

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts NEWS JOURNAL

VOLUME 34-07

October 2017

LCACE.ORG

Back to Basics— What Is a “Database” Anyway?

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June 2017 issue, Sarasota Monitor
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A “database” is an organized collection of data (accessed on-line or through a software program on your computer) which allows many options for updating and viewing that data. If you know about “spreadsheets” then a database is similar to a spreadsheet, but more powerful. Like a word processor is to text or like a spreadsheet is to numbers, a database is to information.

You may not realize it, but you are probably already using a database every day. Your “contact list” for your email and your cell phone is a database, as is your calendar and photo organizer. Small and large businesses use a database application to keep information on their suppliers, customers, inventory, and much more. I think it is very helpful to have some idea of what a database is and how it can be used.

For our example, let's take some information that we all probably use every day – our address book or contact list. We build up the information in this list by adding new names, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. We also are able to view the information we have entered and have a way to update it with new or changed information. In addition, we can SEARCH all the information for certain things and produce a short or long list of information in the database based upon our search request criteria. Let's use our “contact list” as

an example. If we have a database of names and addresses, we can “search” the database by entering the first letter of a name and we may see a list generated of all names that begin with that letter. As we add more letters in the search box, the list of names is shortened based upon the letters we entered. So, if we enter a “j” we get all the names that begin with the letter “j” and if we enter “jo” we get all the names (first and last names) that begin with “jo”, such as john, johnny, jones, jocks, etc. Entering text in a search box is really providing a FILTER to screen your data to find what you want. With a database, you can use filters to create lists based upon what you are looking for. You will also be able to SORT the data. Here are some examples of “requests” that may be done using a database of addresses:

- List all addresses with a Florida zip code sorted by the zip code.
- List all people who have birthdays in June.
- Sort my information alphabetically by first name.

In addition to the above (which, by the way, may also be done by a spreadsheet application) a database has ways of linking or associating data. Of course, the data must have been ENTERED into the database in order for you to find it! A good example of grouping data, using your address list, is “tagging” or assigning some category to data elements. Suppose in your list of addresses you have garden club members, a bridge club, a church group, and other categories. You can “tag” or assign each of these categories to one or more people in

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The LCACE News Journal is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions which will be acknowledged in this newsletter.

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Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

**LCACE
c/o Group Ambassador**

"J.J." Johnson

Membership

LCACE membership is open to all individuals and families interested in personal computing. Annual dues are \$20.00 per individual/family. Applications for membership may be obtained at the monthly meeting, by request on the club hotline, and are now available on our web site at <http://www.lcace.org>.

Meetings

LCACE meetings are usually held on Saturdays at the Grayslake Area Public Library, 100 Library Lane, Grayslake, Illinois. The meeting room opens at noon and the formal meeting begins at 12:30 p.m. All meetings are open to the public. Bring a friend!

Newsletter Submissions

Club members are welcome to submit classified ads, reviews, tips and other articles for publication, to our newsletter editor in Microsoft Word format (.doc). **Publication deadline is the 20th of the month for all ads and articles.** Please do not use tabs or special formatting.

Newsletter Advertising

Ad rates per issue: Full page - \$25, Half page - \$15, Quarter page - \$10, Business Card - \$5. Discounts are available on advance purchase of multiple issues. Please send camera-ready copy and payment to the club address by the 15th of the month preceding publication. For more information on ad pricing, please call our Hotline. Ads are **FREE** to all paid members.

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Phil's Ramblings

October 2017

The leaves are turning (and falling), the Cubs are in the playoffs and the Bears are in last place. It must be October!

Apple and Samsung are making news with their latest flagship phone releases, not only for the features but also for the cost. Time will tell if customers feel the incremental improvements are worth the big bucks....

As noted in last month's newsletter, the Windows 10 Creators Update is scheduled to be released on October 17. This bears some further discussion. To begin with, Microsoft does not automatically install Creators Update on your Windows 10 computer, as it does with other Windows 10 updates. On or shortly after the release date, Microsoft will prompt you to begin the installation process. You must first enter your choice of privacy settings, before the update can be installed. You will have several opportunities to delay installation, if you so choose.

Interestingly, I have just read a report at "betanews.com" (published in late September) that only 78% of Windows 10 users in the United States have installed the spring Creators Update. Microsoft has apparently been sending follow-up reminders to Windows 10 users who have not installed that update, but no system is foolproof. To be sure that your computer is fully up to date in anticipation of the fall Creators Update, go into Settings / System / About, and check the Version number of your current Windows 10 software. It should be 1703.

