Linux Wins the Desktop in 2014 and 3 More Bold Predictions

presented by

Orv Beach

linux **wins the desktop** in 2014
and 3 more bold predictions

Orv Beach will discuss why 2014 is the year that Linux starts to win the desktop, which is the final Linux frontier. And why it's the year of exponential growth for Linux in every arena at our January 14, 2014 meeting.

Orv Beach

"Linux won. The penguin has achieved world domination, and the usual commentarians completely missed it even after years of predicting it. That because it's not something that happened in a single flashy event, but rather has been the product of years of hard work and steady improvement," he said, quoting his friend Carla Schroeder, at Linux.com.

"The strength of Linux and free/ open source software (FOSS) is iteration. FOSS iterates many times faster than commercial proprietary software because there are no artificial barriers like those that infest the business world: no "brilliant" marketing ideas, no business processes (proposal, review, proposal, review, proposal, review, ad infinitum), no protecting existing product lines, no artificially crippling applications to create multiple price points..." according to Ms. Schroder, in "Linux Wins the Desktop in 2014 and 3 More Bold Predictions" at http://bit.ly/1bJslNm.

"Another benefit is a priceless wealth of knowledge for anyone to use: you can download old kernels all the way back to the very beginning, version 0.01. The Linux kernel mailing list archives don't go back quite that far, but the Indiana University archive goes back to 1995," she also said.

"And of course Linux is going to continue its increasingly-rapid advance into everything: automotive, communications, gaming, smart grids, industrial automation, smart homes, education, distributed science and research, medicine, agriculture — enough to fill a few books. This year is just the beginning of the Linux and FOSS tidal wave," Ms. Schroeder concluded.

Don't miss this program! Orv is an enthusiastic, fun and knowledgeable Linux user/fan/evangelist. He will inspire you and motivate you and will answer all your questions.

Linux has long ruled some areas of computing such as supercomputing. But in 2013, Linux and the open source method of developing software started to quietly dominate all aspects of computing, from cars to the cloud, and end-user computing, thanks in part to Android and Chrome OS.

—ZDNet
http://zd.net/1iIdOtU

feedback

Two readers below comment on the CNet article, "New malware roosting place: Inside your SD Card?" A pair of security researchers have figured out how to subvert tiny controller chips in flash-memory storage devices, an approach that could expose people's private data. Read it at http://cnet.co/KivLky

FRANK BOLLINGER
ORCOPUG, CALIFORNIA

It's hard to tell from the article how an SD card becomes infected. I only use them in my cameras and don't see the same threat as might exist with a phone. Perhaps there's a risk if some malware on a PC would infect a card during an upload.

TED WIRTZ
ORCOPUG, CALIFORNIA

I read the blog, but will try to view the YouTube video later to confirm.

It appears so far that a hacker would need physical access to the SD card in order to load the MIM software.

If you are talking about a card you already own, you are probably safe enough. If a local store has a hacker working in the back room who has the capability of repackaging in factory original packages, that might be a different issue.

If you think you see NSA behind every doorway, this "capability" could be installed at the factory under FISA secret court order, and none would be the wiser. (You've probably seen articles recently claiming NSA is secretly installlling eavesdropping software in I-phones. True or not, I don't know.)

In any event I guess it shows where there's a will, there's a way. Maybe it would be safer to just use good old USPS. That mail would require a specific court order showing proofs of why mail should be intercepted, not just some vague suspicion.

NEIL LONGMUIR
WPCUSRGRP, CANADA

Here's an image of the snow along my garage in the back yard. I had just as much snow along the south side the house as well.

I had a good three feet of snow behind the garage which is 24 feet wide and the back lane had a good 8–10 inches. Right now Winnipeg streets are a mess.

I move the snow with "Tony" — the snow blower. It would take days to shovel it because of the cold and the amount. When shoveling an hour here, maybe, and an hour there.

Well, the snow is over, but we are in a real deep freeze -33 F. with a wind chill of -45 F. right now. So my best defense is to stay in the house and do a few chores.

The fence at the back of yard is 4½ feet high, and the snow on the lane is a good foot over the top.
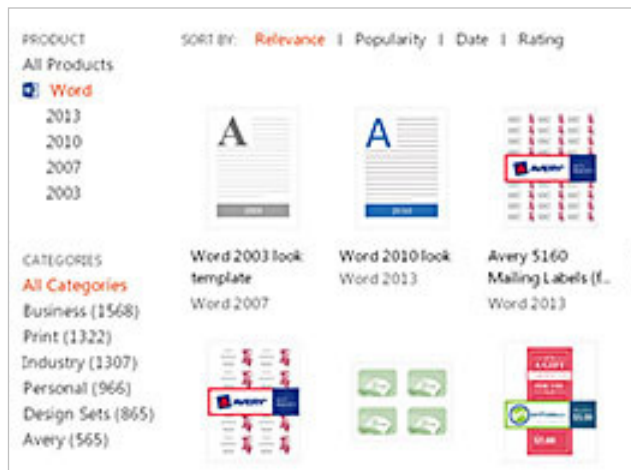
Winter Wonderland

WORD
understanding templates

by Allen Wyatt

A template is nothing more than a pattern used by Word to describe how your document looks and how you interact with the document. Templates contain formatting information, a style sheet, macros, toolbar and menu modifications, and boilerplate text.
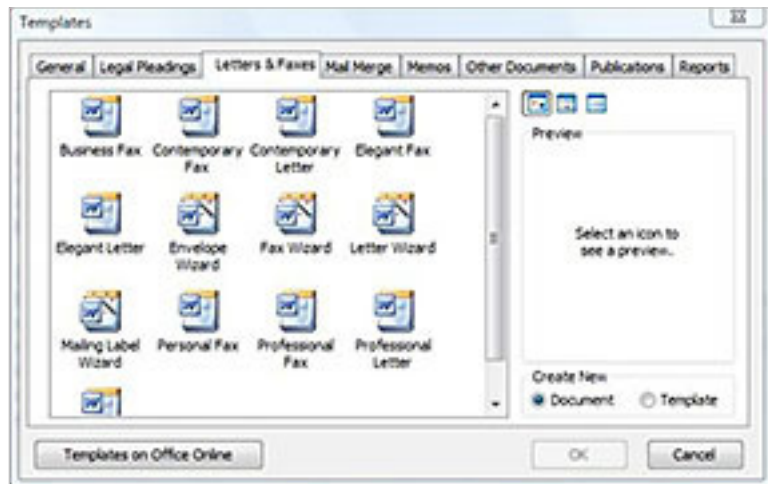
In Word, templates all end with the DOT extension (this stands for DOcument Template). If you want to create a template, you follow these steps:

1. Start a new document.
2. Make your changes to formatting, macros, and the toolbar and menus.

Templates that Word installs on your computer

3. Save with Document Template (*.dot) selected in the Save As Type drop-down list.

That's all there is to it. Generally, selecting Document Template in the Save As Type drop-down list will move you to your templates directory. However, you should make sure that you save your new template file in the same directory with all your other template files. That way it will be available for future use.

