?". We'll also save time for your specific MS Excel questions.

Look for the presentation notes and example spreadsheets about July 22nd at <https://www.scscclub.com/smnr>

This session will be recorded and posted to the club's website.



Tom's Tech-Notes

Customizing Your Windows 11 Desktop

Introduction

Windows 11 usage is steadily increasing as more users upgrade from Windows 10 or buy a new PC with Windows 11 pre-installed. This article will offer a few configuration options for making the Windows 11 desktop more to your individual liking. We'll touch on a variety of settings, mostly in the Personalization area.

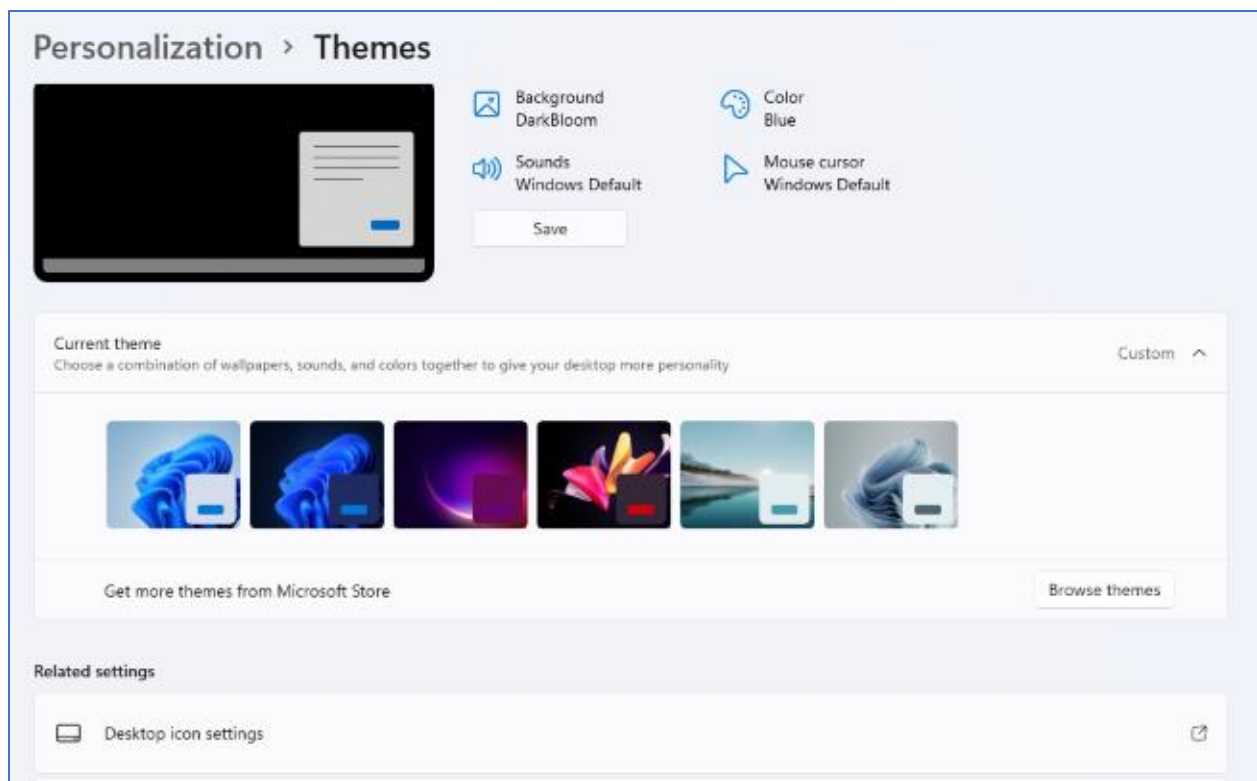


Tom Burt's Windows 11 Desktop

Choosing a Theme

The default theme is "Windows Light". PCs from commercial vendors like HP, Lenovo or Dell may have customized this. Click the "Settings" gear icon on the Start menu and then choose Personalization > Themes. The Themes settings screen will display (screen shot below).

