# Use Your Computer to Write a Memoir

By Keith Connes, Member, The Computer Club, FL

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www.scccomputerclub.org/

diane (at) scccomputerclub.org

Here's a way to use your computer to create a legacy: Write a memoir. It doesn't matter whether you are a beginning writer or a seasoned pro – or even if you don't consider yourself to be a writer at all. Write a memoir to present the gift of your inner self to your family, friends, and perhaps a wider audience. You might find that you've acquired a new hobby!

A memoir can give your loved ones a greater insight into who you are and how you got to become the person you are – your thoughts, your feelings, your adventures through life, and the things you learned along the way.

Let me be clear as to what I mean by "memoir." Some people may think of that word "memoir" as meaning an autobiography. Well, yes, an autobiography is a very extensive memoir, taking in the entire life of the subject, but a memoir can also be just a small nugget of that person's existence – a series of reminiscences, or even a single recollection. So, it's not that daunting a task.

Even so, would your memoir really be that valuable to others? Well, think of somebody who is important to you, be it a spouse, relative, or friend – and even though you've known that person for years, you sense that there are aspects of her or his life that you don't know about and wish you did. Not necessarily skeletons in the closet, but – well, wouldn't it be fun to know that Mom always wanted to be a trapeze artist, but somehow never got around to it?

# Lake County Area

# Computer Enthusiasts

## c/o Group Ambassador

## "J.J." Johnson

## News Journal

*The LCACE News Journal* is published eleven times annually. Members are encouraged to submit contributions which will be acknowledged in this newsletter. Send articles to editor@lcace.org  Permission is granted to reproduce any or all parts of this newsletter in other User Group publications, provided that credit is given to LCACE and the individual author (s).  Logo designed on an Atari Stacy Laptop in 1989 by Dwight Johnson Jr.

## 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

ello, everyone! It has finally stopped raining (at least temporarily) and it's nice to see the sun again! Maybe spring is finally here….. (It's sad when you can use this same opening line in both the May and June newsletter column!)

As a reminder, our LCACE membership year begins in April. For those who have already renewed your annual membership, thank you! For those who have not, please see Judy or J.J. at our June LCACE meeting; they will be happy to accommodate you.

As previously announced, our June meeting will be on the third Saturday of the month, June 15th. The program will be a combination of "show 'n tell" and "ask the Guru". Please plan to join us and bring along any new tech items that you care to share with your fellow members, along with tech questions that you would like some answers for. Our annual picnic will be on the second Saturday of July (7/13) at State Bank of the Lakes, Grayslake. More info and sign-up will take place at our June meeting. Please plan to attend!

I mentioned this in our May newsletter, but it bears repeating. Microsoft is scheduled to stop support for Windows 7 on January 14, 2020 – approximately seven months from now. If you have a computer running Win 7 it will continue to work after that date, but you will not receive any further security updates from Microsoft. Thus, the longer you continue to use that computer to connect to the Internet after 1/14/2020, the more at-risk you will be for a malware attack. I suggested several options in my May newsletter column (posted on our website); if your main computer is still running Windows 7, please start thinking about how to replace or upgrade it.

Microsoft has released the May 2019 upgrade to Windows 10 and is slowly rolling it out to users. It's important to understand their new approach. For prior major upgrades, MS relied on field testing by Windows Insiders and early adopters who triggered a download by clicking on the "Check for Updates" button in Windows 10 Settings and who immediately installed the upgrade once it was downloaded to their computer by Microsoft. The Fall 2018 upgrade became a disaster because many users downloaded & installed the upgrade before the reports of problems started coming in to Microsoft. This time MS is moving much more slowly, relying on feedback from Windows Insiders and those other users who have voluntarily triggered a download via the "Check for Updates" process. Once they become comfortable that all is well, they will begin downloading the upgrade to everyone. But even then, it will not be automatically installed. The user will decide when (or if) the upgrade is installed.

I'm somewhat surprised that I have not yet seen much in either the technical or popular media about how this upgrade is performing. It's still early days, but I expected to see some feedback by now – good or bad. As more information becomes available, I will pass it along via our group email process. Meanwhile, as suggested in my recent email, I recommend that you wait until it is clear that this update is performing well before downloading / installing it.