WordTips is your source for cost-effective Microsoft Word training. (Microsoft Word is the most popular word processing software in the world.) This tip at http://word.tips.net/T000466_Understanding_Templates.html applies to Microsoft Word 97, 2000, 2002, and 2003. You can find a version of this tip for the ribbon interface of Word (Word 2007 and later) at http://wordribbon.tips.net/T010195_Understanding_Templates.html

Some of the free templates at microsoft office for all versions of Word
http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/

EXCEL

creating a watermark

by Allen Wyatt

I n Excel there are a couple of ways you can create a watermark for use with a spreadsheet. Unfortunately, you must set up your watermark as a graphic; you cannot specify text to be used as a watermark. With this understanding, you can then create a background image to be used with your

Figure 1. The Sheet Background dialog box.

worksheet. The image can be any graphic image desired. You should follow these steps:

1. Choose Sheet from the Format menu. This displays a submenu.

2. Choose Background from the submenu. This displays the Sheet Background dialog box. (Figure 1.)

3. Use the controls in the dialog box to locate and select the graphic image you want to use as your watermark.

4. Click on OK.

The image is imported and fills the background of your worksheet. Note that the image is repeated over and over again--it is tiled in the background of the worksheet.

You should note that you are given very little control on the appearance of the image you use as a background. In order to make it appear as a real watermark--lightly shaded and not distracting to the main text in the worksheet--you may need to play with it and adjust it a bit in your favorite graphics program.

You can also use special programs you may already be familiar with, such as WordArt, to insert special attention-grabbing text in your document. You should understand that if you do this, the WordArt object actually floats above your spreadsheet. Thus, it won't necessarily appear in the background like a true watermark. It may come in handy at the bottom of a worksheet that doesn't occupy an entire sheet of paper, however.

One other thing to check, which has very little to do with Excel, is the capabilities of your printer. If you have a new "business oriented" printer, it will often place standard watermarks on the copies it produces. You can check this out by looking at your printer properties in the Print dialog box.

ExcelTips is your source for cost-effective Microsoft Excel training. This tip at http://excel.tips.net/T002698_Creating_a_Watermark.html applies to Microsoft Excel 97, 2000, 2002, and 2003.
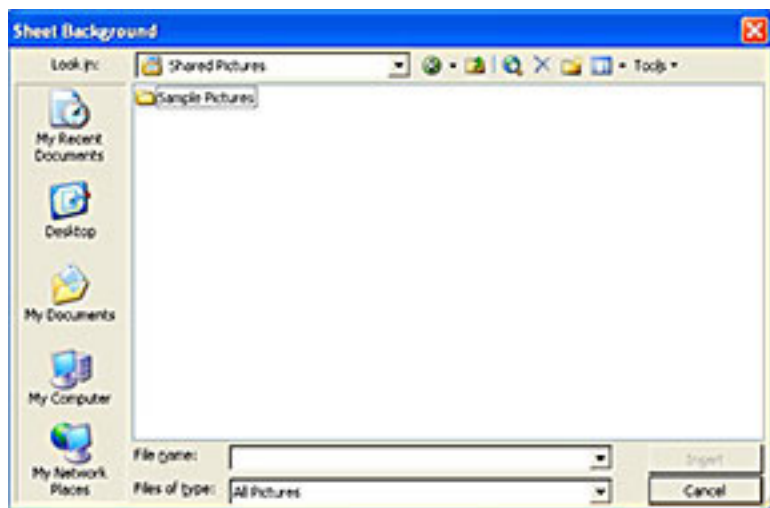
WHY are some of my emails not being delivered?

There are many reasons for the non delivery of emails. Check the list below and see if your email falls into any of the categories.

1. **No subject line** – Some Internet Service Providers (ISPs) reject emails that do not have a subject line or your recipient may not open it because they fear it may be "Spam."

2. **Suspicious subject line** - Internet Service Providers (ISPs) reject emails that have "suspicious" subject lines and treat them as "Spam" for the user's protection.

3. **The recipient's mail box** may be full or over-quota.

4. **The recipient's email address** may not be valid any longer.

5. **The recipient's address was typed incorrectly.** Double check the spelling, proofread your email and make sure that there are no spaces in the email address, before clicking "send."

6. **The recipient's email address** may have changed.

7. **Email Anti-Virus software** often removes the contents of an email if it thinks that it has harmful contents such as viruses.

ask pamela
by pamela tabak

If your mobile phone has been working well, it will not be a major problem to get it working again

WHY is my cell phone dead and does not charge when connected to a power source?

If your mobile phone has been working well, it will not be a major problem to get it working again. Below are a few things you can try:

1. If the cell phone does not "power-up" when it is connected to a power source, the first thing you should do is disconnect it from the power source and plug in another device, that you know is working, to make sure that the power source is "live."

2. If the power source is "live" try removing the mobile phone battery and then replacing it into the phone. This "resets" the system and the mobile phone usually comes back to life. Plug it back into the power source until it is fully charged.

3. If the "reset" does not work, the power cord might be faulty and should be replaced.

4. If your cell phone is still inoperable, take it to your cell phone supplier for examination.

the world
at our fingertips

by Linda Gonse

How we live our daily lives has changed in the past couple of decades since the advent of the World Wide Web. It has become common for people to go to the Internet on their desktop computer, smartphone, or tablet to check dates, names, places, and answers to a thousand other questions, as well as for entertainment.

Knowledge about anything in the world is seconds away at our fingertips.

While we often take this resource for granted simply because it is so obequitous, there are times when what we find is so useful that we can't wait to tell everyone what we've seen and share it.