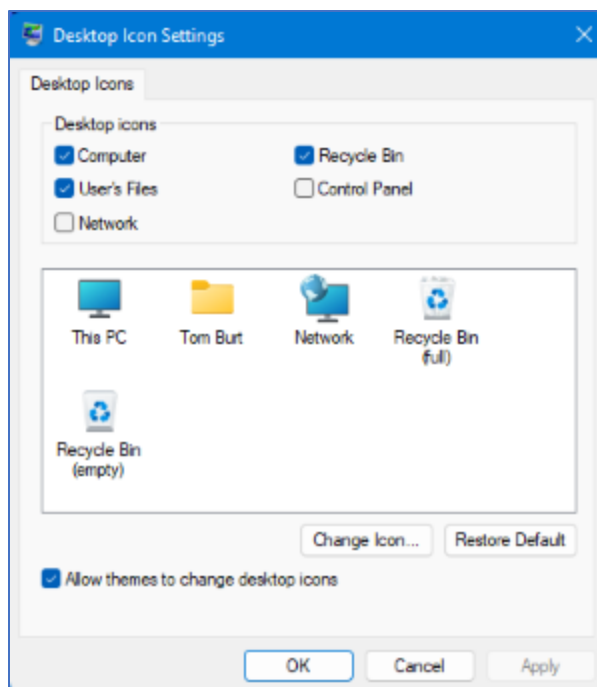
It shows your current theme along with any customizations. Note that a Theme includes colors, images, sounds and mouse cursor settings. When you have adjusted all the related settings, you can Save those settings as a named custom Theme.



Themes Settings

Windows 11 offers six default Themes. Hover the mouse over each to see the name and behavior. Some Themes rotate between several background images. I decided to keep the default “Windows Light” theme and then customize it.

Choosing Desktop Icons



On the main Themes settings, under “Related settings”, is a link for “Desktop icon settings”. Click this to bring up the dialog to the left.

You can click the check boxes to specify which icons you want to appear on your desktop.

The central panel shows how each icon will appear. You can select an icon and then click the “Change Icon” button to bring up an icon chooser dialog. You can click the “Restore Default” button to revert an icon back to the Windows default.

Unchecking the “Allow themes to change desktop icons” checkbox will retain your desktop icon settings if you decide to change to a different theme.