For anyone interested in learning about the new features in this upgrade, here is a link to a How-To Geek article that provides a detailed analysis: https://www.howtogeek.com/402569/everything-new-in-windows-10s-april-2019-update/

Locally, Verizon is testing 5G wireless in the River North area of Chicago. There was an article

in the Business section of the May 29<sup>th</sup> Chicago Tribune that discusses a reporter's experience with the Verizon test. Here is a link: http://digitaledition.chicagotribune.com/html5/desktop/production/default.aspx?&edid=5e4020d6-4e87-4b64-954c-e0254f56011c

The Tribune writer used a newly released $1,300 5G phone from Samsung to sample the Verizon network throughout River North. In one of the better locations, he was able to download all two hours and 17 minutes of "Homecoming: A film by Beyonce" to his phone in **9 seconds!** But service varied quite a bit as he wandered through the area. It turns out that the 5G signal is easily blocked – by almost anything. Hence, a need for lots of antennas. I won't repeat all the information in this article; check it out at your leisure. Suffice to say, 5G appears to be a work in progress. Moreover, it is unclear (for me at least) how much casual cellphone users would benefit from this big increase in data transmission speed.

In any event, it's good to know that 5G is moving forward. Check out the Trib article for details.

Hope to see you at our June meeting!

*Phil*





**Yvonne Mitchell**

My best friend since high school was, for most of his adult life, a sales executive whose high-powered drive enabled him to start up and run several insurance companies. I thought I knew him pretty well, but I was astonished when he sent me a book of sensitive and lovely poetry that he had written! I saw an aspect of Frank I had never suspected, and my respect and admiration for him became even greater.

Well, you may not be a secret poet, or even a wannabe trapeze artist, but aren't there some unrevealed parts of you that you wouldn't mind sharing, but you haven't gotten around to it, or maybe you're just a little shy about it?

Write it down. Write your memoir. One of the easiest ways to get it done is to use speech recognition software (some of it is free) and possibly a compatible recorder. The software automatically converts your spoken words into a text file, such as Microsoft Word or Google Docs.

Here are a few basics about getting comfortable with the dictation process: Just start talking and don't worry about grammar or punctuation – you can fix it later. If it would help get the thoughts flowing, sit down with someone you feel relaxed with and record the conversation as you chat about a topic for your memoir.

Regardless of where your memoir begins, it can take on a life of its own – because it is, after all, the life of your own.

Write your memoir. Do it for the ones you love, for yourself, and maybe for some great-great-grandchildren you will never know. But through your memoir, they will get to know you.

Note from Judy: Meeting idea – Keith is giving a presentation to his group on "Why Type it When You Can Say it?"

**Believe with all of your heart that you will do what you were made to do.**
**Orison Swett Marden**

# Kretchmar's Korner

## Mistakes We Make When Buying a Computer

By David Kretchmar, Computer Technician, Sun City Summerlin Computer Club NV

For many of us, computers have become an integral part of our daily lives. Computers have become almost as important as a car to some of us. Fortunately, computers are pretty easy to acquire. They are no longer a major investment (my first computer system, 20 years ago, cost $3000) but still can be a significant purchase and something we will live with for years.

For the less tech-savvy, buying a computer can be difficult. There is a lot of tech jargon flying around, and all of it is competing to get your money. Because of that, mistakes are easy to make, and they can easily result in your money going to waste. When you're spending hundreds of dollars, you don't want to get a machine that's going to break down in a year, fail to work as expected or cost any more than it ought to. We are going to take a look at a number of computer shopping mistakes so that you can avoid them and get a great computer without spending any more than you have to.

### Always Buying Whatever's Cheapest

If you have very minimal computer demands and hardly browse the Internet, you might be able to get away with only ever getting a cheap computer. Cheap and/or old hardware is going to wear out more quickly and fail to meet the ever-increasing demands of new software. A $200 machine could last you a couple of years, but that time may be filled with headaches as it begins to struggle more and more on its way to the computer graveyard. A $400 computer should last longer, and that time should be less filled with headaches. It is impossible to be entirely sure what you're going to get for your money, but you'll probably have a good chance of finding a more reliable, longer-lasting PC if you spend more. You don't need to buy a $2,000 computer, but just keep an eye out for good deals on brands and models that have proven to have a good lifespan, and you should be safe.