Several times over the past couple of months I've been delighted and surprised by what I've found on it. So, I am going to share these gems with you right here.

The information ranges from SMTP and POP settings for many web services, to media conversion of all types, to calculation of how many steps burn how many calories, to where computer conferences are held, to free office suite programs everyone needs, and so on.

better cardfile than cardfile

Remember the little Cardfile program native to early Windows through to Windows 95? It was handy and easy to use. But, sadly, it's gone. And, if you created Cardfile files in the program, you can't open the proprietary file format in anything else to use the data in them now.

Thank goodness for online forums. There is always some

computer user who can steer you to answers you need. In the case of Cardfile, users in several forums recommended the free aazCardfile.

First and foremost, it will import your old crd files and allow you to view and edit, and resave to a new format — be it txt, RTF, HTML, or an older version of aazCardfile.

It's simple and, yet, unlike the original Cardfile, it is capable of so much in the way of data management, filtering, retrieval, and viewing, you will want it on your computer. Get yours at http://www.azzcardfile.net/

free online file converter

My granddaughter told me about this free online file converter that lets you convert media easy and fast from one format to another.

My problem was attributed to using an older version of PowerPoint and the only sound files that could be embedded in it were WAV files.

The music files I had are mp3 and mp4a.

After going to the conversion site, I was shocked by how easy and how fast the converter worked! In seconds, I had the sound file format I needed and was able to get back to the presentation with hardly a break.

Online File Converter also supports many different source formats besides music. There are convertors for images, ebooks, videos, document, archives, and a hash generator. Keep the URL close by your computer. I guarantee that one day when you need a conversion you will find it to be priceless, http://www.online-convert.com/

pop/smtp settings

These days, we have the technology to send and receive email from our smartphones and tablets as well as our computers.

My cousin was recently setting up an email account on a new Kindle Fire for her sister and hit a snag. What was the SMTP and POP server data? She didn't know.

This handy site gives the SMTP, IMAP and POP server settings for major ISPs. What's more, if your email provider needs a port number, those are also listed.

I don't know about you, but I have spent plenty of time looking through providers' websites before I found this information. Having it in a list in one place is a great idea.

http://en.kioskea.net/faq/9166-smtp-imap-and-pop-server-settings-for-major-isps

suicide by sitting?

Lately, I've been reading about the dangers (yes, dangers) of sitting for long periods. There is an ebook called "Sitting Kills" at Amazon that we computer users should read. It gives the rationale for rising often and moving around before sitting again.

There are also many articles that proclaim "sitting is the new smoking." One quotes Mayo Clinic endocrinologist Dr. James A. Levine, saying "Excessive sitting is a lethal activity." Read it at http://www.pittsburghquarterly.com/index.php/Personal-health/is-sitting-the-new-smoking.html

To remind myself to take hourly stretch breaks, especially when working on the newsletter, I installed the free BreakTaker program on my pc that a writer at CNET recommended, http://howto.cnet.com/8301-11310_39-57411481-285/remind-yourself-to-take-stretch-breaks-with-breaktaker/.
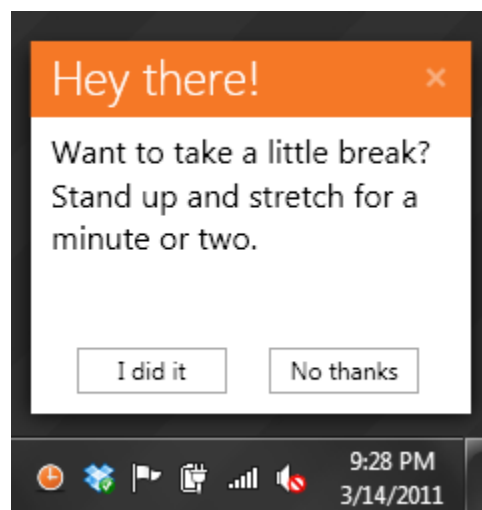
BreakTaker sits in your system tray and watches the clock for you. Its default is set to one hour, at which time it pops up unobtrusively and reminds you to stand up. You can pause the app if you are taking lunch or focusing on a call. It's at http://www.techerator.com/software/breaktaker/

Not to forget the time we all spend bent over our smartphones and tablets, there is even an app for them

that reminds you to get out of your chair regularly. Read about the StandApp and get a link at http://www.boston.com/business/technology/apptitude_test/2012/10/get_out_of_your_chair_and_stand_app.html

best free office suite

My years of always buying the latest and greatest are finally over. There comes a time when you have enough programs and they work just fine. But, one big reason for not buying more recent releases is their cost which has been skyrocketing out of range, especially for people who are unemployed, in school, or retired.

Of course, we all know that THE office suite at the top of everyone's list used to be Microsoft Office, the priciest office suite program on the market. But, in recent years other office suites, which are a collection of programs consisting of a word processor, spreadsheet and presentation applications bundled together, parallel the features of Microsoft's flagship program. What's even better about them is that nearly all are free. That's right. They cost you nothing.

The list of the free programs (and a few at nominal cost) for use on your computer or on the cloud, their descriptions, and links, is at http://www.techsupportalert.com/best-free-office-suite.htm

Among the mini reviews, read about: OpenOffice, Kingsoft Office Suite Free, SSuite Office - Excalibur

Just look at these great ideas!

Release, Softmaker FreeOffice, Apache Open Office, LibreOffice, Google Drive, ThinkFree, IBM Lotus Symphony and Zoho.

computer conferences, expos and trade shows

Did you know there are computer conferences, expos, and tradeshows somewhere in the United States every month of the year?

Lists of the events and their links are on Wikipedia. For computer conferences go to http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Computer_conferences; for computer expos, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Computer_expo; and for computer-related trade shows, check out

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:Computer-related_trade_shows

walking burns calories

When you are out walking you are burning calories. How many? Well, it depends on your weight, distance and pace. But, it's all easy to figure by going to http://walking.about.com/library/cal/uccalc1.htm and plugging your information into their handy, online calculator. In a second, the results are computed and should give you a sense of satisfaction in what your walk accomplished rather than waiting to see the results later on the bathroom scale.