But the big news as 2017 winds down is the increased frequency and seriousness of data breaches and malware attacks. These have been prominently featured in general news reports, and highlighted in technology media. I've shared with our members multiple reports and tips from technology newsletters on this topic. If you have not read them, please do so. If you have, I suggest that you build a dedicated file of advice about how to best protect yourself in this

brave new world of ours, and what to do if something bad happens.

It is important to note that the recent Equifax data breach represents something new. Our name, date of birth and Social Security number are lifelong identifiers. We can cancel credit cards, close bank accounts and take other preventative or corrective actions throughout our lives. These actions may be a pain, but they can prevent future problems. We cannot change our lifelong identifiers. This means that anyone in possession of that information can wait in the weeds for months or years before trying to steal our identity.

Moreover, these identifiers are not just associated with credit cards or bank accounts, they are also associated with our medical records (among other things). This offers the opportunity for bad guys to use our stolen identity to pay medical bills for themselves or others, with the costs being borne by our insurers.

(Consider, as an example, your date of birth. That can tell an identity thief that you are old enough to have Medicare Insurance. If he has your Social Security number he also has your Medicare insurance number. With both of those data elements, he can create a phony Medicare Insurance card. With commonly -available address information, he can create a phony driver's license. With those two documents, he can get medical care almost anywhere. Your first clue that this is happening is likely to be a bill from the provider for your 20% share of the Medicare-approved cost of "your" treatment. Your second clue is likely to be a Medicare statement of benefits, describing the care that "you" received.)

We will talk more about this at our October meeting; for those of you unable to attend I plan to encourage everyone to become more knowledgeable in this arena and to share their experiences and knowledge with fellow

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your address list. Remember that one person may be assigned to more than one category. John, for example, may be in your garden club and in your bridge club. When you assign people to different “groups” in your email contact list this enables you to send a group email to everyone in that group. Pretty cool, eh? Can you imagine the huge databases used by airline companies or the military? Not only customer information but parts, inventory, sales, and so much more information can be organized and available in different ways for different people.

Of course, there are many more tools, options, and capabilities to a database application. Each may have many possibilities and some limitations, but I think this article will help you understand the basic concepts about the databases you are already using.

Back to Basics

The HDMI Cable and Connectors

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April 2017 issue, Sarasota Monitor
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As technology changes, hopefully for the better, more and more devices are available to us. For most of us who use technology for personal and home use, we would like to connect some devices to our TVs to enjoy the big screen video and great sound experience. The latest connection cable type that does this for us is HDMI which stands for “High Definition Media Interface”. The cable connectors (the standard size and a mini size) are shown in the photo. They have a shape to them that allows them to be inserted only one way, so do not force it into the port, try turning it over (180 degrees) and try again.

The purpose of HDMI is to replace different kinds of connectors and cables with one type that, hopefully, can handle all your device connections. Do you remember the old days when there were separate audio/stereo and video cables? Today almost all of the newer devices (laptops, TV's, DVD players, etc.) will come with at least one HDMI connector port. The older style connectors may also be pre-

sent, but if possible, HDMI should be your first choice to make those connections.

Your TV remote control will have a button labeled “input”, and when you press this button different input options (that is, what is coming INTO your TV) will be displayed and allow you to select which one you want. One option will be “cable” which means your TV will show your cable programs – the cable you pay for each month. But other choices will include one or more HDMI inputs, usually labeled HDMI-1, HDMI-2, etc. If you have more than one device connected to your TV it is best for each device to connect to its own HDMI port on the back of the TV. You select which of the inputs you want to view on your TV by using the “input” button on your remote. Of course, there must be something (video and sound) coming into that port to the TV for you to see anything. For example, you may have a DVD player connected to HDMI-1, but if your DVD player is not on and playing something, you will not see anything on your TV when you select that input option. If you have some older devices which may not have an HDMI connector, you can purchase a converter device to allow it to connect.

Lastly, I am always amazed by the cost of cables – after all, they are just wires with plugs on the ends, right? If you checkout the prices of cables at stores and the prices on the internet, you will be shocked at the high prices they can charge for these things. Yes, some cables are higher quality than others and may come with better “shielding” to protect the signal, but most prices are much too high for what you get. My advice would be to shop on-line and get the cheapest cable that meets your needs, but make sure you can return it if you are not happy with it. If it doesn't work for you, then return it and move up to the next higher-priced (and hopefully better quality) cable.

You can find out more about HDMI cables and connectors by asking Google, of course. But connecting them is easy, even for us amateurs.



And the winners are...