### Not Buying Based on Your Needs

If you think a computer seems awesome because you've heard media hype about it, it's the latest thing, or it just looks awesome, you're probably shopping for a computer incorrectly.

Sure, if you want to prioritize a certain feature such as appearance or power, you can, but most of us should just think about what we need from the computer and buy a machine that will enable us to do the job. If you're going to just do light Internet browsing, some word processing, and watch a movie here and there, you can probably do without 32GB of RAM, that 8-core CPU, or 12 USB 3.0 ports. Whatever you get with a computer, you pay for, so try not to go for something you know you don't need.

Not Knowing What You're Getting with an Operating System

About 10 years ago my nephew camped outside of Best Buy to get a dirt-cheap laptop. The laptop was inexpensive, but it came without a permanent operating system! Fortunately he had a geeky uncle who was able to help him, but not all were so fortunate.

Today you are unlikely to be sold a computer without an operating system (OS). There are plenty of different computer OS out there — Windows, Apple OS X, various flavors of Linux, including the Chrome OS. Each OS functions differently. Most importantly for users, each OS handles software differently (if at all). If you have an old computer running one OS and want to bring software you purchased to a new computer, don't expect to succeed if you switch operating systems. For example, Skype may have versions working for Mac and Windows, but you won't be able Skype with your friends and family if you switch over to Chrome OS. Remember the first step in buying a computer: you need to decide what you need to do with a computer and ensure the OS will support it.

## Assuming a Feature is Included

Whether you're shopping for a laptop or a desktop, don't make any assumptions about the features that are included.

## Computers come in all configurations

You should never take anything for granted. If you want a computer with a CD/DVD drive, look and see if there is one, and if you're shopping on line or in a store, make sure you know with 100% certainty it's there. Optical drives seem to be slowly going the way of the old floppy drives – away.

Software can usually be downloaded online rather than installed from an optical disk. More and more new computers don't include an opti-

cal drive, especially laptops, since the optical drive on a laptop adds considerably to the bulk of the system. External optical drives are available for $25 - $30 and this is often the solution if an optical drive is required.

Also make sure there are plenty of USB ports, and importantly at least 1 high speed (3.0 or 3.1) USB port.

Some new computers are sold with HDMI video output only.

If you plan to utilize an older monitor with only the old standard 15-pin sub-D input, you are out of luck without a special adapter.

## Not Finding a Problem with a Computer While You Can Still Return It.

Just because you've spent your money for a new computer already doesn't mean the buying process is over. You have a time window where you can return the computer if you're not satisfied. Test everything. See how far the Bluetooth signal reaches. Ensure it can connect to your Wi-Fi network and maintain a connection. Test out all of the drives and ports. Try out headphones and microphones. Install all of the programs you want to use and try them out. Run Prime95 or your most demanding video game for hours. You basically want to make sure that the computer will easily meet your needs. If it's falling short or not working how you expect, you want to find that out while you can still return it. (Personal story: I once bought a high-end Dell desktop computer that seemed great, but it would not shut down without cutting off the power. I returned it quickly for a replacement. If I hadn't tested out those features early on, I would have learned the hard way what it felt like to waste $3000.)

## Not Shopping Around Enough

You do need to shop around - that is, if you want to get the best deal. Don't just go into Best Buy and assume your options are limited to those devices at those prices. Shopping at a single retailer (especially a brick-and-mortar shop) will guarantee that you'll miss out. Every big retailer is going to have some deal going at any given time, so you've just got to hunt for the right one, which means checking way more than one place. I suggest you look at Newegg.com, TigerDirect.com, Amazon.com, and BestBuy.com. If you're brave and knowledgeable you can see what you can find on eBay.com. Check the manufacturers' websites. Check Costco and other retailers. If you shop around and are patient, you'll get a good deal on a new computer.

## Setup and Warranty

Finally, there's the matter of setup services and warranties. Choosing to get a warranty is an extra cost, which I do not recommend, but it adds some security. If you're concerned about physical damage to the computer, an accidental damage warranty isn't a bad idea. As far as setup services, if you know your way around a computer, or know someone who does and is willing to help, you can likely pass on having a professional set it up — most of what's done is pretty simple. If everything about computers is like a foreign language to you and no one you know tolerates your technological deficiencies, it may be worth the money to have a pro come set up your new computer and get you up and running.