Choosing a Desktop Background

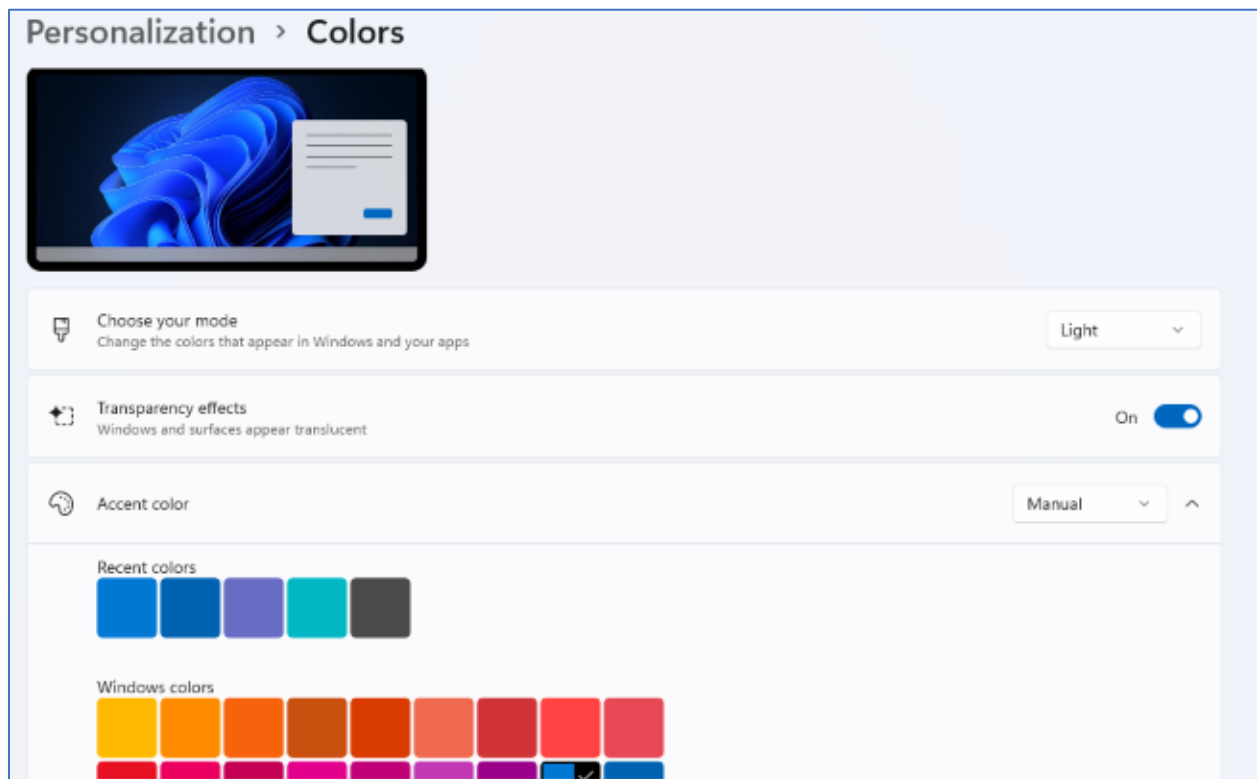
My next Desktop customization was to select a different background wallpaper. I liked the blue bloom but preferred it on the dark background used in the “Windows Dark” Theme. I Googled for the location of the images for Windows 11 themes and found the blue bloom on a dark background in **C:\Windows\Web\Wallpaper\Windows**, named “img19.jpg”.

I copied this image to my **Photos\Saved Pictures** folder and renamed it to: “DarkBloom.jpg”. I then went to Settings > Personalization > Background and set the dropdown to “Picture” and clicked the “Browse photos” button. I browsed to Pictures\Saved Pictures and selected my DarkBloom.jpg image. That set my background to the desired Dark Bloom.

You can set the Desktop background to a solid color, a single image or a rotating slide show. Knock yourself out!

Choosing Colors

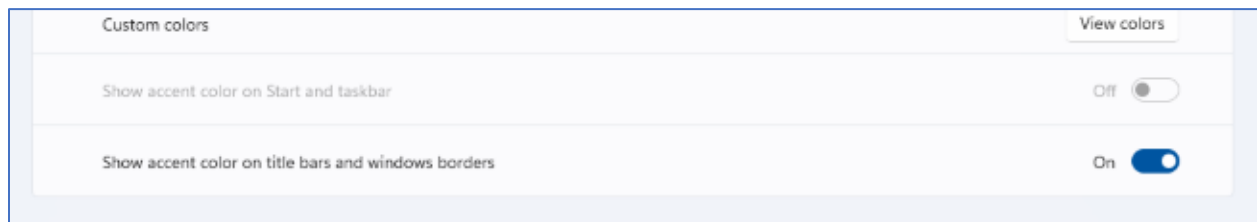
My next Desktop customization was to change some of the color settings. I went to Settings > Personalization > Colors. This opened the screen partially shown below.



Colors Settings

I left the Mode (Light) and “Transparency effects” setting (On) as they were. I set the Accent color mode to Manual and then chose a medium blue from the palette. I could have created a custom color if I didn’t like any of the palette’s colors.

Next, I scrolled further down until I could see a slider button for “Show accent color on title bars and windows borders”. I clicked to turn this On.