This site also has some great Walk Off Weight in 2014 tips and articles at http://walking.about.com/ including topics such as:

- Pedometer Walking
- Treadmills
- Beginners
- Fitness Walking & Workouts
- Walking Programs
- Walking Fast
- Half Marathon & Marathon
- Blisters and Heel Pain
- What to Eat and Drink
- Walking Clubs and Partners
- Trails, Walk Events & Tours
- Walking Clothing & Gear
- Walking Shoes

ask leo!
by Leo A. Notenboom

How can I rejoin two files into one?

I split a file a while ago. I don't have a copy of the program used and I can't remember what it was. All I know is that it split the 2 files into segments ending in ".1" and ".2". Is there a program out there that will universally rejoin files? Or do I have to keep hunting 'til I find the program that I used?

The term for what you're attempting to do is called "concatenation" — basically splicing two files together to create a single file.

And the tool's already on your machine. The copy command in Windows will do it.

In a command shell: **copy file1 /b + file2 /b file3**

Will join file1 and file2 to create file 3. The "/b" indicates that Copy should treat the file as binary rather than text.

http://ask-leo.com/how_can_i_rejoin_two_files_into_one.html

How do I paste into a Windows XP Command Shell?

Using a DOS window under Windows ME there's a handy "paste" clipboard appearing with some other icons in the DOS window title bar. Is there any way to get this in Windows XP? I haven't been able to find any mention of it but may be overlooking something obvious.

You came to the right place. I live in the Windows XP command shell. My (DOS) roots must be showing.

Anyway, the icons may be gone, but the functionality is most certainly still there.

I don't believe that there's a way to actually get the icon back, though it wouldn't surprise me if there were a third party add-on that could add something like it.

But Copy, Paste and a few other old friends are all still there on the system menu. Click on the upper left icon on the command shell window, referred to as the system menu, and along with Move, Size, and so on, you'll see a sub menu called Edit. Click on that, and you'll find Copy, Paste and other clipboard related commands. Here's a screen shot of what I mean:

If you're so inclined, there are good things buried in the Properties item as well that will let you control the look, feel and some of the behavior of the Command Shell. http://ask-leo.com/how_do_i_paste_into_a_windows_xp_command_shell.html

More than **half of** *U.S.* **homes** *don't have or don't use their landline.*

alternative
landline telephone services

by Ira Wilsker

I t should come as no surprise to followers of technology that newer technologies always tend to replace older technologies; this process has been going on since the advent of mankind.

Of the myriad of technologies widely used today, it should come as no surprise that the traditional hardwired landline telephones, using a basic analog technology well over a century old, are already obsolescent.

According to a story in USA Today on December 27, 2012 (quoting an original 12/26/12 article from Gigaom), "More than half of U.S. homes don't have or use their landline." The article explains how wireless phones have in many cases totally replaced the copper wired analog phones in the majority of homes.

This decline in demand for traditional phone service has not been lost on the likes of AT&T and Verizon, major providers of hardwired phone services. The USA Today and Gigaom articles state, "As the FCC begins its regulatory process to change the rules associated with landline access and telcos like AT&T and

Among the most widely advertised digital phone products and services are MagicJack, Vonage, Time Warner Digital Phone (similar services are promoted by other carriers), Ooma, netTALK, and BasicTalk.

Verizon try to get out of the landline business altogether, it's clear that the phasing out of copper-based voice lines will have repercussions that go beyond telephone calls."

While cellular (mobile) telephones have taken away much of the market share (and profitability) of the copper based landline services, the rapid rise in the popularity of alternative phone services utilizing "Voice over Internet Protocol" (VoIP) has indicated that there is still substantial demand for a somewhat fixed telephone service for both home and business users. VoIP phone services are digital, utilize the internet to

carry calls rather than the more traditional copper lines, generally offer superior voice quality, and utterly lack the domestic long distance charges still charged by the traditional phone companies.

For those making international long distance phone calls, either to or from the United States, most of these VoIP services offer either free or very inexpensive international long distance. Several of the VoIP providers also offer a reasonably priced international flat rate calling plan with unlimited international calling for less than just local calling costs from a traditional phone company.

Originally, most of the VoIP providers had difficulty sending and receiving traditional analog FAX messages, but that problem has been resolved, with almost all of the digital carriers now handling FAX machines as well as any other connected phone devices.

Watching TV for more than a few minutes will likely expose the viewer with a host of commercials for alternative phone services. Among the most widely advertised digital phone products and services are Magic-Jack, Vonage, Time Warner Digital Phone (other similar cable company phone services are promoted by other carriers), Ooma, netTALK, and BasicTalk. While not heavily advertised, but widely known and used in technical circles are Skype and Obihai. Major providers of online chat ser-

Skype and Obihai are not heavily advertised, but are widely known and used in technical circles.

vices, such as Google, Microsoft, and Yahoo! offer voice chat services that are encroaching on telephone services, with the Google Voice service now being used by many users as a replacement for traditional telephone service. Social networking services, such as Facebook, may also be entering the fray.

I will admit that over the years, I have experimented with several of the devices that can be used to simply connect common home phone (corded or cordless) to the internet in order to make virtually unlimited local and long distance phone calls.

Originally, my primary intent was to avoid horrendous long distance charges when my daughters started going away to college.

Later, when cell phone plans offered a very limited number of minutes, with additional minutes being very expensive, I needed an alternative method to avoid crippling long distance charges when calling out-of-area family.

While our current cell phone plan has a large number of (limited) daytime minutes, with unlimited evening and weekend calling, my primary interest in a VoIP system is to be able to totally replace my

antiquated but traditional phone company with a much more cost effective (money saving) alternative that includes virtually unlimited local and domestic long distance calling.

By noticing the increasing popularity of the VoIP systems for home use (home users may be able to retain their "old" landline phone number while generating substantial savings), and the exploding use of VoIP based office phones (a service offered by several of the digital phone providers), it seems inevitable that the traditional landline carriers such as AT&T and Verizon may be presiding over a dying technology.

After toying around with several voice-chat services, requiring the use of a headset and boom microphone, my first foray into the more modern VoIP services was with the original version of the magicJack, which I reviewed here in the February 19, 2009 edition of the Examiner.

My major complaint about the original magicJack, an issue resolved in a later version, was that it had to be connected to a computer that was turned on in order to function; when my computer was turned off, there was no magicJack service.