# Firewalls

By Dick Maybach, Member, Brookdale Computer User Group, NJ

www.bcug.com

n2nd (at) att.net

A firewall is a program that monitors traffic on a network and rejects any data that violate its security rules. One way to classify a firewall is by its location: it can be host-based, where it resides on a computer and controls all the data transferred through its data port, or it can be network-based where it resides on a modem or router that connects a local area network (LAN) to the Internet. The latter is sometimes inaccurately called a "hardware firewall," although it is actually software, but running on a router, a modem, or a dedicated processor rather than a general-purpose PC.
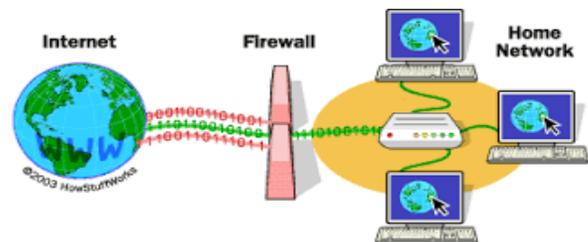


Figure 1. Network-based Firewall.

The primary purpose of a network-based firewall is to isolate your home network from the Internet. Without one, your networked printers, PCs without host-based firewalls, and shared storage devices would be available to the world. A host-based firewall is very similar to a network-based one; the major difference is its location. It isolates the data on your PC, primarily on its disk, from other computers on the network. If you use your laptop to access the Internet through a wireless (Wi-Fi) hotspot, only its firewall protects you. Some firewalls, e.g. that included with Windows,

allow increasing the protection when connected to such unprotected networks.
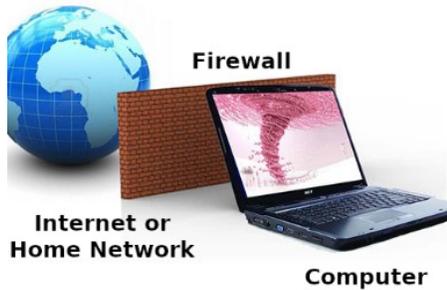


Figure 2. Host-based Firewall.

There are multiple types of firewalls, each using a different approach to traffic filtering.

- First-generation firewalls were *packet filters*, comparing basic information, such as the original source and destination of the packet, the port being used, and the protocol, against a list of rules.

- Second-generation firewalls were the so-called *stateful* firewalls, which added another connection state to the filtering criteria. Based on this information, the technology could determine if the packet was starting the connection, was a part of an existing connection, or wasn't involved at all.

- *Third-generation* firewalls understand applications as well as some widely-used protocols such as File Transfer Protocol (FTP) and Hypertext Transfer Protocol (HTTP). Based on this information, the firewall can detect attacks trying to circumvent it by misusing a protocol or violating application procedures.

Third-generation firewalls control traffic flow in several ways.

- Service control determines what types of services are accessed.

- Direction control determines in which direction particular service requests are initiated.

- User control determines if a user is allowed access to the service.

- Behavior control determines how particular services are used.

A firewall protects your computer from Internet hacking, where someone gains remote access to it over a network, and against worms, malware that spreads over a network. However, it provides little or no protection against many other threats.

- If you give permission for other computers to connect to yours, e.g. enable remote access.

- Switching off the firewall or adding many exceptions to its rules reduces the protection.

- It is not effective against malware, including viruses, spyware, ransomware, etc. This is most commonly acquired through clicking on email attachments and email links, downloading pirated media, and visiting rouge or infected Websites.

- It does nothing about spam.

- People with physical access to your computer or network are not monitored.

- Data introduced to the computer other than online, e.g. via USB connected devices, CD/DVD etc. are not checked.

- If your laptop acquires malware while connected to a Wi-Fi hotspot, and you later connect it to your home LAN, your other PCs can become compromised since you are behind the firewall.

- Traffic that appears to be legitimate passes freely.

- A firewall protects only information on your home LAN; once you send it to the Internet it's accessible to anybody.

- Only you can prevent phishing, where you are tricked by e-mail, a Website, or a phone call into installing malware, by-

passing the firewall, or disclosing sensitive information, such as your bank passwords or credit card details.