Door Prizes Winner
Bobby Jacobs



50/50 Winner
William Fosdick

Jere's Tech Tips



HOW TO RECORD & RUN MACROS TO AUTOMATE TASKS IN WORD

Macros in Microsoft Word allow you to record a series of actions and then execute them with a single click of a button. Microsoft Word Macros are like using Automator on a Mac. They can save you time on actions you perform often in Word. This groovyPost article covers 7 steps to creating and running a Word macro: <http://bit.ly/2xphsnM>

NO BARS? HERE'S EVERYTHING THAT CAN AFFECT YOUR CELLULAR SIGNAL STRENGTH -

Cell signal is weird. One moment you could have five bars, but walk a few feet and it drops to two. In my house, the signal downstairs is awful, but it's perfect upstairs. There's a lot going on with cell reception, so let's look at some of the main factors that affect it. Go to this How-To Geek Web page and get informed. <http://bit.ly/2eDuM3i>

GOOGLE MAPS TIPS

Don't take Google's trusty Maps app for granted. It gets even better once you dig into its settings and start customizing it. Here are some tips to make it even more efficient. Go to this PCworld Web page and learn the new capabilities for Google Maps. <http://bit.ly/2grAKop>

members through our Google Groups email system and/or discussion at future meetings. Suffice to say, this is something that we will have to guard against for the rest of our lives.

Halloween seems very appropriate this month!



BackBlaze

Unlimited Backup for just \$5/month

by Jasmine D’Katz

Some of us are very paranoid about backing up and protecting our computer files especially if you are like me and have over twenty years of digital photos and music, I want to ensure my files are backed up and secured in more than one place which is the reason I’ve chosen a second cloud backup service. Yes, I said a second service.

Several years ago, with the recommendation of one of our club member I chose Carbonite as a backup service for my main computer, and the service has been very good and reliable. The yearly price was also reasonable for one of multiple computers. I get occasional messages letting me know that my computer has not been backed up since a specific day and how much I have stored on their server.

As a photographer, I want to insure my photos are backed up and secure. Recently BackBlaze was recommended to me by a fellow camera club members, so I decided to give it a try. Like Carbonite, it’s also a cloud based backup system and the price is compatible with Carbonite.

BackBlaze offers a unlimited online backup plans which includes my computer, all internal and USB drives I have connected to my computer. For me, this includes at least three USB drives. BackBlaze backs up existing data automatically when it changed, as well as new data when added to a location you’ve chosen to back up. This means that you don’t have to do anything. There are no limits to file size, and no file restrictions. Best of all, there’s a ISO and Android app which allows me to check my file status.

BackBlaze was a breeze to setup, after downloading the setup file. I signed up for the 2-year plan for \$95 which was a little cheaper then Carbonite. After installation, BackBlaze scans my computer and all connected USB drives. I was then directed to select or deselect drives I want backed up. Being that I had over 3 Terabyte of files stored on my three-connected drives therefore, it took over four days to back it up. The time for the backup all depends on my internet speed. If I turn off my computer during the backup, BlackBlaze will pick up where it left off, so nothing is lost. BackBlaze does not give up. Now that I have everything backed up, only new files or changes to files are uploaded.,

Ok, now that everything is secure on the cloud, BackBlaze will allow me restore single files directly from my account as long as it’s less than 30 MB, else the process takes a little longer since its first put into a ZIP file and then I’m emailed a download link. If I need to restore larger files and need

faster service, then BlackBlaze will FedEx me a USB hard or Flash Drive.

Big plus for BackBlaze is they can help me locate my computer if lost or stolen, and have a hard drive shipped to their door with my data on it.

BackBlaze is the top-rated backup service with unlimited storage, just ahead of Carbonite. Now if you are unsure if you want or need a cloud backup service, you can head over the backblaze.com to make use of the 15-day free trial.

Membership

September 9, 2017

Membership Chairperson

Members: 48

Meeting Attendee: 18

THANKS FOR JOINING

None

THANKS FOR RENEWING

Bobby & Howard Jacobs

Julie Bell

THANKS FOR VISITING

Paula Drves

Winners:

50/50: William Fosdick

Door Prize: Bobby Jacobs





Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

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HOLIDAY RAFFLE 2017

1st Prize:

**Ausos
Notebook Computer
15.6" LED Display**

- Intel Core I5-7200U Processor @ 2.5 GHz
- Windows 10
- 8GB system memory
- 1TB hard drive
- Super Multi DVD drive
- USB-C 3-1 port



2nd Prize:

\$150.00

3rd Prize:

\$50.00



Tickets: \$1 each, 6 for \$5, or 25 for \$20

Drawing December 9, 2017

WINNER NEED NOT BE PRESENT



Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

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or need help with your computer?



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