More Colors Settings

Configuring the Taskbar

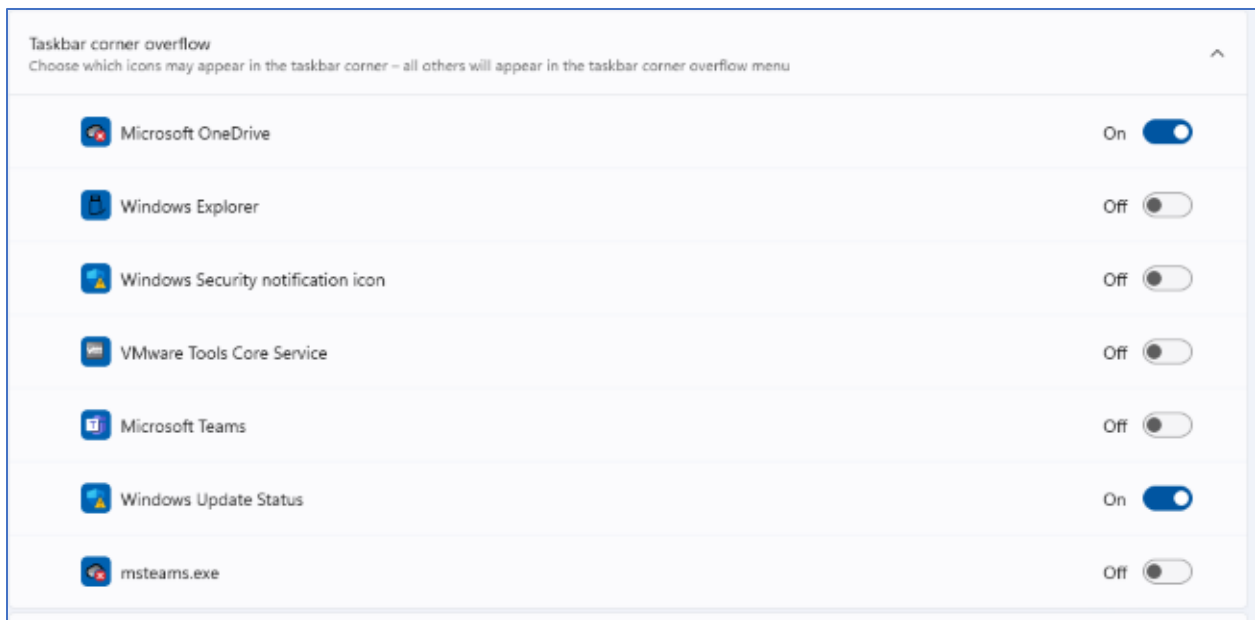
My next Desktop customization was to set up the Taskbar. I went to Settings > Personalization > Taskbar to bring up the Taskbar settings screen.



Taskbar Settings

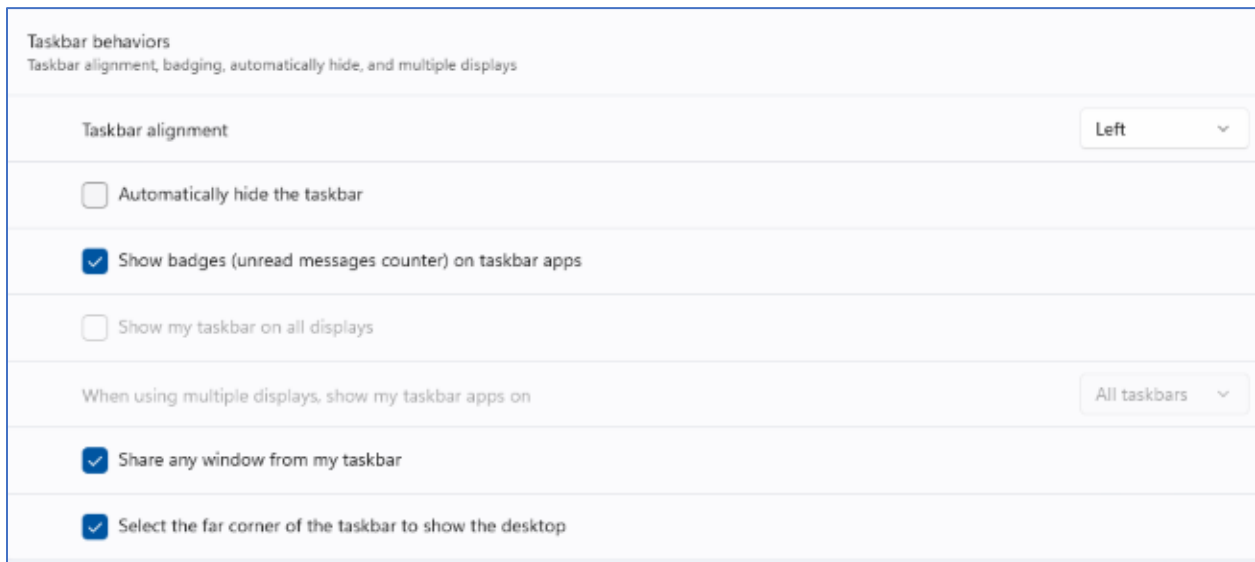
I turned on the sliders for Search and “Task view” and turned off Widgets and Chat. Under Taskbar corner icons (Pen menu, Touch keyboard and Virtual touchpad), I left them all Off.