About two years ago (Examiner, December 23, 2011), I reviewed an updated version of the then new magicJack PLUS, a much improved build that did not require an "always on" computer in order to have full

Turn to next page

phone access. Newer builds of the device, the latest named "2014 magicJack PLUS", now claim much improved voice quality. The new magicJack PLUS device retails for $69.95, but is widely available for as low as half that price, and usually included the first year of service. Additional years can be purchased for as little as $19.95 per year with a multi-year subscription. The PLUS version of the MagicJack is very simple to install and setup; the AC adapter is
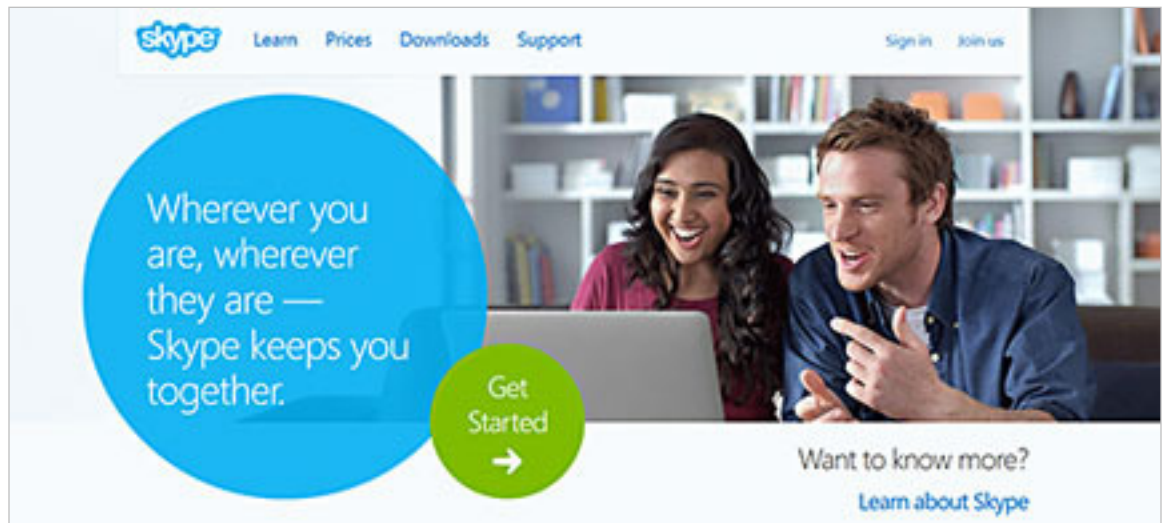
plugged into a standard power outlet, with the magicJack's USB plug inserted into the AC power source. A standard phone is connected with its phone plug to one port on the magicJack, and a standard Ethernet

(network) cable is connected another port on the device. Registration is fast and simple, leading to a dial tone on the now connected telephone.

To be fair, before having adequate cell phone minutes, the portability feature of the magicJack was handy as I could make and receive phone calls from wherever I had a decent broadband internet connection.

As with almost all of its competitors, magicJack offers many of the same services as traditional landlines, including caller ID, voice mail, and 911 service (E911). The magicJack is arguably the best selling VoIP device because of its heavy advertising and promotions, with the magicJack website claiming over 11 million devices sold.

Prior to the release of the PLUS version of magicJack, I was seeking an alternative that did not require an "always on' computer in order to function full time; I found that device, the netTALK DUO, which I reviewed in length in the Examiner on May 4, 2012.

The basic netTALK DUO was less expensive than the magicJack

PLUS, priced at $49.95 retail (commonly available for about a third less), had superior voice quality, with better customer service and tech support than magicJack.

The first year of virtually unlimited local and long distance service was included in the price, with additional years of service available for $29.95; a year of netTALK cost about the same as a month of basic landline service from the traditional phone companies. Portable, with almost all of the features of a landline (e911, voice mail, caller ID, etc.) I preferred the netTALK over the magicJack.

A new model, the netTALK DUO WiFi ($64.95), offers the option of connecting to any available WiFi service rather than connecting to a router via Ethernet cable.

My latest attempt at a home-based VoIP service was an Ooma Telo device.

While initially more expensive than netTALK or magicJack, it seems to have better voice quality, and virtually unlimited free local and long distance calling without a monthly or annual subscription fee, making it quickly more cost competitive than a magicJack or netTALK if used for more than two years.

Retailing for $149, it is widely available new for under $100, and several of the "bargain" websites periodically have the Ooma (refurbished) for around $69.

On Black Friday, I purchased my new Ooma Telo for the same price as others charged for a refurbished model. Installation was very fast and easy, with the online activation an intuitive process. I selected a local

phone number, and was able to make and receive phone calls in just a very few minutes. The included AC adapter, Ethernet cable (included), and cord from the telephone connect to the back of the Ooma; as with other VoIP devices, a broadband connection and available router port are required.

The device, which is probably the best looking of the devices I considered, is possibly one of the most full featured devices available.

I tried its much-acclaimed technical support (a weakness with many of its competitors), and it was fast, polite, and effective.

Published reviews from trade and technical journals raved about the voice quality of the Ooma over its competitors, and while I did not scientifically test it, I can say that the voice quality was excellent.

In order to be fair, the free local

and long distance service is not really free, as Ooma is required to collect taxes from its users; according to the Ooma website, "Federal universal service charges, FCC regulatory fee, state and local taxes, fees & surcharges and regulatory and compliance fees are billed monthly and are subject to change." I went to the tax rate calculator on the Ooma website (www.ooma.com/rates), entered my zip code, and found that the total federal and local taxes on my unlimited phone services will be $3.72 per month, charged monthly to my credit card.

Reading the fine print on the websites of some of the competing VoIP services indicates that they also either are now, or may shortly start adding these same taxes and fees to their monthly or annual subscription fees.

There are several Ooma devices

Websites of some of the competing VoIP services indicates that they also either are now, or may shortly start, adding taxes and fees to their monthly or annual subscription fees.

available, including a WiFi adapter (remote devices can send and receive calls via WiFi), Bluetooth adapter (cell phones and other Bluetooth devices can connect directly to Ooma if in range), remote handsets, and other devices.

There are Ooma devices explicitly for business users that can connect the businesses' phone lines to VoIP, getting the benefits of free (plus taxes) unlimited local and domestic long distance service. Ooma also offers relatively inexpensive international long distance calling, either at a very low "pennies per minute" rate or a monthly flat rate of $17.99 for unlimited international long distance calling to 61 countries.