If you run a server from home, perhaps to host a Website or exchange files, you need two firewalls, one between the Internet and the network called a Demilitarized Zone (DMZ), and a second one between the DMZ and your home network; see Figure 3. The firewall between the DMZ and the Internet is less secure, because it allows incoming requests to the servers on the DMZ network. Such requests are not allowed through to the home network. Other DMZ architectures may be preferable depending on your requirements. You will need to do some research before implementing one, but fortunately, few home computer users need this complexity.
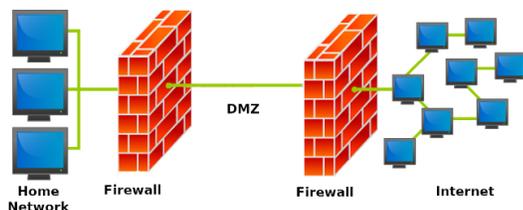


Figure 3. DMZ

Because firewalls are software running on small dedicated processors and are exposed to the Internet, they are subject to hacking, and they are attractive targets. Most home users rely on firewalls included in the cable modems and routers supplied by their Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Unfortunately, ISPs are not diligent in installing patches to correct the security flaws that are frequently uncovered. If the only devices on your home network are PCs with their own host-based firewalls and you haven't enabled file sharing among them, the risk isn't large. However, if you have network-shared storage or other devices without firewalls, you should add your own firewall between your network and the ISP's interface. Many routers include firewalls and these are convenient to use here. Most security experts say that keeping your software up-to-date is the most important

security measure, more so even than installing anti-virus software. This applies to any firewalls you install.

Most operating system include a host-based firewall, which is probably adequate for most home users with a network-based firewall between their LAN and the Internet. However, aftermarket software is available from many anti-virus vendors, and you may wish to consider one of these, especially if you have a laptop with sensitive information and use it at public Wi-Fi hot spots. Regardless of how you use it, check your firewall's documentation to be sure it's properly configured for you situation.

You can implement a network-based firewall in three different ways:

·   purchase purpose-built hardware, probably with an integrated router,

·   install firewall software on a compact PC such as a Raspberry Pi, and

·   install firewall software on a standard PC.

The first is the easiest and by far the most preferable, as it's ready to use right out of the box after minimal configuration. The second requires more work and expertise but can result in a unit that is at least as effective, but few users have the expertise needed to insure the security that this application requires. The third is unlikely to be satisfactory, as PCs have hard disks, monitors, and keyboards which aren't needed here, and you will be tempted to use a surplus one that probably has an old operating system with many known vulnerabilities. You will also have to remove many programs that were needed in its former role as a general-purpose PC but may have security risks. For firewall duty you want simple hardware and software and the latest version of the latter.

A good firewall tutorial is available at http://computer.howstuffworks.com/firewall.htm and a more technical one at http://mercury.webster.edu/aleshunas/COSC%205130/Chapter-22.pdf .

**L.C.A.C.E. Club Historian**
**History Report, 2019-05-11 Meeting**
**By Les Larkin**
**LesLarkin@AIM.com**

Our May meeting was conducted by Phil Bock. New business was the July Indoor Picnic.

Yvonne Mitchell won the door prize, a laptop platform with cooling fan. DeBorah Sirilla won $7.00 in the 50/50 raffle. Congratulations to our winners!
?
Phil and I made the coffee, and Liz Barnett provided munchables for us.

Last month's presentation was "Email Strategies" by Lester Larkin (me). There is a PDF version of the slideshow, and a video, at
http://lcace.org/presentation/presentations.html

Another great meeting, and I hope to see you at our June 15 meeting.

**May 11, 2019**

**Membership Chairperson**
J.J. Johnson

**Members: 50/48%**
Meeting Attendees: 24

**THANKS FOR JOINING**
None

**THANKS FOR RENEWING**
Barton & Diane Berndtson
Henry Henriksen
Ted Zalewski
Fred & Liz Barnett
David & Diane Carlson

**THANKS FOR VISITING**
John Holden



## HAPPY BIRTHDAY

## DEBORAH SIRLLA
## PHIL BOCK



DeBorah Sirilla

# Lake County Area Computer Enthusiasts

**Do you have computer questions
or need help with your computer,**

**smartphone or tablet?**

## WE'RE READY TO HELP!





# 11:15 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

**Hotline** LCACE

**Phone: (847) 623-3815**

## Members

### Members Web Sites

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Take a good look, you just might see yourself.

**LCACE Photo Albums**

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The Association of
Personal Computer User Groups