I next clicked the down chevron to open the “Taskbar corner overflow” settings. The Taskbar corner has been formerly known as the Notification area and as the Windows Tray. I turned on the Microsoft OneDrive and Windows Update Status icons to make them visible. The others appear in the overflow popup.



Taskbar Corner Overflow Settings

Lastly, I clicked the down chevron to open the “Taskbar behaviors” settings



Taskbar Behaviors Settings

For Taskbar alignment, I selected Left from the dropdown. The default is Center. I left unchecked the “Automatically hide the taskbar” and left checked the “Show badges (unread messages counter) on taskbar apps”.

Adding Shortcuts to Programs

Use the File Explorer to browse to the program’s .exe file (usually in Program Files or Program Files (x86)). Left click to select the .exe file and press Shift + F10 to bring up a context menu. Hover the Mouse over the “Send to” menu option and wait for a secondary menu to appear. Then click “Desktop (create shortcut)”. Finally, rename the new Desktop shortcut to suit.



Kretchmar's Korner

My Trip into Virtual Reality

David Kretchmar, Hardware Technician

Originally published June, 2019



Recently that the price of virtual reality (VR) equipment has descended at least part way out of the stratosphere. So, I thought, “Why not?” which was a much easier question for me to answer to answer than “Why?” I told my wife I wanted it to help entertain our grandkids. She did not really buy my rationalization, but still gave her approval for my new toy.

What is “Virtual Reality”?

Virtual Reality can be defined by what it is trying to achieve: total immersion. Virtual Reality is an experience far beyond the much more familiar 3D, which has been around seemingly forever and has always been pretty much an entertainment gimmick. With VR, you are seemingly transported to another reality by virtue of electronically created visuals, sounds, and even some tactile feedback.



Your static (without moving your head) field of vision in VR is 110 degrees, similar to your vision in the real world. When you turn your head and body the magic really kicks in; you can view 360 degrees of your VR world, left, right, up, and down.

And everything seems somewhat realistic – so real you can actually interact with that VR, depending on what creator of that VR experience has programmed. Some VR titles put the viewer right in the middle of the action. In the best VR experiences you can interact with various objects and individuals. Sometimes you can pick up and use an object

such as a ball or gun. Your VR experience is often dependent on how you choose to interact with the presented VR environment.

What equipment is required?

The Oculus Rift set I bought consists of a headset that fits over the top of your face, 2 sensors that pinpoint your exact position and left and right hand controllers that provide virtual hands to use in your VR world. The Oculus headsets provide built-in 3D sound. At the heart of a VR system is a mid-grade PC with a fairly beefy graphics card.



There are VR headsets that are powered by an attached smartphone. These are much less expensive but provide a much lower quality experience.