WalMart is heavily advertising BasicTalk digital phone service, complete with the most popular services and unlimited local and domestic long distance calling. I tried a BasicTalk and it appeared to work well, with excellent voice quality.

While the VoIP device itself is among the lowest cost of any of its competitors at only $9.99, and has had excellent reviews, BasicTalk also charges a monthly service fee of $9.99, which, including the taxes and fees, actually would cost (in my zip code) $12.11 per month. This is far less expensive than the traditional analog phone service, generating considerable savings over just a few years, but quickly becomes more expensive than most of its competitors.

It is almost a "given" that cable broadband providers also offer a digital (VoIP) phone service along with TV and internet services. While quality is often excellent, and feature rich, it is often among the most expensive of the

competing services, even though it is common to offer a "teaser" rate for the first 12 months of service, going up to normal price the 13th month and thereafter.

Some cable carriers have announced a "new lower monthly rate" of $19.99 for service, while several other cable companies are charging $24.95 to $39.95 per month, with charges for some additional services. These monthly rates do not include the added taxes and fees, which are similar to most of the other carriers.

Different cable providers have different fee structures for the equipment necessary to connect the home telephone to the cable service, with some leasing (renting) the VoIP device, some including the cost of the device with the monthly subscription fee, and at least one offering a port directly on the rented cable modem for the phone jack. While still cost effective when compared to the traditional landlines, cable digital phone service is among the most expensive alternative services available.

A very interesting device that has traditionally appealed to "techies" is the Obihai series of VoIP devices. These Obihai devices are intended to utilize other VoIP services, such as the Google Voice (GV) service, providing a very low cost of service from devices that start at $59.99 retail (often available online for about $37) for the basic OBi100

Turn to next page

single line model, with moderately higher prices for models that support multiple lines, FAX service, and other functions.

Obihai also has models that support the multiple phone lines found in office environments. Reviews of the Obihai systems have been excellent, and when used on alternative VoIP services, such as Google Voice, are among the least expensive to operate, while offering free local and domestic long distance calling, ultra low cost international calls, and other services. While slightly more complex to setup, these Obihai systems are among the least expensive to own and operate over a period of a year or two.

Vonage is another heavily advertised VoIP product, emphasizing its international calling. In order to use the Vonage service, the user must purchase a "Vonage Box" which may retail for $79.99 but is widely available deeply discounted.

Vonage offers local and international "teaser" rates of about $10 per month for a limited number of months, increasing to $24.99 per month (plus taxes) for unlimited local and domestic calling, a discounted limited plan (400 minutes per month, 5 cents per minute overage) for $12.99, and international rates of $26.99 for unlimited calling to the US and over 60 countries.

Along with some of the cable plans, Vonage is among the most expensive of the plans over time, but its international calling plan is among the best available.

No comparison of VoIP plans would be complete without mention-

ing Microsoft's Skype service. Mostly free if used between computers or smart devices, and inexpensive if calling a phone number, Skype utilizes the computer (or smart device) as the "box," along with the speaker and microphone components of the computer.

I have used Skype with a set of headphones and a microphone in order to talk to other Skype users (the free calls).

Calling off the Skype system, such as to other telephones, is reasonably priced, with the lowest rates being available on a subscription basis, with subscription rates being based on projected usage. Domestic (US) calling is as low as 2.3 cents per minute on a "pay as you go" basis, or $2.99 per

month for unlimited calling to the US and Canada, $7.99 per month for most of North America (including landline calls to major cities in Mexico), to $13.99 per month for unlimited calling to over 60 countries.

There are several telephone-looking devices that serve as a dialer, speaker and microphone that work on computers with Skype, effectively making the computer a complete telephone device.

Other than the cost of the computer or smart device, Skype is among the least expensive telephone alternatives.

As the technology is changing, services such as these may be the death knell for the old fashioned, traditional telephone services.

websites

http://ooma.com

http://www.ooma.com/rates

http://www.magicJack.com

http://www.nettalk.com

http://www.skype.com/en/

http://www.vonage.com

http://obihai.com

http://www.basictalk.com

http://www.timewarnercable.com/en/residential-home/phone/domestic-international-calling-plans.html

http://gigaom.com/2012/12/26/over-half-of-american-homes-dont-have-or-use-their-landline/

http://www.usatoday.com/story/tech/2012/12/27/more-than-half-homes-without-landline/1793823/

Read Ira Wilsker's weekly computer and technology column in the Examiner at http://www.theexaminer.com/feature/ira-wilsker You can email Ira at iwilsker@sbcglobal.net

CDC

Wireless Substitution:
Early Release of Estimates From the
National Health Interview Survey, January–June 2013

by Stephen J. Blumberg, Ph.D., and Julian V. Luke
Division of Health Interview Statistics, National Center for Health Statistics

Overview

Preliminary results from the January–June 2013 National Health Interview Survey (NHIS) indicate that the number of American homes with only wireless telephones continues to grow. Two in every five American homes (39.4%) had only wireless telephones (also known as cellular telephones, cell phones, or mobile phones) during the first half of 2013—an increase of 1.2 percentage points since the second half of 2012. In addition, nearly one of every six American homes (15.7%) received all or almost all calls on wireless telephones despite also having a landline telephone. This report presents the most up-to-date estimates available from the federal government concerning the size and characteristics of these populations.

NHIS Early Release Program

This report is published as part of the NHIS Early Release Program. Twice each year, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS) releases selected estimates of telephone coverage for the civilian noninstitutionalized U.S. population based on data from NHIS, along with comparable estimates from NHIS for the previous 3 years. The estimates are based on in-person interviews that NHIS conducts continuously throughout the year to collect information on health status, health-related behaviors, and health care access and utilization. The survey also includes information about household telephones and whether anyone in the household has a wireless telephone.

Two additional reports are published regularly as part of the NHIS Early Release Program. *Early Release of Selected Estimates Based on Data From the National Health Interview Survey* is published quarterly and provides estimates for 15 selected measures of health. *Health Insurance Coverage: Early Release of Estimates From the National Health Interview Survey* is also published quarterly and provides additional estimates regarding health insurance coverage. Other Early Release Program products are released as needed.

Methods

For many years, NHIS has asked respondents to provide residential telephone numbers, to permit the recontacting of survey participants. Starting in 2003, additional questions were asked to determine whether a family had a landline telephone. NHIS families were considered to have landline telephone service if the survey respondent for each family reported that there was "at least one phone inside your home that is currently working and is not a cell phone." (To avoid possible confusion with cordless landline telephones, the word "wireless" was not used in the survey.)

An NHIS "family" can be an individual or a group of two or more related persons living together in the same housing unit (a "household"). Thus, a family can consist of only one person, and more than one family can live in a household (including, for example, a household where there are multiple single-person families, as when unrelated roommates are living together).

The survey respondent for each family was also asked whether "anyone in your family has a working cellular telephone." Families are identified as

Percentages of adults and children living in households with only wireless telephone service or no telephone service: United States, 2003–2013

NOTE: Adults are aged 18 and over; children are under age 18.
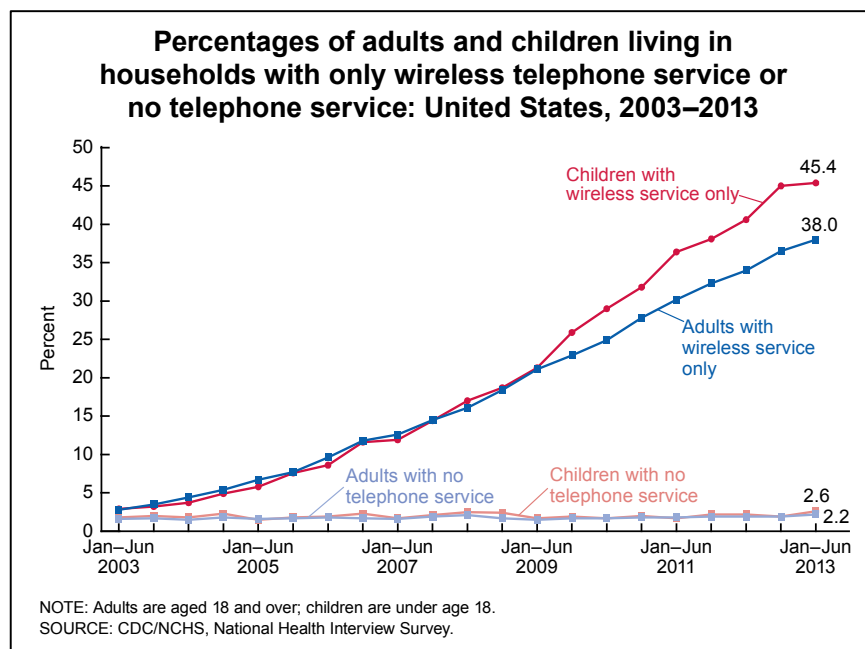SOURCE: CDC/NCHS, National Health Interview Survey.

Figure 1

should I buy a network attached storage device?

by Frank Bollinger

To NAS or not to NAS? That was the question I asked myself while planning for a new computer. I've always gone to great lengths to have good data backups. In the days before hard drives, I used to have two boxes of 5 1/4" floppy disks; one for my original files and one for backup copies. After getting my first hard drive, I still used one box of floppies to back up any new or modified files. I eventually converted to flash drives, but was still careful to always have backups. This approach meant saving everything twice, but I never lost a file.

A network attached storage (NAS) demonstration at an Orange County PC Users' Group meeting a few years ago convinced me to get a NAS at home. Since a NAS is a special hard drive enclosure designed to robustly back up and store files redundantly, it can be a valuable way to protect data.

After research, I bought a Synology DS209, primarily based on good customer reviews and three USB ports. I thought connecting my laser and ink jet printers to USB ports on the NAS might be a convenient way to put them on my home network. I also periodically connected an external hard drive to one of the USB ports to back up the NAS.

Although my main interest is data backup, this NAS (and many others) can also act as a mail or web server and share files on a network. For redundancy, I chose two drives configured to "mirror" each other. Whenever I saved a file to the NAS, it was written to both drives.

Setup was straightforward but, as at least one Amazon.com reviewer mentioned, probably not for a novice. My computer and networking background made the concepts and terminology familiar. The biggest issue for me was that my computer wouldn't always recognize the NAS on daily start up. I had an Ethernet connection and accessed the DS209 by IP address. Synology's technical support recommended "mapping" it to a drive

Synology DS209

letter, which solved the problem. The only other issue I've had with the DS209 occurred following a power failure. All three of the USB ports died and have not worked since.

The NAS came with backup software but I chose to use a program called "Karen's Replicator" that I read about in the "Windows Secrets" newsletter. I simply set it to copy all new or modified files from my PC hard drive to the NAS once per day.

While planning for my new computer, I wondered if it made sense to continue using the NAS for my backups. As an experiment, I installed a USB3 card (for speed) in my then current PC and connected two external USB3 hard drives. With Karen's Replicator, I scheduled a backup for one drive in the morning and the other in the evening. After running all of these backups for several months, I concluded that the USB3 hard drives were giving me accurate backups without the extra complication of the NAS. I also began alternately swapping a different drive each week and taking the "removed" drive off site for safety. Since I hadn't been using most of the sophisticated features of the NAS, this is the method I'm using with my new computer.

Which method is best for you? Like so many alternatives we encounter, it depends. If you want to share the device with multiple computers, or set up a web or mail server, the NAS is definitely better. If you simply want to backup the data from one PC, the external drives are easier to implement and maintain.

first mac pro design is **"epic"**

When Apple announced the Mac Pro at the World Wide Developers Conference in June, they said that it would be available later in 2013. In order to meet that commitment, the first deliveries were made on Christmas Eve.

These were the two standard models with either Quad-Core (4 Intel Xeon E5 with 10MB L3 cache) for $2,995 or the 6-Core (6 Intel Xeon E5 with 12MB L3 cache) for $3,995.

The first wave of reviews for Apple's new built-in-the-U.S.A. Mac Pro workstation landed this week, even as the machine's ship date slipped inexorably from Dec. 30 to some indeterminate date in February.

And they're about what you'd expect for a top-of-the-line Mac Apple hyperbolically touts as "epic," "something radically different from anything before it": piles of plaudits with some obvious caveats about the machine's price, its obvious need for more powerful software applications and a few inevitable quips about its cylindrical design and metallic black chassis, which lend themselves to comparisons with Darth Vader and Diaper Genie, both.