There are currently 2 premiere makers of VR equipment, Oculus and HTC Vive. Samsung also has VR products, but it is not currently considered a leader in VR technology. It is similar to the environment some 40 years ago with the Sony Betamax vs. VHS.

HTC Vive is a stand-alone company while Oculus was acquired several years ago by Facebook. Vive equipment is a more expensive than Oculus', and has a slightly better picture quality, but Oculus now seems to have better virtual "hands" to interact with its virtual world. Eventually one or 2 technologies, by Oculus, HTC Vive, Samsung, or some other company such as Amazon, Google will likely prevail.

How realistic is VR?



A user could never mistake a current VR world for the "real" world. The resolution of the Oculus VR device is 2160 x 1200 (1080 pixels by 1200 pixels of resolution for each eye), and a 90 Hz refresh rate, less than a good HD television. Also, there is a noticeable "screen door" effect; it seems like you are viewing the VR world through a screen. But just like looking through a real screen you quickly learn to ignore the screen and see only what is beyond.

What is the future of VR?

VR is in its infancy, which is both exciting and concerning. In the future VR will appear much more life-like and the interaction will be more realistic. It is easy to imagine a surgeon operating on a person anywhere in the world using VR technology. It is also easy to imagine the characters in a VR world, powered by Artificial Intelligence, providing a lonely person with "human contact" or a reasonable facsimile thereof.

VR use in marketing and education has great potential. As with any new medium, pornography is apparently becoming an early adopter.

Last month 2 of our grandkids, age 6 and 9, visited. It is no exaggeration to say they were fascinated by their VR experience, and I have retained the title of “World’s coolest grandpa”. I have the coffee cup to prove it.

APCUG Guest Article

Who's Watching You? Virtual Private Networks

By Kurt Jefferson, Editor, CKCS Newsletter October 2022 Issue

<https://ckcs.org/> lextown2 (at) gmail.com

More Internet users are relying on VPNs – apps called Virtual Private Networks – that keep your Internet activity from prying eyes – than ever before. As more of us pay our credit card bills online, buy tickets from online travel agencies, and read our email, it's clear online privacy is getting much more attention.

Most Americans are unaware that in 2017, Congress passed and the president signed a bill trashing an F.C.C. rule.

That rule would have required Internet providers to get permission from customers before selling their web browsing history and other private information to advertisers, ad agencies and others.

Instead, Internet providers are free to sell your personal data, despite your objections. Isn't this backwards? Shouldn't you be able to decide who sees your browsing habits, your email, the banks with whom you do business, and your Social Security number?

Personal information such as which illnesses you've searched in a web browser, where you bank, where you shop, and potentially even where your child or grandchild goes to school can now be accessed by the company you pay for Internet service.

To prevent this, more and more of us are paying for VPNs to keep prying eyes away. The COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on VPN use.

"When the pandemic hit in 2020, VPN demand skyrocketed, driven by the increased use of internet-based services at home, and the evolution of remote work. During the first two weeks between March 8th and March 22nd alone, VPN usage in the USA increased a massive 124%," reports Findstack.

A blog called The Cornwall Seeker writes, "A decade ago, Only a third of Americans and 20% of the people in the U.K. knew what a VPN was. Now, 68% of all adults in the U.S. use a VPN according to security.org."

A just-released poll by Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research and Meritalk reveals that most Americans believe their personal online information is not at all secure.

Most polled believe social media activity such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram is not very or not at all secure. 50% say private text conversations lack privacy.

In addition, many are not satisfied with the federal government's total lack of action. Nearly 75% of those polled support establishing national standards for how companies can collect, process and share personal data.

The Associated Press quotes Sarah Blick, a professor of medieval art history at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, northeast of Columbus as saying, “I feel there is little to no security whatsoever.”

Earlier this year, the college’s human resources department told Blick that someone fraudulently applied for unemployment insurance benefits in her name. As we spoke about during the September Tech Night Zoom session, VPNs can keep your online activity secure – but only if you use them on all of your Internet devices.

If you missed Tech Night, check out [A Beginner’s Guide to Understanding VPNs](#).

If you’re ready to choose a VPN, see what [Top10VPN](#) considers its best VPN services.

Tom’s Guide lists its top choices in the best VPNs.

Because so many Americans (and Internet users all over the world) are currently considering a VPN, it’s a very competitive market.

As I mentioned during Tech Night if you can afford it, you can get better pricing if, rather than buying a VPN for six months or one year, you pay for a two- or three-year period.

What To Look For In a VPN

Security & Privacy: As one website says, “A VPN is only as good as its ability to keep you and your data safe.”

Speed: Since a VPN is rerouting your Internet connection through its own private servers, if there aren’t enough servers your speed can suffer. The best VPNs have vast networks all over the world. If you cannot connect to one server because too many people are connected at the same time, you simply choose another server.

Ease of Use & Customer Support: It should be as simple as moving a slider button on your phone or double clicking a tab on your Mac or PC to activate a VPN. If you have trouble with a VPN – or questions – the company needs to provide customer support. Period.

Performance & Server Locations: The more servers there are, the better chances you have to connect to your VPN if there’s congestion. If you cannot connect to a server closest to you, then there should be one fairly close by. (Connecting to a VPN server in St. Louis or Virginia rather than St. Croix or Germany or Australia will typically give you faster Internet speed from your computer, phone, or iPad in Kentucky.)

Price: Find a VPN that you can afford. Avoid free VPNs. Many of them generate revenue by displaying plenty of ads. So, as you’re trying to use the Internet, you’re constantly disrupted by ads. Free VPNs often have few servers, and it might be a challenge to find one located near you. What you might not know is that many free VPNs use your computer’s processing power when it’s not in use. In addition, your activity might be tracked, your browsing details may be sold, and your Internet connection is often slow. Also, it’s been discovered that China owns a number of free VPNs. Do you really want your personal Internet data going to Chinese authorities?

No Logging: The best VPNs will not track your web browser visits, your email, your social media usage, or other Internet activity. VPNs that do track your activity usually have one goal in mind: Making money. They want to sell your personal data.

“One quarter of all Internet users have accessed a VPN in the last month,” wrote Rob Mardisalu on the thebestvpn.com website in January 2020. Here’s a breakdown by device: (had used a VPN in the last month as of Jan. 2020.)

Desktop: 17%, Mobile: 15%, Tablet: 7%

For some, using a VPN was as common as washing their hands. bestvpn.com reports in early 2020, 35% of desktop computer users and 42% of mobile users (phones, laptops, iPads) had used a VPN every day.

VPN Users by Age (source: thebestvpn.com)

55-64 years old: 4%

45-54: 9%

35-44: 19%

25-34: 33%

16-24: 35%

The Asia–Pacific region has the highest number of VPN users (30%), while North America and Europe lag with far fewer VPN users (17%).

It turns out retaining anonymity (and keeping personal data private) is the strongest motivator to use a VPN in: the USA, Sweden, Canada, France, Japan, Germany, and South Africa. In other countries, folks use VPNs to stream TV shows and movies that have not yet been released or are off limits in those regions. In China and Russia, reporters use VPNs to get around repressive, dictatorial Internet restrictions.

Need more details? There are a number of websites that describe VPNs in simple English so that all of us can decide what’s best for us individually.

Here are some links providing details, descriptions, and information about VPNs that are easy to digest:

[How–To–Geek](#) [Tricky Enough](#) [Forbes Advisor](#)

Lab Monitor Schedule

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

July 2022	Monitor Schedule
Jeff Southwell Jim Mahoney	Saturday 07/02/2022
Fred Cohen Linda McMullin	Saturday 07/09/2022
John Zuzich Raymond Pun	Saturday 07/16/2022
Linda Muench Gail Weiss	Saturday 07/23/2022
Linda McMullin	Saturday 07/23/2022