It's worth noting that a few reviewers noted that the Mac Pro was too much machine to fully test in the time allotted, which in itself says quite a bit about what Apple's managed to pull off here.

Brian Westover, PCMag.com said, "The Mac Pro isn't quite perfect. It's expensive, even given the usual premium for Apple products, and the one-year warranty and 90-day tech support is short and lackluster. Whether or not the lack of internal expansion is a detriment is yet to be seen, but at the very least it's a drastic change, that will force many professionals to change how they approach their work. At the very least, it's safe to say that the Apple Mac Pro (2013) offers some of the most exciting updates to desktop design we've seen, and backs it up with powerful professional-grade performance. The Apple Mac Pro (2013) is our new Editors' Choice for single-processor workstations, and one of the best high-end desktops we've seen in years."

To read more expert comments at allthingsd.com go to http://dthin.gs/KBGJBO

(Thanks to HHICC for bringing this to our attention in their January 2014 newsletter.)

Height: 9.9 in
Diameter: 6.6 in
Weight: 11 lb

Under the cover Mac Pro RAM, CPU, etc.

Fits into small spaces

AT&T Thumbs Nose at Net Neutrality With 'Sponsored' Bandwidth Scheme

by David Kravets

AT&T announced a new scheme (January 6) that allows app-makers and websites to pay for the bandwidth you consume using their services — a move digital rights activists say breaches the spirit of net neutrality.

The second largest mobile provider is taking advantage of the data caps it imposes on subscribers by letting companies sponsor the bandwidth their wares use. The consumer who enjoys those sponsored services will not have that broadband count against their monthly data allotment. Sponsorship is not mandatory — if a company doesn't pay AT&T, the bandwidth will count against the user's cap as always.

Online rights groups said the move is anti-competitive and takes advantage of a loophole in Federal Communications Commission rules prohibiting ISPs from favoring one service over the other. For the most part, however, those FCC guidelines adopted in 2010 apply to cable, fiber and DSL internet providers, not wireless ones.

"This definitely violates the spirit of network neutrality," says John Bergmayer, a senior staff attorney with Public Knowledge. "Once you have a data cap, set artificially low, that opens the door to all kinds of shenanigans."

Free Press, another Washington, D.C. digital rights group, says the changeover, expected to be operational in the coming weeks, will increase the costs for businesses, which will then pass those costs to the consumer. What's more, the plan does not reduce subscribers' monthly fees or increase the amount of broadband for non-sponsored wares.

"While sponsored data will be pitched as a way to save customers money, it's really just double charging," Matt Wood, the policy director at Free Press, said in a statement.

Excerpted from Wired.com, http://wrd.cm/1iReIUT

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the 6 most important tech bombshells coming this year

Mobile devices will drive tech growth worldwide as privacy concerns mount —Time, Business & Money, http://ti.me/1gBCocG

top 5 tech business cases affecting the tech business in 2014

National Security Agency surveillance, net neutrality and the feud between Apple and Samsung will be among the major issues defining the legal landscape for the tech industry in 2014 — USNews, http://bit.ly/1aD6FTI

how us internet service might get better—and worse—in 2014

Fiber buildouts and threats to net neutrality make this year worth watching —Ars Technica, http://bit.ly/1ds1iYj

cable giant comcast roared in 2013 But will it use its power to trample the web in 2014?

Comcast's positioning in the Internet ecosystem has gotten so powerful, some industry watchers fear, that it could create inequalities in how web publishers are able to deliver their content, and in how regular Internet users are able to consume it.—Venturebeat, http://bit.ly/1facZcX

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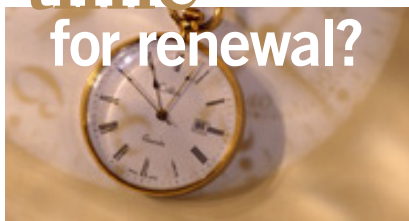**Lyons, Mike**
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time for renewal?

NOVEMBER 1	Louise Applequist
DECEMBER 1	Bob McDonald
	Carl Westberg
JANUARY 1	Linda Gonse
	LeRoy Kaump
FEBUARY 1	Charlie Moore
MARCH 1	Frank Bollinger
	Kevin Joe

submitted by Charlie Moore

thank you members!

Thank you to member presenters: Frank Bollinger, Bill Bowman, Larry Klees, and Ted Wirtz. And thank you to our Program Chairman, Lothar Loehr, for bringing us great programs. Won't you please help? Contact Lothar to sign up for your own program.

no secret keyword raffle for january

The Secret Keyword Raffle will not be held in January.

thank you newsletter contributors!

Allen Wyatt, Charlie Moore, Frank Bollinger, Ira Wilsker, Leo Notenboom, Linda Gonse, Neil Longmuir, Pamela Tabak, Ted Wirtz, Tim O'Reilly, and Wes Taylor

february deadline
JANUARY 25

Our thoughts and prayers are with you, Mike. We miss you!

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membership application

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Home Phone ( ) _____ Work Phone ( ) _____ E-mail Address _____

Areas of Interest/Comments _____

Make checks payable to: ORCOPUG — Dues are $25 per year
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Meetings are the second Tuesday of every month. See www.orcopug.org for more information.

Orange County PC Users Group

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- Special offers & discounts
- Monthly meetings
- Affiliation with worldwide group

User groups represent the spirit of the frontier, a community getting together to do things that no individual ought to have to do alone. The pioneers of the American west got together for barn raisings, cattle roundups, and the occasional party. The pioneers of new technology get together for installfests, new user training and support, and just plain fun. Being part of a user group is the best way to get more out of your computer, and lets you make friends while you're at it.

Tim O'Reilly, President
O'Reilly Media

where are the meetings, when are they held?

next meeting: Tuesday, January 14, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. — Coco's Bakery Restaurant

Regular meetings are held the second Tuesday of the month at 6 p.m. at Coco's Bakery Restaurant, 1011 North Harbor Blvd., Fullerton, CA. Meetings are free and the public is welcome!

Planning meetings *are held the second Wednesday after the regular meeting every month at 6:30 p.m. at Carl's Jr., 3240 Yorba Linda Boulevard, Fullerton, CA 92831. All members are welcome to attend planning meetings! Check with Charlie Moore in advance to be sure the planning meeting has not been cancelled.*